

Dear Yale students,

The end of October is quickly approaching, and along with the falling leaves and cooler nights come the Halloween celebrations on our campus and in our community. These celebrations provide opportunities for students to socialize as well as make positive contributions to our community and the New Haven community as a whole. Some upcoming events include:

- **Haunted Hall Crawl & Costume Ball** at Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History
- **Grove Street Cemetery Tours**, Grove Street Cemetery, New Haven
- **YSO's Halloween Show**, Woolsey Hall

However, Halloween is also unfortunately a time when the normal thoughtfulness and sensitivity of most Yale students can sometimes be forgotten and some poor decisions can be made including wearing feathered headdresses, turbans, wearing 'war paint' or modifying skin tone or wearing [blackface](#) or [redface](#). These same issues and examples of cultural appropriation and/or misrepresentation are increasingly surfacing with representations of [Asians](#) and [Latinos](#).

Yale is a community that values free expression as well as inclusivity. And while students, undergraduate and graduate, definitely have a right to express themselves, we would hope that people would actively avoid those circumstances that threaten our sense of community or disrespects, alienates or ridicules segments of our population based on race, nationality, religious belief or gender expression.

The culturally unaware or insensitive choices made by *some* members of our community in the past, have not just been directed toward a cultural group, but have impacted religious beliefs, Native American/Indigenous people, Socio-economic strata, Asians, Hispanic/Latino, Women, Muslims, etc. In many cases the student wearing the costume has not *intended* to offend, but their actions or lack of forethought have sent a far greater message than any apology could after the fact...

There is growing national concern on campuses everywhere about these issues, and we encourage Yale students to take the time to consider their costumes and the impact it may have. So, if you are planning to dress-up for Halloween, or will be attending any social gatherings planned for the weekend, please ask yourself these questions before deciding upon your costume choice:

- **Wearing a funny costume?** Is the humor based on "making fun" of real people, human traits or cultures?
- **Wearing a historical costume?** If this costume is meant to be historical, does it further misinformation or historical and cultural inaccuracies?
- **Wearing a 'cultural' costume?** Does this costume reduce cultural differences to jokes or stereotypes?
- **Wearing a 'religious' costume?** Does this costume mock or belittle someone's deeply held faith tradition?
- Could someone take offense with your costume and why?

Here is a great resource for costume ideas organized by our own **Community & Consent Educators** (CCEs) <https://www.pinterest.com/yalecces/>

We are **one Yale**, and the actions of one affect us all..., so in whatever fashion you choose to participate in Halloween activities, we encourage everyone to be safe and thoughtful during your celebration.

Sincerely,

**The Intercultural Affairs Committee-**

Maria Trumpler – Office of LGBTQ Resources

Sharon Kugler – University Chaplain's Office

Peter Crumlish – Dwight Hall Center for Public Service & Social Justice

Kelly Fayard – Native American Cultural Center

Omer Bajwa - University Chaplain's Office

Risë Nelson - Afro American Cultural Center

Leah Cohen – Joseph Slivka Center for Jewish Life

Melanie Boyd - Office of Gender and Campus Culture

Eileen Galvez - La Casa Cultural

Brian Tompkins – Yale Athletics

Saveena Dhall - Asian American Cultural Center

Anne Kuhlman – Office of International Students & Scholars

Burgwell Howard – Yale Dean of the College Office/Office of Student Life