

**A RESOLUTION CALLING FOR BROWN UNIVERSITY  
TO END THE ACADEMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE RECOGNITION  
OF COLUMBUS DAY<sup>1</sup>**

Sponsored by: Michael MacCombie '11

1. WHEREAS the choices regarding what holidays the University chooses to officially honor by closing offices and academic functions are an illustration of the priorities and values of the institution, and
2. WHEREAS Columbus Day is often celebrated in a historically inaccurate manner and does not recognize the negative legacies of Christopher Columbus<sup>2</sup>, and
3. WHEREAS, the Brown Corporation endorsed a set of initiatives in response to the report of the Steering Committee on Slavery and Justice. The report reads, "we were also asked to reflect on the meaning of this history in the present, on the complex historical, political, legal, and moral questions posed by any present-day confrontation with past injustice."<sup>3</sup> It would be inconsistent with this goal to not consider the negative implications of the celebration of Columbus Day, and
4. WHEREAS Harvard and Brown are the only two Ivy League schools that explicitly recognize Columbus Day as a holiday<sup>4</sup>, and
5. WHEREAS although there may be differing interpretations of Columbus Day as a celebration of Italian heritage, Hispanic culture (Día de la Raza) or otherwise, the implications Columbus Day weekend has for the Native American community must be acknowledged as well, and
6. WHEREAS, the Undergraduate Council of Students did not come to a consensus as to whether or not the accompanying administrative and academic recess should be replaced by an alternatively scheduled recess during the school year<sup>5</sup>,
1. BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that the Undergraduate Council of Students urges ending the official observance of Columbus Day at Brown University by removing its name from the academic calendars by the 2009-2010 school year, to be replaced by an alternatively named holiday, such as "Fall Recess," for instance.

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<sup>1</sup> This resolution is a modified version of one presented on November 19, 2008 to the Undergraduate Council of Students, by Clay Wertheimer '10, that did not pass. Clauses 2, 3, 4 and 5 were taken directly from this earlier resolution, with minor edits to reflect the changed intention and nature of this resolution. Clause 1 was taken directly from this resolution.

<sup>2</sup> Columbus Day Fact Sheet, prepared by Reiko Koyama, October 2008 and presented to the Brown University Community Council on October 28, 2008

<sup>3</sup> Report of the University Steering Committee on Slavery and Justice <[http://brown.edu/Administration/News\\_Bureau/2006-07/06-037b.html](http://brown.edu/Administration/News_Bureau/2006-07/06-037b.html)>.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.registrar.fas.harvard.edu/fasro/common/calendar.jsp>

<sup>5</sup> Minutes of the General Body meeting of the Undergraduate Council of Students, November 19, 2008: <http://www.brown.edu/Students/UCS/minutes>