

Shortlisted Book for the 2021-22 Book in Common

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Tommy Orange *There There*

Date: 2018

List price: \$16 paperback

Book website: <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/563403/there-there-by-tommy-orange/>

Publisher description:

One of *The New York Times* 10 Best Books of the Year and winner of the PEN/Hemingway Award, Tommy Orange's wondrous and shattering bestselling novel follows twelve characters from Native communities: all traveling to the Big Oakland Powwow, all connected to one another in ways they may not yet realize. Among them is Jacquie Red Feather, newly sober and trying to make it back to the family she left behind. Dene Oxendene, pulling his life together after his uncle's death and working at the powwow to honor his memory. Fourteen-year-old Orvil, coming to perform traditional dance for the very first time. Together, this chorus of voices tells of the plight of the urban Native American—grappling with a complex and painful history, with an inheritance of beauty and spirituality, with communion and sacrifice and heroism. Hailed as an instant classic, *There There* is at once poignant and unflinching, utterly contemporary and truly unforgettable.

This book is shortlisted for the 2021-22 Book in Common because

- *It is engaging to students and to a broad audience.* This debut novel is a vividly told coming-of-age story that introduces readers to the experiences of Native peoples and communities in the East Bay and beyond. It does so by balancing youthful and older characters/conversations with an engaging storyline that converges near the end of the novel. This gripping story will lead to critical conversations for our campus and community.
- *It has broad appeal across disciplines.* This book is a novel, but it makes specific reference to social, political, economic, cultural, and sovereignty issues in Native communities across California. Chico State has not selected a novel for the Book in Common since 2013-14. This book has clear connections to disciplines in the arts and humanities, social sciences, ethnic studies, communication, health and wellness, and education.
- *It is relevant and timely.* The experiences of Native peoples in California is always relevant, yet has rarely been a focus of cross-campus conversations. Additionally, 2021-22 will be the first year of the CSU Ethnic Studies requirement, which includes Native Americans as one of four focal groups. This book also investigates rural and urban divides in innovative ways.
- *It relates to the university mission.* Since 2017, CSU Chico has worked with the Mechoopda Indian Tribe of Chico Rancheria in the creation of an Office of Tribal Relations to support our Native American students. *There There* would provide public spaces to think deeply about the history and culture of Native peoples at Chico State, in California, and nationally. This book would deepen our focus on the campus strategic priority of Equity, Diversity & Inclusion.
- *It is conducive to year-long programming.* Partnerships with the Office of Tribal Relations, University Diversity Council, and the Mechoopda Indian Tribe of Chico Rancheria will create powerful campus-community conversations.