

Celebrating #ConstitutionDay and #CitizenshipDay

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Introduction

Constitution and Citizenship Day recognizes both the adoption of the United States Constitution and those who achieve citizenship. At the University of Utah (UU), the Government Documents team developed a plan to not only draw attention to the Constitution but to provide a forum for diverse student groups to gather and share information about citizenship.

Methods

To realize our ambitions, we reserved a central, high-traffic location in the library for tabling. We pre-ordered 200 cookies frosted with "We the People" and unpacked our pocket constitutions supplied by the FDLP.

To make the tabling more meaningful beyond handing out free stuff, we focused on the citizenship aspect of the holiday. We invited three UU offices to table with us – the American Indian Resource Center, the Black Cultural Center, and the Dream Center (now First-Generation Scholars).

Giving voice to diverse campus groups on this federal holiday helped highlight our country's complex history regarding citizenship, progress made, and work yet done—even if it was just a tabling event.

Results

Distributed all pocket constitutions and cookies and spread awareness of campus partners that serve marginalized members of the campus community.



FDLP 2024

Constitutions, Cookies, and Community.

A novel way of presenting the holiday: The celebration of the many ways of being a citizen



Shane and Ambra preparing for the 2022 Constitution and Citizenship Day event.

Partners

Black Cultural Center - <https://blackculturalcenter.utah.edu/>

First-Generation Scholars - <https://firstgenscholars.utah.edu/>

American Indian Resource Center (AIRC) - <https://nativeexcellence.utah.edu/>



Conclusions

1. Value to individual students
2. Value to library
3. Value to citizenry

Challenges

HB261, a recent Utah law, has introduced significant challenges to academic librarianship within the state. One primary concern is the potential impact on diverse student groups and how we connect them to resources.

The law's provisions, particularly those related to the teaching of critical race theory, could lead to a chilling effect on our ability to provide a comprehensive and inclusive learning environment. This could indirectly limit access to vital government information - particularly those related to controversial or sensitive topics - for marginalized student populations and hinder their academic success by hindering their ability to conduct research and understand the complexities of public policy issues.

At the UU, this has directly resulted in removing most student and community groups representing a specific population or identity way.

Futures

The Government Documents team at the UU will attempt to host a new version of the event in 2025, perhaps outside of the library.

Further Reading

More on HB261:
<https://le.utah.gov/~2024/bills/static/HB0261.html>

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