27th Annual American Indian Studies Association Conference

Constellations of Indigenous Belonging and Kinship

University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM
February 5-6, 2026

ANNUAL AISA GRADUATE PRE-CONFERENCE

Wednesday, February 4, 2026

9:00 - 10:00 AM	**Optional Prayer Run** Location: West side of Mesa Vista Hall (a poster board will be available) Food to follow Prayer Run
12:00 - 12:20 PM	**Welcome and Introductions** Location: Lobo A&B
12:30 - 2:00PM	**Book Talk "From the Skin"** Location: Lobo A&B
2:30 - 5:00 PM	**Film Screening "You're No Indian" (2025)** Location: Lobo A&B Snacks will be provided
5:30 - 6:30 PM	**Dinner at UNM Draft & Table** Location: UNM Second-level "Draft and Table" taproom

CONFERENCE AT-A-GLANCE

February 5, 2026 AISA Conference Day One

8:00 AM – 8:45 AM	Plenary Welcome - Breakfast Provided
9:00 AM - 10:30 AM	Section I: Panels and Presentations
10:45 AM - 12:15 PM	Section II: Panels and Presentations
12:15: PM – 1:45 PM	**Lunch - Catered by Miriam Lucero**
	Jackson Student Atrium, Center of Anderson School of Management
1:45 PM - 3:15 PM	Plenary - Honoring Dr. James Riding In
3:30 PM - 5:00 PM	Section III: Panels and Presentation

February 6, 2026 AISA Conference Day Two

8:00 AM – 8:45 AM	Breakfast Provided
9:00 AM - 10:30 AM	Section IV: Panels and Presentations
10:45 AM - 12:15 PM	Section V: Panels and Presentations
12:15 PM - 1:45 PM	Celebration of Life: James Riding In
	Lunch hosted by the AISA Board
2:00 PM - 3:30 PM	Business Meeting
3:45 PM – 5:15 PM	Section VI: Panels and Presentations

Welcome to AISA 2026

Yá'át'ééh Relatives,

Welcome to our 27th Annual Conference of the American Indian Studies Association and our 3rd Annual Graduate Pre-Conference. We are so grateful that you have joined us this year at University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, New Mexico. We are honored that you are here with us to be in community for a few days as we share our work.

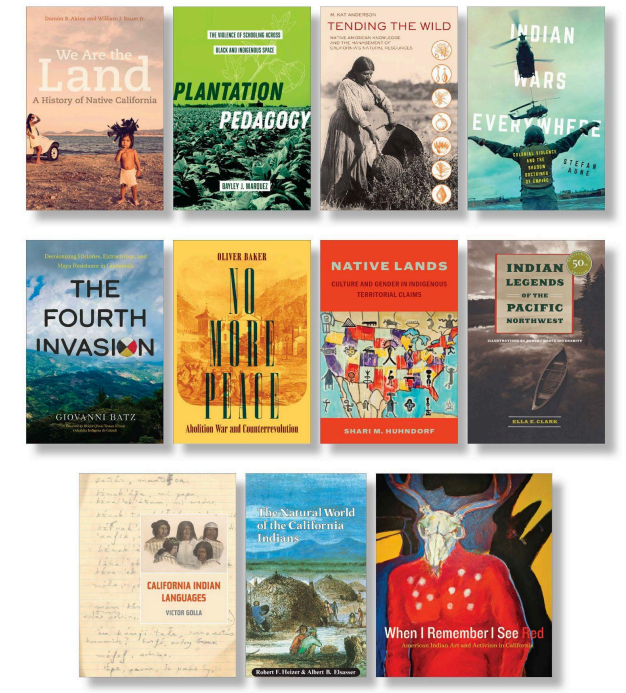
This year, our board discussed our theme that should focus on recent issues impacting our Tribal Nations and Indigenous Communities. With national division occurring, we wanted to remind and center our teachings, practices, and communities as pivotal to the work that we do. We settled on our conference theme, "Constellations of Indigenous Belonging and Kinship" to resist the current and ongoing political climate that continues to impact all of our Tribal Nations and Indigenous communities. We know that one powerful tool for use as Indigenous Peoples is our kin and community. Without each other, AISA and other organizations alike, would not exist. Our Indigenous belonging and kinship with one another uplift us to imagine worlds where we, as Indigenous Peoples, thrive.

Additionally, this past year, we lost a dearly beloved member and co-founder of American Indian Studies Association, Dr. James Riding In. For AISA 2026, we want to honor his legacy and the foundations of American Indian Studies. Instead of one keynote, we have decided to host a Celebration of Life with a Plenary Panel on Day 1 and community gathering on Day 2.

This conference is an opportunity to provide support for the future of American Indian Studies/Native American Studies/Indigenous Studies. Thank you for joining us and making our 27th Annual Conference a big success.

Ahéhee'

Dr. Souksavanh T Keovorabouth, Diné, AISA President



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AISA CONFERENCE DAY ONE

Plenary Opening: 8:00 AM - 8:45 AM

Room location: SUB Ballroom C
Breakfast provided

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

Session 1: Jodi A. Byrd's Indigenomicon, Grounded Relationalities, and the Future of Indigenous Studies

Roundtable
Room location: SUB Ballroom C
Jerome Clark (Diné), Sarah Fong, Ho'esta Mo'e'hahne (Southern Tsistsistas and Hinono'ei), Maia Rodriguez (Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas), Alex Trimble Young

Chickasaw scholar Jodi A. Byrd's The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism (2011) was a theoretically transformative monograph grounded in Indigenous philosophies and critical methodologies that profoundly impacted Indigenous studies as well as critical ethnic studies, settler colonial studies, cultural studies, and postcolonial studies. Turning to Byrd's new book, Indigenomicon: American Indians, Video Games, and the Structure of Dispossession (2025), this roundtable brings together a collective of scholars to contemplate how Indigenomicon might similarly shape conversations in Indigenous studies and beyond. Panelists will consider Byrd's approaches to the structures of Indigenous dispossession, genocide, anti-Blackness, misogyny, and anti-queerness that undergird video gaming cultures. Noting Indigenomicon's centering of Indigenous onto-epistemologies, narratives, and (inter)communal relations, panelists will ponder Byrd's conceptualization of "grounded relationality" as a place-based ethic that is informed by Indigenous cosmologies. Panelists will consider how Byrd's focus on the "ground" might productively unsettle colonial assumptions about narrative, temporality, space, and aesthetics.

Session 2: Who Gets to be Indian? Discussing the Titular New Book by Dina Gilio-Whitaker

Panel
Room location: Lobo A & B
Dina Gilio-Whitaker, Joely Proudfit, Eric Tippeconic, Kiana Maillet, Nicole Myers-Lim

Few topics in Indian country are more controversial than Native identity. Yet in our national narratives the concept of Nativeness is rooted too often in self-identification outside the bounds of American Indian norms of kinship and belonging. We often

hear the axiom that “Native identity is complex;” while true, it also conceals conflicting ideas about what exactly constitutes Nativeness. The result is a confusing swamp of misunderstanding about what Nativeness is and who counts. In her most recent book, Dina Gilio-Whitaker fearlessly interrogates Native “identity” through a sociohistorical analysis showing how Nativeness became commodified and thus easy to exploit, leading to two of the most serious issues plaguing Indian country today: pretendianism and disenrollment. As a case study grounding her analysis, Gilio-Whitaker discloses her acquaintance with Sacheen Littlefeather over a period of ten years in which she came to understand Littlefeather’s blatant ethnic fraud. At the heart of Gilio-Whitaker’s thesis is the contention that Nativeness is more a political category than a racial one, in line with current legal arguments that respond to challenges to tribal sovereignty in the U.S. Supreme Court. The panel will take a roundtable format consisting of faculty from the American Indian Studies department at California State University San Marcos who will engage in a discussion of the book. From there, we will engage questions that will be relevant to conference participants about how we navigate this difficult terrain in academia and other social spaces.

Session 3: Nughejagh: The Teachings of K'enggeya Gin

Workshop
Room location: Isleta
Jessica Ross (Eklutna Native Village), Angelica Firmin (Eklutna Native Village)

Join Professor Jessica Ross and Student Angelica (Jelly) Firmin as they explore the K’enggeya Niłduch’endeldih (teachings of the beaded things) which demonstrate the critical aspects of kinship in relation to Indigenous healing and well-being. This session will offer insight into the significance of interdependence in our communities and how the practice of traditional values can transform the body, mind, and spirit.

Session 4: Affective Reflections & Strategies of Community in Indigenous Archival Studies

Panel
Room Location: Fiesta A & B
Briki Cajandig, Jonathan Pangelinan Cabrera, Cheyenne Travioli

This panel explores celebrations of Indigenous belonging and kinship through archival experiences of the Newberry Library’s 2025 Native and Indigenous graduate fellows. Drawing on the Edward E. Ayer collection of American Indian and Indigenous Studies, panelists explore the care, relationality and accountability that challenged the archive’s settler-colonial structure during the fellows’ research process. Panelists reflected on building strategies of affective care amongst one another while navigating overwhelmingly damaging colonial perspectives, with the responsibility of unearthing and transforming them into modes of Indigenous narration. Dedicating attentiveness to emotive realities fellows experienced arguably lessened emotional isolation that institutional archival spaces so often perpetuate.

With Dr. Myla Vicenti-Carpio and Dr. Jennifer Denetdale's mentorship, cultivating principles of safety and respect contributed immensely towards the panelists' environment, highlighting the intergenerational work grounding these affective foundations. As Indigenous archival studies expands, desire for affective infrastructure is crucial for archival ethicality and centering Indigenous methodologies of care.

Session 5: Indigenous-led challenges to settler colonial narratives through education, memory, and cultural revitalization
Individuals Paper Panel
Room location: Acoma A & B
Moderator: Rachael Nez (Navajo Nation)

Kemeyawi Q. Wahpepah (Kickapoo Tribe of Oklahoma): "It should be taught in a way that's not celebrated": Native & Indigenous Encounters with Commemorative Pedagogy in US Schools

A growing number of scholars have explored the ways in which Indigenous people globally and Native people in the United States, specifically, have contested settler colonial forms of collective memory. However, many of these studies have focused on the traditional locations of collective memory—museums, monuments, and memorials—omitting schools, an important fourth site of memory work. Drawing on 133 interviews conducted with forty-five Native and Indigenous students across the United States, this study centers schools as sites of memory work and Native and Indigenous youth as agents of memory by exploring how they story their encounters with school-based commemoration. It finds that while students regularly encounter hegemonic forms of commemorative pedagogy at school, they also advocate for the uptake of a critical commemorative pedagogy with the potential to disrupt settler colonialism by foregrounding Native and Indigenous counter-memories on occasions designed to educate about—rather than celebrate—contested pasts.

Jacqueline Wilson (Yakama)
Throughout the United States, elementary school music curriculums largely center Western traditions and forms of understanding. Lakeside Elementary is a K-5 public school on the Coeur d'Alene reservation where tribal culture and language are infused into many educational subjects – with music being a noted exception. In response, the "Music as Community" project was undertaken with the intent to incorporate tribal songs and musical traditions into the student experience at Lakeside. This case study documents the project in which Coeur d'Alene tribal members shared traditional and cultural knowledge in four units culminating with a fieldtrip to Washington State University for the purpose of creating high-quality recordings in a professional studio environment. The goal of the project was to deepen community connections, provide experiential learning opportunities, and increase the depth and breadth of knowledge about tribal songs and traditions for Lakeside students and teachers alike.

Majel Boxer Sisseton and Wahpeton Dakota (Fort Peck Assiniboine & Sioux Tribes of Montana): What Does Reconciliation Look Like? Fort Lewis College,

Colorado House Bill 24-1444 and Truth-telling in the Presence of Settler-State Apology

In 2024, the Colorado General Assembly passed HB24-1444: Federal Indian Boarding School Research Project. The legislation created an American Indian Steering Committee, of which I am a member, to guide a collaborative process to include American Indian perspectives, testimonies, oral histories on the impact of federal boarding schools in the state. Additionally, this paper seeks to understand and learn from other Indigenous People's experiences with state-sponsored Truth and Reconciliation Commissions. I also ask the question, "What does reconciliation look like in the absence of settler-state apologies? Pertinent to this discussion are prior attempts of formal "apologies" made by U.S. government officials to American Indians for past wrongs. Central to this discussion is the role of Native Peoples participating and/or guiding reconciliation work in the U.S., for example, the Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative under Secretary Deb Haaland and the Department of the Interior.

Session 6: In "Álastsii Dah Deidijaa", Nia Francisco writes: 'álastsii' dóó nínit'i'ii niidlįh / seeds that does not cease we are. These seeds are stories and language.

Panel
Room Location: Santa Ana A&B
Dr. Manny Loley (Diné) , Amber McCrary (Diné), and Dr. Shaina Nez (Diné)

These seeds, carried in the palms and hearts of our elders, have sustained and inspired generations of Diné storytellers and cultural knowledge holders. With these seeds, we continue storytelling traditions that have supported our people through the violence of settler colonialism. As we continue to live, we plant these seeds in the hearts and minds of the next generation. In this way, the stories continue. Never ending and always growing. In this conversation, leaders in Diné storytelling and literature will discuss Diné storytelling traditions, rhetorical sovereignty, print culture, kinship as storywork, Diné literary programs, and answer questions from participants. Part conversation and part interactive storytelling, this session will be a practice in "'Álastsii Dah Deidijaa'", or carrying the seeds our elders offered to us. In "'Álastsii Dah Deidijaa'", Nia Francisco writes: 'álastsii' dóó nínit'i'ii niidlįh / seeds that does not cease we are. These seeds are stories and language. These seeds, carried in the palms and hearts of our elders, have sustained and inspired generations of Diné storytellers and cultural knowledge holders. With these seeds, we continue storytelling traditions that have supported our people through the violence of settler colonialism. As we continue to live, we plant these seeds in the hearts and minds of the next generation. In this way, the stories continue. Never ending and always growing. In this conversation, leaders in Diné storytelling and literature will discuss Diné storytelling traditions, rhetorical sovereignty, print culture, kinship as storywork, Diné literary programs, and answer questions from participants. Part conversation and part interactive storytelling, this session will be a practice in "'Álastsii Dah Deidijaa'", or carrying the seeds our elders offered to us.

Section II: 10:45 AM – 12:15 PM

Session 1: Thinking Out Loud (TOL) Tables

Location: SUB Ballroom C
Moderator: Tiffany Lee (Diné/Lakota)
TOL involves an informal presentation around a table to share the presenter's ideas for future research, new research in progress, or to talk through ideas with interested colleagues. There are 6 tables labeled A through F. See below for table topics, titles, abstracts, presenters per table, and approximate time per presenter.

Table A: Indigenous Sovereignty and Stewardship

10:45 AM – 11:30 AM
Presenter 1: Emily Watkins (Absentee Shawnee and Yankton Sioux)

As part of my dissertation work, I am investigating how we can move from a model of preservation in National Parks to one of Tribally led stewardship. Lassen Volcanic National Park is an incredible place, and its tallest peak, Kohm Yah-mah-nee (Maidu), is a special place to several Native nations in northern California. For over a century, National Parks have been preserved under a model that I argue is akin to keeping museum pieces behind glass- no one can touch or interact with them in a meaningful way, as they're supposed to be in the same "idyllic" condition for generations to come. This oppressive conservation model has led to less healthy ecosystems, as well as limiting Indigenous access to those lands. Ultimately, I'm searching for a way in which we can bring back healthy lands and allow better access for Indigenous peoples, with or without National Parks.

11:30 AM – 12:15 PM

Presenter 2: Casper Reaves

Many small business owners in the United States find organizations that are beneficial for support and networking. Where do Indigenous entrepreneurs find support? As some organizations reduce their efforts in inclusion and belonging, we will explore the experiences of Indigenous business owners, artisans, and vendors, focusing on their sense of belonging and the support they receive. How do family, clan, and nation support their business dreams? What support did local and national incubators, pitch competitions, funding sources, and organizations provide? Confidence is a crucial factor for many entrepreneurs. An Indigenous artisan commented on how participating in a pitch competition improved their confidence. How have Indigenous business owners managed to navigate gains and challenges in their confidence? We will discuss how belonging intersects with confidence.

Table B: Indigenous Education and Histories

10:45 AM – 11:30 AM
Presenter 1: Christina Mescal (Navajo)

Session will showcase the Chilchinbeto community rug project, my grandfather's

inspiration and my journey as a science educator and administrator. Sii Hasin; our hopes and dreams to make it happen to share with all on the accomplishments of the community weavers and leadership. Share the correlation with the Project, POLLEN model, and OEDS Revitalizing Diné Vitality project to any future projects in the planning phase. “The Big Sister rug is a tribute to the leadership of Chilchinbeto Community and the skills and the dedication of the ten weavers. It is a symbol of self-sufficiency and independence.” The center is the focal point and duplicate in 4’s, representing common designs. The rug honors the leadership of the Navajo Nation. Scholarship (Nitsáhákees) and hopes and dreams (Sii Hasin) for future leaders’ graduating. For a better life (Iiná) for them to go on and plan (Nahat’á) for the next chapter in their lives.

11:30 AM – 12:15 PM
Presenter 2: Vickie A. Peoples

Assimilation through the mainstream educational process has failed because public mass education involves separation from yourself as a human being and as a part of the land and the community. This form of education was death to the traditional ways of teaching youth to become autonomous yet community-minded indigenous tribal members. The United States government forcibly removed Native American youth from the reservations for over a century to enact cultural genocide. They placed them in U.S.-run boarding schools to train them to follow the laws and traditions of the West, since they needed to know how to be ruled. The West used discourse in these schools to justify its perceived duty to exercise control over the “noble savages”. Since the passage of the Native American Languages Act (NALA) in 1990, native language education has experienced a renaissance. My research goals include what makes current language programs successful, how to implement further language education programs, and how to preserve Native American cultural and linguistic lifeways. By exploring the harrowing history of Native American education in America and following it to current language revitalization efforts, I hope to contribute to the movement of Native Americans to be silenced no more.

Table C: Indigenous Feminist, Queer, Trans, and Two-Spirit Studies

10:45 AM – 11:30 AM
Presenter 1: Isla Hubbard

Queer, Trans, and Black, Indigenous, People of Color (QT/BIPOC) individuals cultivate communities and strategies necessary to push forward decolonial social justice movements through the use of theories, methodologies, and practices. QT/BIPOC Peoples create communities of care not dependent on capital, but rather on the need to survive in a social-political system not designed for their survival. With examples of community found in the Civil Rights Movement, the Stonewall ‘Protests’, and the Encampments of student protests in support of #FreePalestine, social justice movements are a platform of advocacy used by marginalized communities to make their voices heard. This research seeks to explore how Queer and Transgender students’ involvement in social justice movements on college campuses, specifically in Students for Justice in Palestine, can impact the overall

outcome of the movement, in addition to understanding how the "Queering" of these movements can reconceptualize Palestine outside of settler-colonial frameworks.

11:30 AM – 12:15 PM
Presenter 2: Danielle Fenn (Red River Metis)

Grounded in my lived experience as an Indigiqueer Métis feminist and informed by Indigenous scholarship, the study uses qualitative methods and the Future Imaginary to support co-creation of desired futures. This research-in-progress investigates Indigenous futurity as a path toward housing justice. Involvement with the grassroots movement One House Many Nations shaped the project direction, for it highlighted the transformative potential of community-led housing. Anchored in Jesse Thistle's 12 Dimensions of Indigenous Houselessness and the Neechi Principles, the project uses a future set in 2175 to all for ideas that circumvent current colonial constraints and foster flourishing. Elders, women, Youth, and Two-Spirit participants will discuss how they define home, envision housing, and imagine community structures that uphold Indigenous rights, relationships, and practices of home. The goal is to activate the Neechi Principles as a living framework for relational governance, sustainable development, and the resurgence of Indigenous place-based futures.

Table D: Indigenous Water and AI

10:45 AM – 11:30 AM
Presenter 1: Aubrey Granger (Navajo)

Discussions regarding tribal water rights require useful data visualizations tailored for audiences with limited contextual understanding of water challenges in the Navajo Nation. Inequities brought to the Navajo Nation that contribute to distrust with the U.S. government will act as the background to the endeavor. Policy analysis will be research on past and current legislation relevant to the Navajo Nation's resources and water rights, such as "paper water rights" and "wet water." Large language models (LLMs) will be incorporated to analyze news articles to see how opinions and narratives have changed over the years. The goal is to produce clear, engaging graphics that communicate Navajo water challenges to policymakers, tribal leaders, and the public. The goal is to use visualization to make the argument that water rights are not just legal problems but lived daily experiences affecting health, time, and survival.

11:30 – 12:15 PM
Presenter 2: Sarena Johnson, Amy Johnson (Caldwell First Nation)

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) has become ubiquitous, with far-reaching impacts into the personal and social realms. For example, the hyper-contemorary phenomenon of individuals living in romantic 'relationships' with ChatGPT raises a multitude of debates about what constitutes a relationship, what counts as relational reciprocity or even what defines humanity. Within the field of Indigenous Educational Studies, there is an increasing appetite to map themes of GenAI

discourse within Indigenous ontologies for pedagogical consumption. There are Indigenous scholars who state that GenAI has "spirit" or belongs in Indigenous more-than-human-kinship networks, and claim to think otherwise is anthropocentric. Yet, many Indigenous thinkers are critical and even suggest GenAI is colonial or recolonizing. This analysis begs the question, "If AI did have spirit - what kind of spirit would that be?" This project will examine themes of animacy, delusion, technology as prosthetic and multi-lifeform relationality in the playscript of an original live theatre production.

Table E: Indigenous Remembering

10:45 AM – 11:30 AM
Presenter 1: Ashik Istiak, Md. Raisul Islam (Bangladeshi)

Sajek Valley, home to the Lushai, the Tripura, and numerous Chakma Indigenous peoples—or, in Bengali terms, Adivasi nations—in Bangladesh, is situated along the small, hilly Sajek River, which borders the Indian states of Mizoram and Tripura. Yet, beneath Sajek's scenic beauty lies over 200 years of settler colonial history, marked by colonial mapping, land occupation, Indigenous displacement and dispossession, violence, and genocide. This paper mainly examines the period from the 2000s onward, when Sajek transformed from a remote forest area into one of the country's most popular tourist destinations. We interpret this transformation as a racial capitalist strategy designed to meet Bengali settler colonial expectations. Special focus is given to the water sources in Sajek, including the river, which are heavily impacted by settler tourism and unmindful tourist behavior. Our methods include key informant interviews, intensive interviews, and focus group discussions to gather local insights and present an Adivasi perspective on the environment in the area.

11:30 AM – 12:15 PM
Presenter 2: Noah Castorena

My thinking out loud for this year's AISA conference on the Constellations of Indigenous Belongings is centered on my experiences and ideas inspired by the 25 Indigenous Projects outlined in Linda Tuhiwai Smith's Decolonizing Methodologies. I think the project I've always come back to as foundational and critical to my work is what Smith outlines as the project of Remembering. Remembering has been key for me, more so in the past year, in order to understand my family's history and their respective journeys that allowed me to exist today. Smith defines Remembering as "The remembering of a people relates not so much to an idealized remembering of a golden past but more specifically to the remembering of a painful past, re-membering in terms of connecting bodies with place and experience, and, importantly, people's responses to that pain." (147). This remembering is required as the easiest way I can define myself and my current positionality is as a Salvadorian-Mexican-American of Indigenous descent. In order for me to exist today, my family lineages traversed and existed within 3 distinct settler colonial nation-states. My family practiced a variation of what Gerald Vizenor

called survivance, the act of survival and resistance. My family practiced survivance through transnational belonging and kinship as they crossed Indigenous borders and imposed settler borders. To be in my position as the first in my family to have a Bachelor's degree and currently pursuing a graduate degree, is an immense privilege. The only way I can reciprocate is by Remembering.

Session 2: Navigating Sensitive Themes and Teaching Transnational Indigenous Sovereignty

Roundtable
Room location: Isleta
Candy Martinez (Zapotec); Kris Klein Hernández (Mexican-American)

This panel shares pedagogical material and careful approaches to teaching Turtle Island (North American) and Abya Yala (Latin American) sovereignty and struggles. Faculty will share the challenges they encounter when they teach sensitive topics involving militarization and gender violence across Indigenous communities. They will name tensions that may arise in the classroom and the challenges faculty encounter when selecting readings and assignments. Focusing on one or two courses, each panelist will share assignments and lecture topics that facilitate bridging connections. Such assignments may require students to analyze archival documents from the 19th and 20th centuries, as well as contemporary visual materials. Faculty will reflect on why it is urgent to make connections across communities and disciplines, even if such connections involve complex themes. We hope to engage the audience and open up to have a conversation about pedagogy.

Session 3: In Solidarity

Panel
Room Location: Lobo A&B
Marisa Page, Kyle Harvey, Mario Atencio, Mario Montoya, Xochitl Reyna, Allison Shaddox, Valerie Chavez

Amid ongoing division and the dominance of anti-JEDI (justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion) rhetoric and policies, the Native American Studies and Chicana/Chicano Studies departments unite in solidarity to condemn the actions by the State in dismantling postsecondary programs that support marginalized communities. UNM remains committed to serving underrepresented students, aiming to promote discovery, cultural contributions, academic values, and the development of a healthy, educated, and economically vibrant state. The university emphasizes excellence, inclusion, environment, integrity, and place, with a vision of leading globally in unlocking human potential, addressing community issues, and celebrating diverse inclusion. This panel, featuring students from the Native American Studies Graduate Collective (NASGC) and The Equitable Alliance of Multicultural Organizations (TE AMO), will examine how student groups can unite in solidarity and relationship to community, advocating for and implementing strategies to ensure fair treatment of individuals from diverse backgrounds, regardless of ethnicity, race, gender, or sexual orientation.

Session 4: Confronting Indigenous Healthcare in Marginalized Communities

Individual Paper Panel
Room Location:Acoma A & B
Moderator: Ruben Leyva

Dr. Perry R. James (Navajo)
Navajo epistemology promotes a sustainable, holistic, kinship-based way of knowing that emphasizes harmony with the interconnectedness of spiritual, physical, and mental aspects of life, which are deeply connected to the land. Epistemological knowledge is gained through keen observation of the land, as well as spiritual guidance found in ceremonial practices. These core principles and applications embody kinship-based ways of knowing that foster balance and healthy relationships.

Healthy relationships foster a sense of sacred space, enriched with stories, songs, ceremonies, and history, all of which are vital for the survival of the Navajo people. By maintaining this language, the Navajo worldview continues to grow, strengthening social connections among life, self, others, sacred places, the environment, the cosmos, and all living beings. Language loss not only signifies the erosion of kinship to all things and wisdom but also reduces the ability to live harmoniously within one's unique environment.

Richelle Etsitty Diné (Navajo)
This paper presents the conceptual framework and study design for an ongoing dissertation exploring how adult members of Diné families in Albuquerque enact survivance to empower their children. Grounded in a narrative qualitative design, the study will center on 5-10 family dads, capturing the lived experiences of adults who actively transmit knowledge, values, and lifeways across generations. Drawing on the concept of survivance and Diné philosophy of Sa'ah Naagháí Bik'eh Hózhóón, the research highlights five interrelated principles— active presence, intergenerational teachings, resilience and adaptation, self-determination and sovereignty, and identity and core values—as enacted within everyday family life. By illuminating how Diné families sustain cultural continuity and agency, this work contributes to scholarship on Indigenous education and leadership by reconceptualizing education from in-school learning to the transmission of intergenerational teachings in the home and within the context of an urban community.

Kimber Olson (Chiricahua Apache) - This session explores the Healing-Centered Indigenous Regulation Framework © rooted in kinship, reciprocity, and collective consciousness. Moving beyond a trauma-informed focus on pathology, this model centers belonging and relational accountability as the medicine that restores harmony across generations.

Based on Dr. Kimber Olson's doctoral research, "Inviting the Sacred Wound into Circle" (conducted with 14 Tribally Affiliated subject matter experts with extensive lived experience), this approach integrates Indigenous science, mind-body medicine, and community healing practices. It acknowledges that trauma is not only

personal—it is relational and systemic—and that healing occurs when we re-enter the field of kinship, where every being has a role and a rhythm in the whole.

Participants will receive a free digital copy of the 50-page Healing-Centered Indigenous Regulation Workbook ©.

Session 5: Interactive Tlingit Clan Exercise

Workshop
Room Location: Fiesta A&B
Maria Shaa Tlaa Williams (Tlingit)

Interactive Tlingit clan exercise: Come and participate in this interactive and fun exercise in which all of the workshop participants are in a Tlingit village in the late 19th century. We will organize into moieties, clans, and house groups. Then we will have a mock politically arranged marriage, avert war, and have a mock potlatch. This is very fun and we need at least 20 participants. The more the better!

Session 6: Identity and Recognition as Family and Belonging

Panel
Room Location: Santa Ana A&B
Suzan Shown Harjo, Lloyd L. Lee, Philip J. Deloria, Stephanie Fryberg, Norbert S. Hill, Jr.

This panel on Identity and Recognition as Family and Belonging is proposed as a hybrid panel, with some participants there in person and some joining virtually. The proposed panel is organized by Suzan Shown Harjo (Cheyenne Citizen, Cheyenne & Arapaho Tribes) and chaired by Lloyd L. Lee, Ph.D. (Citizen, Navajo Nation), with panelists including Philip J. Deloria, Ph.D. (Yankton Dakota), Stephanie Fryberg, Ph.D. (Tulalip Tribe), Harjo, and Norbert S. Hill, Jr. (Citizen, Oneida Nation). The proposed panel focuses on kinship/self-determined identity/imposed identity, basically covering pseudo-Indianism in academia and entertainment industries, mascoting, stereotyping, range of citizenship criteria, trends in tribal constitutional changes, and some creative, practical alternatives to the vampire (blood quantum) policies. The proposed panelists bring their scholarship, lived experience, and work of longstanding with Native Peoples and relevant policies, practices, and laws.

LUNCH: 12:15 PM – 1:45 PM

Lunch provided
Location: Jackson Student Atrium, Center of Anderson School of Management

PLENARY PANEL: 1:45 PM – 3:15 PM

Room Location: SUB Ballroom C
Remarks by the AISA President Souksavanh T Keovorabouth

Panel: Manny Pino, Suzan Harjo, Ben West, Kevin Riding In, Dawna Riding In Hare

Moderated by Lloyd L. Lee (and Remarks as James' successor to the editorship of the *Wicazo Sa Review)*

Section III: 3:30 PM – 5:00 PM

Session 1: Indigenous Planning + Design is Actualizing the Community-Building Work in AIS

Roundtable
Room location: SUB Ballroom C
Michelle Hale, Dushawn John-Armenta, Joaquin Lopez Huertas, Michaela Shirley, Elisha Charley

Indigenous people design and build places of kinship and belonging. People share language, stories, and experiences that reflect a landscape of knowledge, survival, and resilience. Placeknowing and placekeeping create and sustain spaces for communities' whole being. This roundtable will discuss Indigenous co-Design + Community Development. We will share recent project work, community collaborations, learning, and observations made while working at the grassroots level and when advocating for Indigenized Planning + Design in academic spaces. Discussants will demonstrate the importance of Indigenized Planning + Design to the work of American Indian Studies as it advances applied work in community and economic development and can facilitate spatial justice and much-needed improvements in culturally appropriate housing projects, parks, and government facilities. We will feature a dialogue about the future of Indigenous Planning and how it responds to multiple intersectional identities. It will include an ideation workshop to co-create solutions to advance the field.

Session 2: 'Álastsii Dah Deidijaa': Carrying Stories for Sustenance and Longevity

Panel
Room location: Fiesta A&B
Dr. Manny Loley, Amber McCrary, and Dr. Shaina Nez

In "'Álastsii Dah Deidijaa'", Nia Francisco writes: 'álastsii' dóó nínit'i'ii niidlįh / seeds that does not cease we are. These seeds are stories and language. These seeds, carried in the palms and hearts of our elders, have sustained and inspired generations of Diné storytellers and cultural knowledge holders. With these seeds, we continue storytelling traditions that have supported our people through the violence of settler colonialism. As we continue to live, we plant these seeds in the hearts and minds of

the next generation. In this way, the stories continue. Never ending and always growing. In this conversation, leaders in Diné storytelling and literature will discuss Diné storytelling traditions, rhetorical sovereignty, print culture, kinship as storywork, Diné literary programs, and answer questions from participants.

Part conversation and part interactive storytelling, this session will be a practice in "'Álastsii Dah Deidijaa'", or carrying the seeds our elders offered to us.

Session 3: Publishing with Wicazo Sa Review

Workshop
Room location: Isleta
Lloyd L. Lee, Madeline Rose Mendoza

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

Session 4: Kinship, Land, and Indigenous Sovereignty

Individuals Paper Panel

Room location: Lobo A&B
Moderator: Sarah Hernandez (Lakota)

Daphe Littlebear, Ph.D, Santa Ana Pueblo

This paper examines kinship as both a lived experience and a framework of accountability within Santa Ana Pueblo through Pueblo Kitchen Table Theory, a community-grounded research approach rooted in relational responsibility. By positioning the kitchen table as both a physical and metaphorical site of governance, this work demonstrates how kinship sustains Pueblo sovereignty and disrupts settler-colonial systems that seek to individualize or bureaucratize Indigenous governance. Drawing on intergenerational interviews with youth, parents, and elders, the study analyzes how Tamayame enact belonging through ceremony, caregiving, and collective decision-making that integrate land, language, and values. Belonging emerges through practices of reciprocity, elders' guidance, parents' instruction, youth participation, and shared care for land and water.

Situated within broader Indigenous intellectual traditions, Pueblo Kitchen Table Theory illustrates how kinship operates simultaneously as pedagogy and governance, offering a model for reimagining policy, environmental justice, and Indigenous futures grounded in care, relationality, and sovereignty

Sarah Seroy (Cree) & Natalie Hamren: Walking with the landscape: A decolonial approach to connecting with New Mexico

Connecting with natural environments is a transformational experience that can positively impact physical, social, and mental well-being. This study will explore the personal and emotional impact of New Mexico's landscape on two graduate students new to the region. Using a combined walking, autoethnographic, and photographic method, we will reflect upon our responses to a hike through the Volcanoes at Petroglyph National Monument in Albuquerque, New Mexico. This study will also highlight the importance of land-based and decolonial research methodologies, the use of which calls upon the "academy to recognize and value knowledge, protocols, and practices that have enabled Indigenous lifeways to be sustained for generations" (King et al, 2013). Mobile approaches to landscape research explore how the various ways people interact with landscapes, including embodied experiences such as walking, hiking, or working, influence their experience and perceptions of them. Indigenous autoethnography is an anti-colonial research practice that emphasizes subjectivity, positions the subject-as-researcher, and places personal experiences within an empirical framework. These methodologies align with Indigenous learning practices and epistemologies. This duo-autoethnographic approach will illustrate how the same landscape can have different meanings for people and how people find meaning and attach memories to landscapes.

Jennifer Marley (San Ildefonso Pueblo)- This paper explores how Indigenous identity and pretendianism have historically been and are currently being manufactured in service to the project of settler colonialism in the US, Southwest, New Mexico, and Mexico. I argue that failure to understand Indigenous identity as anything but belonging to a Native Nation has dire consequences for the sovereignty of Native Nations and people. I articulate the concept of the mythical "Aztlan" as the basis for a neo-zionist project by which detribalized individuals assert the "God given right" to occupy continuously existing, sovereign, Tribal Nations. I call on Native people to consider how articulating our struggle from a basis of class consciousness and unity may include our detribalized relatives in a liberatory decolonization project in which they do not need to feel compelled to identify as Indigenous to fight for self-determination, human rights, and care-taking of the land

Harshit Sosan Lakra , Oran Tribe, India (Harshit Sosan Lakra), Kehaulani Lum, Jessica Martinez Cruz

Our landscapes are living stories of memories, identities, and relationships. For Indigenous and Tribal communities, land is home in a material, spiritual and cultural sense. Many physical planning and infrastructure projects commodify landscapes and erase stories, practices, and relationships that define Indigenous belonging. As a result, the cultural fabric that ties people to place is weakened, and the wisdom embedded in these landscapes fade with each layer of ignorant modernization. This gift weaves relationships by reimagining how we see and represent our cherished landscapes — through memories, lived experiences and shared relationships.

Through storytelling and visual translation of ahupuaa in Hawaii and villages in Manipur, we trace how relatives and ancestors -such as stones, pathways, forests, waters, shelters, fishes,

turtles, birds and other animals and plants hold meaning — shaping how we live, relate, and sustain each other in reciprocal ways. We redraw our landscapes as an act of care, healing, reclamation and continuity.

Session 5: Indigenous experiences and Two Spirit visibility

Individual Paper Panel
Room Location: Santa Ana A&B
Moderator: Souksavanh T Keovorabouth (Dine)

Rowan Greywolf Moore (Sicangu Lakota) - Reservation Dogs, as one of the first Indigenous-made shows to become a household name and part of mainstream media, received critical praise for its authenticity of Indigenous modern life and its ability to weave trauma and humor. While Reservation Dogs generally resists stereotypes of Indigenous peoples, the show still reproduced film tropes, particularly for Indigenous women. Willie Jack's character, though, is a rare visualization of an Indigenous Two Spirit woman that rejects Red film tropes for female and Two Spirit characters. In this presentation, I discuss findings from a case study,as part of a larger dissertation project, wherein I explore how Willie Jack's character utilizes what I call Red (re)orientations as a means of Red Resistance to colonial film tropes.

Anca Wilkening-This paper examines the entangled and multi-layered relationalities within eighteenth-century Lenape and Mohican Moravian communities in the Northeast. Drawing on queer and Indigenous studies approaches to kinship - as a fraught yet generative structure through which belonging, violence, and transformation are negotiated - I center settler-Indigenous relations in Moravian congregations within Indigenous epistemologies of kinship, rather than viewing them solely through Moravian-Christian theology or European social frameworks.

Session 6: Oceti Sakowin Life Writing: Stories of Decolonization, Resistance, and Sovereignty

Panel
Room Location: Acoma A&B
Camilla Hayes, Wendi Lee, Jolee Magoosh, Zack Matthews, and Aja Quintana

Oceti Sakowin writers not only tell unapologetic life stories but also promote Indigenous sovereignty. In their respective works, Charles Eastman (Santee Dakota), Zitkala Ša (Yankton Nakota), Russell Means (Oglala Lakota), Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve (Sicangu Lakota), and Elizabeth Cook-Lynn (Crow Creek Dakota) discuss their identity and lives, and engage with questions surrounding community, identity, colonization, and sovereignty. This panel identifies how Oceti Sakowin writers compose prose that builds towards decolonization and engages with the genre of life writings. UNM graduate and undergraduate students – Camilla Hayes, Wendi Lee, Jolee Magoosh, Zack Matthews, and Aja Quintana – share important insights into the way Oceti Sakowin writers use life writings to develop tools that critique settler colonialism, support Indigenous sovereignty, and positively impact our perception of Oceti Sakowin people, communities, and nations. This discussion considers how Oceti Sakowin authors communicate and embody resistance in their communities and in their writings.

AISA CONFERENCE DAY TWO

Breakfast provided: 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM
Location: Sub Ballroom C

Section IV: 9:00 AM – 10:30 AM

Session 1: "Coming back to our power": Honoring Kinship for Community and Land-Air-Water Sustainability

Roundtable
Room Location: SUB Ballroom C
Leola Tsinnajinnie Paquin, Lani Tsinnajinnie, Antonia Ruiz, Elspeth Iralu, Amelia Cook, Davian Thompson, Dylan Bernal, Mario Atencio

This roundtable will consist of professors, students, and community leaders who have teamed together to work from a framework of kinship, community, and education on land-water-air sustainability. The focus on "coming back to our power" is inspired by Santa Clara Pueblo scholar Gregory Cajete's articulation of empowerment. The session will include conversations of positionality in relation to Indigenous stewardship, mentorship, education, and planning. Presenters will discuss how we lean on relationships with one another, shared values, our communities, and with the environment to develop projects that are focused on climate justice. These community-engaged projects utilize experiential and land-based education; storytelling; and cross-place collaboration to build capacity in protection of our well-being and future.

Session 2: "i <3 decolonial art": The disconnect between the Western Museum and Indigenous Pedagogies

Film or Creative Performance
Room location: Fiesta A&B
Shaela Sageth (Nawat (El Salvador))

This presentation will share findings from analyzing aspects of the indigenous community, as presented by Pueblo scholar Gregory Cajete as a methodology, as they manifested during summer fieldwork. This analysis examines the role of the Indigenous community in contributing to the team's broader mission of applying co-design methodology. Then, I will screen part of Q'ochas Resilientes, an experimental documentary produced during summer fieldwork conducted in the town of Pucachupa within the Andean region of Puno, Peru. Q'ochas Resilientes

follows students from MIT, UTEC, UNAP, and Wellesley as they conduct action research in a collaborative effort to mitigate the effects of climate change within the altiplanos. To navigate water scarcity and contamination, measures of knowledge sharing, finding voice, and community building are utilized. This work envisions the co-design of resilience alongside community members through the revitalization of the Q'ocha tradition, a practice of water storage and harvest used for time immemorial.

Session 3: Native/Indigenous Voices and Belonging in Academic Publishing

Panel
Room Location: Santa Ana A&B
Sarah Hernandez, Esther Belin, Manny Loley, and Julianne Newmark

Native and non-Native editors are creating critical spaces in academic publishing that promote Indigenous rhetorical sovereignty and center Indigenous knowledge. This panel asks: Why are special issues on Indigenous topics necessary? Panelists will reflect on experiences of Indigenous belonging and kinship in publishing, while exploring the purposes and limits of sharing Indigenous knowledge in academic formats. They will also examine the role of Native and non-Native collaborators and consider strategies for equitably involving non-Native people and institutions within the editing and publishing process.
The discussion will highlight editorial approaches, community engagement practices, and strategies for fostering belonging, recognition, and transformation in publishing. Panelists include editors from: Esther Belin's Poetry Magazine special issue on Diné poetics; Sarah Hernandez, Christopher Pexa, and Julie Newmark's Studies in American Indian Literature special issue on Oceti Sakowin literature; Manny Loley, editor of Leading the Way; and Lloyd Lee, editor of Wíčazo Ša Review.

Session 4: Indigenous place-based knowledge and nation-building

Individual Paper Panel
Room Location: Acoma A&B
Moderator: Maia Rodriguez

Pavin Johnson (Quapaw Nation) -This paper will explore the consequences of the Oklahoma Native held land leasing and sale economy on the nation building processes of two large and two small Oklahoma native nations. Settler Colonialism is a struggle for control of the land. The primary strategy of U.S Settler Colonialism in Oklahoma has been the dissolving of native society into the economy and worldview of small holding land owners. I argue that one of the main challenges the Oklahoma native community faces in our nation building efforts is the prevalence of a rentier mentality viewing the land as a source of personal income rather than communal welfare originating in both the forced shift in the political economy of native life to that of the small holder and the designed present day poverty and precarity faced by native people in the state.

Tyler Moore (Cherokee Nation)-The Wakarusa River Valley and wetlands have had an interconnected history with the various Indigenous groups throughout history. There are six sections to outline within this work, the first being traditional homelands, followed by emigrant tribes, then would come the United States industrial training school, now known as Haskell Indian Nations University, continuing to the Baker wetlands buyout, the next era would be the creation of the Southwest Lawrence trafficway, and finally our modern era of protecting the wetlands versus developing it. We must discuss this portion of the Wakarusa River Valley because most of this region's residents do not know the Indigenous history of the land. Indigenous history is already a subject that is poorly represented within Western spaces, so with good ethics in mind, we must demonstrate this history through our work to help inform those who do not see the generations of Indigenous stories of the land.

Mario Atencio (Navajo) -The recovery of a long-unreported intratribal treaty between the Navajo Nation and the Ute Nations may have multiple impacts on recent uranium mining operations and could problematize federal nuclear regulatory actions.

Okechukwu Iroegbu (Igbo, Nigeria) - This paper highlights the importance of indigenous knowledge in human-wildlife conflict management contexts. Land is recognized in this paper as the space where human-wildlife conflicts occur, so its relevance to indigenous groups will be studied. The study will briefly discuss the relationship between the Igbo people of Nigeria and their land, drawing examples from the author’s personal experience. The study will therefore illustrate how indigenous groups from various African communities use their knowledge and folk narratives to manage conflicts arising from human-wildlife contact. Folk narrative traditions such as these may offer pathways as we try to develop benevolent stewardship of nature.

Session 5: Native Sacred Places and Protection

Panel

Room Location: Lobo A&B

Suzan Shown Harjo, Lloyd L. Lee, Richard W. Hill Sr., Tina Kuckkahn, Sm3tcoom Delbert Miller, Brett Lee Shelton, Gabrielle Tayac, Waŋbli Wapȟáha Hokšíla (Edward Valandra), Daniel R. Wildcat

These proposed panelists are the essayists for the Wíčazo Ša Review Special Issue on Sacred Places Protection (Volume 39, Numbers 1 & 2, Spring & Fall 2024; actual publication, September 2025). Lee is Editor of Wíčazo Ša Review and Harjo is Guest Editor of the Special Issue. Titles of the essays are: Native Sacred Places, Lifeways, and Lives Distorted in Others’ Imaginings, Dogma, Language, and Law: An Introduction (Harjo); In a Sacred Manner We Live: Haudenosaunee Reflections on Protecting the Sacred (Hill); Returning the Heart of the People (Kuckkahn); “My Old People Used to Say...”: Reflections on Sacred Places in Tuwaduq Territories of the Pacific Northwest (Miller and Kuckkahn); Property as a Bundle of Rights: Using Legal Theory to Re-Own Relationships to Sacred Places

(Shelton); In The Presence Of The Secular: Protecting Sacred Places (Valandra); and Deloria's Invocation: The Fourth Kind of Sacred Lands (Wildcat). Some proposed panelists would present a version of or updates to their essays, while others may present new, but related material. The proposed panelists are traditional practitioners, cultural rights specialists, or both. All understand and can help others to understand belonging and kinship in relation to Native people, places and ceremonies; protocols, cultural practices, religious tenets, and/or laws; responsibilities to and of a nation and/or moiety; the difference between individual and collective rights and ways;
and how all these combine to protect, not protect, or endanger sacred places and site-specific exercises of religious liberties.

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

Session 1: Applied Indigenous History: Turning Hindsight into Foresight for All

Roundtable
Room location: SUB Ballroom C
Patrick Burtt, Patricia Limerick, Farina King, Cesar Barreras, Kelly Beym

Applied Indigenous History links the intellectual, cultural, and political strengths of Indigenous Peoples with practical tools for engaging the past in service of present-day needs. Aligned with the 2026 AISA theme Constellations of Indigenous Belonging and Kinship, it reframes historical skills to inform policy, governance, environmental stewardship, and cultural and language revitalization. By turning hindsight into foresight, it invites participation across disciplines what includes Tribal leaders, educators, scientists, artists, health professionals, and community members, emphasizing that contextualizing and acting on our histories is a shared responsibility. Through accessible and relational methods, practitioners resist academic gatekeeping and promote an "all hands on deck" ethic grounded in humility, clarity, and public service. Whether supporting land reclamation, treaty rights, or community planning, Applied Indigenous History operates as both a discipline and a practice of kinship, connecting generations, geographies, and knowledges to help shape a more just and interconnected future.

Session 2: Situating the Grounded Knowledge of Indigenous Existence

Roundtable
Room Location: Acoma A&B
Elise Boxer (Dakota), Jerome Clark (Diné), Travis Franks

This roundtable is based on the forthcoming edited volume, Of the Land: Situating the Grounded Knowledge of Indigenous Existence. The roundtable is based on our use of situadedness, as articulated by Jerome Clark's use of and development of a theory of Diné situatedness constituted by physical connection to, memory upon, and consciousness stemming from the land. In the Diné context, existence, consciousness, and land are one and the same. That is, to exist and to know begins with an intimate connection to place, and, because of this intimacy, knowledge,

history, memory, and experience are held in and between people and place. How can Indigenous situatedness be a response to settler colonialism? This roundtable is interested in a dialogue between roundtable participants and the audience that advance Indigenous theories and methodologies rooted in Indigenous epistemologies, especially those rooted in and of the land.

Session 3: Indigenous Leadership: Constellations of Belonging and Kinship

Panel
Room Location: Santa Ana A&B
Cassie Velarde, Danielle Lansing, Marina Hernandez, and Ruben Leyva

This panel emerged from a Native American Studies course on contemporary Indigenous leadership in which each participant developed a leadership model grounded in cultural knowledge, lived experience, and commitments to community change. Bringing together master's and doctoral students in NAS and anthropology, the panel examines Indigenous leadership as a living framework of belonging, responsibility, and survival rather than a set of positional roles. Danielle Lansing presents an Urban Native Family Leadership Model that strengthens family connections to Tribes, Nations, and Pueblos through educational hubs. Cassie Velarde examines a Jicarilla leadership continuum rooted in creation narratives and kinship prior to colonial disruption. Ruben Leyva offers the Star Way Leadership Model, a Gila Apache framework guided by five kinship- and land-based principles. Marina Hernandez presents a model centered on relational accountability, place-based praxis, and intergenerational knowledge for an Indigenous community resource center. Together, these models reposition Indigenous leadership within constellations of kinship and belonging.

Session 4: Cultural expression as Indigenous resistance, healing, and relational practice

Individual Paper Panel
Room Location: Lobo A&B
Moderator: Myla Vicenti Carpio

Tammy Wolfe (Cree Nation): Beadwork can positively impact Indigenous peoples' holistic health, mental, emotional, physical and spiritual healing from the impacts of intergenerational traumas, due to the many negative systemic impacts caused and created by colonialism, on both an individual and communal level because it helps to strengthen Indigenous peoples' identities through the use of storytelling, mastery, learned leadership and finding a strong sense of belonging, which ultimately adds to the collective health of the community. This preliminary research ultimately led to my current study within my PhD research at the University of Manitoba, where I have both researched and studied the holistic healing benefits of beadwork working with the community of MMIWG2S and my continued experiential learning that can be utilized and implemented through a multitude of community organizations, school based programs and on an individual and collective level.

Zachary Milliman: In 1999, the theatrical oratorio King Island Christmas premiered that dramatizes a 1951 event involving the Iñupiat community of Ugiuvak (King

Island, Alaska). The musical's paternalistic portrayal of Indigenous life appropriates cultural traditions and reduces Iñupiat foodways and ceremony to a spectacle of gluttony. Grounded in collaboration with elder Ted Mayac Sr., this paper critiques how such misrepresentations sever the kinship systems and ecological relationships foundational to Iñupiat identity and survival.

Drawing on the methodologies developed by Dylan Robinson (Stó꞉lō) in Hungry Listening (2020), I analyze the song "Agoodik, Muktuk, Salmon, and Seal" to trace how King Island Christmas hungrily recomposes Indigenous history for settler consumption. I contrast this with the Iñupiat Wolf Dance ceremony as an assertion of Indigenous ecological knowledge. This analysis responds to Ted Mayac's call for cultural repatriation and seeks to amplify the voices of the Ugiuvangmiut in reclaiming their stories and relationships with place.

Caleigh Lyons: "Okodakiciye-Wakan Odowan Qa Okna Ahiyayapi Kta Ho Kin" or "Hymnal with Tunes and Chants according to the use of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Missions Among the Dakotas of the Missionary District of South Dakota" enriches Book Studies. It refuses to be just a Christian or just a Dakota object. The Dakota people are an oral culture and had sung for centuries before Euro-Americans began to intervene in the 1820s. This 1894 Dakota Hymnal is a testament to how the Dakota people will continue to sing, even if they use slightly different words and music. When the Dakota language is endangered, the colonial missionary Dakota will be used. There is no pre-contact, pure aspect of either Dakota or Euro-America in this Dakota Hymnal. Survivance was achieved through finding belonging and kinship in an object that was intended to be a missionary tool.

Session 5: Radical Two-Spirit Relationalities: Indigenous Queer/Trans Resistance, Performance, and Urban Futurity

Panel
Room Location: Fiesta A&B
Souksavanh T Keovorabouth, Malia Billy, Keioshiah Peter

This panel weaves together interrelated conversations of Indigenous Queer, Trans, and Two-Spirit (2S) resistance, performance, and urban survivance and Thrivance. Two-Spirit, first shared at the 1990 Winnipeg gathering, extends far beyond a term of realization—it is a radical act of resurgence against settler-colonial impositions of cis-heteronormativity. Reclaiming Two-Spirit knowledge is an ongoing process of returning to our Elder-led teachings and revitalizing oral histories that affirm Indigenous relationality, gender, and sexuality outside colonial frameworks. Building from this, Diné drag performance, particularly through the work of Lady Shug, embodies this radical resurgence. Lady Shug's performances, as seen in We're Here (HBO), reimagine Diné futurity through felt affect, Indigenism, and K'é (kinship), transforming the stage into a site of healing, political resistance, and community care in response to bordertown violence. Extending these expressions into urban spaces, interviews conducted in S-ki:kigdam (Phoenix, Arizona) with

Indigenous Queer, Trans, and 2S peoples highlight how they navigate, resist, and transform cities shaped by settler colonial urbanization. Participants' stories reflect both displacement and belonging, demonstrating how Indigenous bodies re-map urban geographies as spaces of connection, community, and futurity. Together, these stories and performances reveal how Two-Spirit presence—on stage, in cities, and within communities—enacts anti-colonial resistance and (re)claims Indigenous life beyond colonial borders.

Session 6: Wileety Native American College: Belonging, Community, Nationhood, and Campus

Panel
Room location: Isleta
Chair of Session: **Jaime Fuentes**, Northern Pomo from Hopland Band of Pomo Indians
Panelist: **Annette Reed**, Enrolled Citizen and Member of the Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation, **Joaquin Tarango**, Enrolled Citizen Wilton Rancheria
Amber Bill, Ph.D. Northern Paiute/Te-Moak Western Shoshone (South Fork Band) and enrolled member of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe

The Wileety Native American College at Sacramento State is the first of its kind on a California State University Campus. The CSU System is the largest four-year public university system in the country. The Wileety Native American College will provide career and Tribal leadership-focused activities and training for the professional development necessary for success both within and outside of Native American communities at the local, state, and national levels. Student support services will be easily accessed through the Wileety Native American College to provide a more fluid pathway through the university. Students will collaborate with their peers through the cohort model, thus creating support systems with the potential to become lifetime networks and resources. We will present how it was formed and why. We will discuss the ways by which Wileety Native American College intersects with Native American Studies, Tribal Affairs and the Esak'timá Native American Student Center.

CELEBRATION OF LIFE - JAMES RIDING IN

Lunch hosted by the AISA Board

Room Location: SUB Ballroom C
12:15PM – 1:45PM

BUSINESS MEETING

Location: SUB Ballroom C
2:00 PM – 3:30 PM

SECTION VI: 3:45PM – 5:15PM

Session 1: Indigenous Relationality, Land, and Sovereignty

Individuals Paper Panel
Room Location: SUB Ballroom C
Moderator: Souksavanh T Keovorabouth (Diné)

Jacob Richard: Bonds of Iron: Kinship and Belonging within the Nêhiyaw-Pwât

The Nêhiyaw-Pwât, or "Iron Confederacy," was a coalition of individual bands that dominated the northern Great Plains from the mid-1700s to the late-1800s. Formed by the Nêhiyawak (Plains Cree), Îethkabi (Stoney), Nakóda (Assiniboine), Saulteaux (Plains Ojibwa), Métis, and Haudenosaunee peoples, these polyethnic bands thrived as the principal middlemen of the northwest during the fur trade era. This paper argues that the diversity of the Nêhiyaw-Pwât strengthened, rather than hindered, their alliance. By applying an ethnohistorical approach to colonial sources, this paper reveals how contemporary Nêhiyaw-Pwât bands remain connected to the historic kinship ties they forged on the Great Plains. In doing so, it reconsiders how kinship bonds are forged and emphasizes how kinship within the Nêhiyaw-Pwât strengthened over time and when tested by hardship. Ultimately, the paper demonstrates that kinship bonds were critical to the success of the historic Nêhiyaw-Pwât and emphasizes kinship's continued importance to their modern-day descendants.

Dylan Bernal (Sandia Pueblo, Yuchi)
Here in the Southwest, across villages, Pueblos, and Native communities, water is at the center of life. B'a wa eithe wem (water is life). The health, wellness, and prosperity for these communities is dependent on water and how it is delivered throughout the state. Land-based cultures here in New Mexico have developed and utilized Acequias as the primary water delivery system; these veins are the bloodline for Pueblo life. In an effort to understand my place, my relationality as Tiwan, I craft my relationship to land and water through lived experience, storytelling, memory and the land itself. I aim to examine my family history, our relationship with land and water, and my own position as a farmer, community member and steward while inquiring about how and where we get our water from. This perspective emphasizes the importance of water education, community-based research, and connections to land through place and time.

Kelly Nalani Beyan (Navajo) - Tribal geopolitics in the United States is inherently linked to foods. When sovereign and settler governments mutually agreed to terms of co-occupancy, Tribes negotiated for clearly stated pre-contact rights to remain absolute so communities could retain equal access to ancestral sources of sustenance

and maintain traditional foodways. This research seeks to understand how Tribal leaders understood negotiations around tribal hunting, fishing, trapping, and equal access rights. When demanding inalienable rights for Tribal Citizens, did leaders intend this as a perpetual right to food? The research centers kinship relations to foods to frame the cannons of treaty interpretations within Indigenous cosmologies and worldviews. Through a case study approach, this works defaults traditional knowledges to conduct a historical analysis of tribal treaties and case law to navigate potential pathways towards Indigenous food governance and the recognition of the right to food as a treaty right.

Arina Melkozernova - The paper summarizes research methods applied for the comparative analysis of seed narratives in Indigenous and Italian farming communities. To respond to the shift in discourses away from the anthropocentric perspective to ecocentrism in the process of "becoming-with" seeds and contribute to closing the nature-culture gap imposed by the binary Western knowledge system, the author developed a relational framework for interdisciplinary and participatory research, incorporating values from Indigenous Research Principles, Biosemiotics, Environmental Humanities, Indigenous Ecology, Ecocriticism, and Ecofeminism. This framework illustrates the dynamic interactions among research components, facilitating the mapping of relational knowledge values rooted in Indigenous epistemology. By comparing the connections between seed keepers and their land, the paper highlights how cultural practices are deeply tied to locality and continuous relationships with the environment. The comparative analysis of seed narratives aims to contribute to decolonizing knowledge efforts and challenge Western epistemic practices by incorporating diverse perspectives to co-create knowledge.

Cynthia-Lou Coleman, PhD, Osage (enrolled)
A string of extraordinary policy decisions set off a chain reaction that sparked the largest dam removal project in history that promised to restore fisheries, fauna, flora and wildlife habitats along the Klamath River in the Pacific Northwest. We view the decision-making and discourse surrounding the dams' razing through two lenses: Vine Deloria Jr.'s conception of Indigenous Metaphysics and Democratic Pluralism. In light of the dams' backdrop—where we examine three Native American communities that have deep cultural, spiritual and social relationships with the River—we explore how decades of division between the tribes, farmers, ranchers and others were mended in the 2000s and resulted in the decision to remove four aging dams by 2024. We explore how stakeholders aligned with Deloria's tenets (such as the interconnection between beings and place) and with the central pluralistic notion that a diversity (rather than a uniformity) of decision-makers created a more ethical, equitable and democratic decision-making process.

Session 2: Indigenous Identity and belonging

Individuals Paper Panel
Room Location: Santa Ana A&B
Moderator: Victor Begay

Mary Bowman (Hunkpapa Oglala Lakota)- Tiarra LittleOceti Sakowin Community Academy (OSCA), in partnership with NISN, has developed a graduate

profile rooted in Lakota Star Knowledge, a framework informed by ancestral teachings. This approach strengthens Indigenous students' cultural identity, fostering a profound sense of belonging and purpose. By centering Indigenous knowledge systems in education, OSCA empowers students to embrace their heritage confidently, enhancing both academic achievement and personal growth. Students at OSCA are encouraged to be unapologetically Indigenous, carrying forward ancestral wisdom while thriving in contemporary learning environments. This presentation will explore how Lakota Star Knowledge guides curriculum design, shapes student outcomes, and cultivates a model for culturally sustaining education.

Nathan Blackwell (Navajo) - Indigenous notions of kinship and belonging operate through and within a metaphysics of reciprocity and ethical obligation that extends relationality beyond the closed boundaries of identity. This paper presents a speculative exploration of future ancestral methods for making kin outside of settler-colonial structures of elimination. In Diné historical narratives, the first Five-fingered Earth Surface People were charged by Changing Woman to find and make more kin. This expansive, relational mandate developed into what is called the Gathering of the Clans—a historical cycle which ended (roughly) with the internment at Hwéeldi and the development of the modern Navajo Nation. What if contemporary Diné resurged this vital instruction in the present and future? How do lived practices of expansive kinship and belonging shift Indigenous political horizons? Through a speculative and futurist method, this paper explores how Indigenous kinship might offer a political and ethical framework for developing a post-settler world.

Session 3: Indigenous literary as Resistance

Individual Paper Panel
Room Location: Isleta
Moderator: Joaquin Lopez Huerta

Dr. Jessica Barudin (Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw) - This presentation features the short documentary Ga'walapa laxa̱n's ka̱n's sa̱nale' (Help Us to Be Whole Healing Program), created during a 2024 trauma healing program at the Nawalakw Language & Culture Camp, hi'ma̱nis ka̱ku̱tła̱'atsi ("a place of forever learning") at Hada (Bond Sound), on Ka̱kwa̱sutinuxw territory (Musgamakw Dzawada̱'enuxw). The film follows frontline workers and community leaders as they slow down, engage Kwakwala language, songs, and dances, and restore kinship through ceremony, land-based learning, and somatic regulation amid massive waves of grief and cumulative stress. The AISA session offers experiential learning, where participants will be guided through a grounding practice, witness the film screening, and share in a reflection circle. Film is presented as a relational method for knowledge translation and mobilization, connecting to film-as-planning praxis (Sandercock & Attili). The session invites participants to consider access to care for Indigenous land-based healing, and language-forward wellness and social services.

Megan Tusler, PhD (Osage) - In this presentation I consider Native historical

novels to argue against an account of Native writing as simple history, showing that the novel-as-history is a category to which Native writers are often compelled to respond. To what extent can—or can't—the historical novel serve as an account of historical events? Why are Native novelists expected to "do history" when the task of the historical novel is to conceptualize, fictionalize, and interpret? I provide an historicist account, grounded in Indigenous literary epistemologies and theories, of how three novels of the Osage murders can be taken as productively incomplete accounts, demonstrating the unique contribution of Native writers to the long tradition of the historical novel. I show that the compulsion to provide a full account of historical events that has been placed on Native writers avoids a robust theoretical account of the possibilities and contingencies that the historical novel might provide.

Session 4: NAS-TEA Podcast: A podcast at AISA for reflections on kinship and belonging

Workshop
Room location: Acoma A&B
Moderator: Wendy Greyeyes
Wendy S. Greyeyes, Tiffany S. Lee, Lloyd. L. Lee, Leola Paquin, Maia Rodriguez, Myla Vicenti Carpio, Daphne Littlebear

Podcast guests: Michelle Hale, Jerome Clark, Rachael Nez, Ruben Leyva

The NAS faculty at UNM has started a podcast titled NAS-TEA. Our purpose is to encourage the outreach and education of critical issues impacting the NAS field that will be informative for our community members. NAS believes in community engagement and through the podcast, the department will facilitate topics that center on the history and importance of the NAS field, issues, and successes of our communities, and most importantly, our faculty and students' research in NAS. We will recruit several AISA registered participants to engage in a discussion to center their stories and reflections of what kinship and belonging mean to them and how NAS contributes to academic and student spaces of belonging. Audience members will listen in but can also ask questions and engage in discussion for the podcast recording.

Session 5: Cultivating Community Through Critical Indigenous Librarianship Programming: Creative Expression to Language Immersion to Research

Roundtable
Room location: Fiesta A&B
Alexander Soto and Eric Hardy

This presentation will demonstrate how Indigenous librarianship is prioritized at The Labriola Center, an Indigenous-led library within a non-Indigenous doctoral research university library. This library is trailblazing approaches and strategies that can greatly influence how libraries engage with Indigenous peoples. The all Indigenous staff has utilized American Indian Studites to drive the "Indigenizing" of their library model, so that Indigenous patrons can foster belonging in the library and larger university. By delivering programming that engages and centers Indigenous ways of knowing, lived experiences, and creative expressions, the Indigenous staff builds community through

a variety of community events and engagements. This presentation will spotlight why an all-Indigenous staffing model is needed to create programs that: 1) foster cultural resilience 2) support community building and 3) facilitate Indigenous research that supports self-determination and Tribal sovereignty. Additionally, it will stress the primary importance of having Indigenous leadership within non-Indigenous library systems.

Session 6: Intergenerational Impacts of Native American Boarding Schools in Oklahoma

Panel
Room Location: Lobo A & B
Panelists: **Savannah Slayton (Cherokee citizen), Amelia Cook (Chickasaw citizen), Ashley Moelling (Muscogee/Creek citizen)**
Chair: **Farina King, Ph.D. (Navajo Nation citizen)**

Chaired by NAS professor Dr. Farina King, this panel brings together emerging Native scholars in Oklahoma whose work traces the deep and intergenerational impacts of Native American boarding schools across time. Panelists examine distinct historical moments from nineteenth-century mission and manual labor schools to the contemporary legacies of assimilationist education policies affecting Native youth today. Grounded in Indigenous methodologies and decolonial frameworks, each presentation is shaped by the scholars' own family and community connections to boarding school histories. Dr. King and students Amelia Cook, Savannah Slayton, and Ashley Moelling are collaborators on Indigenous Truthtelling of Boarding Schools, a community-engaged initiative that brings together scholars, students, and Native communities to teach and learn these histories with care. At a moment of intensified public debate over how boarding school histories are understood and taught, this panel emphasizes truth-seeking as a necessary pathway toward healing, accountability, and Indigenous educational futures.