



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on July 13, 2018

## Professors on Warpath Over University's Cowboy Ad Campaign

Professors at the University of Wyoming have settled it: The Cowboy State university's advertising slogan is racist and sexist.

Well, at least a handful of professors have, the [Casper Star-Tribune reported](#) earlier this week.

The rest of the faculty and students are another matter, as are the taxpayers of Wyoming, known as The Equality State [on its federally minted quarter](#).

**“The World Needs More Cowboys”**



### On the Warpath

The university's ad campaign, which has already cost \$500,000, is elegant in its simplicity: “The World Needs More Cowboys.”

The university's mascot is “Pistol Pete” (shown), a gun-totin' fella who keeps the fans entertained at sporting events. The school logo, also the state logo, is the trademarked [Bucking Horse and Rider](#). Presumably, this too is a triggering offense against half of humanity, but in any event, the *Star-Tribune* aired the usual complaints from the usual crowd.

“I had lots of different reactions,” Angela Jaime, director of the American Indian Studies department, told the paper. “I was really disappointed in the university for endorsing such a negative slogan.”

Jaime is worried that such imagery becomes “incredibly problematic” when recruiting “native students,” and by “native” she doesn't mean an applicant whose ancestors fought in the [Johnson County War](#) and look like charter members of the Wyoming Stock Growers Association.

Said Jaime, “The term ‘cowboy’ evokes the play time — the racist play time — of cowboys and Indians, right?”

Not really, but on to Christine Boggs, co-chair of something called the Committee on Women and People of Color. “I was kind of like ‘Woah, has anyone else heard of this?’”

Yet a third person, Professor Christine Porter, [told the newspaper](#): “Well, the concern for me is the ‘boy’ part, right? Since the 1950s at least in other parts of the country, it is no longer acceptable ... to use the generic masculine and pretend that includes the feminine.”

The paper noted that cowboys conjure images of the “straight white man and past conflicts with Native Americans.” The implication, perhaps, is that the “straight white man” is now a less-than-desirable image. But how about the cowboy symbolizing rugged individualism and self-reliance and personifying the real man who works hard to build a life for himself and his family and fights for what's right? Obviously that is not the image the politically correct crowd conjures.

### School Circles the Wagons

School officials, refusing to cower to political correctness, defended the choice.



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Chad Baldwin, an associate vice president for communications at the university, said the school is not going to drop the idea.

“The people of Wyoming aren’t going to stand for that,” he told the newspaper.

“In my opinion there are people who are critical of it who haven’t explored what we’re trying to do. A foundational element of the campaign is that we’re recasting the concept of the cowboy so that it represents everyone associated with it.”

He said the university was trying to take the traditional view of a cowboy — a straight white man — and tip it on its head, removing a potential obstacle and turning it into a selling point.

“Some faculty were skeptical that could be done,” the newspaper reported, but “some faculty” happened to include two of the same voices readers heard before.

“I would say that the University of Wyoming is not going to be capable of redefining the term ‘cowboy,’” Boggs said. “There’s how many movies that have depicted exactly a straight white rough guy as a cowboy? We’re not going to redefine that with a marketing campaign.”

Porter, [the newspaper reported](#), surveyed faculty and staff, receiving 200 answers. “Nearly all — 97 percent — said they first thought of a white male when they pictured a cowboy.”

Some readers of the newspaper defended the slogan in its comment section; others weren’t so happy about it, calling it “radically misguided,” “a bad idea,” an “awful slogan” and “backward-thinking.”

Whether the school can get critics back on the reservation is open to question given the tenor of these debates. The angry Left bellyaches until its demands are met.

## **Fighting Sioux**

That’s what happened a few years ago when the University of North Dakota [was forced](#) to drop its mascot, the formidable and courageous Fighting Sioux. That, too, was adjudged racist even though one faction of the Sioux Nation wanted the school to keep it.

The politically correct NCAA kept pushing the school to drop the mascot, then voters approved a measure to do so.

UND’s mascot became the [Fighting Hawk](#), a silly-looking bird that looks like it might wind up on a Sioux warrior’s dinner table.

*Photo of “Pistol Pete”: AP Images*



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