



## NATIVE AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH

THE PAST, THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE, SOWING THE SEEDS OF HOPE!



This month we celebrate Native American History Month with a renewed sense of purpose. One that recognizes the ceded Tribal lands on upon which our campus rest here in the City of Livonia, and one centered around reimagining how we can support, enrich and enhance the lives of our Native American Community members through initiatives set forth within our (IDEA) Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Accessibility Strategic Plan Theme; which

seeks to empower every member of our diverse community. We're dedicated to the mission of creating a more equitable and accessible environment. One that embraces the unique aspects of our differences, and fosters opportunities to enhance the overall learning experience for our Native American and Indigenous community members, in order to bolster their ability to thrive here at Schoolcraft College.

### SCHOOLCRAFT COLLEGE RESIDES ON POTAWATOMI TRIBAL LAND

According to Pokégnek Bodéwadmik | Pokagon Band of Potawatomi, "The 1833 Treaty of Chicago established the conditions for the removal of the Potawatomi, known as the Neshnabék, meaning the original true people. from the Great Lakes area. When Michigan became a state in 1837.

This forced removal is now called the Potawatomi Trail of Death, similar to the more familiar Cherokee Trail of Tears.

However, a small group of Neshnabék, with Leopold Pokagon as one of their leaders, earned the right to remain in their homeland, in part because they had demonstrated a strong attachment to Catholicism. It is the descendants of this small group who constitute the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians.

Each Indigenous nation has its own creation story. Stories tell that the Potawatomi have always been here. Other stories tell of migration from the Eastern seaboard with the Ojibwe and Odawa Nations.

The three tribes loosely organized as the Three Fires Confederacy, with each serving an important role. The Ojibwe were said to be the Keepers of Tradition. The Odawa were known as the Keepers of the Trade. The Potawatomi were known as the Keepers of the Fire.

Later, the Potawatomi migrated from north of Lakes Huron and Superior to the shores of the mshigmé or Great Lake. This location—in what is now Wisconsin, southern Michigan, northern Indiana, and northern Illinois—is where European explorers in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century first came upon the Potawatomi; they called themselves Neshnabék, meaning the original or true people."

"Potawatomi the name is pronounced pot-uh-WOT-uh-mee) comes from the Ojibway "potawatomi," which means "people of the place of fire." The Potawatomi call themselves Nishnabek, meaning "true or original people." Potawatomi are connected to their ancestors through the Great Chain of Being (Matchimadzhen), which links past, present, and future generations.

# HISTORICAL CONNECTION TO OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Historically, “higher education attainment amongst American Indians and Alaska Natives (AIAN) has been lower than that of other groups. U.S. Census figures show that education attainment by AIAN is less than half that of their peers, with only 14.3% of AIAN people age 25 or older holding a bachelor’s degree, compared to 30.9% of the overall population. Furthermore according to research “unresolved funding conflicts and reductions in public funding for post-secondary studies translates into greater financial stress for Indigenous students (Roland 2009; Mayes 2007; Bruce, Marlin, and Doucette 2010), particularly Métis, non-status, and off-reserve students (Holmes 2006).”

Research has identified several factors impacting post secondary success of Native American student, and reflects that; For every 100 Native American high school students, only 51 actually graduate, and of those who graduate from high school, only 37 enroll in

postsecondary institutions and attain a bachelor’s degree in six years (Tierney, Sallee, & Venegas, 2007). Previous research has identified several factors impacting postsecondary achievement among this population including affordability, lack of academic preparedness, family and cultural obligations, cultural tensions, racism, lack of engagement, and invisibility (Brayboy, 2004; Carney, 1999; Guillory & Wolverton, 2008; Jackson, Smith & Hill, 2003; Lundberg, 2007. We can’t change the past, however! We can set a new precedent by asserting that we can, and will make every possible opportunity available to CRAFT a framework that provides the knowledge, training, communication, and skills needed to empower our Native American populations in reaching their own personal, academic, economic and any other goals that lead to a future filled with promise.

## LIFTING NATIVE AMERICAN VOICES

In this edition we’ll hear from Rachel Yazzie, Phi Theta Kappa student leader and Navajo Nation member about her CCSsmart Community College experience. We’ll also hear from Faculty member Paul Beer, about his experience with the Stratford Festival, producing plays

written by First Nation members, about matters affecting First Nation members, as well as the importance of organizations creating Land Acknowledgments as a part of educational awareness and respect for the communities in which we reside.



### MEET RACHEL YAZZIE

Rachel Yazzie, member of the Navajo Nation, Phi Theta Kappa student Leader, Community College success story, and (IDEA) Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Access advocate. In a recent interview with the Schoolcraft Office of Equity & Engagement; Yazzie shared “My journey hasn’t been easy. I’ve had to overcome a plethora of challenges, first as an indigenous person, secondly as a little person, lastly as an individual with learning disabilities.”

“I feel that Native American students are often overlooked and much too often treated as an afterthought.” Community College has afforded me opportunities than many there from different tribal communities will ever experience, in the absence of more support, and necessary funding. We have a rich history, and the United States as a whole has benefited greatly from our land and natural resources.



### Rachel Yazzie & Catreese Qualls at 2022 Phi Theta Kappa, Catalyst Convention in Denver, Colorado

“There’s a time to sew and a time to reap. I think it’s time to start sewing into our Native American students and providing pathways that will ultimately help them succeed. Funding through Scholarships have helped student Leaders such as Rachel Yazzie, go on to reach their fullest potential. Crafting brighter futures requires fewer words and more actions. The time for change is now!” \_C.Qualls

According to Yazzie “Choosing the community college pathway is an investment toward affordable education. For example, I was able to make that tribal scholarship stretch instead of student debt. As a direct result of scholarships and much needed resources. As a direct result of obtaining the necessary assistance I needed through TRIO, I’ve been able to go on and achieve my academic, personal goals, and so much more, as a member and Leader of Phi Theta Kappa, the largest International Honor Society in the world. Thanks to my Community College journey!”



### LIVE PODCAST:

[podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/lets-talk-trio/id1498974442?i=1000583507960](https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/lets-talk-trio/id1498974442?i=1000583507960)

### TRIO

According to the US Department of Education “The Federal TRIO Programs (TRIO) are Federal outreach and student services programs designed to identify and provide services for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds. TRIO includes eight programs targeted to serve and assist low-income individuals, first-generation college students, and individuals with disabilities to progress through the academic pipeline from middle school to post baccalaureate programs. TRIO also includes a training program for directors and staff of TRIO projects.”

### FIND OUT MORE ABOUT TRIO HERE:

[www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/index.html](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/index.html)

# A REFLECTION BY, PROFESSOR PAUL BEER

## STRATFORD FESTIVAL, BRINGS INCLUSIVITY TO THE EDUCATIONAL THEATER.

Like many academic institutions that sponsor them, educational theater is becoming increasingly aware of the need to acknowledge the sacred lands on which we tell our stories. In its 2021 conference, the Association for Theater in Higher Education invited each participant to acknowledge the ancestral and traditional stewards of the land which their institutions occupy.



The Stratford Festival, North America's largest Shakespeare Festival, has a long-standing tradition of acknowledging and honoring the ancestral guardians of the land on which they operate.

They have written acknowledgments that appear on their website and in play bills, and there are verbal announcements before most performances. Stratford goes further in its dedication to the principles of recognizing and honoring its responsibility to learn how to be better treaty partners with the traditional stewards of the land.

Part of that effort is to produce plays written by First Nation members and to produce plays about matters affecting First Nation members. For instance in the 2022 season, the Festival offered 1939, a new work which tells the story of four Indigenous students in a residential school in Northern Ontario who, with their teachers, are preparing a presentation of Shakespeare's *Alls Well that Ends Well* for an anticipated visit by King George VI. The students discover and explore themes from Shakespeare's play that mirror their own experience and the colonial expectations that surround them. In addition to the production, the Festival made available a reflection and healing space adjacent to the theatre where patrons could examine and contemplate artist Tom Wilson's installation *Fading Memories of Home*, which explores the systematic erasure of Indigenous culture in residential schools. Further, \$5 of each ticket price was donated to two Indigenous charities.

The Stratford Festival's efforts have grown over the years, but provide an interesting model to consider as we explore how we can move from acknowledgment to engagement.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF A LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

A Land Acknowledgment is a foundational, powerful form of recognizing the erasure Indigenous people's history and culture. Acknowledgment by itself is a small gesture. It becomes meaningful when coupled with authentic relationships and informed action. But this beginning can be an opening to greater public consciousness of Native sovereignty and cultural rights, a step toward equitable relationship and reconciliation. Naming is an exercise in power. Who gets the right to name or be named? Whose stories are honored in a name? Whose are erased? Acknowledgment of traditional land is a public statement of the name of the traditional Native inhabitants of a place. It honors their historic relationship with the land."

### HOW TO WRITE YOUR OWN LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

If you're interested in writing a Land Acknowledgment the Native Governance Center suggests that you:

- Start with self-reflection
- Use appropriate language
- Build real, authentic relationships with Indigenous people.
- Understand displacement and how that plays into land acknowledgment

Please click the link below for a live video streamed land acknowledgment.

[nativegov.org/resources/indigenous-land-acknowledgment-video/](https://nativegov.org/resources/indigenous-land-acknowledgment-video/)



Please click on the link provided below as a step by step reference guide to writing your own Land Acknowledgment.

[nativegov.org/news/a-guide-to-indigenous-land-acknowledgment/](https://nativegov.org/news/a-guide-to-indigenous-land-acknowledgment/)

# UPCOMING EVENTS



Photo by Kristin Keyes

Stop by and check out the Schoolcraft College Bradner Library | Native American Heritage Book Display  
Check out Native American Pow Wow listing: [calendar.powwows.com/](http://calendar.powwows.com/)

## WORK CITED

The Impact of Financial Aid on Native American Students

March 2011 Journal of Diversity in Higher Education  
4(1):12-25 DOI:10.1037/a0021202

Authors: Jesse Mendez at Oklahoma State University - Oklahoma City, Jesse Mendez Oklahoma State University - Oklahoma City

Pilar Mendoza at University of Missouri

[www.researchgate.net/publication/232553776\\_The\\_Impact\\_of\\_Financial\\_Aid\\_on\\_Native\\_American\\_Students](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/232553776_The_Impact_of_Financial_Aid_on_Native_American_Students)

Indigenous Higher Education:

Asserting an Inherent Right to Education

CHERYL CRAZY BULL | EQUITY, March 12, 2022,  
(accessed Oct 19, 2022)

Where We Have Been:

A History of Native American Higher Education

March 2005 New Directions for Student Services,  
Mary Jo Tippeconnic Fox (Comanche Shelly C. Lowe  
(Navajo 2005(109), DOI:10.1002/ss.149

[www.researchgate.net/publication/234610945\\_Where\\_We\\_Have\\_Been\\_A\\_History\\_of\\_Native\\_American\\_Higher\\_Education](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/234610945_Where_We_Have_Been_A_History_of_Native_American_Higher_Education)

Indigenous Higher Education:

Asserting an Inherent Right to Education

CHERYL CRAZY BULL | EQUITY

[higherlearningadvocates.org/2020/03/12/indigenous-higher-education-asserting-an-inherent-right-to-education/](http://higherlearningadvocates.org/2020/03/12/indigenous-higher-education-asserting-an-inherent-right-to-education/)

[www.livonia.gov/1418/History](http://www.livonia.gov/1418/History)

Potawatomi, Jun 11 2018 (accessed Oct 18, 2022)

[www.encyclopedia.com/history/united-states-and-canada/north-american-indigenous-peoples/potawatomi](http://www.encyclopedia.com/history/united-states-and-canada/north-american-indigenous-peoples/potawatomi)

**Committed to crafting a more inclusive community for all.**  
**Contact us at [dei@schoolcraft.edu](mailto:dei@schoolcraft.edu) and visit [schoolcraft.edu/idea](http://schoolcraft.edu/idea)**



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Please visit and share Schoolcraft Connection website: [schoolcraftconnection.com](http://schoolcraftconnection.com)  
Students Activity Sign-up: [bit.ly/3tYzCtA](http://bit.ly/3tYzCtA)

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