



Indigenous Freedom of Traditional Prayer

23-24-05

Whereas: a core Jesuit value of the University of San Francisco is Cura Personalis - care of the whole person, including the physical, emotional, financial and spiritual well-being of USF's students; and

Whereas: USF celebrates their position as the number one most ethnically diverse school in the nation and welcomes students of every "creed, culture, color, country, identity, and orientation"¹; and

Whereas: part of the Jesuit institute mission is to "Respect everyone. Serve others. Nurture the whole person (mind, body, spirit)"² and as a part of taking care of the USF student body, USF welcomes "more than 25 faith traditions"³; and

Whereas: burning medicinal practices are not new to this campus, as the St. Ignatius church burns their prayer medicines of frankincense and myrrh during mass; and

Whereas: USF is on the unceded land of the Ramaytush Ohlone people and, in accordance with USF's commitment to social justice, the University strives to honor this land and its history, including the prayers and rituals that belong to the people of this land; and

Whereas: ensuring that USF follows the Indian Freedom of Religion Act of 1994⁴ by guaranteeing Indigenous students have the right to practice their religion, and have a space and accessibility to their form of prayer; and

Whereas: there are many Indigenous herbal medicines that are burned in order to pray in various traditions which include, but are not limited to: cedar, tobacco, copal, sage, lavender, tossa, pepperwood, palo santo, sweetgrass; and

Whereas: University Ministry's mission is to "support the spiritual, religious, and pastoral needs"⁵ of the USF community, which includes access to ceremonial forms of prayer that are crucial for students and their spiritual well being on this campus;

¹ [USFCA Stand for Diversity](#)

² [USFCA Our Jesuit Roots](#)

³ [USFCA Stand for Diversity](#)

⁴ [Indigenous Freedom of Religion Act of 1994](#)

⁵ [University Ministry Mission](#)



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Therefore, be it resolved by the Associated Students of the University of San Francisco Senate in its role as the sole representative body of all the undergraduate students of the University of San Francisco, the following be enacted:

Resolved: that in order to support Indigenous students in their spiritual well being, USF will allow the burning of traditional Indigenous herbal medicines in the Peace Garden for the purpose of prayer on campus; furthermore, be it

Resolved: University Ministry will ensure that these traditions are respected and Indigenous students have access to the Peace Garden as the place to practice ceremonial prayer by creating a sign in sheet for reservation of the space on the USF campus for aforementioned medicine usage and prayer; furthermore, be it

Resolved: in order for USF Indigenous students to participate in their cultures' practices of healing and spiritual prayer, the University Ministry will hold unsmokable tobacco (mixed with cedar and sage) in order to avoid students being charged with a fee for holding it in their dorm rooms; furthermore, be it

Resolved: University Ministry will provide lighters for students to check out, ensuring proper adherence to Student Residential Policies⁶; furthermore, be it

Resolved: Residential Directors will provide information about Indigenous prayer tobacco and University Ministry services during Freshman Orientation as well as publicize and emphasize alternative options available for accessing prayer tobacco in the dorms and on campus; furthermore, be it

Resolved: University Ministry, in conjunction with Public Safety and other USF Departments deemed necessary, will attend a yearly informative workshop led by local Indigenous ceremony leaders on traditional medicine burning prayers so as to inform them with cultural competency as it relates to the smells of healing smoke and their burning processes.

⁶ [Student Residential Policy 2.1.H.4](#)



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Presented To Advocacy on:

February 20, 2024

Presented To The Senate on:

February 21, 2024

Passed by the Senate on:

, 2024

Signed by:

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ASUSF President