

A Guide to Recruiting Native American Employees and Students at TCU

TCU's Native American
Advisory Circle (9/21/21)

Departments and programs at TCU are increasingly interested in enhancing or facilitating Native American presence and influence across our campus, including recruiting and retaining Native American candidates for a variety of roles and positions as students, faculty, staff, administrators, and trustees. However, knowing how to do so successfully and respectfully can be challenging. To assist you with this endeavor, TCU's Native American Advisory Circle suggests the following:

KNOW THE BASICS AND AVOID STEREOTYPES AND MISINFORMATION

It's always best to refer to a person's specific tribal affiliation(s) rather than a more general term. Generalized terms, such as Native American, American Indian, Indigenous, First Nations, or Metis, can be appropriate (or, not) depending on a person's preference and circumstances. For more information, see:

- [The Impact of Words and Tips for Using Appropriate Terminology: Am I Using the Right Word?](#) (National Museum of the American Indian)
- [Reporting and Indigenous Terminology Guide](#) (Native American Journalists Association)

Native American identity is more than having a Native American ancestor or DNA.

Relationships—especially to communities and cultures—are crucial and axiomatic elements of Native American identities. For more information, see:

- [You took a DNA test and it says you are Native American. So what?](#) (NPR, November 24, 2016)
- ["A Conversation with Native Americans on Race"](#) (New York Times, August 15, 2017)
- ["Who is Native American, and Who Decides That?"](#) (NPR, November 1, 2012)
- [So What Exactly Is 'Blood Quantum'?](#) (NPR, February 9, 2018)
- [Blood Quantum and Identity](#) (MIGIZI Communications First Person Productions, 2015)
- [What Percentage Indian Do You Have to Be in Order to Be a Member of a Tribe or Nation?](#) (Indian Country Today, September 13, 2018)

Native American identities are rooted in both ethnic AND political communities. It's not only a mistake to think of Native Americans as only racial or ethnic communities, but doing so advances the destructive goals of colonization.

- Native American tribes/nations are political entities in a government-to-government relationship with the United States. As such, they have the sovereignty to do things such as pass laws, elect their leaders, and set requirements for citizenship in their nations. While not every Native American is a tribal citizen, they still may be closely connected to their communities and cultures.

- For more information, see "[Tribal Nations & the United States: An Introduction](#)," a rich and relatively brief overview on many relevant topics which can be downloaded from the National Congress of American Indians website.

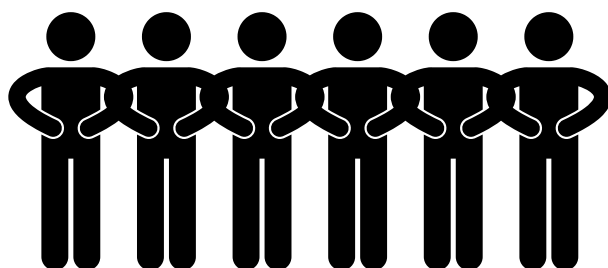
Be aware of Indigenous identity fraud. Unfortunately, people falsely claiming, either intentionally or through misinformed notions, to be Native American or Indigenous is increasingly common. This can be a difficult and complicated issue. For more information, see:

- [Native American and Indigenous Studies Association Council Statement on Indigenous Identity Fraud](#) (Approved by NAISA Council, 15 September 2015)
- [Ethnic Fraud?](#) (Diverse Issues in Higher Education, January 25, 2007)
- [Who are indigenous peoples?](#) (United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues Factsheet)
- [Allegations of 'Playing' Indigenous](#) (Inside Higher Ed, June 15, 2021)
- [Exposing false Native heritage](#) (Native America Calling, February 10, 2021)
- [When does ethnic fraud matter?](#) (Indian Country Today, September 12, 2018)

Native Americans are diverse and have different backgrounds, traditions, experiences, and viewpoints.

- There is no single Native culture, experience, or description. Each tribe/nation has its own culture and history, and individuals relate differently to their communities and cultures and hold different viewpoints. A growing and mobile population adds to this diversity. According to the [2020 U.S. Census](#), "The American Indian and Alaska Native alone population grew by 27.1%, and the American Indian and Alaska Native in combination population grew by 160% since 2010." Nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of Native Americans live in urban areas, rather than on reservations or in rural areas. Be open to Native Americans who may not fit preconceived notions.
- See the [Indigenous Futures Project](#), which gathered information about the priorities and needs of Native communities prior to the 2020 election. The accompanying report can be downloaded from this site.

While Native Americans share many experiences and issues with other underrepresented or marginalized communities, make sure Native American experiences and perspectives are understood from their points of view. Don't assume that the experiences and perspectives of other underrepresented or marginalized communities are identical with those of Native Americans.



BE AWARE OF IMPLICIT BIASES AND THEIR IMPACT ON YOUR ASSESSMENTS OR DECISIONS

While most people would not directly express or even be conscious of these biases, some of the most common—all of which are false—are:

- Western or American ways of thinking and living are superior to Native American ways. Western knowledge and methodologies are superior to Indigenous knowledge and methodologies.
- Native American perspectives and understandings are incompatible with the modern world and have little to contribute to contemporary issues and problems.
- Most Native Americans, even those with terminal degrees, are unsophisticated due to their non-Western cultures. They, therefore, are not as qualified as non-Native candidates.
- It's okay to study about Native Americans, but we don't have much to learn from them, especially regarding modern issues.
- "Real" Native Americans only look and live a certain way.
- If you understand the views and perspectives of one underrepresented or marginalized community, then you understand those of Native Americans.
- Since Native American populations are so small in comparison with other groups, it's not as important to understand their cultures, experiences, and perspectives.
- We don't have many Native American trustees, administrators, faculty, staff, and students at TCU because there aren't many qualified Native Americans.

WHEN SEEKING POTENTIAL NATIVE AMERICAN JOB CANDIDATES, ADVERTISE IN APPROPRIATE PLACES WITH ADS THAT CONTAIN RESPECTFUL DESCRIPTIONS AND LANGUAGE

- ***What is appropriate for job ads will vary depending on the position, but including specific references or links to TCU's [Native American initiatives](#) or history can let potential candidates know about TCU's openness and environment.*** For example, when describing TCU, indicate that the university is located on the historical homeland of the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes or link to the university's [Land Acknowledgment](#).
- ***Avoid stereotypical or colonizing language, attitudes, and approaches not only in job ads, but also in interviews.*** Colonizing language reflects notions of Western superiority and Native inferiority, and results in the subordination and destruction of Native American peoples and their cultures. Job ads and interviews can communicate colonizing attitudes and objectives directly or indirectly. See, [Assimilation, Integration and Colonization](#) (Indian Country Today, September 13, 2018).

- ***Be sure to post job ads to sites where Native American candidates will see them.***

These include:

- [Native American and Indigenous Studies Association](#)
- [Tribal College: Journal of American Indian Higher Education](#)
 - [The American Indian Higher Education Consortium](#) was founded in 1973 and now consists of 37 Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) in the United States.
- [National Indian Education Association](#)
- [National Congress of American Indians](#)
- [Native Hire](#)
- [Native Americans in Academia](#)
- [Native Americans in Higher Ed](#)
- [H-Net](#) (Humanities and Social Sciences Online)
- [TribalNet](#) (“THE platform to connect and seek opportunities in solutions, best practices and technology among tribal gaming, government and healthcare”)
 - TribalNet is a division of [TribalHub](#), which also includes TribalWise- dedicated to training and education; TribalValue- the partner and solution platform; TribalFocus- a consulting and management service provider.
- Contact significant individuals and programs in relevant fields who can help make sure potential candidates see your job ad.

WHEN SEEKING PROSPECTIVE NATIVE AMERICAN STUDENTS, BUILD TRUST WITH THEIR RESPECTIVE COMMUNITIES AND UNDERSTAND THEIR PARTICULAR CIRCUMSTANCES AND NEEDS

- ***Build trust by getting to know people in specific communities.*** Go to their events (when they are open to the public) and learn about their communities. Be supportive. Be respectful. Listen.
- ***Think about how your department or program can build mutually beneficial relationships with their communities.*** What in your department or program benefits Native students and communities?
- ***Have conversations with community leaders such as a tribe’s Education Department director, leaders of local organizations, and for those school districts who have them, directors of American Indian Education programs*** (in the DFW metroplex, these include [Fort Worth ISD](#), [Dallas ISD](#), and [Grand Prairie ISD](#)). Organizations in the DFW metroplex include: [Urban Inter-Tribal Center of Texas](#), [American Indian Heritage Day in Texas](#), and [Indigenous Institute of the Americas](#).
- ***Be patient.*** Building trust and learning a community’s needs take time and effort.

ASK, “WHY WOULD A PROSPECTIVE NATIVE AMERICAN EMPLOYEE OR STUDENT WANT TO COME TO TCU AND BE PART OF YOUR DEPARTMENT OR PROGRAM?”

- *It's a question worth contemplating. Don't assume that the answer is obvious.*
Identifying specific aspects of the university and your department or program that would attract and benefit potential Native American candidates can strengthen your appeal, as well as identify areas for improvement. Be honest about the university's and department/program's strengths and weaknesses as they relate to Native Americans.

2021-22 Native American Advisory Circle:

- Annette Anderson (Chickasaw and Cherokee), Indigenous Institute of the Americas, Plano, TX; licensed clinical social worker; Adjunct Instructor at the University of Texas at Dallas in the Early Childhood Disorders program
- Wynema Morris (Omaha), Board member, Nebraska Indian Community College, Macy, NE, and adjunct faculty in Native American Studies
- Amber Silverhorn-Wolfe (Wichita/Kiowa/Cheyenne and Arapaho), Education Services Administrator, Education Department, Wichita and Affiliated Tribes
- Melanie Battise (Alabama-Coushatta), Tribal Council Member and Member, Higher Education Committee, Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas
- Nathan Elliot (Chickasaw), Executive Officer for the Chickasaw Nation Division of Education
- Chebon Kernell (Seminole), Executive Director, Native American Comprehensive Plan, The United Methodist Church
- Cynthia Savage (Choctaw), Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies and Associate Professor of Professional Practice in the College of Education, TCU
- Haylee Chiariello (Cherokee), TCU student, Interdisciplinary Inquiry major in Native American Advocacy, recipient of TCU's 2020-21 and 2021-22 Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women's Scholarship, TCU Feature Twirler