# Transcript

**00:00:03 Announcer**

The Missouri State Journal, a weekly program keeping you in touch with Missouri State University.

**00:00:10 Emily Letterman**

November is national Native American Heritage Month, paying tribute to the rich ancestry and traditions of Native Americans.

At Missouri State University, the Multicultural Resource Center has an array of events planned, ranging from a guest speakers to a powwow.

On the Springfield campus, just 2.5% of undergraduate students are of Native American heritage.

I'm Emily Letterman. Today my guest is Chante Falcon, a Missouri State sophomore working toward a degree in social work. She's also one of the 52 Native American students here on campus, her preferred terminology.

She'll be the first to admit there are as many different terms for her heritage as there are varying degrees of acceptance with the language.

But she's not sure there should be.

**00:00:54 Chante Falcon**

I'm Anishinaabe and Diné, so that's basically Ojibway and Navajo as far as terminology, Native American, American, Indian, indigenous native, they're pretty much all the same.

They don't really mean any particular difference per say? We're all the same.

**00:01:17 Emily Letterman**

People more than 60% of US high school students go on to college, while only 17% of Native American students are able to continue their education after high school.

**00:01:27 Chante Falcon**

They face a number of challenges the average student does not encounter, so our graduation rate for Native Americans after high school into college is 9%, so only 9% of US graduate college with a degree.

So being on MSU campus and being native, it's a lot eye opening just because most of us grew up on reservations. Those are small communities, so being on our campus is about as big as a community of it's very overwhelming. If you've ever been here. But basically I on a daily it's, you know, I didn't know you were still here or they think that we're, you know, Mexicans or some other race. So it's a lot of cultural awareness that I have to kind of inform people.

**00:02:21 Emily Letterman**

Falcon is working to improve those graduation statistics. Her work started out west.

**00:02:27 Chante Falcon**

So I used to work in Arizona for the Navajo Nation. I used to do, I formed a program called Tomorrow's Warriors, which was basically, I would get them in from school into a college do all their grants and your federal funding, whatever they needed, and then get them enrolled. I would stay with them throughout their first second year and then be able to help them overcome that obstacle and be able to be able to graduate from college and continue because it's hard being away from your family.

It's more a sense of belonging. They don't have anywhere to really turn to. They don't trust a lot of outside people. So if they can connect with an organization on campus or they can connect with somebody in the community that understands them, then it's a lot easier for them to continue.

**00:03:25 Emily Letterman**

Falcon is working to create that sense of belonging right here on campus through a new student organization called American Indian Leaders of Today and Tomorrow.

Or rather, she's working to bring one back.

**00:03:38 Chante Falcon**

Umm, so my dad used to form a campus organization that was called a lot and that was back the same name.

It was back in the late 90s. I was younger. He threw the first powwow on campus and he was able to get that successfully going. So being able to reform that and reintroduce that to campus is very rewarding.

Basically, we just go through cultural awareness. Do events on campus try to get them connected to the Soutwest Missouri Indian Center off campus, so if they need food or if they need you know, somebody to talk to if they're struggling in something, then they have a support system to back.

**00:04:28 Emily Letterman**

Anyone wishing to join the club or volunteer at the Southwest Missouri Indian Center can visit the AILOTT website that's AILOTT.square.site for complete list of campus events this November visit missouristate.edu/multiculturalprograms. My guest today has been Missouri State student Chante Falcon.

I'm Emily Letterman for the Missouri State Journal.

**00:04:54 Announcer**

For more information, contact the Office of Strategic Communication at 417-836-6397, the Missouri State Journal is available online@ksu.org.