

A Summary of Native American Activities and Relationships at TCU 2018-19 Academic Year

"All-in-all, coolest experience I've had at TCU so far."

TCU Student who attended Supaman's concert

"I think a common misconception about Natives is that we are always in traditional dress, and I think it was maybe shocking for some students when [Luci] Tapahonso came out in "normal" clothing. I think that Tapahonso's event was something that really opened the eyes of TCU students, as I could hear my peers talking amongst themselves that she was nothing like what they expected . . . Tapahonso's event was particularly moving to me because it was nice to feel connected, in a different yet comfortable way, with people that I hadn't felt connected to since coming to TCU. I think that if we have more events like Tapahonso's or made Native Americans aware that we do care about their culture, we would attract more of the demographic and more Native Americans would attend or apply to attend this school."

TCU Student who attended Luci Tapahonso's poetry reading

The 2018-19 academic year at TCU witnessed significant developments and several "firsts" related to our efforts to engage Native American peoples and communities. We remain guided by the following goals:

1. To raise awareness of and respect for Native American peoples, cultures, and perspectives
2. To learn from and respectfully engage Native American knowledge(s) throughout all levels of the campus community
3. To create a welcoming and respectful environment on campus for Native American students, faculty, staff, and visitors
4. To build healthy, respectful, and mutually beneficial relationships with Native American peoples and communities

EDUCATIONAL EFFORTS

1. **Symposium:** In keeping with Chancellor Victor Boschini's 2017 designation of the first Monday in October as Native American and Indigenous Peoples Day, TCU held its third annual Native American and Indigenous Peoples Day symposium on October 1, 2018. This year's theme was *A Celebration of Contemporary Native American Peoples and Cultures* and featured two major artists, Professor Luci Tapahonso and Supaman. Professor Tapahonso is the

Navajo (Diné) Nation's inaugural poet laureate and Professor Emerita in the department of English Language and Literature at the University of New Mexico. She appeared as the second Don Coerver Lecturer in Liberal Arts and was sponsored by TCU's Master of Liberal Arts program (Darren Middleton, director). Supaman is a highly acclaimed Crow (Apsáalooke) Hip-Hop artist, most recently receiving the 2018 Indigenous Music Awards for Best Rap/Hip Hop Album and Best Producer/Engineer. His visit was sponsored by Discovering Global Citizenship (Ed McNertney, director). The Chancellor's Office also generously provided much needed funding for the symposium.

While most of the symposium's activities occurred on Monday, the first activity began on Sunday evening when Supaman did an in-studio interview and took calls as part of "Beyond Bows and Arrows," a locally produced Native American-themed radio program. (KNON, 89.3 FM). Supaman spent approximately two hours on air, and the symposium and TCU were heavily promoted.

Professor Tapahonso and Supaman participated in the following on-campus events:

- A luncheon with approximately seventeen Native American students and staff and invited guests.
- A Cultural Dialogue moderated by Dr. Theresa Gaul in which both explored the power of words, especially as reflected in art, cultural representation, language traditions, translation, and self-presentation. The following classes hosted and attended the session: Dr. Chantel Carlson's CRWT 10203, "Intro Creative Writing"; Dr. Rima Abunasser's ENGL 20213, "Global Women's Literature"; Katherine Bynum's HIST 10713, "Multicultural America Survey"; and Dr. Tracy Rundstrom Williams, INTL 30302, "Exploring Global Citizenship II." Other people from across campus attended as well, which resulted in a "standing room only" situation in Sid Richardson Lecture Hall 1.
- Cultural Encounter 1 featured a poetry reading and book signing by Professor Tapahonso in the BLUU Auditorium. It too was filled-to-capacity, with an estimated attendance of about 300-330 people.
- Cultural Encounter 2 featured an evening concert by Supaman in the BLUU Ballroom. As part of the concert, a Dallas-based, Indigenous youth mentor organization, SOAR Beyond Youth, performed a few songs and dances, including, much to their delight, one in which Supaman performed with them. Approximately 500 people attended the concert.

We are grateful to Angela Kaufman and the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life for providing the SOAR youth and their sponsors a meal in the TCU dining facility. We are also grateful to the following for supplying items for gift bags that were given to

these youth: Admissions, Harris College of Nursing & Health Sciences, AddRan Graduate Studies, the College of Education, and the English department. Participating in the concert made a very positive impression on the SOAR youth and their families and sponsors. As late as May 2019, a grandmother of one of the youth told us that ever since the concert her grandson is now all about TCU and wants to attend TCU. Hopefully, we have a future Horned Frog in the making!

- Supaman met with Sarah Newton's class, DANC 20442, "Jazz Dance I—Hip Hop," as well as other dance majors.
- On Tuesday, October 2, Professor Tapahonso addressed Dr. Alex Lemon's class, CRWT 30233, "Creative Nonfiction Workshop I."

Other activities included:

- Women and Gender Studies sponsored a lecture by the Wichita scholar, Dr. Heather J. Shotton, who is Associate Professor, Native American Studies, at the University of Oklahoma. Speaking on, "Through Their Own Eyes: Visual Narratives of Indigenous Women Scholars," Dr. Shotton explored the narratives of Indigenous women in academia.
- Carl Kurtz '14, a TCU alum and member of the Citizen Band Potawatomi Nation, once again erected a traditional lodge (tipi) on the Commons where he met with four classes (totaling approximately 120 students) and discussed his Nation's culture and history. He also stayed at his lodge throughout the day and talked with many individuals. His lodge has become one of the most iconic aspects of the symposium.
- TCU Special Collections displayed on the third floor of the Mary Couets Burnett Library two Navajo rugs that are part of its permanent art collection. Both were donated to TCU by renowned architect and art collector Walter Netsch.
- Approximately 1100 fact sheets were distributed throughout the day. The sheet contained basic information about Native American peoples and their communities, Native American involvement in a variety of fields such as art, literature, business, athletics, fashion, and entertainment, and their relationships to the United States, Texas, and TCU.

TCU 360 published two articles on the symposium: [Native American and Indigenous Peoples Day Symposium focuses on the present](#) (September 28, 2018) and [Native American hip-hop musician reflects on depression and substance abuse](#) (October 2, 2018).

At least 21 professors, representing 26 classes, encouraged their students to participate in the symposium by either requiring or offering extra-credit for attending one or more of the

symposium events. Overall, we estimate that approximately 1200 or more people were involved in the day's activities.

Feedback from the symposium was overwhelmingly positive. One student, responding to Supaman's concert, wrote: "An Amazing, Amazing, Amazing Concert!!! Supaman mixed Hip-Hop with his Native tribal dances, beats, flutes, piano, language and much more! This was such an inspiring event showcased by an inspiring artist! All of his music was very uplifting and motivating!" A professor informed us, "I had many students attend all three events yesterday, and my inbox is full of rave reviews from students. Thanks so much for bringing these very meaningful events to TCU!"

Several students realized how mis-informed they were regarding Native Americans. According to one, "I was being a little ignorant when I thought about Native Americans and failed to remember that they were living in the modern world just like us, and our perceptions of them are hundreds of years old. We must re-evaluate how we think about these indigenous people." This was a common theme, as illustrated by the following student reflections:

- "Not once have I EVER thought to correlate Native Americans with hip hop. But it was very refreshing to see because it made me realize my own biases and beliefs of what a Native American person is and how they act."
- "Entering into this (i.e., Tapahonso's poetry reading), I once had a static view of Native American identity, but exiting I find the dynamism and adaptation of the culture present that has helped it to maintain after centuries of pain and suffering."
- "In my [pre-symposium, in-class] response I made it sound like Native Americans are a thing of the past, but this event proves how very much alive Native American societies are, and that although they may not be like most Americans are, they do use technology and live in cities, not just rural areas in the middle of nowhere in small huts or teepees still. They have adapted to the changing technological advances while still trying to keep their culture, just like any other ethnicity."
- "Looking back at my [pre-symposium, in-class] writing assignment about my understanding of Native Americans, I was shocked. I had not realized how much I did not know . . . my understanding derived from watching the Pocahontas movie and doing projects in fifth grade that involved building teepees out of clay and sticks. Attending Luci Tapahonso's poetry reading, on top of the material I learned in this course, opened my eyes and solidified that my knowledge of Native Americans prior to this course was so small. It is one thing to hear about these interesting and amazing Native American people in class, but it is another thing to actually be in the presence of them . . . I used to think that Native Americans basically lived under a rock, but after learning about them, I realized that I am the one who has been living under a rock."

The symposium's steering committee consisted of Theresa Gaul (English), Albert Nungaray (class of '17), Marie Schein (French), Tabitha Tan (class of '99), Sarah Tonemah (Theatre), and Scott Langston (Religion). On top of this, many, many people from across campus helped out in a variety of ways.

2. **Breathing New Life into the Native Languages of this Land: Colloquium on Revitalizing Indigenous Languages:** On November 5, 2018, TCU's Center for Languages and Cultures, under the leadership of Dr. Marie Schein, hosted this significant colloquium. Dr. Richard Grounds, Executive Director of the Yuchi Language Project, and Chebon Kernell, leader of a traditional Muskogee/Creek ceremonial grounds and Executive Secretary for Native American and Indigenous Ministries of the General Board of Global Ministries for the United Methodist Church, led the session. Cultural revitalization is one of the most important and serious issues facing Native communities.
3. **Film screening of *Ohero:Kon – Under the Husk*:** On February 7, 2019 approximately one hundred people viewed this documentary, which follows two Mohawk girls as they take part in a four-year adolescent passage rites ceremony called Oheró:kon “Under the Husk,” recently revived by the Mohawk Community of Akwesasne. Following the viewing, Shara Kanerahtiiostha Francis-Herne, a TCU graduate student who is the Native and Indigenous Student Association president, is from Akwesasne, and has participated in the ceremony as an auntie, led a discussion and Q&A on the ceremony.
4. **Partnering with Native American Communities: A How-To Workshop:** On March 4, 2019, we held what we hope will be the first of regular workshops designed to provide training to administrators, faculty, and staff who are interested in working and building relationships with Native American communities. Approximately 35 people attended.

Jodi Voice-Yellowfish (Cherokee, Muscogee (Creek), Oglala Lakota) addressed how the issue of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women reflects some of the challenges facing Native American communities. Spaces like those at TCU allow Indigenous peoples to unburden themselves of historical trauma, even while colonization is still at work. Native peoples need emotional support in academic settings as these issues are discussed. Shara Kanerahtiiostha Francis-Herne (Mohawk) pointed out that based on statistics and other data, Indigenous peoples are not supposed to be present in academic settings. This is especially evident considering how few Native American women get higher education degrees. Despite there not being enough culturally relevant content in the U.S. education system, there is still room for partnerships and collaboration. One such area is a commitment to scholarships to ensure a pathway to education for Indigenous peoples. Indigenous students will persist in environments where they feel at home. Chebon Kernell (Seminole) noted that an Indigenous presence is not visible on many campuses and, therefore, TCU must commit to being intentional about Native Americans and their presence here, and then put the resources behind this commitment. There is a need to take away the historical silencing of Indigenous voices and the historical acceptance of the treatment of Indigenous peoples. We must continue building a space for Native American students. One way might be by creating a scholarship to honor Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women.

During the Q&A, our speakers also offered these suggestions and observations: We should offer a space where Native American students can eat, laugh, and be with a friend. We need to make sure that Indigenous parents know they and their children will not be exploited here. Since Indigenous peoples have historically had to go underground to survive, there is a reluctance to be open about their identity. Have Native American students drive the program. Ask them what they want to do and what they want to know. Don't give up. Continue to offer the space and the programming that will support Indigenous students. Among Indigenous peoples, there is often shame and guilt about not knowing their languages and histories. Complexity of Indigenous identity and displacement is the big question. Create a space that affirms the chaos and provide support to students to navigate through it.

5. **Film Screening of *We Are Birds: A California Indian Story*:** On April 17, 2019 approximately seventy-five students viewed this documentary, which looks at Bird Singing among the Cahuilla tribes in southern California and explores the challenges surrounding cultural change and preservation. A current TCU student is the son of the tribal chairman of the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, headquartered in Palm Springs, California.

STUDENT SUPPORT, STUDENT RECRUITMENT, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

1. **Monument acknowledging all Native American peoples and especially the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes:** Over two years of intense work culminated on October 15, 2018, when TCU dedicated a monument acknowledging all Native American peoples who have lived in this area, and especially the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes.

The idea was conceived in 2014, discussions with the Wichita began in summer 2016, and a verbal acknowledgment of TCU's location on the ancestral homeland of the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes was made during the first Indigenous Peoples Day Symposium on October 3, 2016. By December, Theresa Gaul (English), Dave Aftandilian (Anthropology), Albert Nungaray (class of '17), and Scott Langston (Religion) began developing a proposal for a monument. On February 7, 2017, the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes' Executive Committee voted unanimously to work with TCU on developing a monument. A few weeks later, on March 1, we submitted to TCU's Chancellor a proposal that TCU erect a monument, as well as designate the first Monday in October as Native American and Indigenous Peoples Day. The Chancellor approved both initiatives on July 6 and we immediately began working with the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes in developing the monument's wording and design. On September 11, 2018, the monument was installed between Reed and Jarvis Halls, the two oldest buildings on campus. The bronze, circular plaque, mounted in rustic mahogany granite, contains the following text, along with the seals of TCU and the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes:

This ancient land, for all our relations.

ti?i hira:r?a hira:wis hakitata:rira:rkwe?ekih

We respectfully acknowledge all Native American peoples who have lived on this land since time immemorial. TCU especially acknowledges and pays respect to the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes, upon whose historical homeland our university is located.

The day of the monument's dedication, October 15, was a cold, rainy day, forcing the ceremony to be moved indoors. About one hundred people attended. A delegation from the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes, including Gary McAdams, the Tribe's Cultural Planner and former President, and a drum group participated in the ceremony. With Sarah Tonemah (Comanche/Kiowa; Theatre Department) moderating the ceremony, remarks were given by Chebon Kernell (Seminole), Provost Nowell Donovan, Gary McAdams (Wichita), Tabitha Tan (Navajo; class of '99), and Albert Nungaray (Puebloan; class of '17). Written remarks from Wichita President Terri Parton and TCU's Chancellor, Victor Boschini, were read. Canaan Johnson (Seminole/Creek/Chickasaw) of the Urban Inter-Tribal Center played the Native American flute and University Minister Angela Kaufman gave a blessing. Following the ceremony, lunch was served to the Wichita delegation and invited guests. TCU 360 published the following article: [New monument recognizes Native American and indigenous peoples](#) (October 11, 2018).

It was a powerful day at TCU. One faculty member wrote, "It was, without a doubt, the most moving event of this type that I have attended at TCU. I was especially touched by the comments of our alumni, Tabitha Tan and Albert Nungaray. Is there a way I could get access to their comments? I'd love to share them with my department to illustrate how important it is for us to be intentional about creating space at TCU so individuals of all identities are able to find a new home on campus and truly know what it is to be part of the Horned Frog community."

One of the most powerful expression of the acknowledgement and monument's significance came from a Choctaw man. He posted to Facebook a picture of the monument, along with these remarks:

"I can't help going back to this picture I captured at TCU. It brings a bitter sweet emotion to me. Is it a great accomplishment of recognition? Yes! It also shows the state we as Native, Indigenous, American Indians are currently in.

This speaks volumes as to relocation or removal of original inhabitants. Those are someone's ancestors. Ancestors who probably, like my own Choctaw ancestors, made the decision to somehow keep their people alive. To leave the land that would eventually be settled on by TCU.

As I understand it, the monument sits in between the 2 oldest buildings on campus. In my mind I get a visual of the woman standing or praying in front of police at Standing Rock. Or the little girl confronting the bull on Wall Street. To me it represents something

standing in confidence with strength amongst giants. My people standing for something important. Standing to be heard, standing to coexist, standing to educate. There's so much more I want to say but will save it for another time.

I commend those individuals who worked to get this monument, some I know personally. To you I say thank you for getting this monument, this act of recognition put on campus.”

It is our understanding that this monument is the first such permanent representation dedicated to any group of color on our campus. This alone speaks to its significance. Yet, it also reflects TCU's willingness to create public and visible spaces for Native Americans, acknowledge their historical and contemporary stories and perspectives, and address the destructive legacy of colonization. While the monument by itself will not solve all these issues, it is another important step in our university doing so. We are grateful to all those who contributed to bringing the acknowledgment and monument into existence.

2. **Native and Indigenous Student Association (NISA):** NISA met three times in both the Fall and Spring semesters. Shara Kanerahtiiostha Francis-Herne served as president and Jessica Martinez as secretary. The group remains small and we are losing some important members due to graduation, but it continues to create a space for Native American students to gather. It also asserted a Native presence on campus by sponsoring a Blessing Ceremony to open the academic year, co-sponsoring the Native American and Indigenous Peoples Day Symposium, and participating in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion week during the Spring semester. Members also sponsored a table representing TCU at the American Indian Heritage Day in Texas celebration in September.
3. **Blessing Ceremony:** On August 27, 2018 the Native and Indigenous Student Association (NISA) held a Blessing Ceremony in front of the Robert Carr chapel to open the academic year. Members of Paschal High School's Native American Club also attended. After opening remarks by TCU's campus minister, Angela Kaufman, Shara Kanerahtiiostha Francis-Herne, NISA president, led the Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address or Ohen:ton Kariwahtekwen, "Words Before All Else," which is a daily gratitude prayer and message of peace and appreciation for all of creation. The Haudenosaunee use this address to open and close social gatherings and ceremonial meetings. She also burned sacred tobacco for our words, intentions, and commitments to reach the Creator.
4. **Participation in the 47th Annual Symposium on the American Indian, Northeastern State University, Tahlequah, OK:**

A small group of TCU students and faculty organized and participated in a panel discussion on April 12, 2019 as part of this annual symposium. The panel's theme was "Indigenous Women at Texas Christian University: Presence, Absence, and Portrayal." It explored the ways that Indigenous women are present, absent, and portrayed at Texas Christian University, addressed underlying reasons, obstacles, and implications, and highlighted how Indigenous women are changing the university.

The panel was composed of Shara Kanerahtiiostha Francis-Herne (a member of the Kanienkehaka/Mohawk Nation who graduated from TCU in May 2019 with a Master of Education in Higher Educational Leadership); Jessica Martinez (a member of the Choctaw Nation who graduated from TCU in May 2019 with a BS degree in Geography); Theresa Gaul (Professor of English); Farina King (a citizen of the Navajo Nation, Assistant Professor of History and affiliated faculty of Cherokee and Indigenous Studies at Northeastern State University, and a speaker at various TCU events); and Scott Langston (Instructor in Religion).

5. Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women’s Scholarship: As a result of discussions at the Partnering with Native American Communities workshop, held on March 14, 2019, TCU established on May 17 an annually expendable scholarship in the minimum amount of \$5000, which will be awarded for the first time during the 2019-20 academic year. Given that Indigenous women of the United States and Canada suffer from disproportionately and overwhelmingly high rates of violence, the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women’s Scholarship seeks to honor missing and murdered Indigenous women (MMIW), raise awareness about this issue, educate future leaders who will address this and other Native American issues, and provide financial support to graduate or undergraduate students at Texas Christian University who demonstrate commitment to these issues. To help meet the goals of the scholarship, we intend to develop respectful and meaningful programming around the MMIW issue that will manifest itself through coursework, co-curricular activities, community engagement, or other means. We especially want to thank Mike Scott, Mike Edwards, Victoria Chen, Lee Tyner, and David Nolan for their assistance in establishing the scholarship, as well as Shara Kanerahtiiostha Francis-Herne, Sarah Tonemah, Theresa Gaul, Jessica Standifer, Jodi Voice Yellowfish, and Chebon Kernell for their guidance.

6. Growing Recognition of Native Americans at TCU: During this academic year, recognition of Native Americans began to manifest itself in other significant ways. These include:

- Through the leadership of Lindsay Knight, Director of the First Year Experience, the text of TCU’s Native American acknowledgment was included on the campus map found in the 2018-2019 Student Guide (see page 11).
- A few professors are including the text of TCU’s Native American acknowledgment on their syllabi.
- Heath Einstein, Dean of Admission, directed the Office of Admission on October 1, 2018 to begin acknowledging on all program days the ancestral land of the Wichita Affiliated Tribes upon which TCU sits.
- Chancellor Victor Boschini granted Shara Kanerahtiiostha Francis-Herne permission to wear her traditional Mohawk regalia during the Spring 2019 commencement

exercises. We believe this is the first time in TCU's history that Native American regalia has been worn during graduation.

These actions represent a burgeoning awareness of the need to acknowledge and make visible Native American presence on campus. For most of TCU's history, Native Americans have been invisible on campus or portrayed stereotypically. Actions like these are important for creating a positive environment and healthy relationships, and we thank those individuals who have had the foresight to do so.

6. Student Recruitment and Community Engagement: We continue to be involved in building trust and mutually beneficial relationships with Native American communities by directly engaging these communities. It is not only important for Native Americans to have a visible presence at TCU, but for TCU to have a visible presence in Native American communities. The number of people from these communities who attend and participate in campus events continues to grow. While TCU does not yet have a particular strategy for recruiting Native American students, we are working with our limited resources to be present in their communities. Members of the Native and Indigenous Student Association represented TCU at the American Indian Heritage Day in Texas annual celebration in Grand Prairie. Scott Langston continues to work as an ambassador for American Indian Heritage Day in Texas, and also represented TCU at the Grand Prairie Independent School District's American Indian Education program's celebration of student achievement on May 18, 2019. He will participate in June in the Fort Worth Independent School District's Summer Cultural Camp for American Indian students.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

In last year's report on our activities, we identified the follow actions that would help advance TCU's efforts to develop healthy relationships with Native Americans:

1. CONTINUE BUILDING AN INFRASTRUCTURE AT TCU THAT WILL SUPPORT NATIVE AMERICAN STUDENT GROWTH AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT
2. SEEK OUT, DEVELOP, SUPPORT, AND FUND PROJECTS, CURRICULA, AND OTHER IDEAS THAT ARE BASED IN MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH NATIVE AMERICAN COMMUNITIES
3. INCREASE THE PRESENCE OF NATIVE AMERICANS AT TCU AS ADMINISTRATORS, FACULTY, STAFF, STUDENTS, AND VISITING SCHOLARS/LECTURERS/EXPERTS

Prioritizing the hiring of Native American faculty across colleges and departments, ideally through a cluster hire in several disciplines, would be a bold and significant move. A cluster hire would create an immediate infusion of Native perspectives and knowledge across the university; create a cohort of Native faculty, which is necessary for community, retention, and

job satisfaction; and remedy in a meaningful way the invisibility and lack of representation of this particular underrepresented group on a campus that has articulated DEI as a high priority.

4. PURSUE HIRING A TRIBAL LIAISON, THAT IS, A CULTURALLY-CONNECTED NATIVE AMERICAN WHO CAN REPRESENT TCU AND DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS WITH INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

These actions remain critical needs. Despite the tremendous advances that have been made, the campus' "literacy level" regarding Native Americans overall remains quite low. Although there are exceptions, this applies not only to students, but also administrators, faculty, and staff. Stereotypes and lack of understanding of the issues, challenges, and complexities related to contemporary Native-American life abound. This in no way minimizes the great progress we have made, but recognizing the presence of stereotypes and misinformation is directly related to achieving our goals and creating a healthy environment on campus. It is also correlated to the urgency with which hiring of Native Americans, especially as administrators and faculty, and placing them in positions of leadership in the university's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts, is prioritized.

We have deep gratitude and appreciation for the widespread efforts throughout our campus to engage Native Americans in meaningful and respectful ways. Many people and programs have enthusiastically supported these efforts and contributed to their success. The tone has been especially set by our Chancellor, Victor Boschini, and Provost, Nowell Donovan. We thank you for making it possible to do this work.

Respectfully,
Scott Langston (Religion)
Theresa Gaul (English)