

# INDIGENOUS STEWARDS

Let's SKO (Science, Knowledge, and Outdoors)

*A publication of the Southwest Environmental Health Sciences Center, College of Pharmacy*



THE UNIVERSITY  
OF ARIZONA

# INDIGENOUS STEWARDS

This magazine is dedicated to all generations past, present, and future. To past generations for holding onto this knowledge and passing it down; to current generations for continuing this knowledge; and to future generations who will eventually carry this knowledge.

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## Land Acknowledgement

The University of Arizona resides on the traditional territory of the Tohono O'odham people

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 Bottom row (left to right): Ben Richmond, Kyle Harvey, Abby Unger, Nate Loya, Amariah Almquist

## Letter From the Editor

Yá' át' ééh (Hello),

Welcome to the fourth volume of the *Indigenous Stewards Magazine*!

This magazine was created with the goal of highlighting and sharing the stories of our Indigenous students and faculty who are engaged in environmental health science related fields. We also want to feature the various student organizations and programs across The University of Arizona that continuously support our Indigenous students. This edition will be shared with Indigenous youth across Indian Country so that they can see students and professionals who not only look like them but also come from similar backgrounds and have similar goals in life.

Indigenous students and professionals are not only underrepresented in higher education, 1.7% of the student population at The University of Arizona, but they are also under acknowledged for the important work in which they are engaged. This results in us being what is known as an 'invisible population' at the University. This 'invisibility' of our Indigenous students and faculty prevents their stories from being shared across a larger stage.

As Indigenous peoples, these stories serve as our data. We use these stories to guide our thinking and to reflect upon when we are making decisions for our future. This edition will help to give our Indigenous students and professionals the recognition they deserve and to share our stories with audiences from all over Indian Country. We want our Indigenous youth to hear these stories so that they will be inspired to further their education upon finishing high school. Whether it be through the higher education system, a trade school, or traditional education systems, the youth will be the ones to lead the way in Indigenous stewardship.

On behalf of the entire SWEHSC team,  
 'Ahéhee'! (Thank you!)

Cheyenne Grabiec (Diné)  
 Bilagáana - Dziłt'ahnii - Bilagáana - Tsi'naajinii

# Indigenous Stewardship Through Art

By: Cheyenne Grabiec



Maximus Smith

Maximus Smith (San Carlos Apache and White Mountain Apache) is a senior at San Carlos High School and the winner of the Spring 2019 *Indigenous Stewards* Magazine Cover Art Contest. His artwork reflects his culture, his home, and how he was raised.

The crown dancer in the center of his piece not only represents his Apache culture, but it is also a reminder of his childhood and how he was raised. Growing up, his mother was very traditional and participated in many sunrise dances around the reservation.

He would accompany his mother to these dances to help out and he always remembers when the crown dancers would come out to dance.

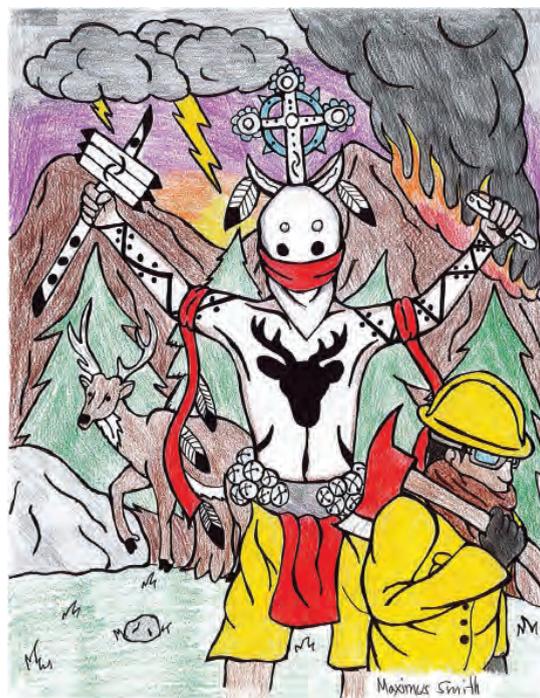
Maximus expressed his connection to his home through the mountains in the background of the artwork. He says that, "It reminded me of home. Mainly Whiteriver and the White Mountain Apache reservation because my grandmother's house is literally in the mountains. When I look out there is a great view of every mountain."

Maximus has also had family members who were firefighters, or more commonly known as, hotshots. During the time he was creating his piece he was taking a class where they did hotshot training. This training reminded him of the hotshots he knew and so he incorporated it into his art.

Upon graduating this spring, Maximus hopes to attend school at either the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, NM or The Art Institute of Tucson in Tucson, AZ so that he can continue his passion for art. He hopes to become an illustrator after finishing college.

He would like to thank his good friend Kayla; his math and art teacher, Mr. Hubilla; and his mother because they have all supported him in his decision to pursue a career in art.

On behalf of the Southwest Environmental Health Sciences Center and The University of Arizona, we would like to thank Maximus for creating this beautiful piece of artwork. We wish him the best on his future endeavors and look forward to seeing more of his art!



Top: Maximus' drawing that is featured on the cover of the magazine

Bottom: Crown dancer statue outside of San Carlos High School

# Native American Science and Engineering Program

By: Jessie Wrona



Shawna Greyeyes

The University of Arizona's (UA) Native American Science & Engineering Program (NASEP) is a year-long program that provides Native American high school students with the resources to pursue a college degree in a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) field. NASEP students complete a week of residential programming at the UA, develop a water quality research project, and commit to a full year of follow-up through online communication. One-on-one support from UA affiliates, interactive workshops, and family events provide students with opportunities to better prepare for the college application process or careers in STEM.

Shawna Greyeyes (Diné) grew up in Flagstaff, but would spend weekends in Shonto, Arizona on the Navajo Nation. Her favorite part of NASEP was staying on the UA campus, where she made friends that she still keeps in touch with today. During the week of residential programming at the UA, Shawna enjoyed learning about illegal dumping, water quality and rights, and how these issues relate to Native communities. Based on what she learned at NASEP, Shawna was able to return to her community of Shonto and test the quality of water her family uses to water their crops. Shawna's research, "Testing Water Quality Parameters to Ensure Healthy Product on the Navajo Nation," won several awards at the 2018 Southern Arizona Science and Engineering Fair (SARSEF) in Tucson, AZ; the SARSEF Grand Award: 3rd Place, the Air Force Future Leaders of STEM, Community Service Award and Outstanding Project in Geosciences. Upon graduating from Coconino High School, Shawna was accepted into the Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) Summer Program at Biosphere 2 in Tucson and researched water isotopes in the Santa Rita Mountains with her mentor Dr. Jennifer Macintosh. REU program director, Dr. Katerina Dontsova, encouraged Shawna to apply to the program after hearing Shawna present at a conference.

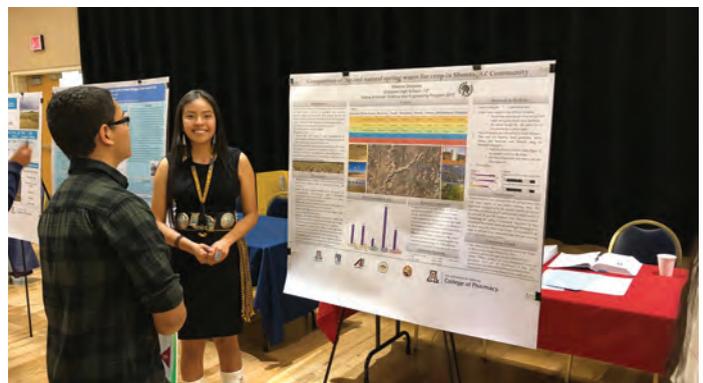
Using the skills and experiences she learned through her time with NASEP, Shawna is currently attending Coconino Community College (CCC). She is in the CCC to NAU (Northern Arizona University) program, which consists of two years at CCC and two years at NAU, which will ultimately lead to graduating with a bachelor's degree from NAU. At NAU, she plans to study environmental science where she can work in a hands-on field. Shawna hopes to use her education to give back to the Navajo Nation by helping to improve the environment. Environmental science is important to the Navajo Nation because it affects all aspects of life. Growing up, Shawna enjoyed spending time outside. She was taught to respect Mother Earth and feels that she was put on this earth to give back to the environment. Her love for the environment and science have inspired her future aspirations.

One piece of advice that Shawna has for Native students is to take opportunities. She says not to doubt yourself, whether it be a scary thing to do or have a less than great GPA; take the chance. For her, one opportunity opened so many doors.



For more information visit:  
<https://nasep.arizona.edu/>

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Right: Shawna presenting her research at Native American College Day at UA

# Keep Engaging Youth in Science

By: Jessie Wrona



*Tia Folgheraiter*

The University of Arizona's (UA) Keep Engaging Youth in Science (KEYS) Research Internship Program is a seven-week summer program that allows Arizona high school students to explore the fields of bioscience, engineering, environmental health, and biostatistics. During the program, students work alongside UA faculty members in research laboratories. The KEYS Internship Program has helped 428 students develop their interests and skills, including KEYS 2016 alumni Tia Folgheraiter (Diné).

Tia grew up in Tuba City, Arizona which is located on the Navajo Nation. Tia participated in KEYS as a junior in high school during the summer of 2016. The KEYS program exposed Tia to many new experiences which had an influential impact on her life.

While in the KEYS program, Tia researched Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis using a *Drosophila* model in Dr. Zarnescu's laboratory. Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) is neurodegenerative disease that affects the brain and spinal cord, causing loss of local motor function, paralysis, and death within 3-5 years of diagnosis. During her research, Tia tested new molecules on *Drosophila*, a type of fly, to see if this drug could potentially help ALS patients. Tia stated that this research assignment was meaningful to her as her late aunt was diagnosed with ALS.

Participating in the KEYS Program and living in the dorms at the UA campus helped Tia become independent. Additionally, she gained research experience and confidence. At the end of the program, students were encouraged to step outside of their comfort zone and present a final poster about their projects. The final research showcase was Tia's favorite part of the program; she enjoyed demonstrating her work to her peers, family, and other professionals. The showcase was especially powerful for Tia because her aunt was able to attend and see the research she had conducted in honor of her.

Now, Tia is a sophomore at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire, where she is majoring in Native American Studies. She enjoys learning about contemporary Native American art and is interested in how Native Americans are represented in the media. Tia feels that learning about Native American history is important because it demonstrates the culture, traditions, and resiliency of Native American people. She believes that there is power in knowing history, as it is the best way to make a difference. While she is not in a lab environment anymore, Tia believes that the research skills and confidence she gained from the KEYS program still help her to this day. Tia also has an interest in environmental studies, where she hopes to explore Federal Indian Law and correct environmental issues that affect community members on her reservation. Today, she currently works as the Special Events Intern at the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C.

When asked what advice she would give Native students she states, "stepping outside of your comfort zone is scary at first but has good outcomes and benefits at the end." Tia also encourages students to find something they are passionate about because it leads to exciting and enjoyable opportunities.



For more information visit:  
<https://keys.arizona.edu/>



*Tia working in the lab during her KEYS experience*



Felise Tagaban (left) and Amanda Cheromiah (right)

Native SOAR (Student Outreach, Access and Resiliency) is a multi-generational service learning mentoring program that is offered through the College of Education at The University of Arizona. The goal of the program is to help bridge the gap between Native American communities, college enrollment, and degree attainment by using a two-tiered mentoring model. Undergraduate students not only have the opportunity to mentor local Native middle school and high school students, but are also mentored by campus graduate students and local professionals.

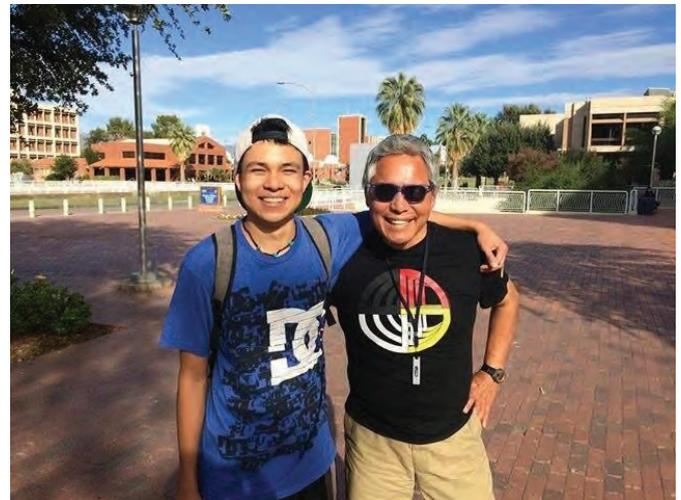
The program is currently overseen by Amanda Cheromiah (Pueblo of Laguna) and Felise Tagaban (Diné and Tlingit). Amanda is a life-long Native SOAR mentor; she was a part of the original cohort of students during her undergraduate years and has been consistently involved during her time as a graduate student. In the spring of 2018 she was appointed as the director for Native SOAR, while still maintaining a mentorship roll with students enrolled in the class. As a Graduate Assistant, Felise works on student recruitment, community relations and engagement, and curriculum development and management. Both Amanda and Felise are graduate students in Higher Education at The University of Arizona.

One of the highlights of the Native SOAR program is the use of digital storytelling. Digital storytelling is the use of multimedia (photos and videos) to share personal stories and ideas. As Indigenous peoples, storytelling has been a part of our culture since time immemorial. However, as time has passed and technology has progressed so have our mechanisms of storytelling. Students in the program are given the opportunity to create videos about their Native SOAR experience to share with The University of Arizona community as well as their home communities.

To see student digital stories visit:  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-m7z4WHuqC8LB1ryvw93PcA/videos>

*"Native SOAR is a program that I wish I had during high school. I would have had more resources in my hand while starting out college. This program allowed me to mentor and be mentored for the first time. I developed great relationships and connections with other Native people from different generations. Native SOAR has helped me see where I want to be and that is helping my community for a better future."*

- Patrick Ebalarosa (San Carlos Apache)



Patrick (left) and his Native SOAR mentor Dr. Tommy Begay (right)



For more information visit:  
<https://www.coe.arizona.edu/native-soar>

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# A Scholar's Pace

By: Cheyenne Grabiec

What does it mean to be an Indigenous runner? How do we use running to navigate the higher education system and our everyday lives?

These are some of the questions that Amanda Cheromiah (Pueblo of Laguna) seeks to answer in her film, *A Scholar's Pace: A Running Narrative of Indigenous Feat*. She said that the inspiration for the film came from Dr. Sheila Nicholas (Hopi) in a class on Indigenous Epistemologies, ways of knowing. Dr. Nicholas had recently returned from a trip to Carlisle Indian School and began talking to the class about her clan father Lewis Tewanima (Hopi) who attended Carlisle. Despite the conditions of boarding school and being so far from home, Lewis stayed connected to his culture through running and eventually represented the United States at the Olympic Games. This story of resilience really appealed to Amanda because it reminded her of how she found running to help her achieve healing from past traumas.

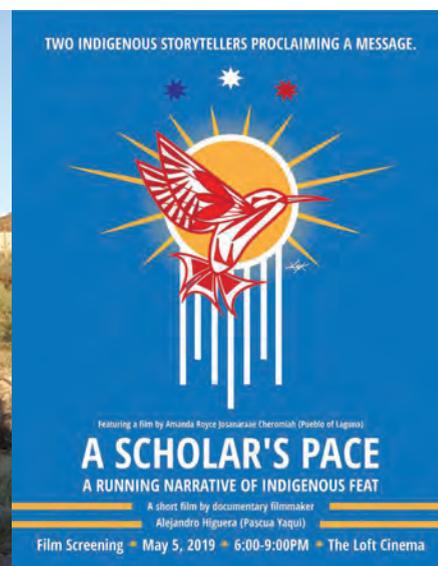
When she began recruiting interviewees for the film, she reached out to individuals whom she already knew or followed through social media. It was through these first few interviews that she built more connections to other Indigenous runners from the community whom she never knew before. While recruiting for interviews she decided to not only include current runners, but also individuals who were avid runners in the past; once a runner, always a runner. At the completion of her interviews she had a total of 11 Indigenous runners, all of whom are associated with higher education in some capacity.

Amanda will debut her film on May 5, 2019 at the event, *A Scholar's Pace & Resiliency Through Running*, at The Loft Cinema in Tucson. This event will also feature a film by Alejandro Higuera (Pascua Yaqui) who is one of the individuals featured in Amanda's film. Alejandro's film *Resiliency Through Running* is a documentary about the Pascua Yaqui Tribe Flag Run which took place in the summer of 2018 to commemorate the 40 year anniversary of the tribe's federal recognition (for more about the run see page 15).

Amanda's goal is to be able to travel to different communities in Indian Country, including her home community of Laguna Pueblo, to show the film. She hopes that youth will be able to see how running is a part of our culture as Indigenous peoples, how it can be used to achieve healing, and how youth can tell a story about themselves through photos and videos; a process known as digital storytelling.



Alejandro Higuera, one of the featured runners in Amanda's film will also screen his film at The Loft Cinema on May 5, 2019  
Video frame from: Amanda Cheromiah



For more information visit:  
<https://loftcinema.org/film/a-scholarspace-resiliency-through-running/>

Flyer created by: Kalene Bigknife

# Undergraduate Biology Research Program

By: Tierra Edison



Jennifer Cubeta

An alumna and current director of The Undergraduate Biology Research Program (UBRP), Jennifer Cubeta graduated from The University of Arizona in 2000 with bachelors' degrees in Science Education and Biology and also earned a master's degree from Northern Arizona University.

Jenn started working with youth as a 7th grade middle school teacher for three years. Later, she transitioned from working with youth to college students as an academic advisor in the Microbiology Department with The University of Arizona for a total of ten years. Jenn's involvement with UBRP started in 1999 as a college student where she began to find her passion for teaching and explaining the "why?" in science after taking part in genetics research. She started as an assistant director and soon became the director of UBRP in 2018. She stresses how much she enjoys expanding upon science education and because of that, she also thought it would be exciting to inspire curiosity in other people.

UBRP, which is considered to be one of the longest standing programs at The University of Arizona, works towards helping students engage in mentored and self-directed work by sharpening their critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Students' projects include research, investigation, discovery, design, and presenting their experimental results. While working as part of UBRP, students develop communication skills, are able to give an "elevator speech" about their research in less than 2 minutes, participate in field trips, engage in community events, build upon community engagement and lastly, contribute toward collections for The University of Arizona's campus pantry.

She hopes for UBRP to grow in the near future and be able to increase the number of students each year in order to share the great experience that UBRP has to offer. She advises that every college student should explore and find out what they do and do not like to do. These steps will assist them in finding their professional match. She also communicates that experience, people, and mentorship are essential for guidance and success. "It's always great to have someone ahead of you and looking out for you. Don't give up on mentorship, they are out there!"

Roxanne Vann (San Carlos Apache) has been involved with UBRP for two years under the Partnership for Native American Cancer Prevention. To her, UBRP has been a life-changing experience.

*"Being part of UBRP has opened many doors for me during my undergraduate studies. It has made me grow mentally, spiritually, and physically by being exposed to today's science and medical era. Being Native American, it made me have a broader view of how much the creator has blessed us with to have the sustainability to pursue our dreams of becoming future scientists or medical doctors. We all have talents and gifts to share amongst us and to one day return back to our people to give back what we have learned in our journey."*

- Roxanne Vann



Roxanne Vann



For more information visit:  
<https://ubrp.arizona.edu/>

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# Partnership for Native American Cancer Prevention

By: Tierra Edison

Tiffani Begay (Diné) from Dilkon, Arizona, is an alumna of the Partnership for Native American Cancer Prevention (NACP) where she currently holds the position as Senior Program Coordinator. She began her college career at Arizona State University, graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Exercise and Wellness in 2013. In 2017, Tiffani received her Master of Public Health degree from The University of Arizona (UA) in Health Services Administration.

During her first summer with NACP at Northern Arizona University she interned with both the Outreach Core and the North Country Radiation Exposure Screening & Education Program (RESEP) as well as the American Cancer Society (ACS). Her duties consisted of visiting Flagstaff schools to teach children about cancer prevention, assisting in the Hopi Men's Health Conference, screening, and data entry.

The following summer, Tiffani was accepted into NACP's DISCOVER program. The DISCOVER program was in collaboration with the UA College of Medicine Focusing Research on the Border Area (FRONTERA) summer program. She spent her summer working on the Lifestyle Intervention for Ovarian Cancer Enhanced Survival (LIVES) study with Dr. Tracey Crane as her mentor. Because of the collaboration with the FRONTERA program, Tiffani along with other students traveled to the city of Nogales, visited health care facilities and public health agencies on both sides of the US-Mexico border.

Tiffani's time with NACP as an intern has been extremely rewarding for her. Not only did NACP provide excellent research opportunities but they also built a cohort of students who strive for making a difference in our Native communities. NACP played an intricate role in Tiffani's success, from being a student research intern to becoming the Senior Program Coordinator for the Training Core. After completing her undergraduate degree, she was contemplating whether to go for her master's. With the encouragement of her mentors and NACP's Program Director, Dr. Margaret Briehl, she applied and two years later, graduated with her Master of Public Health degree all while being a full-time UA staff and graduate student. In the future, Tiffani hopes to obtain her Ph.D. in Public Health and work with Native American communities.



Tiffani Begay



Left : Tiffani helping a student at a resume workshop hosted by NACP

Right : Tiffani and NACP Training Program Director Dr. Margret Briehl



For more information visit:  
<https://cancercenter.arizona.edu/researchers/collaborative-research/nacp>

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Photos by: Aspen Vallo

## Two Worlds

I was born into two worlds  
One praises language and ceremony,  
The other praises individualism and money  
I was born into two worlds  
One says respect animals and the land we live on,  
The other says "Nuclear, gas, & bombs!"  
I was born into two worlds  
One is against fracking & contamination,  
The other is controlled by temptation  
Making decisions that will affect future generations  
I was born into two worlds  
Where one fights for the survival of mother earth  
While the other exploits her worth  
I was born into two worlds  
Compassion. Love. Self-identity  
Corporations, industries, and companies  
Always conflicting, always unstable  
Always contradicting and always having two completely different labels  
I was born into two worlds

Poem by: Aspen Vallo (Pueblo of San Idelfonso)



Photo by: Pixabay



Photo by: Tom Fisk

# American Indian Science and Engineering Society

By: Martina Dawley



2018 AISES Regional Conference  
Photo by: Shivanna Moriarty

The American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) is an organization for American Indians throughout North America, including Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and First Nations students and professionals interested in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) studies and careers.

## AISES Region 3 Southwestern Conference

The 2018 AISES Region 3 Conference was held on April 13, 2018 at The University of Arizona (UA) and had one hundred and fifty students, faculty, staff, and special guests in attendance.

The theme, *Indigenous Hidden Figures in STEM*, focused on the underrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in STEM. Individuals whose work either supports or encourages higher education in STEM were invited to be speakers. Each of the speakers served as role models to all of the students in attendance as they have all successfully maneuvered the higher education system and established themselves in their field of work.



Kiana Kaye

*"The entire conference was amazing because of the number of attendees, speakers, and diverse workshops we had. We invited people outside of the AISES community and it was a great idea because we made our AISES family bigger and were able to expand our knowledge."* - Kiana Kaye (Diné), UA AISES Chapter President

Having a heavy presence of female STEM leaders made a huge impact on the conference. Females in STEM are frequently underrepresented, but by having a large number of female STEM leaders present it showed the younger female students in attendance that they too can succeed in the STEM field. To highlight the female leaders in STEM, the conference featured a Female Panel Discussion.

The Female Panel Discussion session included:

- Genevieve Benally (Diné), a Quality Engineer who grew up in Page, Arizona.
- Sheila Alvarez (Hispanic) an IT Security Project Manager who grew up in Tucson, Arizona.
- Annie François, MD (Haitian) an Orthopedic Surgeon who grew up in Haiti and California.
- Rachel Yellowhair (Diné) an IT Site Services West Region Manager who grew up in Kayenta, Arizona on the Navajo Nation.

These professional women shared their stories about their career paths, specifically on how they overcame their struggles to reach their goals.



Casey Calderon

*"The AISES Region 3 Conference was an excellent way to interact with fellow STEM professionals during the poster session, as well as get to further know other Indigenous scholars, mentors, and researchers." - Casey Calderon (Diné), UA student and AISES member*

Dr. Karletta Chief (Diné), Associate Professor in the Department of Soil Water and Environmental Science at UA, was the featured keynote speaker of the event. Dr. Chief is also the faculty advisor for UA's AISES Chapter.



Dr. Karletta Chief

*"The UA AISES Chapter hosted an excellent AISES Regional Conference in 2018! They were innovative in the selection of sessions and tours and involved the community across campus, Tucson, Arizona and the region! The UA AISES members are truly leaders of their generation sharing knowledge across professional disciplines while inspiring the youth!" -Dr. Karletta Chief (Diné), UA AISES Advisor*



Genevieve Benally

*"The University of Arizona American Indian Science and Engineering Society's officers worked diligently in ensuring the conference was run with professionalism. Their leadership provided students with highly informed sessions and opportunities to network with professionals. The Raytheon American Indian Network (RAIN) values our collaboration with the students and look forward to sustaining our relationship with them for the growth and benefit of all STEM students!" -Genevieve Benally (Diné), RAIN*

One of the most memorable moments of the conference was the closing ceremony. A blessing ceremony was done by Jesse Navarro (Tohono O'odham), UA Government & Community Relations, for all the attendees safe travels home.

*"It was great to see everyone from different universities and communities stand together. Those who have traveled far and near to be part of this conference all gained something new. The atmosphere was pure and you can feel the support from everyone." - Kiana Kaye (Diné), UA AISES Chapter President*

### When is the next conference?

The next conference will be at New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology on March 29-30, 2019. The purpose of the conferences is to widen the community at UA for Indigenous students in STEM.



AMERICAN INDIAN SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING SOCIETY

For more information visit:  
<http://www.aises.org/>

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2018 AISES Regional Conference Attendees  
Photo by: Shivanna Moriarty

For more information on the next AISES Regional Conference visit:  
[http://www.aises.org/news/events/regional-conferences#quicktabs-regional\\_conferences=2](http://www.aises.org/news/events/regional-conferences#quicktabs-regional_conferences=2)

# Promoting Land Stewardship Through Outdoor Recreation

By: Cheyenne Grabiec



What began as a social media project has cumulated into an outdoor company that promotes land stewardship through a Native lens.

Len Necefer (Diné) is not only a professor of American Indian Studies at The University of Arizona, but he is also a lifelong outdoorsman as well as the founder and owner of Natives Outdoors. In March 2017, he started a social media project with #NativesOutdoors to highlight stories and photos of Native people participating in outdoor recreation as a means to address the lack of representation of Native peoples in the outdoor industry.

Since its start, the company has grown to provide outdoor products, as well as advisory and consulting services to the outdoor industry on topics within the intersection of tribes, public lands, and outdoor recreation. The company works directly with tribal governments, community organizations, and individuals on increasing access to outdoor recreation and connecting resources and opportunities within the outdoor industry.

Natives Outdoors has been taking proactive steps to amplify the voice of Native people and nations in the discussion and decision making in outdoor recreation and public land policy. They provide consulting and services to companies, organizations, and individuals who are looking to build meaningful and productive relationships with Native peoples, organizations, and governments.

Recently, Len Necefer co-directed the film, *Welcome to Gwichyaa Zhee*, which explores the Gwich'in community's connection to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The Refuge was opened to drilling last year, ignoring Native rights and public wishes. The Gwich'in are fighting a similar battle as the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, a coalition of seven tribes that have united to conserve the Bears Ears landscape in southern Utah. However, where the Protect Bears Ears movement has received nationwide support, the Gwich'in have not. This film not only gives a national voice to the Gwich'in peoples, but it is also a call to action to support their fight to protect the Arctic Refuge for future generations. As Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous allies, it is our responsibility to stand with the Gwich'in to protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.



**“The more people who stand up, the more likely we are to protect the Arctic Refuge forever. Help spread the word.”**

- Welcome to Gwichyaa Zhee Webpage

For information on Natives Outdoors visit:  
<https://www.natives-outdoors.org/>

For more information on “Welcome to Gwichyaa Zhee” and how to host a watch party visit:  
<https://www.gwichyaaazhee.us/>

Artwork by: Vernan Kee (Diné)

*"I think that all around the world, and especially in the United States, Indigenous people have been the first stewards of this land and I think we're often ignored by outdoor recreationalists or outdoor environmentalists in that regard. We are the first people that have lived here and we've been here since time immemorial. I know that Indigenous people have a lot of knowledge on how to care for the land and everything on it and the water. Our knowledge is super valuable to stewardship efforts because we've been managing this land for millennia."*

- Ashleigh Thompson (Red Lake Band of Chippewa), Natives Outdoors Ambassador



Ashleigh Thompson



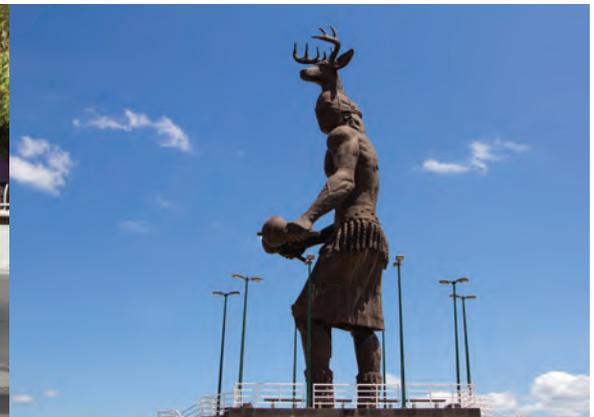
Mariah running through Canyon De Chelly

*"I think of our environments, whether they be built or natural, as teaching tools. I know that for me, something I think about a lot is my understanding of the world has been rooted in the way that I grew up... It's uncomfortable to know that our environment isn't considered a classroom to the same extent as an academic setting. We no longer understand the world the same way that our grandparents did."*

- Mariah Claw (Diné)



The group of Yaqui runners from the US and Mexico that participated in the Vatnaatekai run



Deer dancer in Ciudad Obregón

Photos by: Alejandro Higuera

## Vatnaatekai – Pascua Yaqui 40th Annual Tribal Recognition Run

In recognition of the 40-year anniversary of federal recognition, members of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe took part in a 350+ mile run from the Vicam Pueblo in Sonora, Mexico to the Pascua Pueblo in Tucson, Arizona. The purpose of the run was to commemorate the Yaqui families of Vicam and surrounding villages who migrated north to Tucson in the late 19th century to escape war and violence. The run brought together the Yaqui communities throughout Mexico and Arizona. Alejandro Higuera, an Admissions Counselor who specializes in Native American Outreach through the Office of Admissions, had the opportunity to be a part of the run this year and this is what he had to say about the experience:

*"The fact that we're here [Tucson] and that we have a population here is amazing. Our ancestors traveled over 300 miles to get here... We all came together to remember that even though there is a border that divides us, we can come together for ceremony and remember that we are the same people."*

- Alejandro Higuera (Pascua Yaqui)

# Running and Stewardship

By: Lydia Jennings

As I was running yesterday, I was thinking a lot about what it means to be a land steward. A land steward is someone who looks after and cares for the land. Indigenous Nations have continued this practice since time immemorial, as evidenced in our languages, ceremonies, and cultural practices. We know that we belong to the land, not that the land belongs to us.

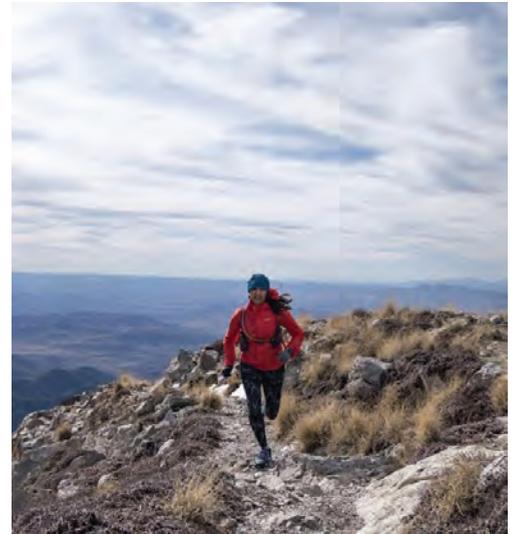
Some people, such as myself, have chosen a career dedicated towards land stewardship. That is, environmental scientists, hydrologists, outdoor educators, and environmental advocates amongst others. It's how we live and practice our land stewardship in our professional endeavors every day.

Then there are land stewards who acknowledge this responsibility by their presence in outdoor spaces on a regular basis. They notice the difference in these landscapes through regular visitation of specific trails, help with trail clean up days, and monitor them through such recreation. I'm thinking of the trail runners, climbers, hikers, mountain bikers, etc. These outdoor users have developed important relationships with the land and feel a vital kinship with landscapes.

Why do I bring this up? Since the government shutdown, many of the trails we visit at national, state, and regional parks are being heavily impacted. The professional land stewards aren't able to perform their duty. Now it's up to every other land steward and land user to share the responsibility of taking care of our lands.

I saw so many people speeding through my local National Park over the weekend (since they didn't have to pay). I saw trash piled up high, I saw bathrooms backed up, and more litter than I've seen before out there. While many might not see themselves as land stewards, if you are using these spaces you have a responsibility to leave no trace of your presence there. This is how we collectively maintain these beautiful places for our future.

- Lydia Jennings (Huichol and Yoeme)



Lydia Jennings

While pursuing a Ph.D. in Soil Microbiology, Lydia is also an avid runner and an ambassador of Natives Outdoors. You can follow her Instagram at: [ilcooljennings](https://www.instagram.com/ilcooljennings) to keep up to date on her outdoor recreation while also getting educated on soil sciences!



Follow Lydia's Instagram for more awesome running photos



Shannon Zullo

## What is a Dermatologist?

A dermatologist is a physician who is trained to evaluate and treat patients with benign and malignant disorders of the skin, hair, nails, and mucous membranes. According to a 2015 report by the American Medical Association, there are approximately 12,000 practicing dermatologists in the United States. Of these, only 28 self-identified as American Indian or Alaskan Native<sup>1</sup>.

Shannon Zullo (Diné) is a medical student in the class of 2020 at The University of Arizona, College of Medicine in Tucson. She was born and raised on the Navajo reservation in northeast Arizona and aspires to be a dermatologist. She received her undergraduate degree in Psychology from Duke University and a master's degree in Cellular and Molecular Medicine from The University of Arizona. Shannon is an engaged leader, researcher, and future clinician.

In her time as a medical student, Shannon has led both the Dermatology Interest Group and SunSmarts, a Commitment to Underserved Peoples (CUP) program that aims to increase sun safety awareness. Shannon is active in the Native American community and served as co-president of the Association of Native American Medical Students. As a testament of her leadership, Shannon

was recognized nationally and received the American Medical Association's 2016 Minority Scholars Award and the National Medical Fellowship's 2015 Mary Ball Carrera Merit Scholarship. In 2018, she received the Outstanding Medical Student in Dermatology award from The University of Arizona, Department of Medicine.

As a researcher, Shannon is passionate about identifying and helping to alleviate health care disparities affecting underserved populations like Native American reservation communities. She adds, "Growing up, I saw many people in my community with skin conditions who suffered from the psychosocial effects of inadequate care. As a dermatologist, I want to make a difference in helping to increase access to specialty care for Native Americans." Shannon recently conducted a study in conjunction with The University of Arizona, Department of Dermatology on dermatologic treatment disparities and knowledge gaps in Native American communities. The aim of the study was to identify the skin care habits, skin conditions, and potential treatment disparities experienced by Native Americans.

Exposure to environmental contaminants and living, playing, and working outdoors can increase the risk for skin cancer and other dermatologic conditions in native peoples. Native Americans face many barriers in accessing primary care and specialty care like dermatology. Few dermatological research studies have focused on the skin conditions affecting our Native communities, and this study is an opportunity to discover new findings that might aid in the future care and treatment of Native Americans.

## References:

1. The American Medical Association. Physician Characteristics and Distribution in the U.S. 2015 ed: American Medical Association; 2015.



The University of Arizona's College of Medicine



For more information visit:  
<https://inmed.medicine.arizona.edu/>

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# Protecting Our Land Summer Camp: A College Mentor's Perspective

By: John Gallo



*John Gallo*

Over my collegiate career, the Protecting Our Land camp was by far the most impactful weekend I ever had. After leaving the campsite instilled with faith in the youth, I found myself empowered and spiritually impacted.

With little time to prepare, the sound of crashing waves running through my mind, and the incredible stress from taking the GRE within a week, I showed up to the camp without any expectations as to what the weekend was to hold. After an orientation with the other college mentors, there was a clear intention for the activities that were planned, and a sense of deep care. It was apparent that the leadership team had experiences with programming and developing youth, and their dedication resonated through the entire team.

This team was unique and composed of several very interesting individuals with a spectrum of experiences and upbringings. Along with the experienced and knowledgeable leaders, three of the college mentors were strong women with a very intact cultural understanding. This group alone was influential enough to create an amazing experience for the campers, and I was able to add to these individuals by being an understanding, relaxed, and diverse college mentor. These Native American youth were able to relate to an individual that was raised in a western emphasis and had not been able to establish a cultural and spiritual sense of being until later in life. With the combination of the individuals in the group, we were able to create a dynamic that catered to the individual differences in the youth.

From my perspective, the first day of the weekend was filled with the regular embarrassing introductions and icebreakers, and most of the relationships were established in the individual groups that were assigned. I quickly realized that everyone in my team, later to be known as Skoden, was a well behaved, motivated, and respectful individual, that came to the camp to have a retreat in the woods with their peers, or to develop their advocacy skills. With many of these individuals being quite advanced in their empathy, knowledge, and personal thoughts, my role changed to be less of a facilitator and more of an emotional supporter. Therefore, many of the activities integrated additional time for the individuals to open up about anything that needed attention, and any of the upcoming concerns that they had regarding the camp, school, future educational opportunities (college) or life in general. Without the flexibility that the leadership team instilled in the college mentors, many of these individuals would not have been able to ask questions or reflect actively amongst personal perspectives, and therefore the experience would have been completely different.

Throughout the progression of the week, it was amazing to see the personalities and relationships of the youth grow. Being the only male college mentor gave me an interesting dynamic amongst the other males. Being a short and rather young-looking college kid left several high schoolers towering over me in height, weight, and facial hair. As we experienced different activities, walks and talking circles, many of the other males began to open up, but much of the interactions revolved around preparations for the future, especially regarding post-graduate paths that involve vocational or military training. These young men are strong, and capable of tackling any obstacle in their path, and it was a fresh breath of air to see individuals excited for what the future holds, and what it means to be a Native American male in an ever-evolving society.



*John (right) and fellow college mentor Sara Johantoberns (left)*

Taking together these experiences, I have been able to translate many of the lessons that I have learned into my future career as a School Psychologist. With a goal to create effective and culturally relevant interventions to propel children through their educational career, I now understand the impact of active reflection and mindfulness-based activities to aid Indigenous students. After seeing how talking circles and journaling transformed several of these youth by helping with peer connection and emotional recognition, I am excited to incorporate these practices within an educational setting. Without the Protecting Our Land camp, I would have missed out on an educational experience, therefore my professional behaviors in research and clinical practice would have not developed in this manner.

Overall, my experience with the Protecting Our Land camp not only encouraged me to continue interacting and motivating Native American youth, but it also provided a new perspective of faith and confidence within a younger generation. This weekend also opened me up to several interests within my future field of work and provided a new perspective on potential interventions to help youth excel in school systems. I would recommend that any individual volunteer for this experience as a college mentor, as the entire experience can be summed up in two words; life changing.

- John Gallo (Comanche)



*Protecting Our Land Summer Camp 2018 Cohort*

*Photos by: Nicholas Wilson*



*College mentor Sara Johantoborns with her mentees*



For more information visit:  
[http://itcaonline.com/?page\\_id=21315](http://itcaonline.com/?page_id=21315)

Contact:  
Melodie Lopez, Camp Director  
[indigenoustategies@gmail.com](mailto:indigenoustategies@gmail.com)

# Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals

By: Natalia Shaw



Natalia Shaw

Boozhoo, Natalia Shaw nidizhinikaaz. Hello, my name is Natalia and I am an Anishinaabe and Chicana graduate student in the Master of Science program in Environmental Science & Policy at Northern Arizona University. I graduated from the University of Redlands in Southern California with a bachelor's in Environmental Science. I currently study water availability in the Canyon de Chelly watershed and how water availability influences cultural vulnerability, especially for traditional agriculture. I am also a current lead instructor for the Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals (ITEP) and an alumnus of the ITEP internship program.

With growing concern for the health of our landscapes and integrity of our cultural resources, we look to our native youth as the present and future protectors of the vast ecosystems that span Indian Country. The passing down of knowledge to numerous generations and engaging Native youth of varying ages within the environmental sciences can ensure that our future land managers reflect the same cultural values that are keystone to our tribal communities.

Based out of Northern Arizona University, ITEP has served as a catalyst amongst tribal governments, federal agencies, and universities to support the protection of natural resources. In addition to this goal, ITEP has also formed an Environmental Education Outreach Program (EEOP) that aims to interest Native youth in environmental careers and help schools improve literacy in STEM through culturally relevant education. EEOP offers several opportunities for Native youth to explore environmental careers, one specific highlight being their summer internship program.

As an undergraduate student I had the opportunity to apply for an 8 week summer internship through ITEP-EEOP. That summer, my host site was the Santa Ynez Chumash Environmental Office in Santa Ynez, California. During my internship I was introduced to writing quality assurance documents for the Environmental Protection Agency, zero waste programs, water quality monitoring, and working with community members on environmental education. This internship provided me the opportunity to work alongside staff with varying job roles, which opened my eyes to the variety of job opportunities within tribal environmental offices in addition to the need for qualified native professionals to fill these roles. The following summers I was excited to re-apply for the internship and had the opportunity to work for the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe's Natural Resources Department in Kingston, Washington and for the Central Arizona Project in Phoenix, Arizona. Throughout my internship experiences, I focused on a variety of topics, from air quality education to tribal water rights. This diversity of topics allowed me to develop a number of skills that could be transferred to any career, but especially within the sciences, skills that I continue to practice as a graduate student. Beyond the skills I received, I left my internships understanding the challenges that tribal nations must overcome in practicing self-determination over the management of natural/cultural resources, in addition to meeting some of the people that are currently working towards solutions through community engagement, application of culturally relevant knowledge, and enforcement of community values.



Natalia working with a group of students



For more information visit:  
<http://www7.nau.edu/itep/main/Home/>

Contact:  
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[Mansel.Nelson@nau.edu](mailto:Mansel.Nelson@nau.edu)

# American Indian and Indigenous Health Alliance

By: Agnes Attakai



Haley Laughter

(Navajo) in 2016 to fight obesity, diabetes, and to promote a healthy alternative form of exercise that cultivates self-confidence, awareness, and balance in today's society. Haley teaches classes, workshops and presentations on yoga, wellness and self-care, and healing from historical trauma through consciousness at her yoga studio Mother Nature and Conference Venues. Haley, also a founder of the Indigenous Yoga Instructors Association, offers live classes on Facebook and other social media platforms. Her goal is to create and foster more Indigenous yoga instructors to heal her people and the communities affected by historical trauma. According to Haley, "Yoga is medicine. It can create balance and awareness while healing the mind, body, and spirit." She is dedicated to shifting yoga culture to be inclusive and equitable for all, especially in Native communities by creating the Indigenous yoga movement. If you to want contact her about classes, email her at [hozhototalwellness@gmail.com](mailto:hozhototalwellness@gmail.com) or call [\(505\) 879-0723](tel:5058790723).

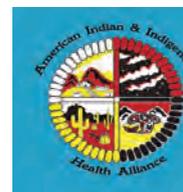
Two years ago AIIHA's Indigenous Day of Health's theme was "Achieving Cultural Empowerment Through Health and Wellness." The featured guests were Chelsey Luger (Turtle Mountain Chippewa and Standing Rock Sioux) and Thosh Collins (On'k Akimel O'Odham) of Well For Culture, a grassroots initiative which aims to reclaim and revitalize Indigenous health and wellness. To find out more about Chelsey and Josh and the Well For Culture movement go to: <http://www.wellforculture.com/>



Chelsey Luger and Thosh Collins  
Photo by: Thomas Karmelo Amaya

*"We travel all around Native Country for our work as wellness trainers and advocates. We were especially impressed by the work and heart that went into The University of Arizona's Indigenous Day of Health, and it was an honor to be a part of it. The students who make up the American Indian and Indigenous Health Alliance are sure to be future leaders in all areas of health and wellness in Indigenous communities and beyond, and we really look forward to seeing the amazing things that they go on to do. It would be a wonderful, truly progressive thing if Native students at all college campuses hosted a similar event."*

- Chelsey Luger



For more information contact:  
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Participants at AIIHA's 2017 Indigenous Day of Health with Well For Culture (seated left)  
Photo by: Alejandro Higuera

# Arizona Tri-Universities for Indian Education

By: Karen Francis-Begay



*Photo by: Gregor Orbino*

## History

In the fall of 1999, the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation appeared before the Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) and announced its second \$1.0 million gift to be shared equally among Arizona's three state universities. To ensure that American Indian students receive the support at each university, the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation asked the presidents of Arizona State University, Northern Arizona University, and The University of Arizona to designate a spokesperson on American Indian programs.

The university designees were charged to meet regularly to discuss challenges and opportunities in promoting student success. With the encouragement by the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation, the Arizona Tri-Universities for Indian Education (ATUIE) was officially formed on November 17, 2000.

## Mission

The mission of ATUIE is to lead the nation in American Indian student recruitment, persistence and graduation; advocate and support American Indian leadership at the highest levels within the state universities, colleges and tribal governments; and support integration of both academics and culture for the total well-being of students.

## Policy & Advocacy Initiatives

Over the past few years, ATUIE has been instrumental in its advocacy work whereby its membership has positively impacted statewide policy for the benefit of students and tribal communities.

For instance, the leadership of ATUIE helped draft and get approval for a Tribal Consultation Policy (ABOR Tribal Consultation 1-118). The policy acknowledges the special relationship the state universities have with Arizona's Native Nations and to consult with tribes on initiatives that have a potential impact on tribal citizens and the communities.

Another policy that has been revised and that now benefits American Indian students is the Residency Classification for Tuition Purposes. Initially, American Indian students who were enrolled with one of Arizona's Native Nations and hadn't resided in Arizona to be considered an "in-state" student, had to pay out-of-state tuition fees. With the revised policy, American Indian students qualify for in-state tuition if they are enrolled citizens of one of Arizona's 22 Native Nations, regardless of how long they have lived out of state. Since the policy revision, we have seen an increase number of students qualify for in-state tuition that otherwise wouldn't have.

## Membership

The ATUIE coalition expanded its membership to include not only faculty and staff from the three state universities, but also other higher education institutions that serve American Indian students, extending to institutions in New Mexico. The institution members are: Arizona State University, Northern Arizona University, The University of Arizona, Diné College, Tohono O'odham Community College, Navajo Technical University, San Carlos Apache College, Maricopa County Community Colleges, Pima Community College, A.T. Still University, University of New Mexico, Gallup Branch, and Western New Mexico University.

# 2019 Tribal Environmental Health Forum

By: Marti Lindsey



Artwork by: Dwayne Manuel (On'k Akimel O'odham)

The 3rd bi-annual Tribal Environmental Health Sciences Forum was a great success in 2019. Held at Hotel Tucson on February 27, 2019, members of the Environmental Health community came together to discuss research and hear from colleagues and community members. It expanded appreciation and engagement of Indigenous voices about various topics that touch on tribal responses to disasters; such as floods, contamination of waterways, and research processes concerning disasters. The forum bridged diverse knowledges, broadened skills and understanding of environmental science, and health by joining professions and tribal communities together in learning and discussion.

The forum brought nearly 200 individuals from various backgrounds, communities, expertise, and departments to convene, creating a safe and intimate setting for fellow professionals, colleagues, and friends. Disaster experts and students presented and shared knowledge, models, opportunities, and ways of collecting data and conducting research through panel sessions and posters. Edward Manuel, Chairman of Tohono O'odham Nation and Gabriel L. Lopez, Vice-Chairman of the Ak-Chin Indian Community told stories of flooding from Hurricane Rosa in 2018.



TO Nation Chairman Edward Manuel

The sessions ranged from the Impacts of Climate Change and Disasters to Personal Stories of 2018 Flooding in Tribal Communities. The Emergency Managers/Public Health Officers presented what Tribes are doing to plan for and to recover from disasters and participants completed an exercise about Incident Command Structures. To address Disaster Research, there were presentations about the Indigenous Inquiry Framework, the Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response, known as CASPER, and Data to Collect during and after a Disaster. Perhaps the most captivating presentation was the community panel where members from various communities presented on their personal experiences with disasters in their community. These personal stories showed the emotional distress individuals undergo during disasters, an aspect often overlooked in the disaster response research field.

The planning committee was comprised of tribal partners from the Ak-Chin Indian Community, the Gila River Indian Community, the Pascua Yaqui Tribe, and the Tohono O'odham Nation. They were joined by partners from the Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, the Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals, Indigenous Strategies, staff members of the Southwest Environmental Health Sciences Center, the Native American Research and Training Center, the Southwest Climate Adaptation Science Center and the Rural Health Professions Program. Together the tribal partners and organizations all participated to plan and execute the 2019 Tribal Environmental Health Forum to make it successful.

The Forum was comprised of people who care deeply for the Earth and want this planet to last for as long as possible. The main focus of this forum, and of environmental health in general, is to learn and take measures to create a long-lasting planet for generations to come. The only ones who can make this a possibility are the people who live on Earth, it is our job to come together and preserve Mother Earth.



Community Panel (from left to right): Dr. Karletta Chief, Chili Yazzie, Ophelia Rivas, Gabriel Lopez

Panel on the Indigenous Inquiry Framework (from left to right): Kyle Harvey, Melodie Lopez, Cheyenne Grabiec

# Southwest Environmental Health Sciences Center: Supporting Indigenous Scholars

**Danny Sestiaga** (Fort Yuma Quechan) was born and raised in Fort Yuma, Arizona. Danny is a winter 2018 graduate of the Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health with a Master of Public Health in Health Services Administration. He interned with the Southwest Environmental Health Sciences Center (SWEHSC) through the summer and fall of 2018 as a part of his degree requirement. While with SWEHSC, Danny took the lead on an upcoming asthma research project with a tribe in the Southwest. He also assisted in developing a Haury Challenge Grant project to help transition community college students in environmental science related degrees to The University of Arizona. Now that he has graduated, Danny's goal is to be a part of and oversee the transition of management of his tribe's health services from the IHS to the tribe itself. He wants play a role in helping his tribe offer culturally competent and relevant health care to citizens. Danny believes that his multicultural background has contributed immensely to his success. He believes that wanting what is best for your people, knowing where you come from, and never losing sight of that can play a considerable role in your academics.



Danny Sestiaga

Danny's advice to students:

*"Don't forget where you come from. You're going to have problems, but by being here and trying your hardest, you're going to be successful. In a sense, you being here is your ancestors' wildest dream. We, as Indigenous folks, are taught to be resilient; we are resilient people. We are unique in the way we believe and our characteristics. I think that in the grand scheme, at the university, our experiences and the things we have gone through as a people are validated, and I think that it is something we should not lose sight of. You deserve to have a seat at the table. Also don't be afraid to ask for help."*

**Kyle Harvey** (Diné) was born and raised in Rabbitbrush, New Mexico. Kyle works as a Program Coordinator for SWEHSC while also pursuing a Master in Higher Education. Kyle applied to work with SWEHSC because of the Center's focus on environmental justice within tribal communities. In his position, Kyle will be working with a tribe in the Southwest to develop an asthma research project and he will also be working with the San Carlos Apache Tribe to assist in coordinating a research project to address their ongoing issue of trash burning, and how it has been affecting the health of their community. Another project that Kyle will be assisting with is the development of the newest volume of the *Indigenous Stewards Magazine*. Kyle's long-term goal, once he finishes his education, is to become involved in educational policy to understand how education systems within tribal communities can better support students, Indigenous epistemologies, and the background the students come from. Kyle also attributes his culture with motivating him to pursue higher education. He says that one of the biggest things is remembering where he came from and always remembering that he is Diné first and that he needs to give back to his community in some way.

Kyle's advice to students:

*"Follow your passions; what makes you emotional. Also be a bit critical of the people you surround yourself with because there is always going to be people that will want to take advantage of your perspective and once they get what they want then they won't want anything else with you. Always ask questions; be a learner. If and when you get to the point of being an expert, stay humble."*



Kyle Harvey  
Photo by: Amanda Cheromiah



# Social Media: Who to Follow?

Go on Instagram and follow these accounts to keep up to date on the Indigenous Outdoors and Health and Wellness scenes!



**Natives Outdoors**  
@nativesoutdoors

**Hozho Total Wellness**  
@hozho\_total\_wellness



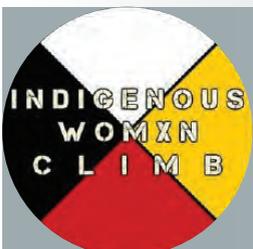
**Well for Culture**  
@wellforculture

**Native Womens Wilderness**  
@nativewomenswilderness



**Indigenous Women Hike**  
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**Red Earth Running Co.**  
@redearthrunco



**Indigenous Womxn Climb**  
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Amber Hoseny, 18  
San Carlos Apache  
San Carlos High School



Hunter Haliburton, 12  
Diné  
Emerson Elementary School



Leighya Hooke, 16  
San Carlos Apache  
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Iverson Henry, 15  
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*Indigenous Stewards* magazine will continue to focus on young professionals and the vital work they do to protect the environment, improve human health, and empower Indigenous communities. Your support will allow the expansion to access resources, develop collaborations, and bridge networks for capacity building partnerships.

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