Native American Cultural Center’s
Indigenous Reader

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER: GRADUATION EDITION

MAY 2021

Congratulations to the
Graduates of 2021!

THE TASSLE WAS WORTH THE HASSLE

Warm greetings from the Native American Cultural Center! I hope you, family, and friends are healthy and safe. Although this year has been very challenging for all of us, we will celebrate! In this issue of the Indigenous Reader, we are highlighting our graduates! This year’s graduates have faced many hardships and challenges, yet they remain focused on their studies. They have positively impacted future Rams in various ways. Our core programs such as the North Star Peer Mentoring Program, All Nations Leadership Retreat, K-12 Outreach and Native Women’s Circle benefit and thrive from student involvement and leadership. To the graduates, we in NACC join you, family, friends, and ancestors to celebrate your achievement! We are very proud of you! We hope you find ways to remain connected to the office and the CSU community. Ahe’hee’ (Thank you).

-- Ty Smith, Director

Graduate Highlights

NACC would like to dedicate the last issue of the Spring Semester's Official Newsletter: Graduation Edition to recognize the Native and Indigenous students in the class of 2021. Congratulations on your determination and unparalleled persistence!
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<td>Sophia Alvarez</td>
<td>BS Health and Exercise Science</td>
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<td>BFA Art</td>
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<td>Trenton Beeh</td>
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<td>Andy Fry</td>
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<td>Josephine Glenn</td>
<td>BS Health and Exercise Science</td>
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<td>Alex Hopkins</td>
<td>BS Statistics, BA Ethnic Studies &amp; Minor in Math</td>
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<td>Casey Key</td>
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<td>Hayley Michel</td>
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<td>Serena Natonabah</td>
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<td>Mathis Quintana</td>
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<td>Belén Santistevan</td>
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<td>Haley Todacheene</td>
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<td>Rikkie Mijares-Vallie</td>
<td>BA Sociology</td>
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<td>Benjamin Wilson</td>
<td>BA Economics &amp; BA History</td>
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<td><strong>GRADUATES OF 2020</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Trevor Aguirre</td>
<td>PhD Mechanical Engineering</td>
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<td>Jeremiah Chaote</td>
<td>BS Chemistry</td>
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<td>Sophie Leone</td>
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<td>Kayla Miller</td>
<td>BS Social Work &amp; BA Sociology</td>
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KASANDRA ANAYA

PRONOUNS: SHE/HER

BACHELOR OF FINE ARTS IN ART
(CONCENTRATION IN ART EDUCATION)

Hometown
• Sante Fe, New Mexico

Tribe
• Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo/Jicarilla Apache

How were you involved with the NACC office?
• With the NACC office, I was involved with being a peer mentor, Women Circle coordinator, and a front desk intern.

Fondest memory from the NACC office or CSU
• My fondest memory from the office was going to the All Nation's Leadership Retreat during my first year.

Advice to incoming Native students
• My advice to incoming Native students would be to be willing to step out of their comfort zone and try new things.

How does your degree help your tribal/Native community?
• I want to use my degree to give back to my community by continuing to foster creativity in relation to traditional values.

What else were you involved with on campus?
• I was also involved with the LSC Arts Program on campus and was one of the student coordinators for the Duhesa Gallery.
JOSEFINA BELAY

PRONOUNS: SHE/HER

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN MECHANICAL ENGINEERING
(CONCENTRATION IN AEROSPACE ENGINEERING)

Hometown
- Cambridge, Massachusetts

Tribe
- Laguna Pueblo

Fondest memory from the NACC office or CSU
- Fondest memory is the annual Pow Wow.

Advice to incoming Native students
- I would advise incoming Native Students to really use the NACC center as a place to gather or do homework outside of their dorms. Also, I'd tell them to use office hours with their professors and really schedule their study/homework time rather than guessing when they'll do homework.

Why are you proud to be Indigenous/Native American?
- I'm proud to be Native because of how far my family has come over the past few generations for me to be able to study aerospace engineering. I am my grandmothers' wildest dreams.

Best event you attended on campus?
- The best event I attended on campus was the AISES annual Pow Wow.

What are your plans for after graduation?
- After graduation, I'm looking to work as a test and/or composites material engineer in the aerospace industry.
Hometown
- Bennett, Colorado

Fondest memory from the NACC office or CSU
- My fondest memory from the NACC office was the Pow wow and feeling welcome every time I set foot into the office.

Advice to incoming Native students
- My advice for incoming freshmen is to get your hands on as many activities/opportunities as possible. Whether that be in the NACC office or outside of the NACC office because it will enrich your experience here at CSU and will help you create many connections and find a home away from home!

Favorite place to relax on campus?
- My favorite place to relax on campus is the NACC’s couch which is where I would take my daily naps.

What are your plans for after graduation?
- I plan to attend Illinois State University after graduation to obtain my Masters in Clinical and Counseling!
Milwaukie, Oregon

Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians

I was an active member with AISES.

My fondest memories are the little things that gave me joy throughout the years, such as walking to Mugs with my fellow grad students and talking about non-math things.

Get involved and get to know the people in the NACC office. They will bend over backwards to help you with anything you need!

My PhD in math allows me to bring STEM education back to my tribe and the greater NW indigenous population.

I was pretty much confined to the Math building so my favorite spots are the Oval and Mugs.

For my favorite event, I’m torn between the AISES Pow Wow and the Little Shop of Physics Open House. They are both amazing events that are close to my heart.

For the next year, I have taken a teaching position at Pacific University in Oregon near my family. My greater goal is to become a tenure-track professor at a liberal arts college in the Pacific Northwest.
Hometown
- Bozeman, Montana

Tribe
- Crow Tribe

Fondest memory from the NACC office or CSU
- A fond memory from my time at CSU was being able to be a founding member of the CSU Xi Beta chapter of Phi Mu Fraternity.

Advice to incoming Native students
- Join several groups on campus to make the most of your time and meet a lot of new people!

How does your degree help your tribal/Native community?
- I plan on going to medical school after graduation, and I would love to work for my tribe with Indian Health.

What else were you involved with on campus?
- I'm a member of Premedica, Phi Mu, the CSU Snowriders, and previously played violin for the CSU Symphony Orchestra.
Hometown
• Billings, Montana

Tribe
• Northern Cheyenne

How were you involved with NACC?
• Native Women’s Circle, AISES

Fondest memory from the NACC office or CSU
• My fondest memory would be all of the laughs shared in the office over the years.

Advice to incoming Native students
• Utilize all of the resources you need to and do not be afraid to ask questions.

Favorite place to relax?
• My favorite place to relax would be my apartment.

Best event you attended on campus?
• Dr. Yusef Salaam’s keynote this past February was a great event. He is very inspirational and uplifting.
Hometown
- Thunder Valley, South Dakota

Tribe
- Oglala Lakota Wágluȟe Band

Fondest memory from the NACC office or CSU
- My fondest memory is the first NACC powwow I ever attended. When I walked into the LSC and heard and felt the drum, I felt the school come alive. Ever since then every time I came to campus I remembered that feeling of the drum and I felt at home.

Advice to incoming Native students
- Remember that our ancestors have been on this land that this campus sits upon for thousands & thousands of years. Remember that those mountains in the distance belong to us.

What else were you involved with on campus?
- I was involved with the NACC office as a North Star Peer Mentor.

How does your degree help your tribal/Native community?
- My Bachelor’s degree allows me to translate the dominant western culture into traditional ways, by uniting the two worlds.

What are your plans for after graduation?
- I plan to attend Mitchell Hamline School of Law in Minnesota focusing my studies on Federal/Tribal Indian Law.
KAYLA JONES

PRONOUNS: SHE/HER

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP

Hometown
- Oceanside, California

Tribe
- Yavapai

Fondest memory from the NACC office or CSU
- Conversations and beading projects with NACC Women's Circle

Advice to incoming Native students
- You are strong, resilient, and CSU is lucky to have you!!!

What else were you involved with on campus?
- I was involved with the NACC office as a North Star Peer Mentor.

How does your degree help your tribal/Native community?
- I am looking forward to utilizing my degree for the purpose of protection and preservation of our cultural lands. Indigenous-led stewardship is my dream for future conservation. I am excited to work as an Interpretive Naturalist in California to help educate, support, and connect others to our natural surroundings.
White River, South Dakota
Sičháŋju and Oglála Lakȟóta (enrolled Rosebud Sioux Tribe)

One of my favorite memories from the NACC office was when I got to volunteer for the powwow because I got to meet so many folks from different nations and share laughter with them.

Advice to incoming Native students
- My advice for incoming Native students is: You belong here, no matter how many classes, classmates, and institutions try to erase Native presence and joy. Build community, you’re not alone.

How does your degree help your tribal/Native community?
- My degree helps my community through tying the lessons and instructions I gained back home with analytical skills and connections I’ve had the privilege to develop through my classes, placements, and networking. Through these ties, I integrate Indigenous ways of knowing, doing, and being with Western ways to critically evaluate issues and creatively produce strategies that benefit us.

What are your plans for after graduation?
- At the end of May, I will be moving to Seattle, WA to start a full-time research assistant position working on the URBAn Native Elders: Risk and Protective Factors for Alzheimer’s and related dementias project from the Partnerships for Native Health program housed under the Institute for Research and Education to Advance Community Health out of Washington State University. I am excited about this because I get to practice bringing myself into a space, ethically share and gather knowledge, and support community well-being.
Santa Fe, New Mexico

Navajo Nation

Throughout my four years at CSU I have been a part of the NACC community in a few different ways. I had been a front desk intern for a few years and well as a peer mentor for incoming Native students.

My fondest memories at CSU definitely happened in NACC. I met some of my closest friends and most supportive community.

My advice to incoming freshmen would be to take every opportunity and make the most of it. Do not be afraid to come into the office or to make those connections because those connections are what get you through your time at CSU.

After graduation, I plan on continuing my education by starting graduate school here at CSU.

Outside of NACC I have been a docent at the Curfman Gallery for 3 years and the student coordinator for the Duhesa Galley for 2 years.

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Tribe
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MEGAN PUGET
PRONOUNS: SHE/HER

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN ANIMAL SCIENCE

Hometown
• Bakersfield, California

Tribe
• Coyotero Apache

Fondest memory from the NACC office or CSU
• I love how CSU embraces and celebrated the cultural centers and their events.

Advice to incoming Native students
• Embrace every bit of it and get involved to learn so many new things and meet all different people.

How does your degree help your tribal/Native community?
• My degree helps with native communities because it sets me up to go to Veterinary school where I plan to graduate with my DVM and work in rural communities that are underrepresented in animal health care and safety. This also ties into my plans after graduation. I will be attending Midwestern University in Arizona as a student in the College of Veterinary Medicine in the class of 2025.
Dulce, New Mexico

I was a peer mentor, a member of AISES, and played intramural sports with other students from the NACC office.

One of my favorite memories is the all nations leadership retreat.

Take opportunities you normally wouldn’t. You’ll learn about yourself, and you may get the opportunity to make a difference in other people's lives.

I am proud to be Native American because of the struggles of my ancestors. They went through so much for me to be here today. I am proud to be Native American because of the uniqueness of my tribe's ceremonies, language, and connection to our homeland. Lastly, I am proud because it gives me a sense of belonging and connection to my community and family back home.

After graduation, I want to get another undergrad degree and maybe graduate school, depending on how things turn out. I want to be happy and enjoy the journey. Learning and growing as much as I can.
Hometown
- Phoenix, Arizona

Tribe
- Southern Ute

Fondest memory from the NACC office or CSU
- My fondest memory of CSU is being involved in the SDPS offices especially the Women and Gender Advocacy Center. One that sticks out is helping host Plaza Day on campus in front of the LSC where we talked to students, faculty, and staff about the resources we offer, consent, what interpersonal violence looks like, and connecting folks to community resources.

Advice to incoming Native students
- Give yourself grace as you enter college. There will be times where things feel overwhelming and you might not know what tomorrow looks like. But I promise you will make it through the tough times and you are making your ancestors, family, and fellow native students and staff so incredibly proud with your accomplishments. I believe in you!

What are your plans for after graduation?
- My plans following graduation are to move back home to Phoenix and spend time with the elders in my family. I am going to take a year off from school, work, and apply for a Master's program at Northern Arizona University pursuing a degree in School Psychology.

What else were you involved with on campus?
- I was involved with the Women and Gender Advocacy Center as a Student Aide, a representative on the President's Multicultural Student Advisory Committee, a peer educator for SEED (Students Empowering & Engaging in Dialogue), a research assistant for the Center for Family and Couples Therapy, a subcommittee member for the Native American Advisory Council, a teacher's assistant for a Psychology Seminar and Basic Counseling Skills, and an office assistant for International House.
H A L E Y  
T O D A C H E E N E

PRONOUNS: SHE/HER

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN STUDENT AFFAIRS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Hometown
- Boulder, Colorado

Tribe
- Diné

How were you involved with the NACC office?
- I was involved with the NACC office serving as a North Star Graduate Peer Mentor!

Fondest memory from the NACC office or CSU
- One of my favorite memories at CSU is getting to engage and attend Native American Heritage Month events! It is always so fun to gather with other Indigenous folks from CSU and the Fort Collins community to recognize and celebrate Indigenous Peoples!

Advice to incoming Native students
- My advice for incoming Native students is that it is okay to ask for help! Advocate for yourself and your needs; there are people who care about you on campus and will advocate with you and for you as well!

How were you involved with the NACC office?
- I was involved with the NACC office serving as a North Star Graduate Peer Mentor!

How does your degree help your tribal/Native community?
- With my degree in student affairs in higher education, my goal is to be an advocate for Indigenous students on college campuses and ensure that Indigenous students feel a strong sense of belonging in their campus community.

Favorite place to relax on campus?
- My favorite places to relax are in the NACC office where I get to visit with the NACC staff as well as other Indigenous folks. I also enjoy going out to the oval to get some sun and fresh air, maybe even read a good book!
Tribe
- Turtle Mountain Chippewa

**Fondest memory from the NACC office or CSU**
- Homecoming week is my fondest memory.

**Advice to incoming Native students**
- Stay focused and check back in with yourself on what needs to be accomplished.

**Why are you proud to be Indigenous/Native American?**
- I am proud to be a Native American female graduating from such a prestigious University. My Native culture is important, and I am proud of it.

**Best event you attended on campus?**
- I enjoyed the football and basketball games.

**What are your plans for after graduation?**
- After graduation, my plan is to work for either the state or Federal government and start a career.
Hometown
- Fulshear, Texas

Tribe
- Osage

Fondest memory from the NACC office or CSU
- My fondest memory from CSU is definitely getting to work at the coffee shops, and my fondest memory of the NACC was the peer mentor meetings that we held.

Advice to incoming Native students
- Don’t be afraid to make CSU your home. There’s always going to be the what-ifs, but CSU has the community and the people that will support you through all challenges.

How does your degree help your tribal/Native community?
- My degree helps the native community because I am able to relay accurate history around many different groups of natives, specifically the Osage. This helps with non-natives understanding amp native perspectives that we have today.

Favorite place to relax on campus?
- One of my favorite places to relax on campus was the NACC office and also the fourth floor of the BSB.
SOPHIA ALVAREZ

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN HEALTH AND EXERCISE SCIENCE

TRENTON BEEH

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
CASEY KEY

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN COMPUTER SCIENCE

HAYLEY MICHEL

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN PSYCHOLOGY
TREVOR AGUIRRE
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

JEREMIAH CHAO TE
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN CHEMISTRY

SOPHIE LEONE
DOCTOR OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

KAYLA MILLER
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN SOCIAL WORK & BACHELOR OF ARTS IN SOCIOLOGY (CONCENTRATION ON CRIMINOLOGY & CRIMINAL JUSTICE)
Congratulations on graduating!

Know that whatever adventure you go on next, we’re always here to support you.

To the graduates of 2021...

WE ARE SO VERY PROUD OF YOU!

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Know that whatever adventure you go on next, we’re always here to support you.