

26th Annual American Indian Studies Association Conference

**Imagining Sovereign Indigenous Futures:
Drawing Wisdom from the Past
for a Self-Determined Future**



**Arizona State University Tempe, AZ
February 6-7, 2025**

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Indigenous Innovation Initiative



**EARTH SYSTEMS
SCIENCE FOR THE
ANTHROPOCENE**

Relate Lab:

An anti-colonial collective for
relationalities, stories, and sciences.



To our friends, colleagues and allies,

Welcome to the 26th annual American Indian Studies Association (AISA) conference and to the Arizona State University (ASU) campus. ASU's four campuses are on the ancestral territories of Indigenous peoples, including the Akimel O'odham (Pima) and Pee Posh (Maricopa). We are honored that you are here with us to be in community for a few days as we share our work.

In order to actualize sovereign futures for our communities, it is imperative that we do the work today to protect and sustain all that is important to us. Our conference assists in that endeavor by bringing together scholars, community members and others to discuss and share ideas, meet new people, and support one another in the work that we do.

This year's conference highlights the creativity and impact of interdisciplinary efforts in areas of education, science, language, public health, community development, and the environment; this shows the strength of American Indian and Native American Studies. We will hear new perspectives on Indigeneity, relationality, settler colonial resistance, decolonization, and survival. The "Thinking Out Loud" (TOL) tables were a huge success last year, as they gave participants a chance to talk through ideas still in development, explore new areas of research, and get feedback on work in progress. This year's TOL participants will probe notions of Indigenous sovereignty in business, curriculum, language revitalization, tourism, and literature.

On behalf of the AISA board, thank you for supporting our association. Have a good conference, enjoy the hospitality, and we will see you in 2026 at the University of New Mexico.

Michelle L. Hale, Ph.D.
Diné, Laguna, Chippewa, Odawa
AISA President

'Ahxéhee'

Ashoog

**Askwali /
Kwakwhay**

Ekosi

**Lios em
chiokoe**

Yaw^ko

Thank you!

2024-2025 AISA Board

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Northern Arizona University

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Distinguished Professor, Native American Studies, University of New Mexico

Rachael Nez, Ph.D. Diné (Navajo)
Co-Director, All Our Kin Collective, Fort Lewis College

3RD ANNUAL AISA GRADUATE PRE-CONFERENCE

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Labriola National American Indian Data Center

Hayden Library Room 236 | 300 E Orange St., Tempe, AZ 85287

- 6:00 AM Morning Prayer Run (optional)
Meet at Labriola
- 7:30 AM Hot Breakfast Buffet sponsored by the ASU Graduate College
- 8:00 - 8:30 AM **Welcome**
Kyle Harvey, AISA Graduate Representative
Kristin Mickelson, Assistant Dean, ASU Graduate College
Elishua Shepherd, Mr. Indigenous ASU
- 8:30 - 9:15 AM **Time Management, Prioritization, and Preventing Burnout**
Myla Vicenti Carpio & Melissa Nelson | Moderated by Aresta La Russo
- 9:30 - 10:15 AM **Now You're in Graduate School, What's Next?**
Alex Young, Alycia De Mesa, Souksavanh Keovorabouth | Moderated by
Nicole Swentzell
- 10:30 - 11:45 AM **Identifying & Nurturing a Support System**
Brianna Arviso & Ta'ina Diaz-Reyes | Moderated by Allison Shaddox
- 12:00 - 1:00 PM Lunch sponsored by ASU Earth Systems Science for the Anthropocene (ESSA)
- 1:00 - 2:00 PM **Data Sovereignty, Archives, and Database Searching in Your Research**
Alexander Soto & Sarah Hernandez | Moderated by Eric Hardy
- 2:15 - 3:00 PM **Writing Strategies & Tools**
Elise Boxer, Travis Franks, and Jerome Clark | Moderated by Keoshiah Peter
- 3:15 - 4:30 PM **Fueling Your Experience**
J'Shon Lee & Heather Mercieca | Moderated by Victor Begay
- 6:30 - 8:00 PM Dinner & "Beats-&-Beading"
Catered by "The REZ: An Urban Eatery"

CONFERENCE AT-A-GLANCE

February 6, 2025 AISA Conference Day One

7:30 AM	American Breakfast Buffet sponsored by The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Arizona State University
8:00 AM – 8:45 AM	Plenary Welcome
9:00 AM - 10:30 AM	Section I: Panels and Presentations
10:45 AM - 12:15 PM	Section II: Panels and Presentations
12:15: PM – 1:45 PM	Lunch on your own
1:45 PM - 3:15 PM	Plenary Keynote
3:30 PM - 5:00 PM	Section III: Panels and Presentation
Dinner on your own	

February 7, 2025 AISA Conference Day Two

9:00 AM - 10:30 AM	Section IV: Panels and Presentations
10:45 AM - 12:15 PM	Section V: Panels and Presentations
12:15 PM - 1:45 PM	Business Meeting & Lunch
	BBQ Buffet sponsored by the ASU Relate Lab: An anti-colonial collective for relationalities, stories, and sciences
2:00 PM - 3:30 PM	Section VI: Panels and Presentations
3:45 PM - 5:15 PM	Section VII: Panels and Presentations

Be sure to visit the Exhibitor tables in Turquoise 220 (Thursday) and Ventana A (Friday)!

AISA CONFERENCE DAY ONE

American Breakfast buffet: 7:30 AM, ASU Memorial Union, Turquoise 220

Join us for bacon, sausage, eggs, breakfast potatoes and a hot cup of coffee or tea.

Sponsored by The ASU College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Plenary Opening & Welcome: 8:00 AM – 8:45 AM, ASU Memorial Union, Turquoise 220

Michelle Hale, Ph.D., AISA President, Diné (Navajo), Laguna, Chippewa, Odawa
Teaching Professor, American Indian Studies, Arizona State University

Magda Hinojosa, Ph.D., Dean of Social Sciences, The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Arizona State University

Jacob Moore, MBA, Associate Vice President of Tribal Relations, Tohono O'odham
Arizona State University

Section I: 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM

Session 1: Envisioning Sovereign, Self-Determined Futures: Indigenous Epistemologies in Education

Panel

Room location: Pima 230

Moderator: John White (Diné), University of New Mexico

Aretha Matt (Diné), University of New Mexico-Gallup

I consider the histories and intercultural heritages of the Native American students I serve at the University of New Mexico-Gallup. My teaching is informed by culturally responsive/relevant approaches that allow me to focus on the interconnectedness and hybridity of Native traditions and the colonial histories that have shaped Native identities and cultures. To measure the effectiveness of culturally responsive/relevant teaching methods I use in my classes, specifically for Native American students, I analyze student essays and gather student feedback using questionnaires from Native American students enrolled in my writing classes. It is my intention to show how Native American students who learn to write at the college level using culturally relevant texts and taught through culturally responsive teaching methods are empowered as critical thinkers, readers, and writers.

Garrison Tsinajinie (Diné), University of Arizona

In this presentation, I explore the intersection of accessible STEM education, Diné cultural protocols, and pathways for Indigenous youth and communities to engage in STEM. As the demand for diverse talent in STEM fields grows, it is crucial to create inclusive environments that address systemic barriers faced by Blind and low vision youth and adults. I examine existing resources to enhance the accessibility of STEM and the need for congruent educational practices with Diné values and cultural protocols. By implementing tailored outreach programs and mentorship initiatives, project leaders can promote a sense of belonging and encourage participation in STEM disciplines. Furthermore, I will highlight projects that illustrate how community engagement and collaboration contribute to a more equitable STEM landscape. Through these efforts, the aim is to not only increase representation but also empower Diné students with disabilities to thrive in STEM careers, enriching the field with diverse perspectives and innovation.

John White (Diné), University of New Mexico

This exposition examines the integration of Navajo translanguaging practices in mathematics education, focusing on its transformative impact on enhancing learning experiences for diverse student populations, particularly those from the Diné community. Drawing from my experiences as an adjunct faculty member at the University of New Mexico – Gallup campus, I have worked with various demographics, including bilingual and Diné learners, in introductory algebra and architecture courses. The study argues that relating mathematical concepts to students' cultural backgrounds fosters more profound understanding and inspires engagement, especially among Diné students. By incorporating Navajo translanguaging techniques into curricula, educators can create inclusive environments that promote belonging and engagement in mathematics. This approach empowers Diné students to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills while enriching mathematical discourse through diverse perspectives. Ultimately, this examination highlights the transformative potential of embedding cultural relevance in mathematics education to enhance the academic success of Navajo students.

Shandin Pete (Salish/Diné), University of British Columbia

This research challenges conventional perceptions of Indigenous relationality by examining data, evidence, and uncertainty through Indigenous scientific knowledge systems. It offers a more authentic approach to understanding the natural world, exploring the intricate dynamics of relationality between people, plants, and the environment. The study emphasizes the fluid exchanges that occur in nature, calling for a more refined understanding of reciprocity. By critically addressing common misconceptions about Indigenous environmental thought, it highlights the profound interconnectedness of all living systems. Through the integration of Indigenous epistemologies, this research aims to enrich scientific inquiry, particularly in relation to environmental uncertainty, sustainability, and ethical decision-making.

Session 2: Department of Native American Studies at the University of New Mexico

Roundtable

Room location: Cochise 228

Moderator: Lloyd L. Lee (Diné), University of New Mexico

Tiffany S. Lee (Diné and Lakota), University of New Mexico; **Leola Paquin** (Diné and Filipino), University of New Mexico; **Myla Vicenti Carpio** (Jicarilla Apache, Laguna and Isleta Pueblos), University of New Mexico; and **Maia Rodriguez** (Lipan Apache), University of New Mexico

This roundtable will share information on the NAS undergraduate and graduate programs (Bachelor, Master, and Doctoral). The undergraduate program has a Bachelor's degree, online B.A. program, 2nd major, and BA/MA shared credit degree. The Masters program focuses in Indigenous leadership, self-determination, and sustainable community building. The M.A. program prepares students for positions in tribal leadership, leadership in tribal and/or community-based organizations, and positions related to educational outreach and training, social and cultural program development, policy development, and sustainable community building. The Doctoral program is in Critical Indigenous Thought, Sustainable Community Building, and Comparative Studies in Indigenous Government, Policy, Identity, and Sustainability. The Ph.D. program develops doctoral graduates to become leaders in academia and/or policy researchers in tribal communities. The roundtable will discuss mission, curriculum, degree plan, application process, and faculty scholarship.

Session 3: Weaving Relations: A Proactive Approach to Building Cohort Identity Towards a Diverse and Inclusive STEM

Workshop

Room location: Gold 207

Facilitators: **Edauri Navarro-Pérez**, Arizona State University; and **Clara Hall**, Arizona State University

Our program, "Weaving Relations" expresses our intentional efforts to create strong relationships within the STEM community to retain historically minoritized scholars in graduate education. We develop mentorship programs that examine institutionalized hierarchies and design immersive collaborative, participatory action research projects to unite diverse students and affirm their identities as scholars. In this session, a moderated panel will discuss faculty and students' perspectives on an interdisciplinary, immersive, and Indigenous-led team science experience (IIITSE) designed to develop interdisciplinary graduate student research cohorts. We will also share a synthesis of programmatic elements that enhance culturally affirming research in STEM. We invite participants to co-develop a vision with our team towards an equitable STEM future. We will discuss what enhances the professional development of BIPOC scholars, anecdotal and survey results and stories from our learning experiences. These team science experiences help students build collaboration, communication, and problem-solving skills, fostering cultural affirmation and empowerment.

Session 4: Mayan and Cherokee Perspectives on Disrupting Western Narratives about Indigenous Peoples and the Land

Individual Paper Panel

Room location: Ventana 241C

Moderator: Jerome Jeffery Clark, Arizona State University

Joaquín Lopez-Huertas (Maya K'iche'), University of Utah

Beyond Refusal: Balancing Colonial Thinking Planning with Mayan Ixil Knowledges

Beyond explicit conditions of land control, policy, or decision-making, coloniality is also present in subtle forms, influencing Indigenous Peoples' epistemes. In planning, literature on refusal unveils the colonial violence in cities and regions as a result of assimilation and hostile planning practices. While refusal pays attention to Indigenous positioning between settler states and Indigenous communities, it is unclear how it operates within contexts where Indigenous people play both the role of the colonizer and the colonized. I build on this literature to understand how Indigenous People plan for their futures. I draw on the example of the Mayan Ixil town of Chajul, where the community develops its own schools of thought to challenge settler states imaginaries. By applying territory and body-land as a relational system that brings balance to their lives, the educational spaces where Ixiles engage contribute to developing a holistic approach to Indigenous community planning.

Tiffanie Hardbarger (Cherokee Nation), Northeastern State University

Restoring & Reclaiming Indigenous Agriculture: A Community Case Study

Food sovereignty and our traditional foods are salient pillars of holistic well-being for our communities, cultural lifeways, spiritual connections, and tribal sovereignty. In response to the challenges faced by our community, the “Restoring & Reclaiming Indigenous Agriculture” project was undertaken in the territory of the Cherokee Nation & United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Tahlequah, OK. The intent was to provide aspiring and amateur American Indian farmers training in permaculture design, with an emphasis on traditional/Indigenous practices. During the project, Indigenous knowledge holders shared traditional ecological knowledge regarding traditional foods, including culturally appropriate planting and harvesting practices. The overarching goal of the project was to perpetuate restorative and sustainable agricultural practices and the principles of food sovereignty by drawing upon Cherokee and broader Indigenous concepts of holistic well-being and sustainable food systems. This community case study documents the project and shares participant survey data to further future programmatic development and practice.

Session 5: The West Regional Native American Language Resource Center at the University of Arizona: Sustaining the “Fire” of Advocacy for Community Indigenous Language Work

Panel

Room Location: Turquoise 220

Moderator: Mateo Pomilia

Ofelia Zepeda (Tohono O’odham), University of Arizona; **Sheilah E. Nicholas** (Hopi), University of Arizona; **Aresta Tsosie-Paddock** (Diné), University of Arizona; **Adrienne Tsikewa** (Zuni), University of Arizona

The UA’s WRNALRC marks a significant milestone in the 40+ years of advocacy for Indigenous languages and support of Indigenous language revitalization work by the American Indian Language Development Institute (AILDI). As one of four inaugural 2023 federal grant recipients of the Native American Language Resource Center Act of 2022, the AILDI-WRNALRC is positioned to sustain the fire of advocacy ignited by the ideological commitment put into action by many across time. The WRNALRC Team, comprised of alumnae, faculty, and students in the UA’s Linguistics and Native American Languages & Linguistics (NAMA) program, will share how the ongoing advocacy and support of Indigenous language revitalization is underway. AILDI, NAMA, and now WRNALRC stand as critical Indigenous sites of sovereignty within an institution of higher education that

has produced generations of scholars, linguists, educators, activists, researchers and practitioners to ensure the “fire” of advocacy is well tended across spaces and spectrums.

Section II: 10:45 AM – 12:15 PM

Session 1: Thinking Out Loud (TOL) Tables

TOL involves an informal presentation around a table to share the presenter’s ideas for future research, new research in progress, or to talk through ideas with interested colleagues. There are 7 tables labeled A through G. See below for table topics, titles, abstracts, presenters per table, and approximate time per presenter.

Location: Turquoise 220

Moderators: Tiffany Lee, University of New Mexico & Majel Boxer, Fort Lewis College

Table A: Indigenous Sovereignty in Literature and Visual Landscapes

Presenter 1: 10:45 AM – 11:30 AM

Lindsay Marzulla (PhD Candidate at University of Arizona)

“Kincentric Books”

Highlighting Indigenous voices and experiences in pedagogical practice is an active form of decolonization. This conversation will explore the idea for a new nonprofit that would aim to improve Indigenous representation in school libraries through the donation of books by Indigenous authors. Working in collaboration with local Indigenous communities, the organization would purchase these books and distribute them, beginning with schools on reservations and eventually growing to include public schools around the country. These texts would have a place-based focus, specifically highlighting the Indigenous languages and cultures of the region. For example, in addition to popular works of fiction, schools in Arizona might receive language learning texts in Diné Bizaad, Apache, and/or Tohono O’odham. This discussion invites participants interested in language revitalization and reclamation work, Indigenous education, and nonprofit development. Those who are interested in getting involved and can offer critical feedback are especially welcome.

Presenter 2: 11:30 AM – 12:15 PM

Diana Khaziakhmetova (Tatar, Udmurt, PhD Student at University of Arizona) and
Cassidy Renee Schoenfelder (Oglála Lakǰóta, PhD Candidate at University of Arizona)

“Reclaiming Space: Indigenous Visual Sovereignty in Urban and Rural Landscapes”

Settler-colonialism and Indigenous land dispossession are both geographical and visual projects. This relationship will be explored through Indigenous visual sovereignty, which is Indigenous peoples’ right to self-represent and reclaim narratives in visual culture. Visual sovereignty manifests in public art like Indigenous-led murals, and the inclusion of Native place names and Indigenous symbols in spatial design, shaping social relations and reflecting Indigenous geographies. This discussion will highlight community-driven art asserting sovereignty, examining who creates visualities, for whom, and what Indigenous visuals reveal about power and place, comparing urban and rural contexts. We’ll also discuss the processes involved in creating these visuals and their implications for land sovereignty, the Land Back movement, and environmental, climate, and cultural justice. Examples include Fairbanks (urban) and Glacier Bay Homeland (rural), though other sites are welcome. This conversation invites participants interested in spatial and visual

decolonization, both conceptually and practically.

Table B: Legal Recognition & Water Narratives

Presenter 1: 10:45 AM – 11:30 AM

Yiran Wang, Arizona State University

“Idea: Water Narratives and Self-determination”

Indigenous communities suffer from water insecurity through colonial settlements. Indigenous research has suggested that water is part of the indigenous culture and identity. Cognitive sciences have suggested that narratives and storytelling may open a field for community-building and community empowerment, as well as expressing individual and collective identities. Cultural revitalization is one of the ways to reconnect people with homelands, traditional land and water. Case studies have shown that indigenous communities globally foster community-based sustainable resources managements through practicing cultural revitalization. Yet, there is not enough study on how US Native Americans practice self-determination through cultural revitalization, especially using water narratives. This proposed study hypothesizes that water narratives play an important role in indigenous cultural and identity revitalization, and in enhancing sense of community; and thus, supporting indigenous self-determination against colonial water managing practices.

Table C: Community-based Research & Indigenous Sovereignty in Business

Presenter 1: 10:45 AM – 11:30 AM

Christy Anderson, PhD Candidate (Anishinaabeg)

“Colonial Ethics of Indigenous Research in Canada: Challenging the Conventions of “Indigenous Research” in TCPS2 Chapter 9”

The ethics for engaging in research with Indigenous peoples in Canada is currently structured in a manner that has been responsive to decades of harmful practices by settler colonial researchers. These processes that virtually mandate 'community engagement' place yet another barrier in front of Indigenous graduate students who want to work with their community members while still needing to meet timeline requirements for graduation. There is a need to review colonial constraints of meeting the demands of research ethics that were created as guidelines for those who have done harm--is there room to negotiate alternative visions of research ethics for Indigenous researchers working with undefined communities like urban Indigenous women (represented by many nations)? Is community-based research the only approach to research in contexts where marginalized communities have been silenced and cut off from social, economic, and political power? Can Indigenous scholars be trusted to conduct research with our own community members without seeking 'permission' from local leadership or organizations? These are important questions that are being asked informally in junior scholar circles as we face the threat of political interference in research and its subsequent loss of academic freedom, as well as barriers to completion of graduate studies.

Presenter 2: 11:30 AM – 12:15 PM

Casper Reaves, Researcher, Antioch University

“Supporting Indigenous Entrepreneurs”

Entrepreneurship and small business development play an important role in economic development and are essential for indigenous futures. Many communities and organizations

have attempted to improve support for small businesses; however, many programs do not help Native American business owners and other underrepresented business owners. What products and services that specific communities need are undervalued by the existing business support programs? What unique challenges are faced by Native entrepreneurs? Native American entrepreneurs are succeeding in many sectors and will be a foundational aspect of the self-determination of Native nations. Two stages of small business development must be explored: challenges in starting a business and challenges to grow to the next level. A discussion of these challenges and how Native nations have faced them will share ideas for future steps in research and small business support.

Table D: Indigenous Knowledges as Belonging in Higher Education and Tourism

Presenter 1: 10:45 AM – 11:30 AM

Kyle Harvey (Diné)

“The Community Pot: Feeding Our Relatives through a service-learning internship about food”

Higher education long gained popular form for personal and professional mobility for students in Indian Country. Higher Education research tells us that supporting students’ sense of belonging is one piece of the puzzle to sustaining student persistence (Strayhorn, et al., 2016); however, Indigenous student success can be stifled by manifestations of systemic inequality, such as Basic Needs insecurity. Food and housing insecurities in college are not new phenomena. Further research indicates that students’ sense of belonging is impaired when Basic Needs are not met (Mechler, et al., 2024). The Community Pot demonstrates that advisors can implement methodologies rooted in local land-based knowledges to strengthen Indigenous students’ sense of belonging that also nurtures their aspirations to give back, building up their community. This is demonstrated by an autoethnographic process that centers students’ stories, perpetuating autonomy and activism -through a service-learning internship about food.

Presenter 2: 11:30 AM – 12:15 PM

Tanner C. Knorr, Arizona State University

“Diné as Tourists: A Decolonial, Post-intentional Phenomenological Approach”

Diné identity is complex and remains resilient in the face of American and Western influences. Within tourism studies, however, Indigenous Peoples, including Diné communities, are commonly understood to be exclusively the hosts of White, Western tourists, rather than the tourists themselves. This omission is similar to that of other marginalized groups and serves to uphold colonialism and Western hegemony. This qualitative research is grounded in a Diné paradigm, underpinned with Indigenous decolonial theory, and supported by post-intentional phenomenology in order to ask the question: what is it to be a Diné tourist?

Session 2: Imagining The Classroom as Sovereign Indigenous Space: A look at 30 years of Alaska Native Studies at UAA

Roundtable

Room location: Cochise 228

Moderator: Maria Sháa Tláa Williams (Tlingit), University of Alaska Anchorage

Zachary Milliman, Musicologist, University of Alaska Anchorage; **Christina Newhall** (Unangaŋ), University of Alaska Anchorage; **Donita Slawson** (Dena'ina), University of Alaska Anchorage

In 2023, Alaska Native Studies (AKNS) celebrated its 30th anniversary at the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA). This milestone offers an opportunity to reflect on the past, interrogate the present, and imagine a future where the classroom functions as sovereign Indigenous space. Despite ongoing structural discrimination, AKNS has made unique intercessions that center local and global Indigenous themes and offer generative solutions to pressing issues facing higher education. A concrete result is the hard-won requirement that all students complete a minimum of three credits of Alaska Native-themed coursework to graduate. There remains, however, much work to be done. In this panel, AKNS faculty members discuss the history of the program and goals for its expansion. They will present on issues of reparative curricular design; Indigenizing pedagogy; methods of navigating entrenched settler-colonial structures; language reclamation and revitalization; community engagement; and actionable strategies that imagines the classroom as sovereign Indigenous space.

Session 3: Creating a Positive and Safe Environment for Language Revitalization: Insights from the All Our Kin Collective at Fort Lewis College

Roundtable

Room Location: Ventana 241A

Moderator: Rachael Nez (Navajo), Director, All Our Kin Collective, Fort Lewis College

Moriah Arthur (Navajo), Masani's Beauty Clothing; **Laurel Grimes** (Chickasaw Nation of Oklahoma), University of Oklahoma

The roundtable will address the importance and challenges of building a supportive and inclusive environment for language revitalization and reclamation efforts, with a specific focus on the All Our Kin (AOK) Collective at Fort Lewis College. Founded in 2022, the AOK Collective provides fellowships for Native students at Fort Lewis College, promoting their engagement in language revitalization. These initiatives include a two-week summer language program, an online course on teaching methodologies, and a speaker/learner immersion program. Language revitalization is seen as a deeply personal journey, a communal activity, and an essential element of Indigenous efforts to reclaim identity, culture, lands, and sovereignty. However, students face psychological and social barriers, such as anxiety about their language abilities, accent, and correctness, which are often rooted in historical trauma. The AOK Collective seeks to break from these paradigms, aiming for a non-academic, supportive environment.

Session 4: Confronting Indigenous Healthcare in Marginalized Communities

Individual Paper Panel

Room Location: Pima 230

Moderator: Tennille Marley, Arizona State University

Tochukwu Ikwunne, Northern Arizona University; **Jared Duval**, Northern Arizona University

“CardioCare Quest: A Co-created Game for Improving Hypertension Treatment Adherence in Arizona”

CardioCare Quest is a digital telehealth game that supports hypertension management among Navajo people by promoting sustainable health habits and treatment adherence. The game accomplishes this goal by celebrating the mundane everyday practices of hypertension patients that lead to sustainable risk-reduction habits and improved health outcomes. CardioCare Quest improves patients’ understanding of their treatment plans and encourages active participation, through engaging minigames that focus on diet, exercise, medication adherence, and blood pressure monitoring. The project employs a participatory design approach involving cultural probes, focus groups, and affinity diagramming to ensure cultural relevance. This collaborative methodology helps identify factors influencing high blood pressure while fostering alignment with Navajo cultural values. Additionally, CardioCare Quest provides clinicians with insights into patients’ adherence, aiding in personalized support. A mixed-methods analysis will assess the impact of these telehealth interventions on treatment outcomes, integrating serious game theory to guide the development and efficacy of minigame prototypes.

Frida Espinosa Cárdenas, Arizona State University & Cihuapactli Collective

“*El Buen Nacer*: A Transterritorial Study of *El Buen Vivir* Among Culturally-Rooted Birthworkers in Central Mexico and Arizona”

Indigenous and BIPOCQxi communities face disproportionately high rates of traumatic childbirth, often leaving long-term emotional "soul wounds" tied to systemic inequities. Birthworkers rooted in these communities—midwives and doulas—significantly improve maternal outcomes, fostering safer births and reducing interventions like C-sections. This study examines *El Buen Nacer* (Birthing in a Good Way), a concept grounded in *El Buen Vivir* (Living in a Good Way), an Indigenous transterritorial worldview emphasizing wellness, collectivity, and reciprocity with the land. Drawing on sharing circles, listening sessions, and semi-structured interviews across Arizona and the researcher’s ancestral homelands in Jalisco and Morelos, Mexico, the study explores culturally-rooted birthworkers' perspectives between 2022 and 2024. Reflexive Thematic Analysis and participatory sessions revealed themes defining *El Buen Nacer* while reinforcing protective birthing practices. By bridging an Indigenous Feminist Practice and decolonial approaches, this work advances theoretical frameworks around culturally-rooted birthwork and its role in sustaining transterritorial families and communities.

Hershel Walker Clark (Navajo Nation), Air is Life Health Coalition

“The Navajo Nation Commercial Tobacco Tax Increase: An Act of Tribal Sovereignty”

The Air is Life Health Coalition recognized the need for an aggressive tobacco control policy measure to combat the high prevalence rates of commercial tobacco use in the Navajo Nation. **Methods:** Several Navajo traditional healer organizations in the Navajo Nation were identified to support the importance of the tobacco tax increase for the Navajo Nation. **Results:** It has been essential that the proposed Navajo commercial tobacco smokefree policies acknowledge the use of Nát’oh, a sacred plant used for gift-giving, medicinal purposes, and ceremonies, while simultaneously educating the Diné people and leaders on the importance of the ceremonial use of Nát’oh versus commercial tobacco in the Navajo Nation. **Conclusion:** The Navajo Nation unanimously passed and signed a historic tobacco tax increase into law. Earmark funds will be allocated toward the Navajo Department of Health and provide direct funding to Navajo traditional healer organizations to improve the

well-being of the Navajo people.

Trudie Jackson (Diné), Community Scholar

“Two Spirit Health in North America”

Historical, cultural, and anthropological evidence reveals that prior to colonialism and Christianity, Two-Spirit people held accepted or even honored places within their tribal communities. Cries from the Two-Spirit community for healthcare services to address these problems echo within the hallways of policy makers, the federally funded Indian Health Services (IHS), and the 638 Tribal Health facilities. It is well known that 2SLGBT people face additional healthcare disparities, but a paucity of data exists to describe the health of contemporary Two Spirit individuals who face unique intersectional, sociocultural, and historical influences. The process of decolonizing healthcare for Two-Spirit people requires us to tell our stories and assert our importance within the cultural, ceremonial, and spiritual traditions of our communities. Listening to these voices, we can create medical institutions that recognize and meet our unique health care needs.

Session 5: Planting Seeds for the Future: Native American Studies in South Dakota

Roundtable

Room Location: Ventana 241C

Moderator: Elise Boxer (Sisseton and Wahpeton, Dakota), University of South Dakota

Elise Boxer (Dakota Sisseton and Wahpeton), University of South Dakota; **Myah Red Horse** (Mnicoujou Lakota), Cheyenne-Eagle Butte High School; **Gavyn Spotted Tail** (Sicangu Lakota), Cheyenne-Eagle Butte High School

This roundtable will discuss the current state and future of Native American Studies in South Dakota. Roundtable participants will begin with a discussion about Native American Studies at the University of South Dakota, including how we theorize about the discipline. Dr. Boxer will discuss NATV core curriculum and future direction of the major. Myah Red Horse and Gavyn Spotted Tail, both graduates with a B.A. in NATV and M.A. in Secondary Education with certification will discuss how they implement NATV within their classroom.

LUNCH (on your own): 12:15 PM – 1:45 PM

Plenary Keynote: 1:45 PM – 3:15 PM

Room Location: Turquoise 220

Moderator: Michelle L. Hale

Dr. Laura Harjo

The University of Oklahoma

Native American Studies

Department Chair



“Sovereignty, Land Back and Collective Care: Futuring through Relational Infrastructures”

In the current moment, the state is rapidly expanding infrastructures of control, displacement, policing, and extraction—Indigenous communities have always sustained themselves through relational infrastructures grounded in kinship, care, consent, accountability, and movement. Our relational infrastructures take shape with everyday caretaking practices, kinship networks, and mobilizations, which operate as sovereignty. Within these infrastructures of relationality and care we enact our responsibilities to our kin, (human, and more-than-human), land and the relational places we produce. While our relational infrastructures sustain our communities, they do more than that, they refuse state frameworks that seek to disappear Indigenous peoples and provide a form of worldbuilding and futuring where our embodied knowledge is validated, shared, and enacted as collective care.

Section III: 3:30 PM – 5:00 PM

Session 1: Indigenous Historians on Truth-Telling—Residential/Boarding Schools, Child Removal, Language/Culture Loss, and Reclamation

Panel

Room location: Turquoise 220

Moderator: Myla Vicenti Carpio (Jicarilla Apache Nation), University of New Mexico

In this era of truth-telling, Indigenous historians work closely with communities to ensure stories of survivors, missing children, culture loss and revitalization are heard. Each panelist shares these stories along with descriptions of the nature of their research relationships and research strategies that support the work being done by communities. Farina describes service-learning, story maps, oral history, and the Voices of Oklahoma summer high school project. Winona describes the archival research and community oral history workshops provided by the Office of the Treaty Commissioner of Saskatchewan to assist communities doing ground penetrating radar research on Indian residential school sites. Amy presents findings of her collaborative oral history work with former adoptees as part of her work with the First Nations Reparation Institute. Miriam describes the impact that loss of language has had on the transmission of sacred stories that speak to suffering, survivance, and strength and efforts to revitalize them.

Farina King (Diné), University of Oklahoma

“Indigenous Truth-telling of Boarding Schools Collaborations in Oklahoma”

This presentation features collaborations among Indigenous communities, educators, and students in a growing initiative for Indigenous truth-telling about boarding schools, sharing stories that introduce Native American youth, communities, and the public to the complex experiences and landscapes of these schools. Oklahoma, with one of the highest concentrations of Native American boarding schools, is central to this effort. Dr. Farina King, a leader in this initiative, will discuss partnerships that explore diverse Indigenous experiences and sites. She has led service-learning and research focused on tribally specific and intertribal boarding schools, especially in Oklahoma, through storymaps and oral

histories. King will also highlight the Voices of Oklahoma summer program for Native American high school students, which collaborates with Native Nations to uncover the histories and archaeologies of these schools, reflecting the interconnected yet unique boarding school experiences that have impacted many Native Nations.

Winona Wheeler (Fisher River Cree Nation), University of Saskatchewan

“Schools Aren’t Supposed to Have Graveyards: Community Based Research to Identify Missing First Nations Children at Former Indian Residential School (IRS) Sites in Saskatchewan.”

For generations IRS survivors told stories of children dying at Indian Residential Schools across the country and families spoke of children never returned home. Little attention was paid until the 2015 Report on Missing Children and Unmarked Graves published by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In 2021 the Tk’emlúps te Secwépemc Nation confirmed finding the remains of 215 children buried on the grounds of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School in British Columbia. The public outcry prompted the creation of the Office of the Independent Special Interlocutor for Missing Children and Unmarked Graves to provide support and funding for First Nations to do ground penetrating radar and other research to locate unmarked graves and identify the children buried or gone missing. This presentation provides an overview of ongoing research conducted by First Nations in collaboration with the Office of the Treaty Commissioner of Saskatchewan and academics, on five former IRS sites.

Amy Lonetree (Ho-Chunk Nation), UC Santa Cruz

Stealing Indigenous Children: Centering Native American Stories of Removal and Return

Throughout the twentieth century, the removal of Native American children from their families and tribal nations was a widespread practice. Child removal is a form of intimate colonialism and state violence designed to disrupt Indigenous family relationships and undermine Native American culture and sovereignty. In my paper I examine the experiences of Native adoptees through an analysis of oral histories and testimonies that I have collected as part of my work with the First Nations Repatriation Institute (FNRI), a community-based organization that assists adoptees in reclaiming their tribal identity and rightful place within our communities and nations. The adoptees’ stories, collected in collaboration with FNRI director Sandy White Hawk (Sicangu Lakota), are searing and deeply moving and shed light on the ongoing legacies of removal and separation, as well as efforts by these adoptees to seek reparative justice in the present.

Miriam McNab (George Gordon First Nation), First Nations University of Canada

“‘An Indian is Never Stuck’: Stories of survivance in a Saskatchewan First Nation”

The oral traditions of George Gordon First Nation in southern Saskatchewan, Canada, have seen a decline of Cree/nêhiyaw- and Saulteaux/Anishnaabewin-language use for much of the last fifty years, one-third of the reserve’s history. Replacing traditional stories of wîsâkêcâhk and nênapoš, the culture heroes of old, are stories necessarily told in the English language. These include narratives of suffering and survivance, fantastic stories of physical strength and stamina, and nostalgic remembrances of past ways of work and life. This paper examines that loss and inquires into the effect of stories of struggle and survivance on a community which has been at the forefront of the onslaught of cultural genocide by the residential school program. It also examines whether those stories continue to inspire the youngest generations of this First Nation, efforts to revitalize the oral traditions, and

impediments to the transmission of a local cultural heritage and identity.

Session 2: Scholarship from an Indigenous Lens: Testimonial Justice, Paradigm Shifts and Community Engagement

Panel

Room location: Gold 207

Moderator: Annette Reed (Tolowa Dee-ni Nation), Sacramento State

Kishan Lara-Cooper (Yurok/Hupa/Karuk), Cal Poly Humboldt

Walter Lara Sr. (Yurok), Co-Editor & Author, *Ka'm-t'em: A Journey Toward Healing*

Teh-sa'a:n-xwe Cooper (Yurok/Mvskoke), Author of the *Northern Howl Book Series*

At the 2017 AISA conference, Kishan and Walt presented their vision of a scholarly work, rooted in Indigenous epistemologies and written for Indigenous youth. Their vision resulted in the co-edited anthology, *Ka'm-t'em: A Journey Toward Healing*. This book has been utilized in elementary and high school classrooms, youth groups, training for professionals who work with Indigenous children and families, and with ACEs Aware Certified programs. This publication inspires Indigenous scholars to engage in testimonial justice in meaningful and unique ways. Teh-sa'a:n-xwe will share his *Northern Howl Book Series* that he wrote at 9 years old. Kishan and Walt will utilize *Ka'm-t'em: A Journey Toward Healing* projects to discuss ways in which scholarship from an Indigenous lens can benefit Indigenous communities through testimonial justice, paradigm shifts, and community engagement.

Session 3: Publishing with Wicazo Sa Review

Workshop

Room location: Cochise 228

Facilitators: **Lloyd L. Lee** (Diné), University of New Mexico; **Madeline Mendoza** (Laguna Pueblo/Ohkay Owingeh), University of New Mexico

Wicazo Sa Review, founded in 1985, is an interdisciplinary journal devoted to the mission of assisting Indigenous peoples of the Americas in taking possession of their own intellectual and creative pursuits. During the past four decades, NAS/AIS has emerged as a central arena in which Indigenous peoples in the US define the cultural, religious, legal, and historical parameters of scholarship and creativity essential to the ongoing process of decolonization and survival. This workshop will discuss the process of publishing with the Wicazo Sa Review journal. We will also share exciting initiatives.

Session 4: Language Revitalization through Community-Based Initiatives and Economic and Cultural Development

Individuals Paper Panel

Room location: Ventana 241A

Moderator: Rachael Nez (Diné), Fort Lewis College

Jeromy Miller (Cherokee Nation), (Northeastern State University); and **Tiffanie**

Hardbarger (Cherokee Nation), Northeastern State University

“Tsalagi Idiwonihisdi Nikvi: Bringing Cherokee Language into Every Aspect of Community

Building”

Our tribal nations act as key economic engines with community and tourism development and environmental planning having an immense impact and influence. Such economic revenue and place making efforts rely on tribal lands, languages, and cultures and impact both tribal citizens and the surrounding non-indigenous community. When local indigenous languages are incorporated into these planning efforts, they not only increase the self-determination efforts of local Indigenous peoples, but they foreground language and culture into the community experience. Drawing upon informal interviews with Cherokee Nation stakeholders, this paper outlines the modern efforts of the Cherokee Nation and assesses the level of culturally specific values and practices embedded in the overall planning strategies. A survey and analysis of representative examples of community and economic initiatives that have incorporated the Cherokee language into their mission and planning will reveal areas of success as well as opportunities for improvement.

Dr. Aresta Tsosie-Paddock (Diné), University of Arizona; and **Dilan Erteber**, PhD Student, University of Arizona

“Sustaining Diné Bizaad Through the Navajo Mentor-Apprentice Program: A Community-Based Approach to Language Revitalization”

Like many Indigenous languages, the Navajo language is facing a critical threat due to the decline in the number of fluent speakers contributed by historical policies and contemporary challenges such as migration and the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on elder communities. The Navajo Mentor-Apprentice Program (MAP) offers a community-centered pedagogical framework connecting fluent Navajo speakers with language learners through a dynamic, culturally grounded mentorship model. MAP emphasizes the value of K'é, the Navajo concept of kinship and relationality, as a guiding principle for language acquisition, allowing learners to simultaneously develop fluency and cultural knowledge. MAP envisions a sovereign Indigenous future where Navajo youth are empowered to advance their language and cultural heritage. Drawing on traditional knowledge systems and adapting them to contemporary technologies preserves the Navajo language and strengthens the bonds of kinship and community vital to continuing Navajo sovereignty.

Session 5: Student Voices and Teacher Training in Indigenous Education

Individual Paper Panel

Room Location: Pima 230

Moderator: Tennille Marley (White Mountain Apache), Arizona State University

Leola Paquin (Diné/Filipina), University of New Mexico; and **Nicole Swentzell** (Santo Domingo Pueblo), University of New Mexico

“Centering Native Student Connections to Land and Wellbeing in Remote Learning Environments”

How do Native college students conceptualize wellbeing and connections to land in remote learning environments? The co-authors utilize their positionalities as Indigenous instructors of a longstanding online Introduction to Native American Studies class. Both authors previously earned MA degrees in Native Studies and were inspired by their professors to teach through building community. They also believe in access to education via digital pedagogy. Analysis of surveys, course activities, assessments, and student discussion demonstrate especially strong expressions of relationships to land, community, identity, and

family values. The findings demonstrate the possibilities of dynamic classroom engagement in online platforms in Native American Studies. The authors strive to share the heart of their ancestors, the wisdom of their professors/mentors, and the critically reflective creativity of the next generation of scholars for the sovereign vitality of Indigenous communities.

Victor H. Begay (Navajo), Cascadia College; and **Jennifer Johnson** (Seminole/Sac and Fox), University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

“Voices in Self-Determination: A Retrospect of Educators for Indigenous Futures”

This paper describes a critical analysis of Indigenous teacher training models. Using Critical Theory and Historical Critical Inquiry, the authors argue that mainstream American teacher training models continues a disparaging legacy of colonization and genocide. We draw on Deloria and Wildcat’s (2001) critique and recognize that the goals of teacher education/training initiatives are to promulgate legal and political challenges for Indigenous communities to exercise sovereignty due to structural inequality in the study of erasing Indigenous knowledge systems. Through historical inquiry, we draw connections to 20th century Indigenous educators and their ideologies to challenge assimilation and put these historical narratives into conversation with contemporary teacher training models. The authors provide a critical policy analysis that asserts a capitalist-based agenda to undermine Tribal Sovereignty, by highlighting Native educator experiences and voices of self-determination for Indigenous futures.

Kristin Payestewa-Picazo (Diné/Hopi), Arizona State University

“Amplifying Voices in American Indian/Alaska Native Students in Medicine & Nursing”

This study examines the distinctive life situations of AI/AN students and their obstacles in nursing and medical school. Health inequities among patients result from insufficient representation in the healthcare workforce. AI/AN professionals are inadequately represented in the fields of medicine and nursing. The American Association of Medical Colleges (2022) reports that fewer than 1% of physicians identify as AI/AN, and 90% of medical schools in the United States have three or fewer AI/AN students; As to HRSA (2021), with 0.3% of registered nurses identified as AI/AN. Systemic inequities hinder AI/AN medical and nursing students and the workforce. Our findings will aid in reconciling academic, nursing, and medical curricula for AI/AN students. We hope to enhance tribal participation, community reporting, and dissemination, and provide realistic, durable, and scalable care paradigms to detect and protect AI/AN medical and nursing students.

Session 6: “What You Do to the Earth You Do to the People”: Protecting Greater Chaco

Roundtable

Room Location: Ventana 241C

Moderator: Silas Grant, University of California Irvine

Daniel E. Tso, Community Organizer Navajo Nation; **Samuel Sage** (Navajo Nation), Board President Diné CARE; **Julia Bernal** (Sandia Pueblo/Yuchi), Executive Director Pueblo Action Alliance/University of New Mexico; and **Mario Atencio** (Navajo Nation), University of New Mexico

The Greater Chaco Landscape is an ancient and living cultural landscape that extends for thousands of miles across the American Southwest outwards from Chaco Canyon. Most lands in the center of this landscape, on traditional Diné homelands in northwestern New

Mexico, have been leased for oil and gas extraction. Indeed, over the last century, the Greater Chaco region has become known as a national energy sacrifice zone for the extraction of coal, uranium, oil, and gas. The introduction of fracking technologies in the last decade brought industrialized drilling into Diné communities in the heart of this landscape, desecrating sacred sites and leading to a proliferation of health and environmental harms. Through a dialogue with leading community organizers, this roundtable shares stories, lessons learned, and analysis from the Indigenous-led fight to protect this region, stop fracking, and prevent the encroachment of insidious false climate solutions like hydrogen and carbon capture.

AISA CONFERENCE DAY TWO

Section IV: 9:00 AM – 10:30 AM

Session 1: Place and Land-Based Sensory Practices for Indigenous Futures

Workshop

Room Location: Gold 207

Facilitators: **Pauline Vaquez** (Akimel O’odham/Tohono O’odham), Indigenous Honeys; and **Marina Perez** (Nahua/Huichol), University of New Mexico

In this workshop presentation, we offer a series of interactive activities that engage participants in place and land-based sensory practices. These activities are designed to facilitate a deeper understanding of our senses as they relate to cultural and body autonomy. As educators and community practitioners, we seek to challenge the narrative around senses by sharing, exchanging, and reimagining culturally relevant expressions of care for self, land, and community. We hope participants learn practical skills to implement in their daily lives and communities, ensuring cultural continuity of land-based epistemologies.

Session 2: Producing and Protecting Indigenous Knowledges: Digital Systems, Institutional Review Board, Knowledge Production, and Reclaiming indigeneity

Individual Paper Panel

Room location: Pima 230

Moderator: Kyle Harvey, University of New Mexico

Xavier Nokes (Choctaw Nation/Mexican Indigenous/Isleta Pueblo), Arizona State University

“Gate/Keeping in the Age of Infinite Access”

This work is part of my larger dissertation writing titled "Integration-Informed Digital Systems: Knowledge Procurement, Gate/Keeping, and Experience" and will focus on the chapter "Knowledge Gate/Keeping". As Indigenous peoples, we have endured and persisted under the various modalities of oppression ascribed to colonization. Access to Indigenous Knowledge (IK), which outside our communities is often deemed as "other" (though in reality they are complex and embodied), continues to be miscategorized, misused, and

misrepresented as existing outside its particular context remains a detriment. Here I will engage with the power of "gatekeeping" and "keeping" as both separate and complementary components of protection for IK and other marginalized forms of knowledge. This talk will present particular emphasis on these areas' potential within digital systems and environments, as well as the resilience of Indigenous peoples historical preservation of knowledge, and include conversation around the metrics of valuation of knowledge both within and outside of Western frameworks.

Patrick De?ilélegi? Burt (Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California), University of Nevada, Reno

“Wa·šiw guwa? ?Í·wi? Gewesukákim (Watch Over/Protect Washoe Traditions/Knowledge): Ethical Research and the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California”

Despite the slow-growing inclusion and incorporation of Indigenous research methodologies in the academy, Native Nations continue to be victimized by the non-reciprocal relationships and extractive research methods employed by academics. The ongoing exploitation of Indigenous philosophies and cultural knowledge has worked to support the broader social misunderstandings of Indigenous Peoples. This has upheld the settler colonial systems that maintain the oppressive and marginalizing relationship between the Wa·šiw (Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California) and the non-Indigenous general public. Confronting the continued erosion of sovereignty and the integrity of traditional wisdom, the Wa·šiw have incorporated structures that check and affirm research as being culturally appropriate and aligned with our interests. This paper interrogates the established system of protocols and procedures while offering recommendations to continue to bolster these securities.

Ruben Leyva (Gila Apache, Chilaa'nde), Doctoral Student, University of New Mexico, Native American Studies

“Chasing Freedom: Reclaiming Apache Identity through the Archives”

Angie Debo and other famous authors have written popular Apache histories while focusing on one leader without including the names of others present at these historical events. This paper critiques this analysis using archives and other source documents to present a counter-narrative regarding the researcher's Apache history, emphasizing the divided post-1886 Apache never taken captive. It aims to amplify perspectives of free Apaches, challenging the prevailing historical narrative that suggests Geronimo's capture subdued all the Chiricahua Apache. The research underscores that some Chilaa'nde bands remained in their ancestral homelands spanning the southwestern U.S. and Mexico. The perspectives of the U.S. and Mexican governments regarding this group varied significantly. The researcher, a descendant of these bands, seeks to shed light on this overlooked chapter of history. The study aims to rectify the marginalization of non-federally recognized Indigenous Peoples and to honor their stories with integrity and respect.

Session 3: The Corn Pollen Model Validating Ancestral Knowledge for a Self-Determined Future

Workshop

Room Location: Ventana 241A

Facilitator: **Bernard Chimoni** (Zuni, UNM NALE Doctoral Student), University of New Mexico; **Marnita Chischilly** (Dine', UNM NALE Doctoral Student), University of New Mexico; **Richelle Etsitty** (Dine', UNM NALE Doctoral Student),

University of New Mexico; and **Mechelle Iron Cloud-Crazy Thunder**
(Lakota/Arikara, UNM NALE Doctoral Student)

The Indigenous Corn Pollen Mode (CPM) is a holistic framework (Secatero, 2009, 2018, 2022) highlighting the epistemology of Navajo elders relating to spiritual, mental, physical, and social well-being. The sacred symbol of corn in Indigenous cultural lifeways is inspiration for this holistic framework to promote success and well-being for Indigenous youth and educational leadership. Our workshop provides context and understanding of the four quadrants of the model, rooted in spiritual, mental, physical and social well-being, discussing the 16 attributes that correspond with each quadrant, in depth. As part of putting theory to practice, we will draw on the voices and experiential knowledge of four Indigenous UNM Ed.D. doctoral students, educational leaders who work to center the Indigenous CPM for holistic leadership and well-being in their personal and professional lives. The Ed.D. students will discuss the challenges and opportunities in implementing the Indigenous CPM in holistic leadership and well-being. Using Total Physical Response methodology, attendees will learn the step-by-step Corn Pollen Model (CPM) Exercise, the CPM Exercise handout and a complimentary CPM curriculum guide.

Session 4: From Removal to Landback: Fighting for and Defending Land and Water Rights

Individual Paper Panel

Room Location: Cochise 228

Moderator: Elise Boxer (Dakota Sisseton and Wahpeton), University of South Dakota

Jerome Jeffery Clark (Diné), Arizona State University

“‘Kóqó Shíni’ Hazlǫ́’ : Diné Situatedness as Worlding and the Colonial Drive to Remake the Land”

The 1974 Navajo-Hopi Land Settlement Act aimed to resolve longstanding and contending land claims between Navajos and Hopis. The act split shared lands and initiated a decades long forced removal of over 12,000 Diné people from their ancestral homelands. Diné historian Jennifer Nez Denetdale notes that the “imperative to address the complaints of Navajos and Hopis over shared lands was not taken seriously until coal, gas, and water were discovered.” Roberta Blackgoat, in an interview with Malcolm D. Benally, shares her experience resisting federal relocation and what life has been like living in contested lands. In the interview, Blackgoat maintains her ancestral claim to land and asserts her tie to place. She says “‘Kóqó Shíni’ Hazlǫ́’,” which I translate as “My consciousness comes from this place.” This talk elaborates a theory of Diné situatedness and explicates the ways colonial extractive industries eliminate Diné existence and consciousness.

Amber Bill (Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe & Te-Moak Western Shoshone), California State University, Sacramento

“Protecting Our Water, Protecting Our Rights: The Legacy of Mervin Wright Sr. of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe”

This paper celebrates the work and legacy of Mervin Wright, Sr. in protection and preservation of Pyramid Lake tribal water rights in the 1970s, and how he led the fight for preserving Truckee River water for Pyramid Lake. After the Bureau of Reclamation introduced federal irrigation projects in the West, the administering of the Newlands Project

in western Nevada posed a threat to fish and wildlife in Pyramid Lake, and the cultural continuity and identity of the Kuyuitukado. Border towns and settler agricultural lands stood to gain access to irrigation rights in the substantial water diversion of the Truckee River. This paper discusses how the Winters Doctrine was interpreted then deemed inconsequential and how Mervin Wright Sr. utilized his position within the Tribe to host hearings before the Subcommittee on Administrative Practice and Procedure of the Committee on the Judiciary United States Senate 92nd Congress on Federal Administrative Protection of Indian Rights and Natural Resources.

Session 5: Leveraging Education Sovereignty in STEAM Fields Starts with US: Exploring Scholastic eSports in Indian Education

Workshop

Room Location: Ventana 241C

Workshop Facilitator: Kelly Berry (Apache Tribe of Oklahoma), University of Oklahoma

According to the National Education Association, www.nea.org, the explosive growth of eSports was driven by interest as 90% of teens play video games and matched by growth in eSports scholarships and careers; however, few researchers are conducting minimal research of eSports in educational spaces at the intersection of Indigenous ways of knowing. This presentation examines the impact of incorporating eSports into educational spaces, especially in Indigenous spaces and how eSports serve as catalysts in learning 21st century skill practices (i.e., career, technology, innovation, core subjects). Infusing Indigenous ways of knowing via a conceptual framework of Indigenous Futurisms (Dillion, 2012), Lidchi & Fricke (2019) say, “Indigenous Futurisms uses the images, ideology, and themes in science fiction to envision a future from a Native (Indigenous) perspective and create a newly valid way to renew, recover, and extend First Nations peoples’ voices and traditions” and repositions Indigenous agency as regards worn and colonial representations of ‘discovery’.

Section V: 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Session 1: Wisdom in Action: Sovereignty and Self Determination in Community Leadership

Roundtable

Room location: Ventana 241A

Moderator: Dr. Shawn L. Secatero (Canoncito Band of Navajo), University of New Mexico

Kyla R. Powell (Diné), University of New Mexico; **Shinae N. Reid** (Diné), University of New Mexico; and **Verlena J. Livingston** (Diné), University of New Mexico

This roundtable, led by three University of New Mexico doctoral students from the Native American Leadership in Education (NALE) cohort, centers on the Corn Pollen Leadership Holistic Model, emphasizing spiritual, mental, physical, and social well-being. Through interviews with an emerging leader, a seasoned leader, and an elder, the session reveals how Indigenous leaders confront community challenges through self-determination and sovereignty. Participants will uncover key findings and themes that highlight the evolving role of Indigenous leadership in shaping educational and community frameworks. The discussion will span past, present, and future trends, underscoring the significance of

community values and leadership qualities. By connecting with these foundational principles, Indigenous leaders empower students and foster educational systems that embrace cultural identity.

Session 2: Through Indigenized Thought & Perspective: Bridging Native/Indigenous Language & Thought into Curriculum & Utilizing Impletive Reflection

Workshop

Room Location: Gold 207

Facilitators: **Dustin J. Begay** (Diné, Navajo Nation), University of New Mexico; and **Kimberly Becenti** (Diné, Navajo Nation), Shiprock Associated Schools, Inc.

Through collaboration and integration, we will explore and achieve how to Indigenize learning curriculum. Establishing a connection between language, content, and cultural awareness, with the opportunity to create a specialized curriculum for Indigenous Students. To revitalize Native Language and encourage the bridging of multicultural perspectives, this method may allow for modification and enhanced experience for Indigenous and Non-Indigenous learners. This approach supports students in establishing Identity and Foundational Cultural Knowledge. Modeled after Diné teachings and philosophy.

Session 3: Rethinking and Restoring Indigenous Urban Spaces

Individual Paper Panel

Room Location: Cochise 228

Moderator: Michelle L. Hale, (Diné, Laguna, Chippewa, Odawa), Arizona State University

Souksavanh T. Keovorabouth (Diné), Northern Arizona University

“Urbanization is a Settler-Colonial Tool: Tracing How Settler-Urbanization Utilizes Racialized, Gendered, and Sexualized Violence on Indigenous Bodies”

Urbanization has long operated as a settler-colonial tool, controlling and dispossessing Indigenous peoples through relocation, displacement, and urban development on Indigenous lands. This paper examines how urbanization, often viewed as modernization, is deeply intertwined with settler-colonial processes. Federal policies, such as the U.S. Relocation Act of 1956, serve as examples of how Indigenous peoples have been uprooted, severing their connections to land and community. Urbanization not only erases Indigenous presence but also perpetuates racialized, gendered, and sexualized violence, particularly affecting Indigenous Queer, Trans, and Two-Spirit individuals. I argue that settler colonialism’s “logic of elimination” seeks to remove Indigenous peoples both physically and culturally. From the renaming of places to the racialized structuring of urban spaces, settler-urbanization reinforces settler dominance. This article highlights the need to rethink urban spaces, advocating for Indigenous resurgence, resilience, and the reclamation of land and identity in cities today.

Michaela Shirley (Diné), University of New Mexico; **Elisha Charley** (Diné), Arizona State University; and **Joaquín Lopez-Huertas** (Maya K’iche’), University of Utah

“Restoring Our Tomorrow: Planning for Who We Are”

This paper critiques the imposition of Bilagáanaa (Western) planning and its influences on

the Navajo Nation (NN) government and policies. This includes the Navajo Nation Chapter House (NNCH) Community Land Use Plan's (CLUP) planning process that legislatively occurred with the Local Governance Act (LGA). The LGA certification process allows 110 NNCHs to exercise local autonomy in the planning and development decisions. NNCH leaders were inducted and educated about Bilagáanaa planning rooted in colonial legacy and procured professional, outside planning. Architectural and planning consultants create comprehensive plans with processes that are neither culturally suited to the desires of the Diné, specifically the differences in social dynamics, language, built environment, and social economy, nor provide a long-range environmental and economic vision for sustainable communities. As a response, we highlight how Diné apply the principles of Sa'ah Naaghái Bik'eh Hózhóón' (SNBH) in alternative planning spaces to redefine planning in their terms.

Session 4: Empowering Decolonization through Embodied Epistemologies

Individual Paper Panel

Room Location: Ventana 241C

Moderator: Myla Vicenti Carpio, University of New Mexico

Melissa Granovsky, Manitoba Metis Federation, Concordia University

“Decolonizing Photovoice Through Reverse Mentoring: Advancing Pathways Towards Self-Determination”

Indigenous peoples in Canada face systemic educational barriers rooted in colonization (Younging, 2018). My PhD dissertation addresses these challenges by adapting photovoice, a community-based participatory research method, to create decolonized digital learning environments. Integrating Indigenous methodologies and storywork (Archibald, 2022), this approach humanizes the research process and bridges Western and Indigenous knowledge systems through a two-eyed seeing framework. While photovoice has empowered communities to engage policymakers (Catalani et al., 2010), it can unintentionally reinforce Western frameworks and overlook principles like ongoing consent and data sovereignty (Wallerstein & Duran, 2006). To mitigate these risks, the study centers Indigenous perspectives, prioritizes less extractive methods (Datta, 2020), to emphasize meaningful reciprocity. Continuous collaboration with participants, as advocated by Aguilar et al. (2022), ensures an ethical and non-exploitative process that respects Indigenous self-determination. This research aims to foster equitable spaces for storytelling and mentorship.

Nicole Pelt (Diné), University of New Mexico

“Aligning Decolonization, Tradition, Feminism using ‘Femodernization’”

This paper examines the interplay between Navajo feminism, tradition, decolonization, and the emerging concept of "femodernization" within the Navajo Nation. By drawing on personal experiences and cultural narratives, it explores how Navajo feminism influences epistemological frameworks and shapes contemporary societal norms. Central to this inquiry is the understanding that Navajo feminism challenges colonial gender roles and amplifies the voices of Navajo women within traditional knowledge systems. This reclamation of Indigenous ways of knowing serves as a crucial component of decolonization, enabling the adaptation of traditional practices to modern contexts while preserving cultural identity. "Femodernization" embodies this dynamic, advocating for social justice and cultural revitalization, and positions Navajo women as vital agents of change. Through an analysis of key tenets of Navajo epistemology, this study reveals how the alignment of feminism and

Indigenous knowledge fosters resilience and equity within Navajo communities, ultimately redefining the narrative of gender equality and cultural preservation.

Matthew W. Henninger, Phoenix Veterans Affairs Health Care System; and **Anisha Marion** (Ojibway, Abenaki), University of Utah

“Restoring the Body, Reclaiming the Land: A Decolonial Praxis to Embodiment and Healing within Indigenous Communities”

Embodiment is defined as inhabiting the body in a safe, nonjudgmental, appreciative, and effective way. White-settler colonialism, White supremacy, and colonial violence have situated embodiment within systems of oppression, pathology, and body commodification. Among Indigenous communities, the colonization of embodiment results in cultural disconnection, trauma, health disparities/inequity, stereotyping, and cultural appropriation that reinforces a detachment from one’s body, ancestors, land, culture, and community. As such, decolonizing embodiment seeks to dismantle colonial ideologies, structures, and practices that have historically, and persistently, oppressed Indigenous peoples. This paper proposes the following guiding principles that may inform and support embodiment by centering Indigenous experiences and wisdoms: (a) Cultural revitalization and identity; (b) Acknowledgement of and healing from intergenerational trauma; (c) Land-based healing; and (d) Fostering collective agency and self-determination. This paper seeks to address the urgent need for decolonial approaches that prioritize Indigenous voices and knowledges in the pursuit of justice, healing, and reconciliation.

Session 5: Dismantling Indigenous Tropes in Literature and Film

Individual Paper Panel

Room Location: Pima 230

Moderator: Travis Franks, Utah State University

Rowan Greywolf Moore (Sicangu Lakota), Arizona State University

“The Red Scare: A Case Study of Colonial Film Propaganda in *The Vanishing American*”

Hollywood has a legacy of colonial domination, using film as a tool to create and reproduce narratives that maintain Settler supremacy against Indigenous and other colonized peoples. D.W. Griffith's 1915 film *The Birth of a Nation* is considered a "masterpiece of racist cinema" that became the catalyst for tangible harm off-screen. George B. Seitz' 1925 film *The Vanishing American* situates itself as the so-called "final epic romance of the American Indian". I tender this case study as a potential origin of Red film tropes, highlighting the ways in which *The Vanishing American* both creates and reproduces Settler-focused narratives of Indigenous peoples. I also discuss how these narratives continue today in film and television media to mythologize the American Indian and maintain colonial domination. I end by discussing Indigenous futurities in the film industry to dismantle colonial images.

Wendi Lee, University of New Mexico

“Urban Indigenous ‘Lifeworlds’: Revitalizing Urban Native Literary Spaces with Indigenous Epistemologies”

Demarcations of space and territory define our identity, culture and sense of belonging. While Indigenous epistemologies and literary theories have mostly focused on literature from reservations and tribe-specific concerns, how can we reconcile Indigenous knowledge systems with the literature of the Indigenous dispersed and dispossessed? This paper

spotlights Indigenous ontologies, epistemology and cultural and literary theory in 21st-century urban Native American prose. I explain how decolonization and world-building methods in Indigenous standpoint theory and wholistic theory relate to the construction of urban Native literature in Tommy Orange's *There There*. I will also examine Simon J. Ortiz's writings on a National Indian Literature and how his argument for cultural authenticity in Native literature posits diversity, uniqueness and wholeness within the self, whereby the ultimate goal for reconstruction of Indigenous literature today is to revitalize Indigenous communities across spaces.

Joe Buenker, Arizona State University

“21st Century American Indian Literature Anthologies: Their History and Critical Reception”

The first part of this presentation is a bibliography of the approximately 70 American Indian literature anthologies (books) published since 2000 and a brief discussion of the publishers involved. Part two details those anthologies which emphasized specific genres, geographies, time periods, gender identities, sexual identities or tribal nationalities. Part three is a discussion of the critical response to the anthologies through a summary of published reviews from journals, magazines, and newspapers.

LUNCH and BUSINESS MEETING 12:15 PM – 1:45 PM

Memorial Union, Arizona Ballroom

Join us for a BBQ lunch buffet followed by the AISA business meeting which includes the election of a new AISA President and board members.

Lunch is sponsored by the ASU Relate Lab: An anti-colonial collective for relationalities, stories, and sciences

Section VI: 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM

Session 1: Indigenous Literary and Rhetorical Sovereignty

Panel

Room Location: Pima 230

Moderator: Esther Belin (Diné), Poet and Lecturer, Fort Lewis College

Sarah Hernandez (Sicangu Lakota), University of New Mexico; **Taté Walker** (Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe), Story Teller and Tribal Communications Director; and **Christopher Hoshnic** (Diné), Fort Lewis College

This panel will focus upon the concept of Indigenous literary and rhetorical sovereignty. Diné poet Esther Belin defines literary sovereignty as “a literary framework of aesthetics/poetics rooted in Indigenous language and thought” and expressed through various genres and forms (traditional, visual, and experiential). Belin will lead a panel

discussion with Diné and Oceti Sakowin writers and scholars that examines what Indigenous literary sovereignty means to them and their tribal communities/nations. For nearly two hundred years, American Indian / Native American / Indigenous literatures have been shaped and delivered by individuals from outside our tribal communities. It is time for citizens of sovereign tribal nations to define and articulate our own literary traditions.

Session 2: Navajo Flea Markets, Food Stands and Roadside Vending: “Weaving Relations” by Understanding the Grassroots Economy on the Navajo Nation

Panel

Room Location: Cochise 228

Moderator: Michelle L. Hale (Diné, Laguna, Chippewa, Odawa), Arizona State University

Michelle L. Hale (Diné, Laguna, Chippewa, Odawa), Arizona State University; **Xavier Nokes** (Choctaw Nation (enrolled)/Mexican Indigenous/Isleta Pueblo), Arizona State University; **Tait Wilson** (Tohono O'odham), Arizona State University; **Angelina Mann** (Cherokee), Arizona State University; and **Arshonne Cazares** (Tohono O'odham), Arizona State University

This team visited the Navajo Nation in summer 2024 to learn about flea market vending, food stands, tourism and the contributions that flea markets make to the reservation economy. Our project is part of an NSF-funded initiative that supports IIITSE (Immersive, Interdisciplinary, Identity-Based Science Experiences) initiatives focused on interdisciplinary collaboration. We will discuss the next steps of the project, community partnerships at Navajo and ways that the work encourages students to think about community development work in their home areas. Students will reflect on what they learned about community engagement and how the “Weaving Relations” experience has shaped their thinking about Indigenized research. One team member who is a two-time IIITSE scholar and new Teaching Professor will reflect on ways that IIITSE supports graduate student success through applied learning and mentoring.

Session 3: Graphic Designing for Sovereign Nations with Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK)

Workshop

Room Location: Navajo 240

Facilitator: Sadie Red Wing (Spirit Lake Dakota Nation), Arizona State University; University of Minnesota - Twin Cities

The role of an Indigenous visual communicator requires the practice of visual sovereignty or decolonizing the stereotypical representation into a traditional image for cultural education using Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) or land knowledge. Indigenous visual communicators have the power to give Native Americans a respected face in the world by revealing tribal visual languages in visual communication. The rising movement of visual sovereignty in Indigenous visual communication has revolutionized a new fight against stereotypes. It continues to revitalize an honorable image away from the subordinate portrayal of Indigenous peoples. For this workshop, participants will brainstorm art & design deliverables (items, ideas, or systems) that allow accurate portrayals of Indigenous representation through visuals or forms of communication. This activity will include

discussions on how TEK can aid in the graphic design practice when designing objects that communicate a sovereign nationality, as well as branding for food, sports, and other Indigenous-led businesses.

Session 4: Time and Money in Silko's *Almanac of the Dead*

Individuals Paper Panel

Room Location: Ventana 241A

Moderator: Travis Franks, Utah State University

Alexandra Meany, Louisiana State University

“Toward an Indigenous Critique of Colonial Racial Capitalism: Marx(ism) on Trial in Leslie Marmon Silko's *Almanac of the Dead*”

Leslie Marmon Silko has stated that her second novel, *Almanac of the Dead* (1991), is her “tribute to Marx.” This paper examines how *Almanac* develops an Indigenous critique of Marxism by putting Marx and certain (European and anti-Indigenous) uptakes of Marxism on trial for “crimes against tribal histories.” I argue that by and through this trial the novel both (1) critiques European Marxist histories that “omit and destroy” by ignoring the histories of Indigenous struggle and (2) lifts up Marx as a “tribal man” who understood the power of story and Indigenous methodology of storytelling. In *Almanac*, Marx's devotion to stories and his critique of land-as-property form the hinge between decolonization and anticapitalism. Ultimately, I argue that *Almanac* theorizes what scholars have recently termed “colonial racial capitalism” by bridging scholarly, historical, and conceptual impasses between Marxism and Indigenous histories. Doing so, the novel opens conceptual pathways for anti-capital decolonization.

Maia Rodriguez (Lipan Apache), University of New Mexico

“Beyond Settler Time: Memory and Futurity in Leslie Silko's *Almanac of the Dead*”

In an episode of *The Red Nation Podcast*, Melanie Yazzie shares her practice of visiting “really old trees” on Indigenous homelands because “they have seen a time on this continent without settler occupation.” Yazzie's comment raises a compelling question: What if envisioning alternative and, specifically, decolonial futures requires engaging deeply with the past? This talk examines the dialectic between tradition and futurity in Leslie Silko's *Almanac of the Dead* (1991). Centered on a prophecy of settler disappearance, the novel's sprawling plot builds to the cusp of revolution but ends before it begins. I offer that while this refusal to represent the future does not make for a satisfying climactic plot, it makes for compelling decolonial method. Drawing on Cutcha Baldy's concept of (re)writing, I show how Silko uses memory to empower possibility, revealing decolonization as both a political act and an imaginative journey.

Session 5: Sharing Our Stories, Weaving the Future

Individuals Paper Panel

Room Location: Ventana 241C

Moderator: Kyle Harvey, University of New Mexico

Majel Boxer (Sisseton and Wahpeton, Dakota), Fort Lewis College

“For the Seventh Generation: Dakota History and Cultural Knowledge from Wačiča Wakpa”

Using oral history methodologies, this paper focuses on the history and cultural knowledge of the Dakota Oyate as told by members of the community from the place of the Poplar River (Fort Peck Indian Reservation) located on the upper Missouri River. Told through life stories, major themes, including the history and cultural knowledge of the community is shared to guide the Seventh Generation. This paper acknowledges the work of Waziyatawin and her groundbreaking monograph titled, *Remember This! Dakota Decolonization and the Eli Taylor Narrative* (2005). Her work especially demonstrates the importance of oral history methodologies centered within a community and cultural setting.

Jennifer R. Morgan (Diné & Santo Domingo Pueblo), Navajo Technical University

“Ts’aa’, Navajo Wedding Basket”

The Ts’aa’, or Navajo Wedding Basket, has been essential in Navajo ceremonies for many generations. Historically, the Navajo people traditionally made these baskets themselves. However, the Ute and Paiute tribes also started weaving them and sold the baskets to trading post owners, who resold them to the Navajos for ceremonial use. Today, many Navajos continue to buy their baskets as a retail commodity due to a shortage of weavers. This creates an imbalance between the basket's cultural significance and the efforts to keep traditional basket-making alive among Navajos. This research study investigates why Navajo basket production is declining despite being culturally significant. It considers the views of medicine men and women, knowledge keepers, and the general Navajo community to understand how this decline affects Diné basket makers despite the continuously growing need for ceremonial baskets.

Erika Salinas, MSW, Ph.D. (Comanche and Kiowa), California State University, Sacramento

A Comparative Case Study: Identifying Facilitators and Barriers to ICWA Implementation in California Using the Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research (CFIR)

Today, American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) children are overrepresented in the foster care system. The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) of 1978 aims to protect these children while also upholding tribal sovereignty. However, the issue of non-compliance has been ongoing. This further contributes to the intergenerational trauma experienced by AI/AN children, families, and Tribal nations. As California has the largest population of AI/AN individuals, it is imperative to ensure effective implementation of ICWA. Using implementation science, this qualitative study identified barriers and facilitators to ICWA implementation in California through a comparative case study while strategically identifying feasible strategies. With 12 participants, this study was able to collect 12 cases to identify barriers and 12 cases to identify facilitators for a total of 24 cases. These cases were located across the state of California. Implications for social work practice are discussed.

Session 6: Place-Based Learning: Empowering Indigenous Students through Community-Embedded Graduate Programs

Roundtable

Room Location: Gold 207

Moderator: **Jessica Solyom** (Boricua/Puerto Rican), Center for Indian Education, ASU

Paula Seanez (Diné), Department of Diné Education, Director, Office of Special Education & Rehabilitation Services

Crystal Carr (Diné), Director of Tribal Housing Research, Diné College

Kristen Dosela (Gila River Indian Community & San Carlos Apache), San Tan Head Start Center Supervisor, GRIC

Richelle Antonio (White Mountain Apache), Head Start Mentor Teacher, GRIC

This panel highlights innovative graduate programs at Arizona State University that allow Indigenous students to pursue advanced degrees while remaining in their home communities. Featuring doctoral students from a specialized Justice Studies cohort and online master's in Indigenous Education, panelists will discuss how these programs balance academic rigor with community engagement. Topics include integrating Indigenous knowledge with Western frameworks, navigating cultural responsibilities, and fostering community-embedded research. Emphasizing mentorship, place-based learning, and culturally responsive education, the panelists will share how these innovative programs support academic success and contribute to community resilience and development. By demonstrating how these programs decolonize higher education, panelists aim to inspire future Indigenous scholars to create and participate in educational pathways prioritizing cultural sustainability, community empowerment, and real-world impact.

Section VII: 3:45 PM - 5:15 PM

Session 1: Changing the Classroom and Challenging the System: Restorative Practices Towards Belonging, Autonomy, and Anti-Colonial Thinking in Academia

Roundtable

Room location: Cochise 230

Moderator: Dalia Maeroff, Arizona State University

Lisley Gomes, Arizona State University; **Livia Cruz**, Arizona State University; **Lizzy Colón** (Boricua/Afro-Taíno); Arizona State University; **Meredith Grady**, Arizona State University; **J'Shon Lee**, Arizona State University; (White Mountain Apache); **Alice Sansonetti**, Arizona State University; and **Rob Wolfinbarger**, Arizona State University

Students can struggle within academia's entrenched colonial systems, where diverse and inclusive spaces are rare. However, these spaces can catalyze structural changes to address social crises through transdisciplinary collaboration. This roundtable highlights experiences from *SOS/AIS 598: Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledges*, taught by Dr. Melissa Nelson (Turtle Mountain Chippewa). Using culturally responsive pedagogies and Native science principles, the course fosters belonging, autonomy, and anti-colonial thinking among a diverse cohort of 24+ students from various backgrounds/lands. Discussion will be based on the following guiding questions: 1) How does the SOS/AIS 598 class education experience compare to the other experiences you have had in academia/higher education? 2) What colonial paradoxes do you face in your work and how does your positionality influence your experience of these paradoxes? 3) Reflecting on the term belonging, how has this class influenced your transdisciplinary approaches to your academic work?

Session 2: Expanding *Indigeneity*: Locating India's Indigenous Peoples in Global Indigenous Studies

Individual Paper Panel

Room Location: Ventana 241C

Moderator: **Souksavanh T. Keovorabouth** (Diné), Northern Arizona University

Suanmuanlian Tonsing, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor; **Thanglianmung**, North Eastern Hill University, India

“Indigenous Zomi-Tribal Data Sovereignty (IZDS): Imagining the Future of India's Tribes”

This paper explores Indigenous Data Sovereignty (IDS) for the Zomi people of Northeast India, aiming to protect their sovereignty and cultural heritage amidst government policies and economic pressures, particularly from India's Act East Policy. Despite being designated as a Scheduled Tribe (ST), the Zomis lack true political sovereignty, with state control over their land and data, exacerbated by ethnic violence and displacement. Drawing on Edward Said's “traveling theories” the authors adapt IDS principles used in North America, Australia, and New Zealand to fit the Zomi context, proposing a model called Indigenous Zomi-Tribal Data Sovereignty (IZDS). This model emphasizes Zomi-centered data creation, stewardship, and relational operation, recognizing Zomi values and political challenges. Through IZDS, the authors seek to foster a framework that safeguards Zomi identity, offering an approach to data sovereignty that can be expanded to other marginalized indigenous groups in India.

Session 3: What do you do with your AIS/NAS PhD? How can it advance Native Non-Profits?

Roundtable

Room Location: Gold 207

Moderator: Michelle L. Hale (Navajo, Laguna, Chippewa, Odawa), Arizona State University

Rachael Nez (Navajo), All Our Kin Collective, Fort Lewis College; **Marcella Ernest** (Ojibwe), College of Fine Arts, University of New Mexico; and **Mary Bordeaux** (Sicangu Oglala Lakota), Co-Founder & Co-Director, Racing Magpie

This question is frequently posed to students and faculty who dedicate their time, energy, and years of service to the field. It holds significance as faculty and leaders in American Indian Studies (AIS) and Native American Studies (NAS) programs work to ensure their curricula, degrees, and student experiences remain relevant and beneficial to Indigenous communities. Many AIS/NAS graduates engage in community-focused work through non-profit organizations. This roundtable brings together scholars with extensive experience in creating and sustaining non-profit organizations. The session will feature discussions on the opportunities and challenges of this work, offering graduate students a chance to explore potential career paths, ask questions, and gain valuable insights from seasoned professionals. Additionally, it may inspire faculty to build stronger collaborations with community organizations. This session showcases how AIS/NAS knowledge and skills can drive impactful, community-centered initiatives.

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