

Research Partnerships and Mapping a Regional Agenda for Ending American Indian Health Disparities session

THURSDAY October 19, 2017 12:00-5 PM

Planning Committee Members (biographies)

See www.uwyo.edu/wyominginbre/events/2017-nih-west-idea.html for Conference information

Christine M. Porter PhD, Committee Chair

Christine M. Porter is Associate Professor and the Wyoming Excellence Chair in Community & Public Health in the Division of Kinesiology & Health at the University of Wyoming, where I have worked since 2010. I conduct action research in building social justice and radical democracy, largely through community food system work. I am principal investigator (PI) and project director for “Food Dignity,” a \$5-million, 5-year USDA-funded project that began in April 2011 with 5 community food organizing partners (www.fooddignity.org), including Blue Mountain Associates (BMA) in Wind River Indian Reservation. I am also now PI on Growing Resilience, a randomized controlled trial aiming to assess health impacts of home gardening and provides gardens to interested families in Wind River, in partnership with BMA and other organizations on the reservation (www.growingresilience.org). I’m also pleased and honored to be part of newer endeavors to build more appropriate and effective pathways for Native American higher education and research in health and in STEM within Wyoming.

Alexandra Adams, MD, PhD

Director and Principal Investigator, [Center for American Indian and Rural Health Equity](#), Montana State University.

Bert Boyer, PhD

Dr. Boyer’s research group is broadly interested in genomic, epigenomic and environmental risk and protective factors related to obesity and diabetes in Yup’ik people from Southwest Alaska. For the past 15 years, Dr. Boyer and colleagues have been working in rural Alaska developing a longitudinal study involving ~1,900 Yup’ik Alaska Native people in 11 communities using a community-based participatory research (CBPR) framework. They found obesity prevalence equal to that in the general U.S. population, but although obesity is one of the greatest risk factors for diabetes, type 2 diabetes incidence in the Yup’ik population is less than half that seen in the other areas of the U.S. To understand this better, Dr. Boyer and colleagues are investigating the roles of physical activity and a traditional subsistence diet rich in polyunsaturated fatty acids in prevention of chronic diseases, including diabetes. In collaboration with colleagues at the University of Washington, Dr. Boyer is also involved in a pharmacogenomics program project grant to investigate gene-by-environment interactions related to warfarin drug safety and efficacy. Dr. Boyer and colleagues continue to work towards the development of culturally appropriate strategies to return the full continuum of research results to participants. All projects adhere to a CBPR framework involving community partners and Yup’ik leaders.

Francine C. Gachupin, PhD

Francine C. Gachupin, PhD, MPH, is Assistant Professor, Department of Family and Community Medicine, College of Medicine, University of Arizona (UA). Dr. Gachupin is a tribal member of the Pueblo of Jemez in New Mexico. She received her Doctor of Philosophy from the University of New Mexico and her Master of Public Health in Epidemiology from the University of Washington. She studies primarily chronic diseases and related behavioral risk factors. She has worked at four separate tribal based epidemiology centers – Portland Area, Aberdeen Area, Albuquerque Area and Navajo Area. She is well known for her expertise in human subjects protection. She was former Chair of the Portland Area Indian Health Service (IHS) Institutional Review Board (IRB), former co-Chair of the National IHS IRB, former member of the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Human Research Protections (SACHRP), and former Manager of the University of New Mexico IRB. She currently serves on both the UA and Montana Wyoming Tribal Leaders IRBs.

Allen Harmsen, PhD

Professor, Microbiology & Immunology; past director of Montana INBRE; past co-director American Indian-Alaska Native Clinical and Translational Research Program.

Jordan P Lewis, PhD

Dr. Jordan P. Lewis (Aleut from the Native Village of Naknek) is an Associate Professor with the University of Alaska Anchorage, WWAMI School of Medical Education. Trained as a community psychologist, social worker, and gerontologist, Dr. Lewis's research identifies characteristics that enable Alaska Native Elders to age well and become role models for their families and communities. Using the lessons and experiences of elders, Dr. Lewis develops culturally tailored approaches for family and community members to improve the health of all generations, from long term care programs, dementia caregiver education programs, peer based alcohol interviews, to community-based programs to support aging in place. His past research has explored cultural understandings of successful aging, intergenerational programming in tribal communities, as well as collecting stories to improve program and service delivery in long-term care settings. Jordan received his BSW from the University of Alaska Fairbanks, MSW from Washington University in St. Louis, and PhD from University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Alika Maunakea PhD

Dr. Maunakea earned his B.Sc. degree in Biology at Creighton University (2001) and Ph.D. in Biomedical Sciences at the University of California, San Francisco (2008). He completed Postdoctoral training at the National Institutes of Health (2012) and has since joined the John A. Burns School of Medicine at the University of Hawai'i, Mānoa. In studying epigenetics for over 18 years, Dr. Maunakea has made several important contributions that have helped advance the field. In particular, he has developed and applied novel high-throughput, genome-wide technologies that survey DNA methylation and histone modifications, both central components of epigenetic processes, and has discovered novel roles for DNA methylation in regulating alternate promoter usage and pre-mRNA splicing. In his present role as Assistant Professor in the Department of Native Hawaiian Health, Dr. Maunakea is applying epigenomic information toward understanding the mechanistic relationships of gene-environment interactions that may underlie the origins of diseases of health disparities in Native Hawaiian and Pacific Island

populations, including cardiometabolic diseases and autism. It is hoped that these translational research efforts will contribute to the development of more effective targeted diagnostic, preventative, and therapeutic strategies to improve the health of these underserved communities.

Robert "Scott" Seville PhD

Scott Seville is Professor of Zoology and Physiology at the University of Wyoming. He has been based at the University's Casper Center since 1993 where he has also served as associate dean in the UW Outreach School and interim director of UW-Casper. Seville is program director/principal investigator and Outreach Core director for NIH IDeA Wyoming INBRE, serves as the UW concierge to the IDeA CTA Mountain West Clinical and Translational Research- Infrastructure Network and is an elected member of the National Association of IDeA Principal Investigators (NAIPI) National Committee. He serves on the UW Science Initiative Leadership Committee and the Wind River Reservation Task Force and is the UW contact for the University of Illinois- Rockford Medical School Native American Pathways Program.

Vallabh "Raj" Shah, PhD

Raj is a Regents' Professor at UNMHSC for more than 27 yrs working with disparity population of New Mexico including Native Americans for more than 20 years conducting Health service research in chronic conditions including diabetes and kidney disease. Recently (2013), through patient center outcomes research institute (PCORI) funded home based kidney care (HBKC), Raj established a comparative effective model of delivering kidney care with the following innovations: (1) it is the first HBKC system for the diagnosis and management of CKD in high risk minority populations that was designed with active collaborations with the community leadership and local Indian health services (IHS) providers; (2) it prioritized patient preferences in their health care and then use individualized curricula for CKD intervention; (3) it has the primary outcome of patient activation measures and adherence; (4) it combines community health representatives (CHRs) with point of care (POC) technology and text messaging to deliver state of the art care in a cost efficient manner; (5) it incorporates the culture and traditions of the community, and (6) it employs a patient centered approach leveraged with CHRs, IHS physicians, and expertise from an academic medical center. In Jan 2017, Raj received another major funding from PCORI to transfer his home based care model to 4 other native communities across NM.

Tarissa Spoonhunter, PhD

Niieihii Biixoonoo Hisei (Eagle Plume Woman) Tarissa Spoonhunter with a Ph. D in American Indian Studies is an enrolled member of the Northern Arapaho Tribe but raised on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation in Montana. Her research has been focused on Blackfeet Treaty reserved rights on ceded territory, traditional ecological knowledge(TEK), and use rights in treaty territory. She has taught college courses at the Blackfeet Community College, Wind River Tribal College, University of Arizona, and is a current professor at Central Wyoming College. Her work is looking at Federal Indian Policy, effective tribal governance, building partnerships, and tribal leadership. Her work ambitions have been geared towards sharing knowledge with the elders and young people who may not understand treaty rights or federal Indian law and policy. She is very tied to the traditional way of life and finding balance as an academic and role in her tribal nation.

[Annie N Bergman, PhD](#)

Annie Bergman serves as the Wyoming INBRE Program Manager at the University of Wyoming at Laramie main campus. Annie coordinates INBRE activities and programs on the Laramie campus including organizing meetings, conferences, and retreats, INBRE course offerings, videoconference seminar series, assists with budget oversight, grant and fellowship program coordination and review of proposals, and website development. She is on the Women in Math, Science & Engineering; WYSTEM; and WY Afterschool Alliance advisory boards and assists with interactions between statewide and UW activities.