

Wofford Celebrates Native American Heritage Month

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Publication: *Old Gold and Black*

Publication Type: Print

Audience: Wofford College students, faculty, staff

This November, the Office of Multicultural Affairs and the Association of African American Students are collaborating to bring Native American culture and heritage to Wofford.

According to the Native American Heritage Month web site, the first month-long celebration of the Native Americans was in 1990 when President George H. W. Bush approved a resolution designating November as "Native American Indian Heritage Month."

Wofford will host a series of events that recognize the importance of Native Americans in the history of the United States.

"Essentially, Native American Heritage Month is a month to honor Native Americans as the first citizens of our country and to give them the recognition that they deserve," Millicent Lann, Interim Director of Multicultural Affairs said.

This is not the first time that Wofford has celebrated Native American History. According to Lann, celebrations have taken place for the last three years.

This year, events include lectures and discussions of the role of Native Americans in contemporary society, an exploration of Native American poets and a discussion-based forum on the film "Skins."

On November 10, Dr. Dr. Kimberly Rostan, assistant professor of English led a discussion of the poetry of contemporary Native American poets.

During this poetry salon, selected works of Native American poets like Esther Belin, Gerlad Vizenor, Joy Harjo and Laura Tohe were read and discussed in a small group setting.

On November 12, Dr. John Miles, assistant professor of English gave a lecture on Laura Cornelius Kellogg entitled "Rhetoric, Democracy and Sovereignty: Transformational Dialogue in Our Democracy and the American Indian."

A final event on the film "Skins" will be held on November 18 at 2:30 p.m. in Olin teaching center. "Skins" is a film which follows the story of two contemporary Native American brothers living on Pine Wood Reservation in Nebraska.

After a screening of the film, Wofford students, Katie Brown and Lily Lucas will lead a discussion about the film.

Though there is only a small percentage of Wofford students who identify themselves as Native Americans, Lann says the Native American presences is still felt on campus.

“It’s a very small group [of Native Americans], but they are here and present on Wofford’s campus,” Lann said.

“Just like any other heritage month that we celebrate, it’s important for students to embrace the cultures of others and to be aware and mindful that though we are all different, we have a lot more in common than we think,” Lann said.