



Native American  
Initiatives

# STRATEGIC PLAN

2022-2027

**A COLLECTIVE APPROACH  
TO NURTURING INDIGENOUS  
STUDENT SUCCESS**

*Photo: Dr. Amanda Cheromiah (Laguna Pueblo)*

*Facilitated and prepared by*

**REDSTAR**  
INTERNATIONAL

**Funded by:**



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
ARIZONA INSTITUTE FOR RESILIENCE  
**Agnese Nelms Haury  
Program in Environment  
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**PURPOSE**

**WHY WE'RE HERE**

Working together to expand human potential, explore new horizons and enrich life for all.

**MISSION**

**HOW WE'LL FULFILL OUR PURPOSE**

We will continuously improve how we educate and innovate so we can lead the way in developing adaptive problem-solvers capable of tackling our greatest challenges.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

*We respectfully acknowledge the University of Arizona is on the land and territories of Indigenous peoples. Today, Arizona is home to 22 federally recognized tribes, with Tucson being home to the O'odham and the Yaqui. Committed to diversity and inclusion, the University strives to build sustainable relationships with sovereign Native Nations and Indigenous communities through education offerings, partnerships, and community service.*



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Over the past few decades, Native American faculty and staff have laid the groundwork to improve the University experience for Native American students and faculty.

Yá'át'ééh! As a land-grant institution, the University has a critical role in creating an inclusive campus climate and building a proficient workforce statewide. This strategic plan shows how the land-grant role is linked to Native student and faculty experiences and proposes a reinvestment and redoubling of commitment to these students and faculty. The plan focuses on increasing access to higher education, supporting student persistence and graduation, and preparing a highly educated and skilled workforce.

Native American Initiatives is grateful to the Agnese Nelms Haury Program in Environment and Social Justice for the opportunity to create this plan with the facilitation of Red Star International, Inc. The Office of Native American Initiatives was created to guide and support Native American student and faculty initiatives that respect tribal sovereignty and are culturally grounded and research-based. My vision is that this plan will be an essential roadmap to your work in creating positive and lasting change where all Native communities feel welcomed, valued, and supported in pursuit of their educational and professional goals.

**Karen Francis-Begay, Ph.D.**

Assistant Vice Provost for Native American Initiatives





# Historical Context

The state of Arizona is home to 22 federally recognized tribes and has the third-largest Native American population in the country. Arizona's land base, approximately 28% of which is federal trust land, is home to two of the three largest reservations in the country, including Navajo and Tohono O'odham Nations.

The state's entire land base was originally lived upon and cared for by Native American Nations and individuals. In 1862, the United States Congress passed, and President Lincoln signed the Morrill Act, also known as the Land-Grant College Act. The Act was designed this way: Congress authorized each state to expropriate parcels of indigenous land to sell to raise capital for an endowment (and in some cases to locate the university on the seized land). The University of Arizona is one of 52 institutions across the U.S. that still benefits from investment income generated from Indigenous land confiscated over 150 years ago.

During 1871-1886, the federal government seized lands in Arizona. In 1910, parcels totaling 143,564 acres were assigned as a land-grant to the state through the Morrill Act for the benefit of the University. For that land, the U.S. government paid \$354, and the state raised \$449,624 for an initial endowment, a return of 1,270:1 for the amount paid.<sup>1</sup> Today, that endowment is worth over \$1 billion.<sup>2</sup> In fact, most of the lands for the Arizona "grant" were taken from the Pima, Yuman, Tohono O'odham, Navajo, and Apache. Today, the University of Arizona's main campus is located on the traditional homelands of the O'odham and the Yaqui, while its sites across the state are also located on Indigenous homelands.

This historical context establishes the University responsibility to serve the Native Nations and people from whose ancestors it benefited. While the land-grant status of the University has focused on service and outreach to the people of Arizona, the University's commitment to Native American people has fluctuated over time.

Looking at the recent past, the University supported an active and thriving Native American Student Affairs (NASA) student center and hub of support programs during 2000-2007. However, NASA has seen its physical space, services, and role on campus greatly reduced since then. During the time of budget cuts following the 2008 recession, the University was the only one among the three state universities to have retrenched the role, responsibility, and budget of its Native American student services. This diminishment has been highlighted many times, including in a 2013 Recommendations Report from the Native American Advisory Council (NAAC) to the University president.<sup>3</sup>

In 2007, the role of tribal advisor to the president was created. However, over the next decade, the position's changing placement within the institution, unclear responsibilities, and small budget did not facilitate meaningful, systemwide improvement for Native American students and faculty. Meanwhile, the Arizona Legislature banned "race-based" programs in 2008, and funding for NASA was cut significantly. It came to function as a cultural center operating on a shoestring budget rather than as a focal point of Native American academic innovation. Unlike other "minority groups," Native American students are citizens of sovereign Native Nations in treaty relationships with the federal government. Thus the University has a special obligation to institutionalize its recognition of the unique status of Native Nations and their citizens.

By the late 2010s, the University's service to Native Americans was displaying characteristics of "Virtual Adoption" and "Cosmetic Diversity." Virtual adoption means that offices and structures are adopted to superficially signal to the public that the institution, and its senior leaders, align with external norms of inclusion and diversity. Cosmetic diversity is the practice of enhancing the appearance of diversity on campus on the surface in ways that diversity statistics are presented.<sup>4</sup> The opportunity for change presented itself through University-wide strategic planning.

## General Timeline of Native American Programs & Services





# Introduction

In 2017, The University launched a year-long strategic planning process that engaged more than 10,000 stakeholders in collaborative dialogue about its future. The process acknowledged the achievements of the past while looking to the future.

The University 2018 Strategic Plan is organized around five pillars that showcase the University's vision and aspirations for the future while remaining faithful to its mission of service as a land-grant university. The University's institutional value of diversity and inclusion, which is woven throughout the plan, features most prominently in Pillar 1 *The Wildcat Journey: Driving Student Success for a Changing World* and Pillar 3 *The Arizona Advantage: Advancing our Land Grant Mission to Drive Social, Cultural, and Economic Impact*. More specifically, Pillar 3 highlights the University's aspirations to be a top-performing American Indian and Alaska Native Serving Institution and includes Initiative 3.1c to: "Institutionalize [its] commitment to Native American Advancement."

As part of this initiative, two positions were created: a senior leader for Native American Advancement and Tribal Engagement in the president's office, and a senior leader for Native American Initiatives in the provost's office. In 2020, the University provost established this office and appointed Dr. Francis-Begay as the assistant vice provost, Native American Initiatives (NAI). Leading a newly created office, Dr. Francis-Begay launched a NAI strategic planning process, with support from the Agnese Nelms Haury Program in Environment and Social Justice, to align NAI priorities with the University's broader vision, values, and strategic pillars. The Haury investment in this work provided for a thorough review of needs and opportunities which NAI has incorporated into this new strategic plan.





# NAI Strategic Planning Approach

For many universities, successful strategic planning typically focuses on specific motivations such as: 1) aligning institutional values and increasing internal efficiency and effectiveness; and 2) positioning an institution in relation to external forces, such as new government regulations, changes in the student market, and emerging technologies. Given NAI has an “inward-facing” role that supports internal relationships with University’s academic and student affairs departments, the NAI strategic planning approach focused on internal data, trends, and interactions to determine its priorities. To better understand the data, trends and relationships, an institutional scan was conducted to achieve three primary objectives:

1. Explore the University’s internal capacity needs to achieve Pillar 3 key performance indicators (KPI) specific to Native American student and faculty data measures;
2. Align institutional values with the interests, values and needs of Native Nations and Native American students, faculty and community; and
3. Identify evidence-based strategies to achieve key performance indicators.

The institutional scan included a three-pronged approach: 1) Data review. Identify and review specific Native American student and faculty indicators to better understand the current context as it relates to Pillar 3 KPI; 2) Document scan. Scan University reports and internal documents that summarize recommendations provided by Native Nations, and Native American students, faculty and community; and 3) Review of the literature. Consult the literature to ensure strategies align with evidence-based practices and empirical research that support Native student and faculty success.

## Data Review

Strategic Initiative 3.1c says that the University will institutionalize its service to Native American students, faculty, and communities “by enhancing, supporting, and improving coordination and efficiency of university-wide efforts on Native American students, faculty, and other focus areas.” Native American Initiatives is developing this strategic plan to guide this effort of systemic improvement, thus “establishing UArizona as a leading institution serving Native Americans by increasing awareness and establishing new processes.”<sup>6</sup>

The University Strategic Plan includes metrics for success such as “Close [the] retention gap for Native Students (from 70% today to 91% by 2025).”<sup>7</sup> These rates measure how many full-time, first-year students from one cohort remain at the University the following year.

There are challenges in addressing the initiatives and meeting the metrics. The first challenge consists in clarifying data terms and broadening data collection. For example, the simple question of how many American Indian/Alaska Native<sup>8</sup> students attended the University of Arizona in spring 2020 has three different answers, depending on the measurement systems used:

- Inclusive Race/Ethnicity (New category): Students are counted in every race/ethnicity group in which they have self-identified in the internal data system.
- IPEDS<sup>9</sup> Race/Ethnicity: Based on current federal reporting guidelines, students are grouped into a single category, which prioritizes ‘Hispanic and Latinx’ over all other race/ethnicity categories.
- Legacy IPEDS Race/Ethnicity: Based on legacy (pre-2010) federal reporting standards that have persisted for internal reporting needs, students end up grouped into a single category, which prioritizes ‘American Indian or Alaska Native’ over all other race/ethnicity categories.<sup>10</sup>



## University of Arizona American Indian/Alaska Native Enrollment – Spring 2020

	IPEDS	Inclusive	Legacy
Undergraduates	384	1046	990
Graduates	195	403	331
Total	579	1449	1321

*University Analytics and Institutional Research (UAIR), The University of Arizona: <https://uair.arizona.edu>*

Working with data about American Indians/Alaska Natives is extremely complex because of the numerous and diverse sovereign Native Nations involved. Currently, there are 574 federally recognized tribes in the U.S. While a person may enroll in only one tribe, many individuals identify with more than one Nation. University students may self-identify as American Indian or by Native Nation or with several tribes. They may have another ethnic or racial background in addition to being Native. The multitude of choices often leads to misclassification and even an undercounting of Native students.

First, the NAI office will work with partners across the University to develop meaningful definitions and efficient data collection processes. Then it will work with these partners to use the data in ways that meet the needs of Native American students, faculty, and staff. To guide these efforts, NAI has developed an indigenous framework that will lead to student success which will be elaborated on in a later section.



# NAI Strategic Planning Approach

## Document Scan: A Two-Step Process

The primary purpose of the document scan was to identify opportunities to align institutional values with the interests, values, and needs of Native Nations and Native American students, faculty, and community (Institutional Scan, Objective Two). Dr. Francis-Begay served as initiative owner under the University Strategic Plan, Pillar 3 during its early development. In this role, Dr. Francis-Begay participated in several stakeholder engagement meetings with University Native American faculty, staff, and students. Additionally, she has held senior leadership positions under five University presidents over two decades. Rather than launch another round of engagement meetings, the strategic planning team reviewed reports, memoranda, meeting summaries, and other key documents, current and historical, summarizing engagement outcomes from meetings with Native Nations, students, faculty, and the community.

### Step 1: Review

A total of 25 documents were reviewed. The documents shared the viewpoints of one or more of the following stakeholder groups: seven documents from Native American students; seven from faculty; nine from Native Nations; and two from specific University departments or programs. Although documents older than five years were not included in the scan, they were reviewed to determine if issues and recommendations have changed over time. More on this finding later.

### Nineteen of the 25 documents met the following criteria:

- Addresses University campus diversity and inclusion, with recommendations specific to Native American students, faculty, staff, or community;
- Contains perspectives of Native American students, faculty, staff, program, or community;
- Provides context to the University's Pillar 3 Strategic Priorities and Initiatives; and
- Was prepared within the last five years.

### Step 2: Scan

Next, the planners closely read the 19 documents and coded the concerns and recommendations. Since areas of concern are often paired with recommendations to address them, we list here the key recommendations.<sup>11</sup>

- Reinvesting land-grant investment gains back into Native communities, students, and faculty.
- Ensuring availability of adequate resources to achieve key performance targets identified in Pillar 3 of the University Strategic Plan.
- Monitoring internal consultation and research practices to ensure that faculty and staff are accountable to the Arizona Board of Regents Tribal Consultation Policy and that they respect Native Nations' research policies and practices.
- Regularly and systematically collecting, reporting, and interpreting student and faculty data, as well as monetary contributions of tribes, to inform decision-making.
- Engaging Native American faculty and administrators in leadership meetings and policy decisions, especially those that impact Native Nations, students, and communities.
- Providing training to all faculty, staff, and students to increase awareness and understanding of Native Nations and Native Americans to create a more welcoming and safe campus.

Recommendations found in current documents (within five years) differed very little from those in older documents, covering these significant themes: 1) Diversity and inclusion at the University, 2) Native American student recruitment and retention, 3) Native American faculty recruitment, engagement, and advancement, and 4) Native Nation partnerships. The ongoing advocacy around these themes highlights the need to standardize practices and processes across the University.

## Development of the Plan

Upon completion of the data review and document scan, Dr. Francis-Begay participated in a process to identify the recommendations that fall under the Office of Provost's purview and prioritized the internal systems needed to build the capacity and infrastructure needed to foster a safe and respectful learning community. A systems approach facilitates opportunities for administrative and academic programs and departments to work in partnership—rather than in isolation—to leverage capabilities and resources to ensure a campus environment in which students can be successful.

The research to develop culturally effective practices to enhance the experience and success of Native American students is limited. This is due, in large part, to the population size being too small to include in studies. However, in recent years, an increase in commitment to serve Native American students and the federal government's movement towards formal evaluation of grant-funded programs have led to the development of new studies. Dr. Francis-Begay is well versed in the research that does exist on Native American higher education, and she has participated in some of this research conducted at the University. The strategic plan facilitators consulted this research throughout the process and wove it into this plan.

What emerged from the overall strategic planning process is an Indigenous framework that is student-centered and takes a research-informed approach to creating a sense of place, belonging and connection for Native American students.

During fall 2021 and winter 2022, Dr. Francis-Begay presented the strategic approach and the resulting Indigenous Student Success Framework to different stakeholder groups for comment and support. The strategic plan team used their feedback and successive reviews to prepare this *Native American Initiatives Strategic Plan 2022-2027*.



Photo: Dr. Amanda Cheromiah (Laguna Pueblo)



# Indigenous Student Success Framework

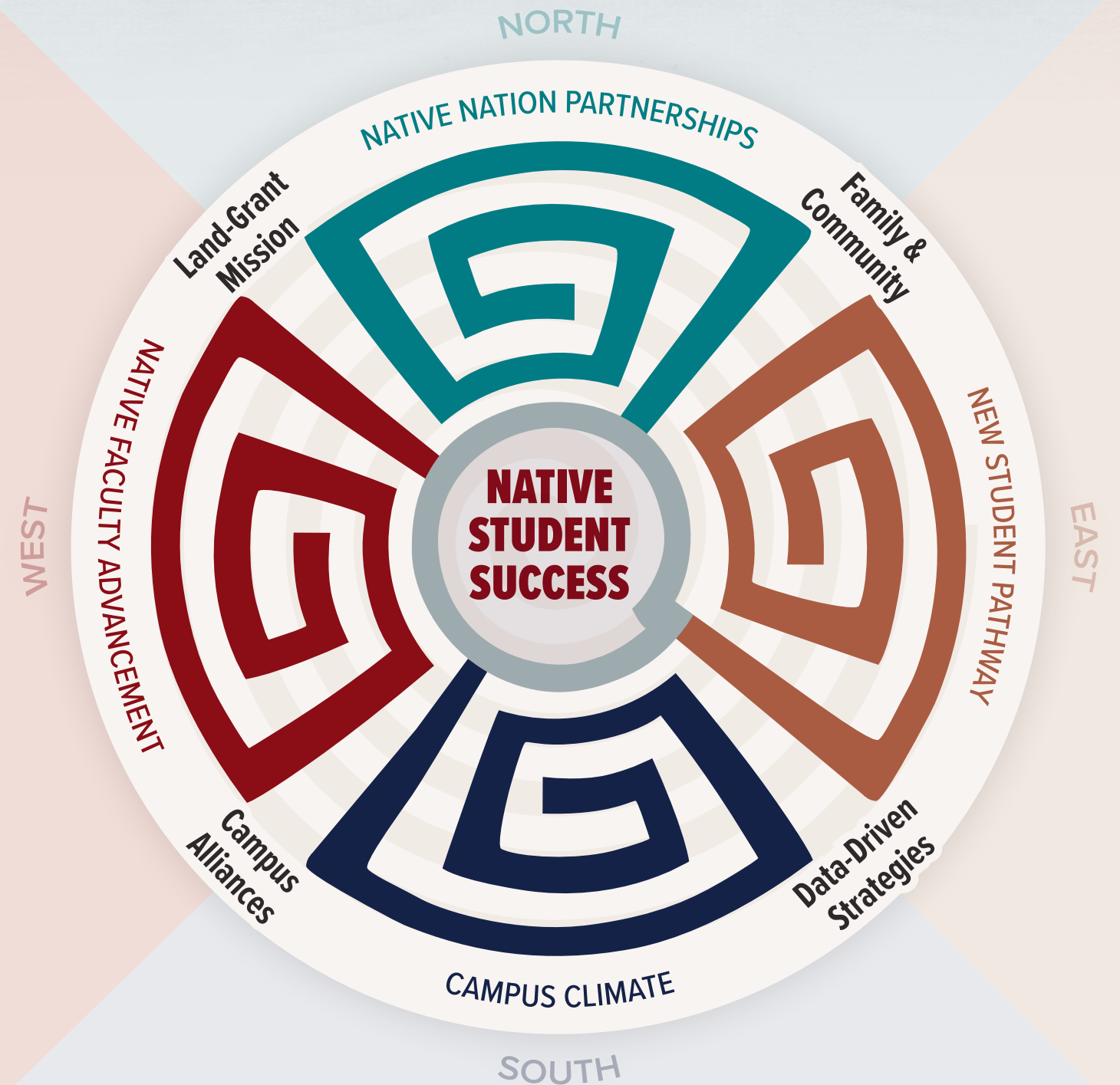
A student-centered Indigenous framework emerged from the strategic planning process and is the basis for the plan. The framework acknowledges the four sacred directions, east, south, west and north as representative of the cyclical nature of ceremony and one's life journey. Although relevant within many Indigenous knowledge systems, Native Nations may interpret the significance or meaning of the four directions differently, and they may attribute different teachings, principles, elements, and epistemologies to each direction. Despite the differences, the framework aims to affirm an Indigenous worldview and philosophy into a student-centered approach to creating a home-place on campus where Native students feel a sense of connection, belonging and respect.

The NAI Strategic Framework places Native student success at the center and builds around four main pathways, along with four integrating themes providing greater context to the Native American student experience. The pathways are each represented by one of the four directions, along with its attributes. Each theme is placed along a cyclical clockwise journey starting in the east:

<b>EAST</b>	Place of Beginnings – New Student Pathway	Native students have the tools to successfully navigate the University experience.
Family and community support college readiness, choice, and transition.		
<b>SOUTH</b>	Self-Sufficiency – Campus Climate	The University fosters a welcoming and supportive campus community and sense of belonging.
Data-driven strategies lead to innovative and impactful programs and services.		
<b>WEST</b>	Positive Relations – Native Faculty Advancement	Native faculty are represented across disciplines and are engaged in academic excellence.
Campus alliances form critical linkages that lead to equitable outcomes.		
<b>NORTH</b>	Self-Actualization – Native Nation Partnerships	Partnerships promote nation building, infrastructure and workforce opportunities.
Land-grant mission affirms accountability and commitment to Native Nations.		

Upon graduation, students return to the east, completing the circle and returning back to their families and communities as role models and mentors.

An O'dham inspired basket illustrates the Native student journey, its cyclical nature, its challenges and opportunities, and the important relationships along the way. This framework forms the basis for the NAI Strategic Plan, which aims to honor the Indigenous Lands and Native Nations from which the University has benefited by ensuring the internal systems are in place to advance Native student success.





# NAI Strategic Plan

Before embarking on strategic planning, Native American Initiatives created this vision and mission to guide its work and to keep the plan tethered to the Native student experience. Below the mission is a brief description of how the rest of the plan is organized.

## VISION

*To be a home-place where Native students feel a sense of connection, belonging and respect.*

## MISSION

*To honor the Indigenous Lands and Native Nations from which the University of Arizona has benefited by ensuring the internal systems are in place to advance Native student success.*

The NAI Strategic Plan is organized into four sections. Each section begins with a header that lists the cardinal direction and its attributes as it relates to this work. Each header is followed by a strategic priority and corresponding goals. Strategic priorities are written as visionary statements in the present tense to affirm their significance, and to serve as indicators of success. The goals are listed as broad statements about what NAI aims to achieve within the priority. An introductory description of the direction and priority's significance follows each goal to provide context and research to support the approach. Important campus alliances and partnerships are described, and followed by objectives, strategies, metrics and timeframes.





# EAST - Place of Beginnings - New Student Pathway

Planting Seeds – Planning – Standards for Life – Creative Thought

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: Native students have the tools to successfully navigate the University experience.

### GOALS:

- Engage students and families before, during and after college entrance.
- Access quality data to more effectively define and measure Native student success.
- Increase financial security through opportunity and access to resources.

The East direction represents a new day, a new beginning. It is the direction the sun rises and gives life to Mother Earth. It is the direction where prayers are offered to the Creator. It is where we plant the seeds for a future harvest utilizing creative thought to where one wants to go in life.

The New Student Pathway begins in students’ home communities as they, along with their families, learn about opportunities in higher education. Students and families make critical choices regarding what institution they will attend, their course of study and financing. They learn about institutional requirements, opportunities and new standards for life. Key findings from educational researchers show how family and community engagement support students’ journeys to college. The University research on Native students’ pathways to college shows that “the home community environment (where most adults in the community were college-educated) influenced Native students’ college enrollment.”<sup>12</sup> NAI will help the University inform its outreach to Native American students and families with an understanding of the essential role that family plays in supporting these students’ matriculation and persistence.<sup>13</sup>

Efforts to ensure students have the tools they need to successfully navigate the University experience begin during their early academic experiences. University Enrollment Management, Early Academic Outreach and academic colleges have a critical role. NAI proposes to work with them, along with University Analytics & Institutional Research to standardize data reports to accurately capture student persistence rates and to develop a strategy to improve student retention.

### GOAL 1.1: Engage Native students and families before, during and after college entrance.

#### Objective 1.1.1: Increase University early outreach and visibility in tribal communities.

Strategy	Metrics	Time
Increase Native student representation in campus materials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baseline established</li> <li>• Increased representation</li> </ul>	YR 1
Develop a Native student early outreach and recruitment strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accurate entrance data is used</li> <li>• Strategy developed</li> </ul>	YR 1 YR 2
Increase Admissions Counselor presence and services on tribal lands.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of K-12 and tribal college outreach activities</li> </ul>	YR 2-3

#### Objective 1.1.2: Improve first- and second-year student persistence rates.

Establish systematic reports to accurately capture persistence rates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean Tribal affiliation data</li> <li>• Accurate baseline established</li> <li>• Establish standardized reports</li> </ul>	YR 1
Improve campus climate student survey instrument.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unique survey created for Native students</li> <li>• Pilot survey for relevance and usefulness</li> <li>• Institutionalize survey</li> </ul>	YR 1 YR 2 YR 3
Develop and implement a wraparound retention strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy developed</li> <li>• Strategy implemented</li> <li>• Strategy evaluated</li> </ul>	YR 2 YR 3-4 YR 5

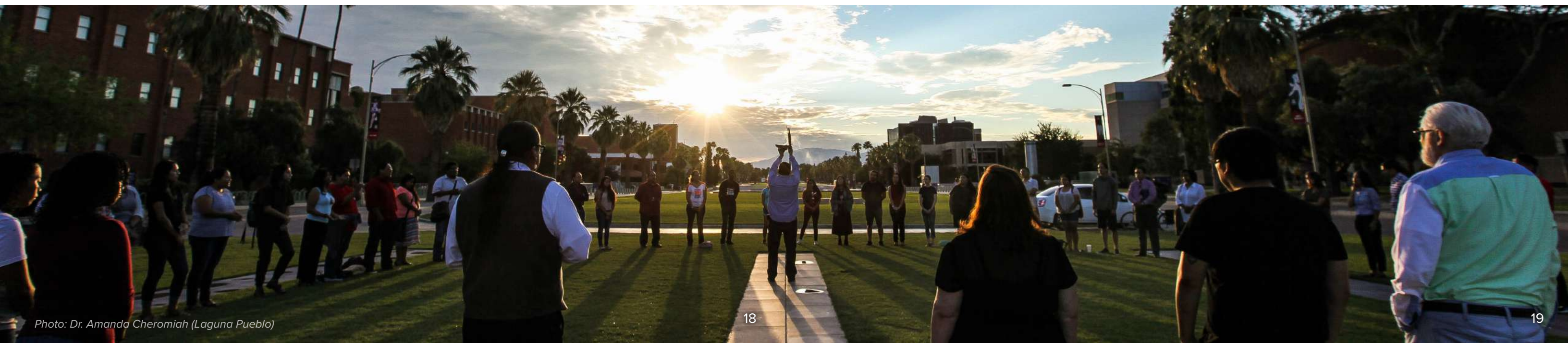


Photo: Dr. Amanda Cheromiah (Laguna Pueblo)



# EAST - Place of Beginnings - New Student Pathway

Planting Seeds – Planning – Standards for Life – Creative Thought

Higher education institutions tend to aggregate all ethnic minorities together to address problems and develop programs in a “one size fits all” approach.<sup>14</sup> NAI proposes to collaborate with University Analytics & Institutional Research to disaggregate the data to more effectively define and measure Native student success.

GOAL 1.2: Access quality data to more effectively define and measure Native student success.		
Objective 1.2.1: Disaggregate data to more effectively define and measure Native student success.		
Strategy	Metrics	Time
Streamline financial aid and scholarship processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular reports</li> <li>Written procedures</li> </ul>	YR 1 YR 2
Bring visibility and increase support to OSFA Native/Indigenous Outreach unit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inclusion in OSFA materials</li> <li>Inclusion in broader on-campus materials</li> <li>Office-wide training</li> </ul>	YR 1 YR 2-5
Objective 1.2.2: Strengthen data collection to better inform policy, program and service decisions.		
Improve campus climate student survey analysis and dissemination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased survey responses</li> <li>Improved representation</li> <li>Reduced response duplication</li> </ul>	YR 2-5

The cost of higher education is a major barrier to Native American students entering college.<sup>15</sup> Research into the importance of financial aid for Native American students confirms how critical financial aid support is to college entry and college choice.<sup>16</sup> Yet college costs and the process of obtaining financial aid are confusing to students and parents alike.<sup>17</sup> NAI is collaborating with the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid (OSFA) to streamline the financial aid and scholarship processes at the University.

GOAL 1.3: Increase student financial security through opportunity and access to resources.		
Objective 1.3.1: Make financial services more accessible and Native student-friendly.		
Strategy	Metrics	Time
Streamline financial aid and scholarship processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Process map to identify and address barriers</li> <li>Written procedures</li> <li>Regular reports</li> </ul>	YR 1 YR 2
Bring visibility and increase support to OSFA Native/Indigenous Outreach unit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inclusion in OSFA materials</li> <li>Inclusion in broader on-campus materials</li> <li>Office-wide training</li> </ul>	YR 1 YR 2-5
Objective 1.3.2: Increase financial aid and scholarship opportunities.		
Identify new and improve existing scholarship offerings and processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish baseline</li> <li>Regular scholarship reports</li> <li># of Native students utilize Scholarship Universe portal</li> <li># of scholarships available</li> <li># of Native students apply</li> <li>\$ Scholarship funds awarded</li> <li># of scholarships awarded</li> </ul>	YR 1 YR 2 YR 2-5 YR 2-5 YR 2-5
Increase donor support for scholarships and programming.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># of donors</li> <li>\$ Donor supported scholarship</li> <li>\$ Donor supported programming</li> </ul>	YR 2-5 YR 2-5 YR 2-5
Provide tuition waivers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># of tuition waivers</li> </ul>	YR 3



Photo: Dr. Amanda Cheromiah (Laguna Pueblo)



# SOUTH - Self-Sufficiency and Dignity - Campus Climate

## Making a Living – Preparing To Make Dreams Come True – Leadership and Strength

### STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: The University fosters a welcoming and supportive campus community and sense of belonging.

#### GOALS:

- Embed meaning of being a land-grant institution.
- Increase awareness and understanding of the contributions of Native Nations.
- Enhance visibility and representation of Native Nations, students, faculty, and staff.

The south direction is connected to one’s sense of self-reliance, preparation, and motivation. It is where we begin the process of making our dreams come true. It is also the direction where our ceremonial songs of healing and strength are sung by the healers and medicine people. This direction can be associated with our natural environment and our surroundings that enrich our livelihood. It reminds us of who we are and the responsibility and pride we take with us going forward.

The University has identified “inclusive excellence” as the recognition of the talents, worldviews, perceptions, cultures, and skills that diverse communities bring.<sup>18</sup> Native Nations are sovereign and maintain a unique government-to-government relationship with federal, state, and local governments.<sup>19</sup> Native Nations are also key drivers in Arizona’s workforce and economy. For example, from fiscal 2004 through fiscal 2012, Arizona Native Nations gave \$819.5 million directly to state and local governments, and at that time, tribally-owned casinos (as a whole) were the third-largest employers in Arizona, after Walmart and Banner Health.<sup>20</sup> Because of the strong contributions and the sovereignty of Native Nations, the wider campus community would benefit from policies and practices designed to raise awareness and provide education, through standardized training and course curricula.

#### GOAL 2.1: Embed meaning of being a land-grant institution.

##### Objective 2.1.1: Create guidelines and use of land acknowledgment statements across campus.

Strategy	Metrics	Time
Establish a Land Acknowledgment Team to advise on land acknowledgments in campus-wide material.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidelines developed</li> <li>• Protocols developed</li> <li>• # of materials featured</li> </ul>	YR 1-2

##### Objective 2.1.2: Incorporate land-grant significance into the curriculum.

Collaborate with the Office of Instruction and Assessment and General Education to develop a strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy developed/implemented</li> <li>• # of courses that include land-grant content</li> <li>• # of faculty that teach land-grant content</li> </ul>	YR 3-4
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The Office of Native American Advancement & Tribal Engagement, Native Peoples Technical Assistance Office, Native faculty and the Office of Instruction and Assessment and General Education have a leadership role in creating guidelines, developing and delivering curricula and providing professional development opportunities to campus faculty and staff.

#### GOAL 2.2: Increase understanding of the land-grant mission and the contributions of Native Nations.

##### Objective 2.2.1: Provide professional development opportunities to all campus faculty and staff.

Strategy	Metrics	Time
Integrate land-grant mission learning module into campus leadership development institutes.	• Learning module inclusion in leadership programs	YR 2-3
	• # of participants	YR 3-5

##### Objective 2.2.2: Establish a land acknowledgment webpage with an accurate account of University’s land-grant history.

Develop and maintain a webpage with a land acknowledgment and University’s land-grant history and reconciliation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active site</li> <li>• # of visits</li> <li>• # of site updates and news posts</li> </ul>	YR 2
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Findings by the American Indian College Fund support a common sense conclusion: “for Native students to be successful in college the institution must be committed to their inclusion.”<sup>21</sup> NAI will coordinate opportunities with University Marketing and Communications to increase Native American visibility and representation.

#### GOAL 2.3: Enhance visibility and representation of Native Nations, students, faculty, and staff.

##### Objective 2.3.1: Promote and raise awareness about Native faculty, programs and services.

Strategy	Metrics	Time
Increase awareness and visitation of the Native American Web Portal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baseline established</li> <li>• Increase in web analytics</li> </ul>	YR 1-5
Improve Native American representation in university materials and media.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of photos available</li> <li>• # of photo used</li> <li>• # of stories about Native faculty, staff and students</li> </ul>	YR 2-5



# WEST - Positive Relations - Native Faculty Advancement

Social Connections – Family Cohesiveness – Plan Implementation – Reinforce Kinship Ties

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: Native faculty are represented across disciplines and are engaged in academic excellence.

### GOALS:

- Grow faculty representation across campus colleges and disciplines.
- Expand leadership and advancement opportunities for faculty across campus.
- Build a learning community that is safe, respectful and welcoming.

The west direction represents positivity and our ability to demonstrate respect and collaboration. We are reminded of our relationship to others and our responsibility to reinforce kinships, especially with family, relatives, and community members. The Native faculty at the university are knowledge and culture bearers who relate to, teach, and mentor Native students. They are our elders and teachers who nurture students to be grounded and to be positive in their education journey. In turn, the university needs to support Native faculty in their academic pursuits, because they are and will continue to be the caretakers of students.

NAI plans to engage Faculty Affairs, the Academic Deans' Council and University Analytics and Institutional Research to develop a strategy to increase Native faculty representation across disciplines and in leadership roles. Similar to Native American students, data on Native faculty is limited. Generating systematic reports and ensuring representation in climate surveys will help inform strategy development to address barriers and increase opportunities.

### GOAL 3.1: Grow faculty representation across campus colleges and disciplines.

*Objective 3.1.1: Improve data collection to better understand Native faculty representation and experience.*

Strategy	Metrics	Time
Establish systematic reports to accurately capture faculty representation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baseline established</li> <li>• Clean tribal affiliation data</li> <li>• Representation by college</li> <li>• # of faculty by category (e.g. career, tenure)</li> </ul>	YR 1
Improve faculty climate survey instrument.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review survey for relevance and usefulness</li> <li>• Ensure representative sample</li> <li>• Data reports generated</li> <li>• Barriers identified</li> </ul>	YR 1-2
<i>Objective 3.1.2: Increase Native faculty, especially in disciplines where they are underrepresented.</i>		
Co-develop a Native faculty recruitment strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy developed</li> <li>• # of faculty / # of endowed faculty increased</li> <li>• # of post-docs increased</li> <li>• # of 1st faculty increased</li> <li>• Use of Strategic Priorities Faculty Initiative (SPFI) funds to recruit NA faculty increased</li> </ul>	YR 2-3





# WEST - Positive Relations - Native Faculty Advancement

## Social Connections – Family Cohesiveness – Plan Implementation – Reinforce Kinship Ties

Opportunities exist to reinvest monies generated through endowment principal, land holdings and land-grant income to support Native faculty research and advancement through recruitment and fellowships.

### GOAL 3.2: Expand leadership and advancement opportunities for faculty across campus.

#### Objective 3.2.1: Increase Native faculty in professional development opportunities.

Strategy	Metrics	Time
Co-develop a Native faculty advancement strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy developed</li> <li>• # of tenure track increased</li> <li>• # of tenure increased</li> <li>• # of adjunct moved to career track with promotion</li> <li>• # of career track moved to multi-year</li> <li>• Equity gap reduction between Native students and faculty</li> </ul>	YR 3

#### Objective 3.2.2: Increase senior administrators and Native faculty engagement opportunities.

Increase inclusion of Native faculty in campus leadership activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # represented on committees/workgroups</li> <li>• Participation in presidential and provost meetings and events</li> </ul>	YR 1-5
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Many opportunities exist to incorporate education and information about Native Nations in Arizona and their contributions, including, but not limited to: new student, staff, and faculty orientations; employee training and workforce development materials; training for anyone who conducts research with Native Nations; community education; and other related avenues.

### GOAL 3.3: Cultivate an academic community built on respect, integrity and inclusion.

#### Objective 3.3.1: Foster a welcoming community for Native faculty.

Strategy	Measure	Time
Embed an annual new faculty event to build their campus network.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual event</li> <li>• # of faculty attend</li> <li>• Post-event survey</li> </ul>	YR 2 Annual

#### Objective 3.3.2: Increase awareness of University's land-grant mission amongst all faculty.

Incorporate a land-grant mission and its connection to the dispossession of Indian lands module into the new faculty orientation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Featured in orientation</li> <li>• Pre- and post-orientation survey</li> </ul>	YR 2 Annual
Increase faculty participation in training on the land-grant mission and its connection to the dispossession of Indigenous lands.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot training</li> <li>• Pre- and post-training survey</li> <li>• # of faculty complete training</li> <li>• Finalize and institutionalize training.</li> </ul>	YR 1 YR 1 YR 2-5 YR 2-3





# NORTH - Self-Actualization - Native Nation Partnerships

Self-Determination – Self-Confidence and Awareness – Interdependence – Homecoming

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4: Partnerships promote nation building, infrastructure and workforce opportunities.

### GOALS:

- Connect students with career development opportunities with and for Native Nations.
- Strengthen relationships with tribal education departments and tribal colleges.
- Support Native American Advancement & Tribal Engagement outreach efforts.

In the north direction, we obtain the knowledge needed to achieve greater self-sufficiency and dignity. We are completing the circle and making our way back home with a greater understanding of ourselves in relation to our environment. We have achieved internal balance while maintaining a positive work ethic, humility and service. Our aspirations now return to our tribes, our communities and our families—all those who have been the source of our personal strength.

Native Nations are interested in partnering with the University in the areas of workforce development, infrastructure and capacity development, and formalizing student support from K-12 to the University. NAI proposes to create and foster campus linkages with Native Nations to support training, research and internship opportunities in various fields.

### GOAL 4.1: Connect students with career development opportunities with Native Nations.

*Objective 4.1.1: Utilize campus resources, programs and services to create opportunities for Native students.*

Strategy	Metrics	Time
Partner with Student Engagement and Career Development to connect students with opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish baseline</li> <li>• # of internships, training, research, and residency opportunities</li> <li>• \$ funding support disbursed</li> </ul>	YR 1 YR 2-5 YR 2-5

Tribal education departments and tribal colleges have a critical role in many students' academic career, often starting in secondary education and continuing throughout their higher education pursuits. There are three tribal colleges and universities (TCUs) in the state: Diné College, Tohono O'odham Community College, and San Carlos Apache College. NAI proposes to work more closely with these TCUs to better support students as they transfer to the University and from the University into the workforce.

Access quality data to more effectively define and measure Native student success. Increase financial security through opportunity and access to resources.

### GOAL 4.2: Strengthen relationships with tribal education departments and tribal colleges.

*Objective 4.2.1: Connect tribal education departments and tribal colleges with campus networks and resources.*

Strategy	Metrics	Time
Develop and implement a tribal education department and colleges engagement strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy developed</li> <li>• # of meetings</li> <li>• Post-meeting surveys</li> </ul>	YR 1 YR 2-5

The Office of Native American Advancement and Tribal Engagement leads efforts to engage Native Nations through formal mechanisms, such as the Native American Advisory Council, University presidential visits to tribal lands, tribal summits and other activities. NAI will support outreach efforts as needed to formalize partnerships in various areas, such as workforce development, infrastructure and capacity development, and formalizing student support

### GOAL 4.3: Support Native American Advancement & Tribal Engagement outreach efforts.

*Objective 4.3.1: Foster campus linkages based on identified tribal needs, priorities, and plans.*

Strategy	Metrics	Time
Support the implementation of academic initiatives and partnerships developed with Native Nations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of activities</li> <li>• # of academic partnerships</li> <li>• # of campus linkages</li> </ul>	Ongoing





# The Future of Native American Student Affairs

Native American Student Affairs (NASA) is currently positioned as a cultural center under the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. However, NASA's role on campus and in the Native American community is essential and goes far beyond that of a cultural center.

Much like the Assistant Vice Provost for Native American Initiatives, NASA serves as an ambassador to Native nations and has a vital role in supporting their citizens, families, and future workforce. Native Nations have the right to remain distinct and to seek acknowledgment and respect by postsecondary institutions for the dual position their members hold as Native American people and as citizens of sovereign nations. This recognition is a key facet of the University's land-grant mission of service.

One way in which the University can respectfully acknowledge the dual position of Native American students is to conduct an evaluation of NASA's placement within the University structure, as well as a thorough consideration of its future mission and role. Once a new NASA director is hired, this Strategic Plan proposes the following steps:

- Phase I
  - Discuss the evaluation of NASA with the new director and make adjustments to the evaluation process as needed based on this discussion.
  - Assess NASA as it exists through a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis.
  - Conduct visioning sessions with NASA stakeholders, exploring the role of NASA and the possible effects of placing it within Native American Initiatives.
  - Gather and summarize all findings.
- Phase II
  - Make a recommendation for the future of Native American Student Affairs at the University.
  - After feedback is received, make decisions on all relevant parameters.
  - Implement all changes to the placement, mission, and role of NASA.

NASA is an ideal recipient of attention and funds as the University seeks to reinvest in its land-grant mission.





# Conclusion

Nurturing Indigenous student success cannot be achieved by one department alone. It requires a collective approach to ensure the systems – relationships, process and capabilities – are in place to ensure a campus environment in which all students can achieve. By incorporating an Indigenous, student-centered approach, the Native American Initiatives Strategic Plan aims to create a home-place on campus where Native students feel a sense of connection, belonging and respect. This will be achieved by leveraging partnerships to advocate for adequate resources, improve data collection, analysis and reporting, increase internal efficiency, and strengthen communication and collaboration across campus.

This **NAI Strategic Plan 2022-2027** reflects the foundational elements needed to positively impact student outcomes across these multiple determinants of success. Dr. Francis-Begay will work with committees, councils, and associations across campus to ensure ongoing engagement in the implementation, monitoring and evaluating of the plan. We appreciate the funding support of this report by Agnese Nelms Haury Program in Environment and Social Justice. Our hope is that our collective efforts to improve how we work with Native students will lead to greater outcomes overall for Native American students, faculty, and staff, and Native Nations.

Together, we will uphold the University's aspirations to be a top-performing American Indian and Alaska Native Serving Institution and to institutionalize its commitment to Native American advancement.



*Photo: Dr. Amanda Cheromiah (Laguna Pueblo)*



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