

UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING
NATIVE AMERICAN & INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS STRATEGIC PLAN
(12-3-18 draft)

Preamble

Native American peoples inhabited and frequented the landscape encompassed within Wyoming for centuries prior to the founding of the University of Wyoming (UW) in 1887. For tribes such as the Arapaho, Cheyenne, Crow, Lakota, Shoshone, and Ute, Wyoming's high plains, majestic peaks, and life-giving rivers have served as ancestral homelands, fishing and hunting grounds, trading areas, and migration corridors. From time immemorial up to the present, this landscape has shaped these place-based peoples' cultures, economies, governments, languages, spirituality, and stories. Endowed in modern times with tribal sovereignty anchored in the U.S. Constitution, the reservations jointly created by and for these peoples during the nineteenth century stem from treaties and equivalent instruments bearing distinct emphasis on education. Witness as just one example Article VII of the Second Treaty of Fort Bridger (1868), which created the Wind River Indian Reservation. In relation to our Native American alumni, students, and more broadly, UW is acutely aware of the essential role played by education in fostering the self-determination of Indigenous communities and individuals. This education enriches our campus, state, nation, and world in immeasurable ways. Thus, it was with a combined sense of excitement, gratitude, and humility that a UW Native American Affairs Advisory Council (NAAAC) was formed in 2018 and the UW Native American Education, Research, and Cultural Center (NAERCC) was established during the same year. Preparation of this university-wide strategic plan for Native American Affairs marks the next step in this important institutional progression.

Vision

UW aims to meet the needs of Native American and other Indigenous peoples in Wyoming, the United States, and across the globe through integrated educational programs, community-driven research, and local service. Our foundational goal is to promote the cultural, economic, political, and social dimensions of these peoples' self-determination as communities and individuals.

Mission

Our mission is to offer culturally relevant and appropriate educational, outreach, and research programs to serve the needs of Native American and other Indigenous peoples in the state, region, nation, and abroad. In accordance with this mission, we seek opportunities that will:

- Provide access to post-secondary education for all Native American and other Indigenous students who desire to pursue undergraduate or graduate education.
- Recruit and train faculty and staff who are knowledgeable about traditions and values of Native American and other Indigenous peoples, such that these colleagues can capably perform student advising, student recruitment and retention, research, service, and teaching.
- Enable curricular and pedagogical advancements involving the integration of knowledge, traditions, and values of Native American and other Indigenous peoples.

- Produce community-driven yet broadly relevant research on salient issues facing Native American and other Indigenous communities and individuals.
- Forge linkages among critical thinking, freedom of expression, diversity, Native American and other Indigenous peoples' cultural heritages, personal growth, and mutual respect.
- Utilize university resources to maximize positive impacts of outreach programs with Native American and other Indigenous peoples throughout the state, region, nation, and world.

Values

Our values are rooted in an unyielding commitment to affirming the cultures, traditions, and value systems of Native American and other Indigenous peoples and to promoting their emotional, ethical, intellectual, physical, and spiritual growth. We must emphasize collaboration, collegiality, and cooperation to work together in a diverse world that presents both challenges and opportunities. We must nurture and prioritize relationships as well as practice generosity. We must instill and insist on mutual respect. We must be brave, resilient, and responsible and employ critical thinking in our decision-making while practicing reciprocity in all we do.

Process

The UW NAAAC wanted to ensure that critical issues, topics, and perspectives of the university community and the Wind River Indian Reservation community were solicited and incorporated into this strategic plan. To this end, a 17-person strategic-plan subcommittee was formed (see Appendix A), and a two-phase approach was developed to gather input. The first phase involved holding a series of 15 listening sessions with UW administrators, faculty, and staff, and Wind River community members during spring and summer 2018 (see Appendix B). The listening sessions focused on six general questions intended to assess UW's academic programs, curricula, research efforts, outreach, and logistical and academic support vis-à-vis Native American and other Indigenous students and communities. More than 200 people attended these listening sessions and offered input, creating a list of approximately 85 topics, issues, and action items. Moving forward from these sessions, the second phase of the process consisted of collecting information about the approaches of other higher-education institutions, domestically and internationally, in regards to Native American and Indigenous affairs, including academic programs, campus events, facilities, outreach efforts, protocols, and research projects (see Appendix C). Undertaken during summer and fall 2018, this comparative institutional research focused on identifying best practices and innovations that might inform future approaches at UW. A carefully crafted list of 27 higher-education institutions was composed for web-based research, and this research was completed with a standardized template developed to evaluate the foregoing aspects of the institutions' approaches to Native American and Indigenous affairs. Stemming from this research, a handful of institutions were identified as leaders based upon their exceptional efforts in this area, and telephone interviews were conducted with representatives from these institutions. As with the preceding listening sessions and web-based research, a template was utilized to structure these interviews in a precise, informative manner.

In sum, the listening sessions, web-based research, and telephone interviews generated a wealth of information that the strategic-plan subcommittee ultimately integrated into this document. It is the input from this wide assortment of people that constitutes the plan's body.

Goals & Objectives

Goal 1: Driving Excellence—*Join together as an intellectual community already renowned for its regional, national, and global relevance and impact by fostering and rewarding excellence in teaching, scholarship, innovation and creative endeavor.*

Subgoal 1: Promote and strengthen scholarly and creative enterprises at UW that have an Indigenous dimension.

- Broaden and strengthen research and creative-activity outcomes in Native American and Indigenous Studies through collaboration with units across campus and entities throughout the state, region, nation, and world.
- Create a clearinghouse of Native American and Indigenous research projects that identifies and describes all UW collaborative research projects, their goals, and personnel involved, including on the Wind River Indian Reservation.
- Support expanded collaboration between UW and tribal agencies—for example, tribal historians and UW museum repository staff sharing methods of cataloguing information.
- Expand access of Native American and other Indigenous peoples to UW research findings through publications, web-based materials, and campus and outreach programs.
- Assist Native American and other Indigenous peoples with preserving and disseminating historical, cultural, linguistic, and traditional ecological knowledge.
- Provide culturally-appropriate training, support, and engagement assistance for UW faculty conducting collaborative research with Native American or other Indigenous colleagues or within Native American or other Indigenous communities.

Subgoal 2: Achieve consistently excellent teaching and mentoring that give Native American and other Indigenous students the knowledge, ability, determination, and innovation to meet tomorrow’s challenges with sustainable solutions.

- Broaden and strengthen academic offerings in Native American and Indigenous Studies through collaboration with units across campus and entities throughout the state, region, nation, and world.
- Provide consistently excellent teaching and mentoring for Native American and other Indigenous students.
- Build a strong, broad network of teachers and mentors at the NAERCC, as well as across campus and in the community.
- Bolster Ellbogen Center for Teaching and Learning’s offerings relevant to Native American and other Indigenous students.
- Strengthen mentoring through formalized programs of peer, academic, and cultural support.

Performance Indicator	Baseline	2022 Target
Increase diversity and enrollment in Native American and Indigenous Studies courses.		
Increase research awards and expenditures on projects with an Indigenous dimension.		

Expand publications featuring work of UW faculty and students on projects with an Indigenous dimension.		
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Goal 2: Inspiring Students—*Inspire students to pursue a productive, engaged and fulfilling life and prepare them to succeed in a sustainable global economy.*

Subgoal 1: Develop a comprehensive campus-wide plan for recruitment, retention, and graduation of Native American and other Indigenous students.

- Establish university-wide target goals for annual recruitment, enrollment, retention, and graduation rates of Native American and other Indigenous students.
- Develop and execute a holistic university Native American student recruitment program to include reservation visits to and from campus, partnerships with K-12 and transfer institutions, follow up, and marketing efforts.
- Expand Native American Summer Institute and develop other recruitment-oriented pipeline programs aimed at familiarizing prospective Native American and other Indigenous students with UW and facilitating their matriculation as new or transfer students.
- Improve recruitment, retention, and graduation of Native American and other Indigenous students by providing and disseminating information about holistic, culturally responsive support services available at the NAERCC and elsewhere, including academic support and advising for graduate school and post-graduation careers.

Subgoal 2: Bolster capacity and profile of academic programs of greatest relevance to Native American and other Indigenous students and their communities.

- Partner with academic colleges to grow and disseminate information about curricular offerings tailored toward Native American and other Indigenous students.
- Create and deliver curricula for Bachelor of Applied Science in Tribal Management and Native American languages.
- Create and deliver a Tribal Historic Preservation course and certificate.
- Facilitate multi-unit expansion of online and distance-learning academic programs available to Native American and other Indigenous students.
- Refine and enhance Indigenous languages curriculum.
- Prioritize study abroad and exchange programs tailored toward Native American and other Indigenous students.
- Develop and grow a catalogue of relevant educational resources for Native American and other Indigenous students and communities such as pipeline programs, online and distance-learning programs, undergraduate research, internships, and service learning programs.

Subgoal 3: Enhance campus climate for Native American and other Indigenous students by promoting greater awareness of Indigenous cultures and histories and convening rich, diverse associated events.

- Increase NAERCC’s vitality and visibility as the campus center for Native American and other Indigenous students.
- Explore construction of a new, larger, uniquely Indigenous facility, demonstrating cultural awareness in its design, to succeed the NAERCC as a hub for Native American and other Indigenous students and activities at UW.

- Foster collaborations between NAERCC and other campus entities such as the Office of Financial Aid; Synergy Program; Service, Leadership, and Community Engagement Office; UW Art Museum; American Heritage Center; and other relevant organizations.
- Build on existing cultural-enrichment programming for Native American and other Indigenous students and the broader campus community with annual events such as an Indigenous speaker series, Native American heritage month, and annual campus powwow.
- Develop a coordinated annual program and online calendar for events of interest to Native American and other Indigenous students and communities, such as those sponsored by Native American and Indigenous Studies, the High Plains American Indian Research Institute, the NAERCC, and collaborative partners.
- Create, publish, and widely distribute an Indigenous land statement for UW.
- Utilize existing and new student organizations such as Keepers of the Fire and the American Indian Studies Alliance to strengthen the sense of community among Native American and other Indigenous students.
- Facilitate multi-unit expansion of internship, service-learning, undergraduate research, international travel, and leadership development opportunities focused on Native American and other Indigenous students and communities.
- Create, administer, and monitor the results of a Native American and Indigenous Student Satisfaction Survey, using these results to enhance programming and to address issues of common concern.

Performance Indicator	Baseline	2022 Target
Increase enrollment of Native American and other Indigenous students.		
Enhance retention of Native American and other Indigenous students.		
Enhance graduation rates of Native American and other Indigenous students.		
Enhance scope of programs encompassed within Native American Summer Institute.		
Expand scope of student participation in Native American Summer Institute.		
Increase participation of Native American and other Indigenous students in service learning, undergraduate research, internships, international travel, and leadership development.		
Increase number of online courses with relevance to the Wind River Indian Reservation.		

Goal 3: Impacting Communities—*Improve and enhance the health and well-being of our communities and environments through outreach programs in collaboration with our constituents and partners.*

Subgoal 1: In a manner that is respectful of tribal sovereignty and intergovernmental relations, collaborate with Native American communities within and beyond Wyoming to develop and maintain long-term, positive relationships aimed at addressing economic, environmental, and social challenges prioritized by these communities through research, teaching, and service.

- Focus collaborative efforts on Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho tribes as well as other tribes whose ancestral homelands fall within Wyoming.
- Strengthen relationships and improve communications between UW and Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho tribal business councils, including convening annual reviews of Memoranda of Understanding between UW and these two tribes.
- Improve coordination and reciprocal communication with existing and new Wind River Indian Reservation-based UW personnel with faculty and staff on UW main campus.
- Create support mechanisms and incentives to increase visitation and active service of UW personnel to Wind River Indian Reservation and other Native American communities, including outreach efforts such as Saturday University.
- Create an external advisory committee composed of a broad base of members from Native American communities and tribes—including Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho tribes, tribal and local educational institutions, and reservation agencies—to solicit annual input about curricular, financial, programmatic, and other institutional matters at UW.
- Designate the High Plains American Indian Research Institute as the primary channel for coordinating UW research efforts involving Native American and other Indigenous peoples and communities, including in conjunction with grant proposals.

Subgoal 2: Collaborate with schools and community colleges with robust Native American student populations to bolster the statewide community of learners and to inspire them to pursue higher education at UW.

- Increase collaboration between UW and community colleges throughout the region to ensure seamless and smooth transfer of Native American students to UW.
- Expand offerings of online courses that could help place-bound Native American students on the Wind River Indian Reservation (and other reservations) to complete degrees.
- Strengthen partnerships with K-12 schools and programs on reservations, including working with educators and tribal education agencies.

Subgoal 3: Increase UW's capacity to engage in meaningful, long-term collaborations with Native American and other Indigenous communities through curricular, programmatic, and structural innovations.

- Involve Native American and other Indigenous parents, elders, and community leaders in support-oriented initiatives organized on campus for Native American and other Indigenous students.
- Work with the UW Alumni Association (UWAA) to enhance the visibility and impact of UW Native American and other Indigenous alumni. This could be a stand-alone alumni alliance, a dedicated section of the UWAA, or both. Make lists of such alumni available to staff in Native American and Indigenous Studies and at the NAERCC.

- Increase representation of Native American and other Indigenous individuals on UW college and university advisory boards, and increase nominations of Native American and other Indigenous individuals for UW awards and related formal recognition.
- Build a system to enhance communication among UW personnel engaged in activities related to Native American and other Indigenous communities.

Performance Indicator	Baseline	2022 Target
Increase frequency of collaborative meetings and other contacts with Native American leaders.		
Increase Native American / Indigenous representation on UW college/university advisory boards.		
Increase Native American / Indigenous nominations for UW awards/recognition.		

Goal 4: A High-Performing University—*Assure the long-term strength and stability of the university by preserving, caring for and developing human, intellectual, financial, structural and marketing resources.*

Subgoal 1: Build human capital to support UW initiatives for Native American and Indigenous programs.

- Employ more Native American and Indigenous personnel at all UW levels.
- Employ more personnel who are knowledgeable of Native American and Indigenous issues.
- Create an Endowed Chair for UW Native American and Indigenous Studies.
- Support professional development for Native American and Indigenous faculty and staff, as well as other faculty and staff knowledgeable about Native American and Indigenous issues, and implement training programs around issues specific to Native American and other Indigenous students, including cultural distinctions, historical trauma, and pedagogies.

Subgoal 2: Strengthen marketing effectiveness for Native American and Indigenous programs.

- Target UW marketing efforts to tribal media outlets, including newspaper, radio, and social media.
- Develop multi-media program aimed at disseminating information to K-12 students about UW Native American and Indigenous events and programs.
- Create a campus visitation schedule for prospective Native American and other Indigenous students, families, and supporters at key events coordinated for both UW and the Wind River Indian Reservation, such as homecoming and basketball games.

Subgoal 3: Enhance financial resources for Native American and Indigenous programs.

- Secure funding to support educational opportunities for Native American and other Indigenous students—e.g., tuition waivers, scholarships, loan forgiveness, work study, research, and research/travel stipends.

- Partner with UW Foundation to increase private giving to support Native American and Indigenous initiatives, and to further the goals outlined in strategic plan.
- Increase grant funding from philanthropic foundations and federal/state agencies in support of UW Native American and Indigenous initiatives—for example, agencies within the U.S. Departments of Agriculture, Defense, Education, Energy, Interior, and Transportation.

Subgoal 4: Enhance institutional operations and planning.

- Strengthen the role, representation, and impact of the NAAAC.
- Assess UW unit strategic plans for programs and initiatives targeting Native American and Indigenous affairs, and pursue opportunities for coordination and collaboration.
- Synthesize best practices in Native American and Indigenous affairs from comparative institutional research, targeting areas for inspiration and improvement at UW.
- Monitor progress toward goals outlined in strategic plan, publishing and distributing an annual report on the plan, and revisiting and revising the plan as needed.

Performance Indicator	Baseline	2022 Target
Increase Native American/Indigenous representation among UW personnel at all levels.		
Enhance scholarship and other financial support for UW Native American students.		
Expand UW Foundation support for Native American/Indigenous affairs.		
Increase philanthropic grant funding for Native American/Indigenous initiatives.		
Increase federal/state agency grant funding for Native American/Indigenous initiatives.		
Develop and distribute annual reports on progress made toward strategic plan goals.		