

Report of the
President's Implementation Committee for Indigenous Engagement & Inclusion

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Acknowledgments

The Implementation Committee is guided by the past and present leadership experiences of NASPA’s Indigenous Peoples Knowledge Community, the support of NASPA President Kevin Kruger, and advocacy of NASPA’s Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion team.

We want to recognize current and past members of NASPA’s Board of Directors, particularly Dr. Chicora Martin, Pam Agoyo, and Dr. Angela Batista, for investing significant intellectual, administrative, and emotional work in making Indigenous Peoples a priority of NASPA.

President's Implementation Committee for Indigenous Engagement & Inclusion: Purpose Membership & Activities

The President's Implementation Committee was established in June 2022. Its purpose was to implement 1) expectations and guidelines for staff and conference planning committees regarding Indigenous engagement at the Annual Conference, regional conferences, and other NASPA programs; 2) sustainable leadership and coordinating structure for the Power and Place Symposium; 3) a plan to develop partnerships with Indigenous organizations and associations; 4) an institutional and individual member engagement strategy for Tribal Colleges and Universities; and 5) a plan for Indigenous mentorship opportunities.

Workstreams were created to address five focus areas: 1) Conferences, 2) Power and Place, 3) Indigenous Partnerships, 4) Tribal Colleges and Universities, and 5) Indigenous Mentorship. Charlotte Davidson (Indigenous Relations Advisor, NASPA) and Monica Nixon (Vice President for Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, NASPA) served as liaisons to each workstream.

Workstreams convened from June 2022 to January 2024. The membership of the Implementation Committee comprises NASPA staff and NASPA members. A list of Implementation Committee members is in Appendix A.

The activities of the IEWG consisted of the following:

- Reviewed [Repairing and Recentering NASPA's Work with the Indigenous Peoples Community](#) authored by Kevin Kruger, NASPA President.
- Reviewed *The Report of the Indigenous Engagement Working Group*, authored by Charlotte Davidson, Monica Nixon, and Pam Agoyo.
- Submitted quarterly Workstream Implementation Progress Reports to the Board of Directors.
- Submitted final Workstream Reports.

Workstream Progress & Accomplishments

The information below highlights the key accomplishments of the five workstreams.

Partnerships Workstream

- Conducted an environmental scan and identified and prioritized the following organizations for initial outreach regarding programmatic partnerships: American Indian College Fund (AICF), American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC), National Indian Education Association (NIEA), and National Institute for Native Leadership in Higher Education (NINLHE).
- Invited these organizations and several others to participate in a roundtable hosted by NASPA during the annual National Indian Education Association Convention (October 20, 2023), with commitment to co-host future gatherings.
- Karen Frances-Begay and Charlotte Davidson hosted a workshop at the NIEA Convention titled, "Voices of Indigenous Student Affairs Professionals in Higher Education," which drew 25 attendees.
- Developed [partnership framework](#) to guide engagement with Native higher education organizations.

Power and Place Symposium Workstream

- Hosted the first in-person Power and Place Symposium at Haskell Indian Nations University in June 2023. Strengths shared in the symposium assessment included hosting at a TCU, integration of student voices, and a focus on relationality and storytelling. Areas for ongoing improvement included providing opportunities for those new to NASPA to meet one another and sharing clearer learning outcomes for sessions.
- Developed a sustainable leadership structure balancing NASPA staff and volunteer leadership to host the Power and Place Symposium on an alternating basis during the Conferences on Student Success in Higher Education and the NASPA Strategies Conferences.

Conferences Workstream

- Finalized an [infographic](#) outlining principles and initial recommended means of respectfully including Indigenous ways of knowing into conference planning. The infographic will function as a living document, so it will be subject to change as our understandings evolve.
- Shared infographic with all in-progress regional conference planning committees to guide Indigenous engagement planning.

Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) Workstream

- Created and distributed a robust qualitative feedback form about development and learning needs of staff at TCUs and Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institutions (NASNTIs), but received low response rate.
- Collaborated with the Mentorship Workstream to host a roundtable session during the 2023 Annual Conference to solicit information about the Association's Indigenous engagement initiatives. Approximately 40 people attended the session, and the following summary of discussion points and recommendations was shared with participants:
 - Amplify the work of TCUs to deepen understanding of the student affairs landscape
 - Engage TCUs to collaborate with NASPA to develop and strengthen student affairs competencies to support Native/Indigenous students at non-Native colleges and universities
 - Spread awareness of and dissuade the additional labor placed on Indigenous professionals and students at non-TCU institutions
 - Create opportunities to convene Indigenous scholars and increase space and support for the creation, advancement, and publication of research by Indigenous scholars.
 - Foster greater inclusivity and accountability to recruit Native/Indigenous students to participate in NASPA programs designed to increase underrepresented professionals in student affairs.
 - Develop a wider awareness among NASPA members regarding serving Native/Indigenous higher education student communities.
 - Assist in the growth and development of the next generation of Native/Indigenous student affairs professionals through Native/Indigenous-centered mentoring opportunities and providing clearer pathways to be involved with NASPA.

- Increase Indigenous engagement beyond land acknowledgements, from supporting Indigenous businesses to performing community service at Indigenous organizations, to convening Indigenous attendees at NASPA conferences.
- Hosted a Careers in Student Affairs Month webinar, “SA Relatives: Impactful Practices from TCUs that Every Student Affairs Professional Should Know,” featuring TCU Workstream Member Robert “BJ” Rainbow, Vice President of Academics at Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish College (a TCU), and Dr. Charlotte Davidson, Director of the Native American House at University of Illinois Urbana Champaign.

Mentorship Workstream

- Articulated stronger connection between Indigenous Peoples Knowledge Community and NASPA Undergraduate Fellows Program Advisory Board, with a focus on increasing applications from Indigenous undergraduate students
- Collaborated with TCU Workstream to host a roundtable session during the 2023 Annual Conference to solicit information about the Association’s Indigenous engagement initiatives, during which much of the feedback from roundtable participants focused on mentoring and engagement pathways.
- Hosted a fall 2023 webinar with the IPKC about Indigenous mentorship, featuring former IPKC leaders Dr. Stephanie Waterman and Dr. Karen Frances-Begay
- Supported IPKC’s creation of Indigenous Mentorship Co-Coordinator positions on the KC leadership team

Priorities for NASPA

The value of co-creation has been underscored throughout the implementation process and generation of this finalized report. NASPA staff joined NASPA members to amplify Indigenous voices, perspectives, and experiences to implement structural change to remedy the “forced fit” experiences that Indigenous peoples historically experienced. As such, our engagement process was somewhat analogous to the leadership sensibilities represented in the Indigenous Peoples Knowledge Community (IPKC) logo (see Figure 1).

As the IPKC logo illustrates, it takes multiple hands and generational knowledge and wisdom to create the ideal conditions for a community to be healthy and thriving. In this vein, the IPKC logo provides thoughtful guidance on how NASPA can continue actively advancing Indigenous engagement and inclusion. NASPA’s strategic aims (advocacy for student success; equity, inclusion, and social justice; research and scholarship; and professional development and engagement) align with the enduring foundations characterized in the IPKC logo (see Figure 2).

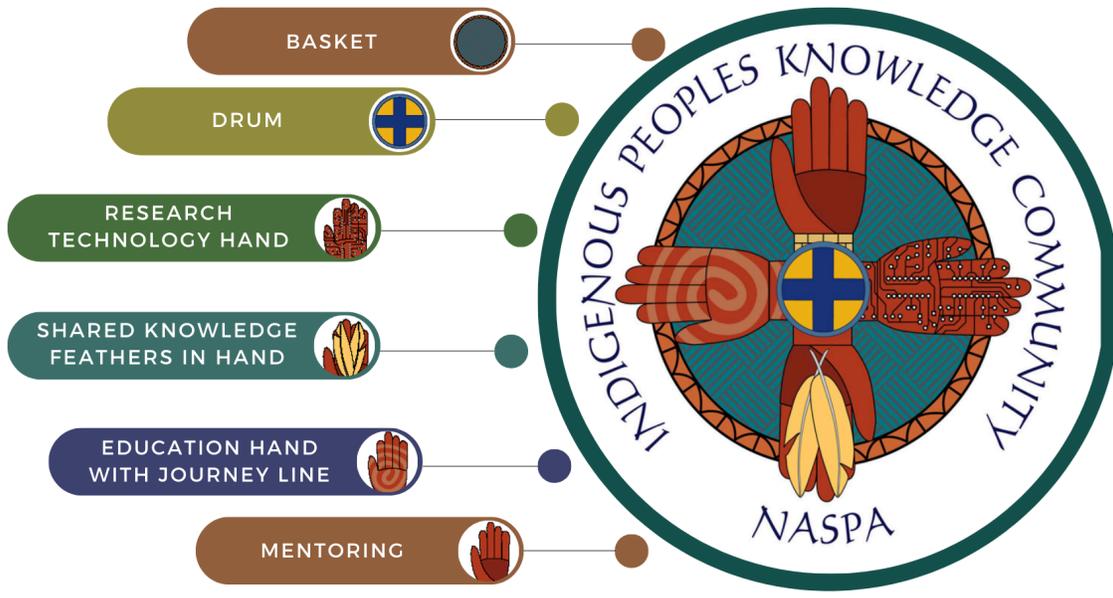


Figure 1. Indigenous Peoples Knowledge Community (IPKC) logo.

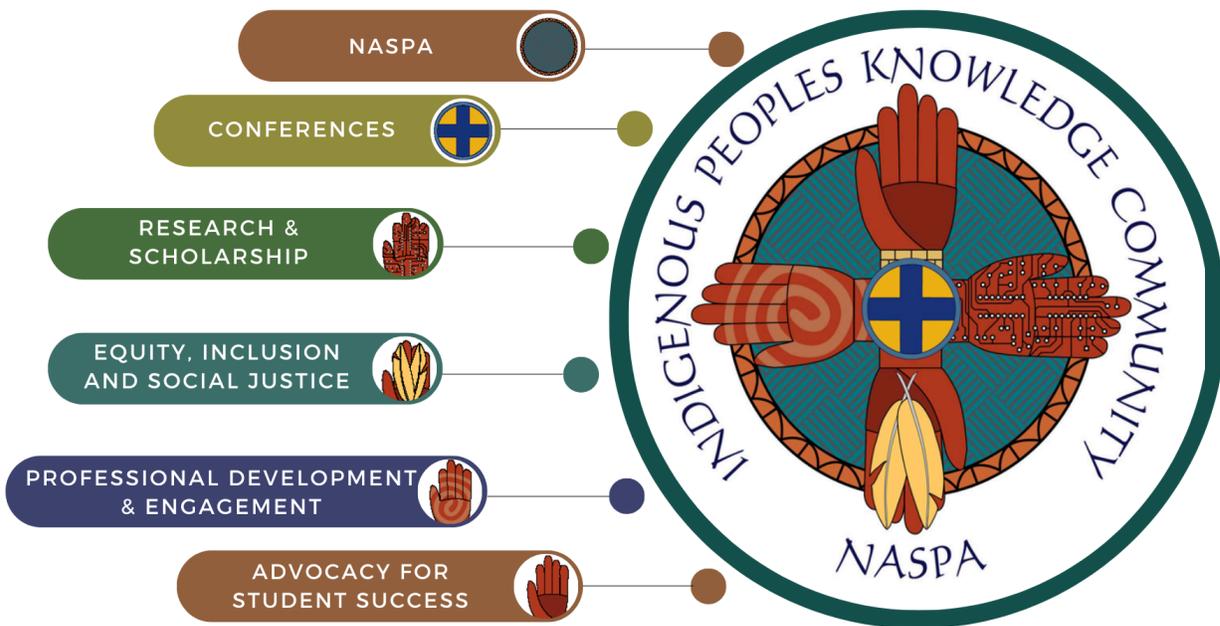


Figure 2. IPKC logo aligned with NASPA's 2019-2026 strategic goals.

In the spirit of collective responsibility, we share how existing organizational strengths can provide opportunities for NASPA to make sustained progress over time. The order of presentation is not intended as a priority list. Instead, the order reflects the logical steps necessary for effective and ongoing cultural change. Management of these priorities will be tracked by NASPA leadership, primarily by the Vice President, Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

Continue to Evolve Frameworks of Indigenous Engagement, Inclusion, and Co-Creation

- Drs. Charlotte Davidson and Monica Nixon have committed to co-authoring an article about the evolution and practice of Indigenous engagement and inclusion in NASPA. Their objective would be to help new community members understand the culture and values of the association. Plans also include submitting a proposal on their work and presenting it at the 2025 NASPA Annual Conference.
- NASPA and the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) are currently undergoing the same process: identifying new presidents and CEOs. Given the unique contexts and capabilities of both higher education organizations, newly installed presidents are encouraged to meet and explore how their associations seek to build environments to support Native students in campus contexts.
- Maintain a roster of Native/Indigenous higher education organizations invited to and have attended the Partnership Roundtable(s). Members could potentially be tapped for national, regional, and Knowledge Community leadership roles.
- Partnership Roundtables should be embedded in NASPA's professional practice, especially when it is evident that different entities and/or organizations do similar work and/or can be a stronger voice for Native/Indigenous issues in their alliance. These roundtables also give NASPA visibility and demonstrate their commitment to advancing equity, inclusion, and social justice. The Advising Success Network and AIHEC are creating a model for mutually-beneficial partnership.
- Finalize the framework and guiding principles on partnerships. Utilize and promote it as a promising practice in how a national organization can develop partnerships with Native/Indigenous organizations and communities.
- To address the growing presence of higher education and student affairs professionals within the National Indian Education Association (NIEA), the creation of an Indigenous-led higher education caucus was proposed and positively received by NIEA attendees. Ensure NASPA continues its participation within this professional circle.
- Recommend and pilot an institutional membership pricing model for TCUs that accounts for institutional mission, enrollment, and budget.
- Continue to define and outline unique NASPA member benefits for Tribal Colleges and Universities and Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institutions.

Enrich the NASPA Landscape with a More Consistent Indigenous Presence

- Ensure Indigenous Peoples are at decision-making tables at all levels of NASPA.
- Develop a communications strategy to ensure that NASPA staff, members, and volunteers, including appointed and elected NASPA member leaders, are routinely updated about Indigenous engagement and inclusion efforts.

- Require use of “NASPA’s Conference Indigenous Engagement Practices” infographic to ensure conference planning committees and leaders approach Indigenous participation in a respectful and formalized manner.
- Focus on building pathways for Indigenous leadership through the IPKC, institute faculty appointments, and elected and selected leadership and engagement roles.

Create Intentional Contexts of Learning and Development

- Continue to provide engagement opportunities during topical months like Careers in Student Affairs Month and Community College Awareness Month to enhance awareness of NASPA membership benefits and opportunities for Indigenous student affairs professionals.
- Invite Tribal Colleges and Universities and Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institutions (NASNTIs) to offer insights on *SA: Voices from the Field* podcast and live briefings.
- To move Indigenous knowledge forward, create dedicated strategic programming to catalyze higher education and student affairs research and scholarship, led and/or co-developed, by Indigenous Peoples and communities.
- Staff and resource the Power and Place Symposium to facilitate its ongoing impact in visibilizing Indigenous worldviews and specialized content focused on Native students and staff.
- Align the Power and Place Symposium on a regular cadence with the NASPA Strategies Conferences and Conferences on Student Success in Higher Education (SSHE), integrating the symposium with overall planning for these events (planning is underway for the 2025 Symposium during Strategies and will commence in fall 2025 for the 2026 SSHE).

Create a Holistic System of Support for Indigenous Members

- In the context of this ongoing work, NASPA’s nearest relationships and responsibilities are to its Indigenous members. Support and empower Indigenous members in their career progression through inclusive practices that increase Indigenous representation in leadership and decision-making roles in NASPA.
- Support the growth of Indigenous members through intentional outreach and developing and tracking participation goals in NASPA development programs, including Dungey Leadership Institute and affinity and professional pathways programs.
- Support Indigenous members in creating a culturally responsive conceptual model for mentorship.

Members of the President's Implementation Committee for Indigenous Engagement and Inclusion

Conferences Workstream

- Tiki Ayiku, Assistant Vice President for Professional Development, NASPA
- Brian Medina, Program Manager, Bias Incident Support Services, University of Maryland
- Nathalie Villatoro, Assistant Director for Regional and Constituent Group Program Management, NASPA

Power and Place Workstream

- Brett Bruner, Assistant Vice President for Student Success and Persistence, Wichita State University
- Gretchenrae Campera, Director of Regional and Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Initiatives, NASPA
- Kimberlie Moock, Doctoral Candidate and Graduate Instructor, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
- Amber Waters, Director of Meetings and Events, NASPA
- Asha' Jones, Associate Director, Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, NASPA

Indigenous Partnerships Workstream

- Alexa Chamberlain, Director of Research and Strategy, NASPA
- Karen Francis-Begay (Diné), Independent Scholar
- Stephanie Gordon, Vice President for Professional Development, NASPA
- Ross Wantland, Director of Curriculum Development and Education, Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign

Tribal Colleges and Universities Workstream

- Robert Rainbow (Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa/Spirit Lake Tribe/Standing Rock Sioux Tribe), Vice President of Academics, Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish College
- Laura Roha, Director of Membership, NASPA
- Emma Spalding, Associate Director, Wellbeing Initiatives and Statewide Coalition Projects, NASPA
- Andrew Yazzie (Navajo), Manager of Student Success, American Indian Student Services, University of New Mexico

Indigenous Mentorship Workstream

- Pam Agoyo (Ohkay Owingeh, Cochiti, and Kewa Pueblos), Executive Director for Student Support, University of New Mexico
- Elisa Aquino (Zapotec), Program Director, Native American/Indigenous Student Success Center, San José State University
- Terry Chavis (Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina), Doctoral Student, University of North Carolina at Greensboro
- Ke'Ana Bradley, Director, Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, NASPA
- Asha' Jones, Associate Director, Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, NASPA