

Recently, the University of Arizona appointed two key administrators in the Executive Office of the President and the Office of the Provost. These two positions will lead UArizona in its efforts to enhance programs and services for the different Native American communities, both internally and externally. This is the first time in the history of UArizona that there have been two Native American senior leaders.

The Honorable N. Levi Esquerra (Chemehuevi) is UArizona's first Senior Vice President for Native American Advancement and tribal Engagement. In this position, he coordinates University-wide efforts to advance Native American programs and tribal engagement in consonance with the strategic plan. He serves as a point of contact for Native issues and as a liaison between the University and tribal governments and regional and national tribal organizations.



*N. Levi Esquerra*

Mr. Esquerra has nearly three decades of experience facilitating and promoting Native American advancement and economic development for Native Nations, including two years as Chairman of the Chemehuevi Indian Tribe and three terms on the Tribal Council. Most recently, he served as Director of the Center for American Indian Economic Development and the Rural Policy Institute, both in the Alliance Bank Economic Policy Institute, which is part of Northern Arizona University's W.A. Franke College of Business Administration. His experience also includes several other community and economic development roles with the state of Arizona, the St. Louis Community Development Agency and the American Indian Center of Mid-America. While representing the U.S. Department of State he worked to address the needs of Indigenous Tribes in Argentina. His expertise also led to the Canadian Consulate inviting him to participate in the annual Canadian Indigenous Conference

where he shared best practices with First Nations communities. As an elected leader, Mr. Esquerra helped shape the Nuwuvi Economic Development Corporation, which creates, manages, and develops tribal enterprises to promote economic self-sufficiency through business development, job creation, and revenue production.

Karen Francis-Begay is a citizen of the Navajo Nation and is the Assistant Vice Provost for Native American Initiatives at UArizona. She leads and coordinates programming in collaboration with academic units and colleges to support Native American students and faculty. Prior to this new appointment, Ms. Francis-Begay served as the Assistant Vice President for Tribal Relations for seven years and prior to that, she was the Special Advisor to the President on Native American Affairs for four years. She has served the UArizona community in other professional capacities for a total of 28 years of service. Ms. Francis-Begay has served on many national and regional boards such as the College Board, College Horizons, Community Foundation of Southern Arizona, and the YWCA Tucson, to name a few. Her life's passion is to advocate for Native American students and for women of color who seek to further their education and career endeavors. Ms. Francis-Begay has a Bachelor of Science degree in Public Administration and a Master of Arts degree in American Indian Studies, and is currently a Ph.D. candidate in Higher Education at UArizona. Her dissertation research is understanding the lived experiences of tribal liaisons at public universities and how they can be better supported in their work. Born and raised on the Navajo Nation, she is of the Tábaqhá clan (Edge of Water) born for the Kiyaa'áanii clan (Towering House).



*Karen Francis-Begay*