

CERTIFICATE OF ENROLLMENT

SENATE RESOLUTION R-32-04

BOARD BILL 5.11

32nd Session
2025-2026 Academic Year

Passed by the Board [Month
Day, 2026] YEAS XX NAYS XX

Nandana Jaideep
President, Board of Directors

Passed by the Senate February
24th, 2026. YEAS 58 NAYS 17.



Erick Jacobsen
Speaker, Student Senate

I, Erick Jacobsen, Speaker of
the Senate of the Associated
Students of the University of
Washington, do hereby certify
that the attached is **SENATE
RESOLUTION R-32-4** as passed
by the Senate on the date set
forth.

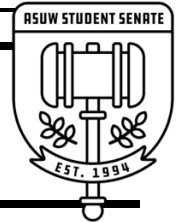


Erick Jacobsen
Speaker, Student Senate

Under Consideration

CERTIFICATE

R-32-04



SENATE RESOLUTION R-32-04

A Resolution in Support of a Pro-student and
Pro-Indigenous Smudging Policy at the
University of Washington

Under Consideration - 2025-2026 Academic Year

A.S.U.W.

Winter Quarter 2026

32nd Session

Sponsored by Lane Ryan (Fort Peck Tribes), Co-Director of Policy
for the American Indian Student Commission.

Co-sponsored by Allison McClaughry (Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma),
Co-Director of Programming for the American Indian Student
Commission.

Honorable Mention to Henry Hess (Chickasaw Nation of Oklahoma),
former Director of the American Indian Student Commission

Referred to Committee on On-Campus Affairs on 02/23/2026. Read on
the floor XX/XX/XXXX.

BILL SUMMARY: A resolution calling on the University of
Washington to, in collaboration with various relevant Indigenous
parties on campus and in the broader community, create a
comprehensive smudging policy that supports students, staff, and
faculty.

1 **WHEREAS** Native peoples have stewarded the lands of North America
2 since time immemorial; and
3

4 **WHEREAS** as established in R-31-18, the Associated Students of
5 the University of Washington acknowledged that historically
6 American Indians and Alaska Natives have been restricted, using
7 both official and unofficial means by the Federal Government and
8 various State governments, to practice their religions, and;
9

10 **WHEREAS** that more specifically the Code of Indian Offenses of
11 1883 banned the practice of Sundance, Ghost Dance, Scalp Dance,
12 potlatch, traditional burial practices, and traditional
13 medicinal practices until the repeal of the ban on traditional
14 dances in 1933 with the entire Code not being repealed until
15 1978 [1]; and

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16
17 **WHEREAS** that former President Jimmy Carter stated "Government
18 agencies and departments have on occasion denied Native
19 Americans access to particular sites and interfered with
20 religious practices and customs" [1]; and
21

22 **WHEREAS** that due to this infringement, the American Indian
23 Religious Freedom Act of 1978, enacted by a joint resolution of
24 the United States Congress, states "it shall be the policy of
25 the United States to protect and preserve for American Indians
26 their inherent right... to exercise the traditional religions of
27 the American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut, and Native Hawaiians" [1];
28 and
29

30 **WHEREAS** that the Free Exercise and Establishment Clauses of the
31 United States Constitution reads, "Congress shall make no law
32 respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free
33 exercise thereof" [1]; and

34 **WHEREAS** American Indian and Alaska Native peoples pray and
35 cleanse in many ways depending on each tribe or families'
36 teachings, but a common form of prayer and cleansing is through
37 the burning of sacred medicines[a], a practice called smudging;
38 and

39 **WHEREAS** the University of Washington, like many other
40 universities in the United States, limits the practice of
41 smudging in such a way that it could be considered an undue
42 burden on the individual praying as it requires unreasonable
43 amounts of notice, interfering with the sacred and ceremonial
44 practice; and

45 **WHEREAS** the standards placed by the UW on those who wish to
46 smudge include requiring 2 weeks of advance notice, an
47 unfamiliar, UW Fire Alarm faculty member to be present at the
48 ceremony, signs alerting the public, and outside "approval"
49 [2][3]; and

50 **WHEREAS** many Native students feel limited by these policies, as
51 indicated by written testimony supplied in Appendix B, and there
52 is a need for a change in policy;

53 **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ASSOCIATED STUDENTS OF THE**
54 **UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON:**

55 **THAT** the Associated Students of the University of Washington
56 reaffirms that it recognizes the rights of all American Indian
57 and Alaska Native students, staff, and employees to practice
58 their religious and cultural beliefs without restriction by the
59 State of Washington, the University of Washington, and the
60 Federal Government [1]; and

61 **THAT** the Associated Students of the University of Washington
62 holds that the University of Washington should, in collaboration
63 with relevant parties, including but not limited to the
64 wələbʔaltxʷ - Intellectual House, the Native American Advisory
65 Board, and student groups, create a comprehensive smudging
66 policy that does not interfere with an individual's regular
67 prayer or ceremonial practice; and

68 **THAT** the Associated Students of the University of Washington
69 affirms and supports the work of others across the State, in the
70 Legislature, and across higher education, to have a pro-
71 Indigenous policy on the subject; and

72 **THAT** the Associated Students of the University of Washington
73 acknowledges the many current and former Indigenous students,
74 staff, faculty, and others within the University of Washington
75 community who have worked towards the goal of a reasonable
76 smudging policy at the University; and

THAT the following parties or organizations be sent this
legislation by the ASUW Senate GAVEL Committee:

UW Board of Regents

Robert Jones | *President, University of Washington*

Tricia Serio | *Provost, University of Washington*

Rickey Hall | *Vice President, University of Washington Office of
Minority Affairs*

Sherri Berdine | *Tribal Liaison, University of Washington*

Marjorie James | *Chair, Native American Advisory Board of the
University of Washington*

Chenoa Henry | *Director, UW wələbʔaltxʷ - Intellectual House*

Alan Galvez | *Adviser to the American Indian Student Commission,
UW Student Activities Office*

Faculty Senate Executive Committee

GPSS Executive Committee

ASUW Board of Directors

The Daily of the University of Washington

References

[1] [A Resolution Calling on the State of Washington and the University of Washington to Recognize the Second Monday of October as the Holiday Indigenous Peoples Day.docx](#)

[2]
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/17UTBR2BzNehU0jWtFpFoBD4CqiH6Y6WK/view?usp=sharing>

[3]
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IOpd7ecbUtNwaKUjkoec6SZvOuraeBw1/view?usp=sharing>

APPENDIX A

Sacred medicines used may include but are not limited to cedar, sage, sweetgrass, palo santo, bear root, and tobacco.

Appendix B

Student A reports encountering significant barriers to smudging in university spaces, particularly during First Nations meetings. They emphasize that smudging is central to cultural and spiritual practices and that opening meetings with smudge fosters a meaningful, positive environment. Due to existing policies, meetings held in designated rooms at the Ethnic Cultural Center have been required to relocate outdoors in order to conduct smudging. They characterize this requirement as disruptive and inconsistent with the purpose of providing culturally supportive campus spaces.

Student B states that residence hall fire alarm systems and housing policies effectively prevented him from smudging in his dormitory. He explains that his family taught him to use sage and sweetgrass following emotionally difficult experiences.

During his freshman year, after experiencing a significant personal hardship, he was unable to smudge in his dorm due to concerns about triggering fire alarms and disrupting his roommate. He indicates that this prevented him from accessing an important culturally grounded coping mechanism during a period of emotional distress.

Alumni A (Class of 1996), a recipient of the UW MAP Distinguished Alumni Award and a community leader in Seattle, expresses strong support for the proposed smudging policy. The alumnus argues that Native students, staff, faculty, and guests possess federally protected rights under the American Indian Religious Freedom Act to practice traditional spiritual and ceremonial customs.

The alumnus asserts that smudging is a foundational spiritual, healing, and cleansing practice within many Native communities. Under current university policies, smudging is either prohibited or permitted only under restrictive procedures, creating substantial barriers to routine cultural and religious expression. The alumnus contends that these requirements impose unrealistic burdens and risk penalizing individuals for engaging in protected practices.