

# CONFERENCE AGENDA

## Friday, February 9th

- 4:00 p.m.–5:00 p.m. OU Campus Tour  
Copeland Hall, Meet at Native Nations Center, 2nd FL
- 6:00 p.m.–7:30 p.m. Opening Keynote and Dinner  
Zarrow Hall 1st Floor, Community Rm
- 7:30 p.m.–9:00 p.m. Native Games Event  
Copeland Hall, NAS and Native Nations Center, 2nd FL

## Saturday, February 10th

All events will be held at the OU Student Union–3rd floor

- 8:00 a.m.–9:00 a.m. Registration
- 9:00 a.m.–10:00 a.m. Opening Plenary Panel
- 10:00 a.m.–10:10 a.m. Break/Transition
- 10:10 a.m.–11:10 a.m. Roundtables
- 11:10–11:20 a.m. Break/Transition
- 11:20 am – 12:20 pm Session I

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### **Indigenous Charter Schools in Oklahoma: Recent Developments and Perspectives**

Session 1 | 11:20 am – 12:20 pm | Regents Rm, 3rd FL

*Presenters: Dr. Cornel Pewewardy, UCO; Starla Bilyeu (Eastern Cherokee), OKCPS middle school teacher; Kelly Berry (Apache citizen), 3rd year doctoral student, Kansas*

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### **Learning about Constellations of Indigenous Experiences in Boarding Schools with Native American College Students in Oklahoma**

Session 1 | 11:20 am – 12:20 pm | Scholars Rm, 3rd FL

This panel features Native American students at the University of Oklahoma who are a part of the growing collaborations and initiatives for Indigenous truth-telling of boarding schools, which work with Indigenous communities to understand and share sources and stories that introduce the public and Native American youth and communities to complicated Native American boarding school experiences. Dr. Farina King will facilitate the panel, since she has worked with each of the students. Oklahoma has one of the highest concentrations of Native American boarding schools, and this panel highlights various working relationships to understand and learn about the diversity of Indigenous lives and contexts of the many peoples and Native Nations that boarding schools have affected, specifically through the lens of Native American students in higher education. Some of the panelists have been in service-learning and research-focused courses that feature Indigenous community-centered work to understand Cherokee and intertribal boarding schools and impacts on Native American education and people through storymaps, Google Earth, and oral histories. Some of the panelists are descendants and relatives of boarding schoolers (survivors and/or alumni). They all are contributing to an effort to partner with Native Nations in Oklahoma to learn the histories and

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archaeologies of Native American boarding schools. All the panelists will address the constellations of Native American boarding school experiences, which vary but are interconnected in the homelands to over 39 Native Nations that has been marked by over 70 different boarding schools.

*Panelists: Dr. Farina King; Amelia Cook; Savannah Slayton; Dr. Bonnie Pitblado; Ashley Moelling; Autumn Pritchett; Andrew Wilson;*

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## **How to Play the Game: Earning the Beaded Cap**

Session 1 | 11:20 am – 12:20 pm | Governors Rm, 3rd FL

When someone says a graduation cap, what first comes to mind? For many Native American students these caps represent academic regalia and ceremonial regalia. Each beaded cap is unique and may hold a distinct value to the wearer but there is one common thread between them that unites them all; every beaded cap was earned through sacrifice and hard work.

For many Native American students in academia the pursuit of a beaded cap can be a lifelong journey fraught with a variety of challenges because the educational system doesn't prioritize the success of these students. The journey of Native American students through higher education is often filled with unique obstacles rooted in historical disparities, cultural dissonance, and systemic barriers. In this roundtable we are going to discuss: our academic paths, avenues of support, retention, and the journeys that students embark on from their homes. Leaving home to attend college and being distanced from cultural traditions, ceremonies, and support, has led to sacrifices made to pursue higher education that exemplify resilience. The main focus of our roundtable is not only for us to each share our journeys through academia but to facilitate a conversation on how higher education systems can better support our Native American students, while also providing them the tools needed to succeed. Beaded caps symbolize honor, respect, and tribal customs passed down from generations and Native Students deserve to be able to earn it by playing their own game.

*Presenters: Sadie Littlecreek, (Absentee Shawnee, Ioway, Otoe-Missouri, Mvskoke, Sac & Fox) OU; Julia Alessandra Guerrero (Comanche, Kiowa) OU; Taryn Evans, University of Oklahoma; Hope Reeves, OU; Lily Painter, OU;*

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## **Mentorship and Self-efficacy**

Session 1 | 11:20 am – 12:20 pm | Associates Rm, 3rd FL

Bandura's (1977) Self-Efficacy Theory. The Self-efficacy theory has been extensively researched and supported in higher education for academic achievement, motivation, and learning. Self-efficacy theory has four components: performance accomplishments, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and physiological states. Self-Efficacy Theory will be applied as a lens to review, collect, and analyze data. The research site of the study will take place at a large public university with the target participants being Native American students with tribal affiliation enrollment. The data that will be collected and analyzed will be to examine how Native American students' sense of self-efficacy, while involved in a mentorship program, impacts the students' persistence through higher education. The research will potentially provide higher learning institutes with successful approaches or improve current strategies to support and retain Native American students. This study may provide data on the challenges and barriers that Native American students face in higher education.

*Presenter: Terra Beaver, Muscogee Creek Nation, Southern Nazarene University*

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2:00 pm – 3:00 pm Session 2

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## **Silenced Steps**

Session 2 | 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm | Regents Rm, 3rd FL

To bring awareness of the crisis across native country of the Murdered and Missing Indigenous women and Men.

*Presenter: Rochelle RedBone Arebalo*

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## **Indiginerdity: Indigenous Pop Culture eXpo (IPX)**

Session 2 | 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm | Scholars Rm, 3rd FL

Immerse in Indiginerdity!! Indiginerdity is a phrase coined by Dr. Lee Francis, IV, founder and CEO of Native Realities' IPX. Learn about their work with the Indigenous Pop Culture eXpo. IPX is filled with thought-provoking discussions, captivating artists, musical performances, and much more Indiginerdity. Gentry will discuss how to immerse yourself in the rich tapestry of indigenous traditions and contemporary expressions. IPX will bring the power of storytelling, resilience, and innovation.

*Presenter: Kristin Gentry (Choctaw Nation)*

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## **Leveraging Educational Sovereignty in STEAM Fields Starts with Us: Exploring Scholastic Gaming Education within Indian Country**

Session 2 | 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm | Governors Rm, 3rd FL

This proposal will explore eSports programs and how they unfold in educational systems throughout Indian Country with discourse of how eSports develop important soft skills i.e., communication, teamwork, problem-solving, critical thinking, decision-making.

Indigenous Futurism, which allows for reimagining cultural histories using Indigenous ways of knowing of the past, present, and future in relation to science fiction and technology, will be discussed in relation to eSports. Recent Indigenous video games, *Assassin's Creed III*, which explores gameplay with a Mohawk protagonist, and *Never Alone (Kisima Ingitchuna)*, constructed through Inupiat lenses, will be highlighted.

According to the National Education Association, [www.nea.org](http://www.nea.org), the explosive growth of eSports was driven by student interest as 90 percent of teens play video games and is matched by growth in eSports scholarships and careers; however, there is a need to recognize how there are very few eSports programs operating in Indigenous spaces.

The facilitators will provide a comprehensive review of how eSports unfold throughout Indian Country and solicit questions and feedback from participants identifying eSports' strengths and weaknesses, while seeking other perspectives. This highly interactive session provides participants with practical knowledge applicable in diverse contexts, contributing to existing discourse, and identifying key educational opportunities for Indigenous students, and areas of research (resources, scholarships, skill sets, etc.) Dialogue will specifically be focused around four key layers: socio-cultural, academic, pedagogical, and economic.

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Learning Objectives:

1. Assess current and emerging discourse of eSports in Indian Country
2. Identify cultural, social, academic, economic, and pedagogical forces advocating eSports in teaching and learning.

*Presenter: **Kelly Berry** (Apache Tribe of OK) Kansas State University; **Dr. Cornel Pewewardy** (Comanche & Kiowa)*

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## **The GEN Program: A Mentor-Linked, Cohort-Based Model for Meeting the Needs of Indigenous Students**

Session 2 | 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm | Associates Rm, 3rd FL

*Presentation continues into Session 3*

American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) students are underrepresented in all aspects of STEM, which contributes to the lack of AIAN students completing degrees and entering careers in health, science, and especially genomics. Addressing these educational disparities requires early learning interventions that foster sustainable support networks and research experiences responsive to the needs of Indigenous students. The Genomics & Ethics Program for Native Students (GEN) is a research and training program designed to foster learning communities for the advancement of Native students interested in genetics and society. Since its inception in 2018, GEN continues to grow a unique learning community that is Indigenous-centered, mentor-linked, and cohort-based. The student cohort is the primary channel through which the GEN learning community is connected, and in 2023 GEN held its inaugural IndiGENcon: Creating Connections and Making Space, the first student-led convention of its kind designed to elevate Indigenous connections and foster a sense of community for Indigenous peoples in academic spaces. IndiGENcon provided opportunities for attendees to partner with Indigenous researchers, Tribal partners, and national organizations that support the goals and objectives of our program. Critically, the conference provided GEN fellows with a supportive environment to advance their research and professionalization skills, to network with other students and professionals in related fields of study, and to serve as ambassadors for ushering Indigenous perspectives into their academic spaces on their own terms.

*Presenter(s): **GEN Fellows**, past and present; **Jessica Blanchard**, PhD, Research Scientist*

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3:10 pm – 4:10 pm Session 3

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## **The Importance of Supporting Tribal Colleges and Universities**

Session 3 | 3:10 pm – 4:10 pm | Regents Rm, 3rd FL

Presently, Indigenous students encounter unique challenges in their educational journeys, distinct from those faced by other ethnic groups. Tribal colleges and universities aim to pave the way for these students' success and recognition in contemporary society (American Indian College Fund, 2021). Indigenous supportive education is initiated by Indigenous leaders with the objective of helping based on their own experiences and access to education, while simultaneously honoring tribal knowledge, culture, and traditions (Abeyta et al., 2020; Crazy Bull et al., 2020; Nelson & Youngbull, 2015; Tachine et al., 2017). Achieving a genuine educational experience through Western standards requires Indigenous supportive education to strike a balance between cultural and community values (Bunkowski & Shelton, 2019; Delong et al., 2016; Kruk-Buchowska & Wood, 2019). According to Nelson & Youngbull (2015), Indigenous students derive significant benefits from a supportive system encompassing community, relationship, power, and mentoring experiences, facilitating the attainment of their goals.

Tribal colleges and universities (TCUs) prioritize the needs of Indigenous students by mirroring the characteristics of their home communities (Arnett, 2015; Hipp, 2019; Trammell, 2020). TCUs address gaps for Indigenous students through adaptive pedagogy, a method not commonly employed by predominantly White institutions (Bryan, 2019; Nguyen et al., 2019; Waterman & Sands, 2016). This approach contributes to the creation of a community aligned with the Indigenous students' backgrounds or aspirations, fostering an educational environment free from assimilation tactics (National Academy of Engineering & Steering Committee for Engineering Studies at the Tribal Colleges, 2006).

*Presenter: Colton Wood (Muscogee) The College of the Muscogee Nation*

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## **The Hunt for Red Pedagogy: Infusing the Transformational Indigenous Leadership Model to Reclaim and Indigenize the Academy**

Session 3 | 3:10 pm – 4:10 pm | Scholars Rm, 3rd FL

This panel presentation will explore the process for identifying transformational Indigenous leadership praxis. Framed from case studies in the transformational Indigenous leadership model (Pewewardy, et al.), panelists will present culturally responsive teaching practices for Indigenous learners and/or effective Indigenous teacher education programs. Within this mixture of scholarship and storytelling, the participants will unfold how their praxis tries to transcend theories of decolonization for reclaiming and Indigenizing the academy, hence Red Pedagogy. Panelists will discuss the notion of Red Pedagogy and its inherent conceptions of Indigenous teaching and learning. Further, the panel will examine the implications of culturally responsive teaching and teacher education by identifying who's doing this transformational leadership change while simultaneously detailing what not to do. The practice of reflecting on our own beliefs and knowledge about effective transformational Indigenous leadership change is one that holds a great deal of promise for engaging Red Pedagogy.

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Panelists: **Dr. Robin Minthorn** (Kiowa Citizen and Descendant of the Apache/Umatilla/Nez Perce/Assiniboine Nations), University of Oklahoma; **Dr. Natalie Youngbull** (Cheyenne & Arapaho/Assiniboine & Sioux), University of Oklahoma; **Dr. Jeanette Haynes-Writer** (Tsalagi, Cherokee Nation citizen), New Mexico State University; **Dr. Brook Colley** (Enrolled Eastern Band of Cherokee; **Wasco**, Warm Springs, Eastern Cherokee Tribe), Southern Oregon University; **Dr. Dawn Stevens** (Omushkeg Cree-Metis, Ojibway, Cowlitz, Steilacoom), University of Washington; **Dr. Virginia Whitekiller** (United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians), Northeastern State University; **Dr. Geneva Becenti** (Dine'), Native Inspired Schools Network; **Dr. Cornel Pewewardy** (Comanche & Kiowa), University of Central Oklahoma; **Carrie Witlow**, (Cheyenne & Arapaho, Kiowa, Creek); **Kelly Berry** (Apache Tribe of Oklahoma), Kansas State University;

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## **Connecting Culture and Success: A Presentation Recap and Preparing Oklahoma Native Youth for College and Beyond**

Session 3 | 3:10 pm – 4:10 pm | Governors Rm, 3rd FL

This presentation will share the experience and outcomes of a summer camp initiative for Native American high school students from underserved school districts in the state of Oklahoma. The Oklahoma Future Native Leaders (OFNL) Summer Camp was hosted 2021–2023 by Rose State College, a premiere public community college in the Oklahoma City metropolitan area. As a grant-funded initiative through the Oklahoma State Department of Education [federal Native Youth Community Project (NYCP)], OFNL aimed to foster college and career readiness while incorporating cultural activities for Native youth. The presentation will discuss the planning process, and camp curriculum, which includes hands-on cultural art projects, dance demonstrations, oral histories, and guest speakers. It will also highlight the fun field trips that enabled the students to connect with other peers and what it was like exploring the Oklahoma City metro area. The session shares the students' feedback and achievements, such as their increased interest in college and other career aspirations, their appreciation of their culture, and their application to Rose State College. The presentation will conclude with some implications and recommendations for future summer camps that aim to support Native American students in their educational and career aspirations.

Presenter: **Courtney Peyketewa**

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## **The GEN Program: A Mentor-Linked, Cohort-Based Model for Meeting the Needs of Indigenous Students**

Session 2 | 3:10 pm – 4:00 pm | Associates Rm, 3rd FL

Description: See page 13

Presenter(s): **GEN Fellows**, past and present; **Jessica Blanchard**, PhD, Research Scientist

4:20 pm – 5:30 pm

Social Event

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## **Beadwork and Basket Weaving Workshops**

OMU Molly Shi Boren Ballroom, 3rd FL

## **Social Stickball**

South Oval Lawn