



38TH ANNUAL DANCE FOR MOTHER EARTH POWWOW OFF U OF M CAMPUS AGAIN AS NATIVE STUDENT CONCERNS LANGUISH

ANN ARBOR, MI—For the second year in a row, the University of Michigan campus will not hear the sound of powwow drums, singing, and jingle dancing. Nor will it host some 6,000 Native dancers, drummers, artisans and other powwow people at the annual event—one of the largest student-run powwows in the country.

The Native American Student Association (NASA) at the University of Michigan announces its decision to keep the Dance for Mother Earth Powwow from the campus of the University of Michigan. **The 38th Annual Dance for Mother Earth Powwow again will be held at Saline Middle School April 10-11, 2010.**

The overwhelming success of last year's powwow in Saline also showed Native students that moving the event was the right thing to do. Attendance was high, dancers and drum groups filled the powwow circle, and powwow fans offered students much moral support.

The reason? Perhaps most visibly, Native students and community members are continuing their protest of the University's ongoing failure to return nearly 1,400 ancestors to tribes from its archaeology collection—and to meet minimal federal requirements to engage tribes towards that end.

Yet in the midst of the university's high-profile efforts to shore up diversity on campus, the repatriation scandal is just one in a serious cluster of concerns expressed by Native students for generations. Simply put, the U of M campus can be a difficult place for students of color trying to juggle issues with Michigamua (later Order of Angell), mismanagement of the tuition waiver, and widespread ignorance about Native needs and cultural concerns. This hampers the working relationship between students and the university in planning the powwow. Students and Native community members began to feel the Dance of Mother Earth powwow transitioned from a Native community event to a "diversity showcase."

Last year, NASA declined \$50,000 in funding from the Division of Student Affairs and Multi Ethnic Student Affairs and took the powwow to Saline.

For some students, the most grotesque example of institutional issues is seen with the repatriation situation at U of M. According to federal inventories, the University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology holds nearly 1,400 individuals in its archaeology “collection.” Despite four years of advocacy on the part of many tribal, student and faculty groups, archaeology curators have been steadfast in resisting legal and ethical calls for the reburial of these individuals. Michigan tribes have officially and unofficially notified the museum that by failing to proactively pursue consultation with tribes, the university is in violation of a federal law. The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, passed in 1990, *requires* museums to conduct tribal consultation and to apply due diligence in obtaining it.

Last October—nearly two decades after NAGPRA was passed—U of M got serious about developing appropriate protocols about Native human remains in its “collection.” “The university has made a great stride in the formation of a committee to review the issues surrounding our ancestral remains being kept in their museum,” said Alys Alley, co-chair of NASA. “That being said, the American Indian students at the University of Michigan will not be satisfied until all of our ancestors are returned to their rightful graves.”

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act was created to be human rights legislation, not science vs. culture. Students are advocating for the human rights of their ancestors, and for the human rights of those in the campus community. U of M must uphold the same legal and ethical standards for all people, and all research.

“It was a sacrifice to switch the powwow location last year,” said Andrea Hebner, co-chair of the 2010 Powwow. “We turned down \$50,000 in university funding and, no, it was not as financially successful as powwows we’ve had in Crisler Arena. To maintain the powwow off campus is a huge decision, and it is one we have not taken lightly. To us, it has been more important to stick with what we believe in, even if we have to work twice as hard to realize our goal.”

“This has been quite a year to look at how Michigan treats Native students and issues of students of color generally,” Alley added. “When the dioramas came down, many teachers worried about being ill-equipped to teach their students about American Indians. Our powwow is the perfect opportunity for those teachers to give their students a first-hand experience with American Indian culture, rather than settling for Happy Meal figurines in a glass container. We hope next year we’ll be able to dance for our ancestors on campus.”

Media Contact: Veronica Pasfield (734) 327-3705 or 272-6325 / veronicaty@hotmail.com

#

POWWOW FACTS & FAQs

The Powwow Committee is honored to announce an excellent roster of top-level drums and invited dancers. Though our venue is smaller, our talent pool is just as big as ever!

HEAD VETERAN: George Martin

MC: Sandon Jacobs

AD: JON TELLER

HEAD MALE DANCER: Marcus Winchester, Tony Davis, and Paul Syvette

HEAD FEMALE DANCERS: Janis Fairbanks, Julie George & Bleu Bird

HOST DRUM: THA TRIBE

SPECIAL GUEST DRUMS: Southern Sun

INVITED DRUMS: Chippewa Travelers, Kingbird & Ribbon Town

HEAD DRUM JUDGE: Harvey Dreaver

HEAD MEN'S DANCE JUDGE: Jerry Cleveland

HEAD WOMEN'S DANCE JUDGE: Deb Plain

WHAT IS A POWWOW? A powwow is a social gathering to meet, dance and sing. It celebrates Native American culture. These gatherings are held year round and many Native peoples travel great distances to attend them. Michigan's tribal families have been enjoying powwows for many generations.

IS A POWWOW OPEN TO NON-NATIVES? Absolutely! All are welcome!

WHAT CAN I DO AT A POWWOW? Vendors are a big part of powwow, with over 50 available on site. Come prepared to shop! We attract the highest-level Native artists, craftspeople, food vendors, and clothing designers to our event. You will enjoy watching our dancers in their beautifully crafted regalia and listening to our traditional music. During the inter-tribal dances, all are invited into the dance circle. And Native activists will have information on hand about issues important to our communities.

IS IT APPROPRIATE FOR KIDS? Always! There is plenty for kids to do, see, and eat.

IS POWWOW ACCESSIBLE TO PEOPLE OF ALL PHYSICAL CAPABILITIES? Saline Middle School is wheelchair accessible and the dance arena enjoys main-floor open areas for watching and listening.

SCHEDULE, PRICES, ETC.

SATURDAY, APRIL 10

Doors open 10 am; Grand Entry at noon and 7 pm
Activities continue until 10 p.m.

SUNDAY, APRIL 11

Doors open 10 am; Grand Entry at noon.
Powwow closes at 6 p.m.

TICKET PRICES

Daily individual prices: \$10 adults; \$7 high school and college students with school ID; \$5 seniors ages 60+ & children ages 6-12; children 5 & under free.

Daily family passes \$25.

Weekend passes \$15 adults & \$10 students.

Groups of 10 or more sold in advance: \$7/day adults, \$5/day students,
seniors and children ages 6-12.

FOR GROUP SALES, DRUM, AND VENDOR INVITATION, EMAIL US AT
powwow_committee@umich.edu

FOR MORE INFO, VISIT OUR WEBSITE
<http://www.umich.edu/~powwow>