

April 1, 2015
Issue 2 Volume 1

SLIVER OF A FULL MOON

inside:

- sliver of a full moon comes to yale
- indian health initiative founded
- honoring missing and murdered indigenous women: silence won't save us
- senior student spotlight double feature

roe cloud
from the yale native community



***Yale Midwinter Social
February 28th, 2015***

The Association of Native Americans at Yale teamed up with the Spirit Lake Foundation to host Yale's first Intertribal Midwinter Social, drawing hundreds of people from Yale, New Haven and all over New England.

Left: New York City favorite Sliver Cloud southern drum group plays an intertribal song

Below: ANAAY Presient Sebi Medina-Tayac and NACC Dean Chris Cutter

Bottom: Potato dance champs David Rico '16 and Diza Rule '13

contents

letter from the editors..... 3

letter from dean cutter..... 4

spring event recap 5

nacc groups..... 7

“silence won’t save us”..... 8

senior spotlight: chris brown... 10

ihi kicks off..... 11

senior spotlight: dalton carr.... 12

sliver of a full moon..... 13



from the editors

April 1st, 2015

Dear Reader,

The Hawaiian language has four different words for the English “we.” Two refer to a pair of people, and two refer to groups of three or more. The other difference exists because Hawaiian, unlike English, makes a distinction between the exclusive “we” and the inclusive “we.” Thus, one of the forms is the most widely applicable. Kākou is the only form of the word that applies to an unlimited amount of people and to the addressee, “you.” After noticing this particular difference, the Hawaiian people created the saying, “It’s a kākou thing,” emphasizing the spirit of inclusiveness and camaraderie.

Lately we’ve been thinking a lot about this sense of togetherness here. While we are the editors of this newsletter, it is really the product of the whole NACC community. We ask for interviews with a senior doing meaningful work in and outside of the center. We write about events put on by student groups who care deeply about the perpetuation of our Native culture. We feature art from the students, whether it be a piece of writing, a poem, or photography. We hope to get a little piece of everyone in it.

After successful events like the ANAAY Intertribal Midwinter Social and the Vigil for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, and the founding of new student groups Yale Sisters of all Nations and the Indian Health Initiative, it is evident that the students are deeply committed to Native culture but also to each other. It’s beautiful to see student leaders frantically making phone calls or staying late at the center to plan events, to see House Staff doing more efficient work than ever, or to see upperclassmen like Dinee (founder of YSAN) and Karleh (founder of IHI) making more spaces and advocating for representation in the interest of Native students in Yale’s future. It’s also beautiful to see students making dinner together in the kitchen, playing video games on the comfy couch and studying all night in the library. Many of the students choose to spend time at the center, not because of a club or a job or a responsibility, but because it is home.



Collective contribution and love for the community is what makes the NACC run, so our center is the prime example of a “kākou thing.”

- Haylee Kushi (TD ‘18) and Sebi Medina-Tayac (DC ‘16)

yale and spirit lake foundation mid-winter intertribal social



The Association of Native Americans at Yale teamed up with the Spirit Lake Foundation to host Yale's first Intertribal Midwinter Social. This event's purpose was to bring together Natives of all tribes as well as the broader community to celebrate culture and socialize. The Yale Native community also hosted Native students from Dartmouth and Brown. Five popular drum groups came in force to the event, including the renowned Mystic River and NYC's local favorite Silver Cloud, joined by Yale's own Blue Feather Drum Group. There were dance demonstrations by senior Dinee Dorame and alum Diza Rule, a hoop dance, a huge round dance, and a potato dance. Vendors sold Native art and clothing, and our caterer, Sly Fox Den of Mashpee, served traditional Northeastern Native food. The Association of Native Americans at Yale worked tirelessly to make this event happen, namely board members: Sebi Medina-Tayac, Kodi Alvord, Andy DeGuglielmo, Ashton Megli, Katie McCleary and Adrienne Elliot. An old friend of the NACC, Kenny Merrick Jr., returned to campus to direct the social, using his experience and know-how to make the Social a resounding success. ANAAY anticipates that this is only the foundation, and we will be able to grow annually.

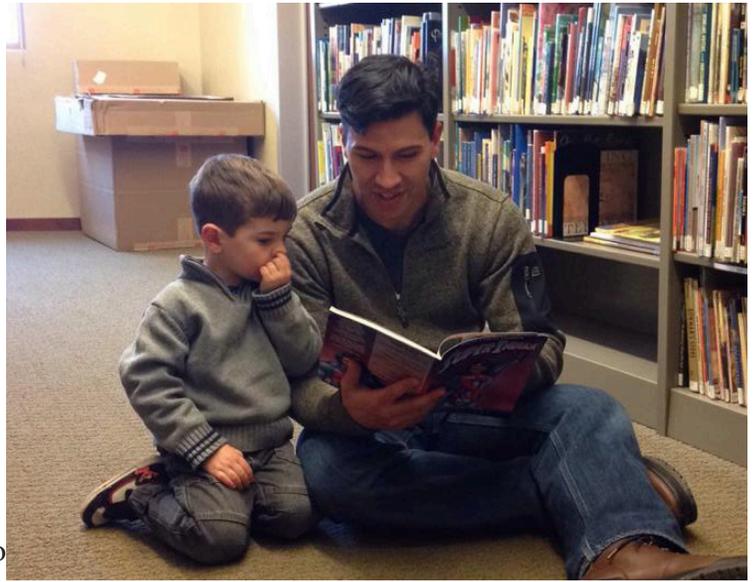


aises science-off

The Science Off was a competition between AISES and Mas Familias on who could get the most science related questions correct. We cooked healthy, partially organic tacos from scratch initially with cornbread. The goal was to socialize and to network among our STEM groups to see who they learned a lot from, what guest speakers we recommend and fellowships and mentors that have been super helpful. We also talked about the structure of each of our groups and talked about how each of us could improve the way we are running our groups.

dean cutter mental health talk

On Wednesday, March 4th our very own cultural center director Dr. Christopher Cutter gave a talk about mental health. The Indian Health Initiative hosted the event, knowing that the balancing act of participating in various extracurricular activities, taking rigorous courses and keeping up with a dynamic social environment can often be taxing for students. Dr. Cutter walked the students through a hypothetical situation and together the group mapped the thoughts, emotions and actions that go with high pressure moments. This activity was cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) in action! Simply put, we can analyze our thoughts, emotions and actions in an attempt to be self-aware enough to address maladaptive behaviors. While CBT is used to treat a variety of mental disorders, it can also shed light on why we act and feel the way we do on an everyday level. He also offered the students a variety of tips to start healthier lifestyles, and while many of them were common sense - more sleep, less coffee! - busy Yalies often forget to take care of themselves in the little ways. Javier Cienfuegos (BR '15) decided to start doing de-stress crossword puzzles, and many students learned that lack of natural light has a proven effect on health.



mohegan sweetheart social

This is the third year Native Yalies attended the annual Mohegan Sweetheart Social in Uncasville, Connecticut. The event included craft vendors, drumming, dancing, giveaways, and lots of socializing. The long-anticipated potato dance, pictured here was a huge hit for the NACC's sweethearts. Blue Feather member Ray Crouch won the raffle, taking home a mini grill, which he donated to the house for cookouts in the upcoming spring thaw.





the yale native american cultural center

undergraduate groups

The NACC has eight undergraduate student groups explained below. The contact information of each group's student leader is listed as well; all interested in joining these groups are welcomed to contact them.

Yale's first American Indian performance group, **Blue Feather Drum Group** showcases both traditional and contemporary drum music, fostering intertribal exchange, creating a welcoming space for cultural participation, and making the Native presence heard on and off campus. Check us out on Facebook, YouTube and Tumblr. Contact Reed Bobroff, bluefeatheryale@gmail.com



Yale's central and oldest Native student organization (founded in 1989), the **Association of Native Americans at Yale (ANAAY)** seeks to unite the community under the goal of increasing the Native presence on campus through education, advocacy, and cultural expression. We meet Saturdays at 4 pm at the NACC. Contact: Sebi Medina-Tayac, sebastian.medina-tayac@yale.edu



Yale Native American Arts Council (YNAAC) is designed to educate, promote, and create Native American art. Contact: Emily Van Alst, emily.vanalst@yale.edu

American Indians in Science and Engineering Society (AISES) gives Yale Native students in the sciences a national network and a campus community to engage for academic and professional development, with the mission to "increase substantially the representation of American Indian and Alaskan Natives in engineering, science and other related technology disciplines." Contact: Vanessa Noelte, vanessa.noelte@yale.edu

Indian Health Initiative promotes healthy and active lifestyles for Natives. We have biweekly basketball games that all are welcomed to join. Mondays at 7:00pm and Thursdays 8:00pm. Contact: Karleh Wilson, karleh.wilson@yale.edu



Yale Sisters of All Nations is dedicated to creating a safe, supportive space for Native women on campus through advocacy work, the open discussion of gender and sexuality issues in Indian Country, and networking/mentorship opportunities. YSAN meets every Monday evening at 7pm in the Native American Cultural Center Conference Room (First Floor). Contact: Dinee Dorame, dinee.dorame@yale.edu

graduate and professional groups

The **Yale Group for the Study of Native America (YGSNA)**, led by Professor of History and American Studies Ned Blackhawk (Western Shoshone), is an interdisciplinary working group centered around topics relating to the study of Native American and Indigenous peoples. YGSNA showcases works-in-progress and is composed of graduate students, faculty, and staff from across Yale. See YGSNA schedule, page 13.

The **Indigenous Graduate Network (IGN)** aims to foster community, support, and professional development among Native American and Indigenous identified graduate and professional students at Yale. Over the past three years since IGN was created, our programming has included a variety of social events and professionalization workshops.

The **Native American Law Students Association (NALSA)** is dedicated to providing personal, professional, and cultural support to Yale's Native American law students and fostering a community among all law students who are interested in Indian legal issues. They are committed to educating Yale's student body about Indian law, tribal sovereignty, and indigenous rights.



student employees

House Managers run the NACC, maintaining the physical facility, staffing programs, and keeping the doors open and welcoming. This involves a hodgepodge of tasks like drilling the Xbox into the cabinet, setting up for events, keeping the Facebook page up to date, baking snacks for NACC parties...the list goes on. Students are welcome to apply at the beginning of the fall semester. Contact Vanessa Noelte, vanessa.noelte@yale.edu

Peer Liaisons are a group of Native upperclassmen available as resources to freshmen – whether they need counseling, academic help, friendship, or just food. Come by the NACC during Sunday night study breaks or liaison office hours (6:00pm – 10:00pm) to hang out!

Contact: Justin Riner, justin.riner@yale.edu

The NACC **Graduate Assistant Program Coordinator**, Verner Wilson FES '15, assists the dean with organizational and logistical tasks, and facilitates meetings with the house managers and peer liaisons.

the nacc is open seven days a week, from 4 to 10 pm

26 High St., New Haven, CT 06520

(ancestral homelands of the Quinnipiac people)

to request access, students should email

christopher.cutter@yale.edu

visit [instagram.com/yalenacc](https://www.instagram.com/yalenacc) | nacc.yalecollege.yale.edu

silence won't save us



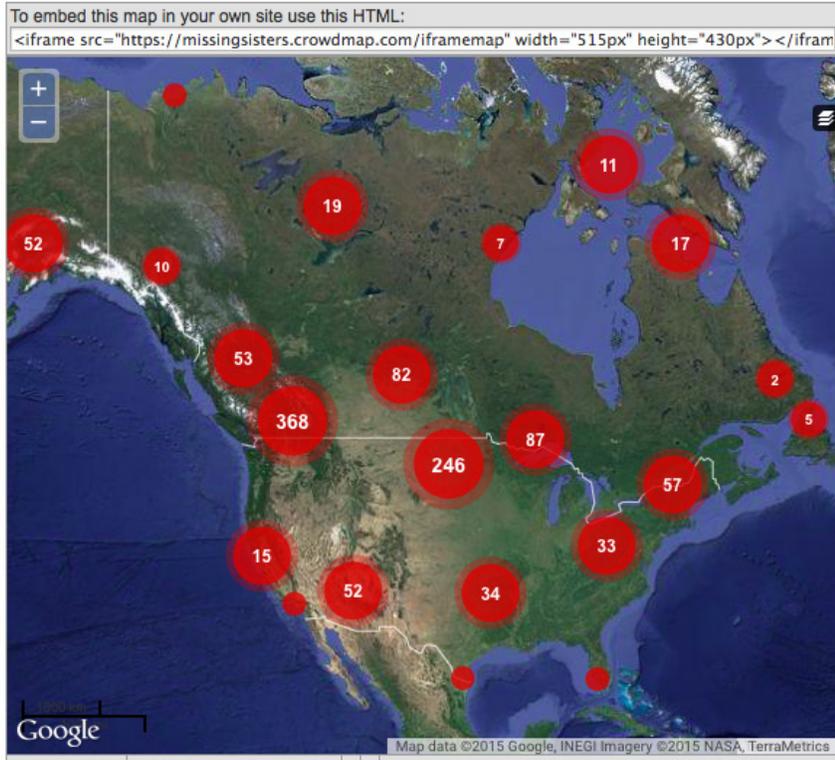
On February 14th, Yale Sisters of All Nations teamed up with the Save Wiyabi Project to lead a teach-in and a vigil to honor missing and murdered indigenous women. Save Wiyabi co-founder Lauren Chief Elk, Yale PhD candidate in History Tiffany Hale, and YSAN president Dinee Dorame (ES '15) spoke at the teach-in. Blue Feather Drum Group performed, and Leigh Kern led a prayer.

Hale opened the discussion by connecting the subject matter to the relevant Valentine's Day theme. The mass consumerism, which has made the holiday all about throwing money at huge corporations, grossly distorts the perception of love into something unrecognizable. Similarly, rape culture and misogyny distort love and attraction until they develop into problems as large as the mass murder and abduction of women of color.

That being said, Chief Elk went on to talk about addressing and preventing these tragedies. She said that the root of this is conceptual, that it's an attitude; "Women don't go straight from 'fine' to murdered and missing." It starts smaller and works its way up. Rape culture and misogyny give rise to emotional abuse that develops into domestic violence. This leads up to murdered and missing." The topic of erasure was also prominent in the teach-in. As a strategy of marginalizing and even eliminating people of color, race and gender were factors often omitted in reports and statistics of missing persons. That is, as the Save Wiyabi Project puts it, how we disappear. Recently, however, groups like Save Wiyabi are starting to bring attention to the alarming rates at which Native women are going missing; hence the new practice of holding vigils, teach-ins, and marches on Valentine's Day.



[VIEW FULL MAP](#)



ALL CATEGORIES

-  **UNSOLVED MURDER**
-  **SOLVED MURDER**
-  **UNSOLVED UNDETERMINED DEATHS**
-  **UNIDENTIFIED REMAINS**
-  **UNSOLVED MISSING**

How to Report

By sending an email:
save.wiyabi.project@gmail.com

By sending a tweet with the hashtag/s:
#opthunderbird
#mmiw
#missingsismap

By filling this form on our website.

So what can we do? With cases of sexual abuse permeating higher educational institutions, it is important to be aware of and actively protest the attitudes that are the root of this problem. Chief Elk also brought up the effect of the Internet and social media on activism. The Save Wiyabi Project, a non-profit organization that aims to address violence against Native American women, created an online map that shows where across the United States and Canada Native women have gone missing.

The reports of missing persons are listed below the map in chronological order, starting with the most recent cases. Anyone can report missing women by emailing save.wiyabi.project@gmail.com. The organization is also very active on Facebook, Tumblr, and Twitter. As an alternative to reporting acts of violence straight to the police, an institution that has a dubious relationship with Native reservations and people of color, the Save Wiyabi Project's social media sites welcome anonymous submissions to foster healing, and also direct people to and connect people with further means of counseling.

Chief Elk discussed the benefits of talking about acts of violence, and emphasized the importance of providing solidarity in the Native community. Dinee Dorame connected this to Yale Sisters of All Nations. The founding of YSAN had a lot to do with making a safe space for Native women, and having a time and place for these difficult yet critical conversations. These issues can be painful to talk about, but to prevent them from continuing to happen we need to have a voice for those who can no longer speak – for those missing in life and missing in death. This teach-in represents that start. As Chief Elk said many times throughout her talk, silence won't save us.

senior spotlight: christian brown

Christian (Chris) Nazhone Brown (PC '15)
Chandler, Arizona . Navajo (Dine)
Geology and Geophysics & Ecology and Evolutionary Biology
ANAAAY, AISES, Blue Feather, Club Geo, Davenport Pops Orchestra



How has NACC changed since you were a freshman?

When I first came to the NACC as a freshman we were still occupying the third floor of the AACC. We were a much smaller community than we are now, and we were greatly limited by the space that was available. When students had to do homework, people would be split up between the AACC library, the computer room, the room with the fridge, and the TV room because everyone couldn't fit in the same space. Now that we are much larger community and we have our own center, there is so much more opportunities for everyone to get together as we now have the physical space to fit everyone in the same room. Additionally it is nice to have speakers come to visit and for people to not have to sit on the floor.

What do you enjoy the most about the NACC community?

The aspect that I enjoy the most about the NACC and its community is the fact that we are a large family. Much like a large extended family, there may be quarrels or fights, but in the end we are all part of the same experience of being Native at Yale. Even though Yale may be hard at points, Native students can always rest assured that they will have a community to fall back on in a time of need. I also love how we have people that take up the position of the loving grandma, the strange uncle, or the rowdy brother.

Why did you decide to become a Freshmen Counselor?

I decided to become a FroCo largely from my experience with Yale from my Freshman year. Coming from a public high school with a large amount of diversity in addition to a much greater Native population, I experienced a great deal of culture shock. I also signed up for a large number of math and science classes my freshman year and I initially struggled with trying to keep up with Yale academically. It was only through the impact of my then Peer Liaison Amanda Tjemsland and the NACC Dean that was really able to get my footing at Yale and prosper. As a Froco, I want to be the same person for my freshmen who will help them establish themselves at Yale so that they can succeed.

What advice do you have for younger native students?

The most important piece of advice that I have for younger Native students is to respect and love each other. Everyone who is involved with the Native American Cultural Center ultimately has the same goal of furthering the advancement of Indigenous peoples. With this in mind, there should be no reason that we as Native students should ever be fragmented among ourselves. Yale is hard enough for students individually and the NACC should be a support group. Fights and breakups are natural in any social group, but at least be decent with each other afterwards as hard as that may be. If people behave in this way, I think everyone will really prosper.

indian health initiative kicks off

Karleh Wilson (SY '16) founded the NACC's newest undergraduate student group, Indian Health Initiative. The mission statement reads: "Indian Health Initiative is an organization run by Native American students at Yale who are dedicated to the strengthening of mental, spiritual and physical wellness." President Karleh Wilson and Vice President Rose Bear Don't Walk (JE '17) both have passion for the group's mission. "As a varsity athlete, I know what it feels like to bond through physical activity.

We have a great group at the NACC, so I thought IHI would be a good way to continue fostering these relationships. As a friend, I also wanted to motivate everyone else to get healthy," said Wilson.

IHI has been working to create an environment that encourages healthy lifestyles in the NACC. To begin this, IHI has been supplying the NACC with healthy snacks, holding biweekly basketball games at Payne-Whitney Gymnasium, and leading Sunday morning workouts in Ezra Stiles gym. The Indian Health Initiative also encourages members to take the Meatless Monday pledge.

"Meat, while delicious, has evolved into an industrial monster. Large-scale meat production has a huge impact on the environment whether it is CO2 emissions, chemical usage or land degradation. Not to mention the increased risks of preventable conditions like heart disease, obesity, and diabetes. The concept of Meatless Monday is to combat these issues. Not only does this have an effect on the environment, but it also exposes you to the beautiful world of a rich plant-based diet! I brought up the idea of Meatless Monday to IHI because by taking the pledge together we are making a big impact on the environment, ourselves, and know we're not alone!" said Bear Don't Walk, now a vegetarian. Take the pledge today by visiting Yale Meatless Monday on Facebook or by contacting mitchell.beardontwalk@yale.edu with any questions or just want to chat about healthy food options.



chaplain's office and ihi sponsor nacc retreat

IHI's goals apply to more than just physical health; the group is also dedicated to improving the mental and spiritual health in the community. In Wilson's words, "I wanted to de-stigmatize discussion surrounding mental health. Yale is a very mentally taxing place for Native



students, so we

need to be aware of the effects that this stress can have." IHI took students to an off-campus retreat to foster mental and spiritual health on March 28th.

Students in IHI spent the day relaxing, reflecting and bonding with friends in the community. Chris Brown (PC '15) taught the group how to make traditional Native corn husk dolls, and Vanessa Noelte (ES '16) led a meditation session. They also bonded by breaking off into pairs and together taking peaceful walks along the

shore of the beach, and later coming together to tell their life stories through pointing out spaces on a collectively marked map.

"I think at a place like Yale it's really easy to forget to take care of yourself. I believe that a healthy body breeds a healthy mind and thus we are seeking to make a healthy, happy community." said Rose Bear Don't Walk.

NACC spiritual advisor Aaron Athey told IHI a version of the corn husk doll story while the students worked away at their little creations, tightly wrapping strings and maneuvering stiff corn husks into desired positions. He said that once there was a vain woman whose job in the village was to collect water from a nearby stream. The Creator had blessed this woman with immense beauty, and staring at her reflection in the stream she neglected her duties as water-gatherer for the village. Not happy about this, the Creator took away her reflection, resulting in the faceless doll.



Corn husk doll made by Kodi Alvord (ES '17)

senior spotlight: dalton carr



Dalton Carr (Choctaw) is an active senior in the Native community from Bakersfield, California. Dalton balances school, his job as a house manager at the NACC, rugby and MEAT Club.

“I’ve loved my time here at Yale and the NACC has been a huge part of that for me. I hope that other students coming to Yale that are having a difficult time adjusting can make use of the NACC in the same way I have.”

How has NACC changed since you joined the community as a freshman?

I have been lucky in my time here at Yale to see the NACC develop into what it is today. Each year has brought a new and eager class that has looked to revamp both native involvement and the face of the cultural center on campus. As a freshman, what I knew as the cultural center was a room in the AACC where natives would squeeze in and play video games. We now have a beautiful house, new groups like Blue Feather, and a new excitement that I could not have anticipated.

What do you enjoy the most about the NACC community?

We’ve had divisions and some rough patches in the past, but I’ve never been more happy to be part of the NACC. We’ve grown together as a house, and have become a staple on campus. I love that when I have nothing to do, I can swing by the NACC and catch several others that are just looking to play some games or eat food. This is a recent development and a good one, I think. The NACC is really a second home for so many natives on campus.

How has rugby impacted your experience at Yale?

Rugby was my way to stave off boredom. I came to Yale with the intention of playing football, but backed out quickly once I saw the daily schedule. After a few weeks of classes, I realized I needed to be doing some kind of sport. So rugby was a natural transition. My teammates have become some of my best friends, and will stay that way I’m sure. I’ve had the most fun while at Yale with rugby, both on and off the pitch. In fact, we were just in Argentina and Chile last week playing teams and exploring places I never thought I would have a chance to visit. I have definitely leaned on rugby and my friends on the team, but I wouldn’t have done Yale any differently.

What advice do you have for younger native students?

Feel welcome. As a freshman, I found it difficult to get involved not only with the NACC but with any extracurricular because I didn’t know anyone involved and I came from a different background than most Yale students. But you have nothing to lose in throwing yourself into a group - new friends are very easy to find. When I began hanging around the NACC, I realized that natives aren’t so scary. The NACC wants everyone involved!

sliver of a full moon comes to yale



On March 31st, the Yale Native American Law Students Association (NALSA), the Yale Group for the Study of Native America, and the NACC brought *Sliver of a Full Moon*, a documentary drama about the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act, to Yale. *Sliver of a Full Moon*, written by Mary Kathryn Nagle, details the work done by five Native women and two Native men to get the Violence Against Women Act reauthorized. The play documents the grassroots movement that led to the 2013 Reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which included a new provision that allows tribes to prosecute non-Native offenders who commit certain assault crimes.

Their efforts led to success when President Obama signed the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013. This was not a complete success, however, as even the reauthorization excludes tribes of Alaska. From the official play website: “*Sliver of a Full Moon* asks the question: what will it take to restore the jurisdiction of all tribes to protect the lives of all native women? Together, we will create the answer.” The survivors who testified in front of Congress were interviewed for this play and their stories were transcribed as a part of the narrative. Lisa Brunner (White Earth Ojibwe) and Billie Jo Rich (Eastern Band Cherokee) reprise their roles to tell their stories once again, accompanied by a full cast of professional and undergraduate Native actors to tell this impactful story.

In conducting auditions for the remaining parts, director Madeline Sayet emphasized that this play, formatted as a staged reading, is very much influenced by Native storytelling practice. Members of the Yale Native community Reed Bobroff, Ashton Megli, David Rico and Haylee Kushi each played various chorus roles that included reporters, senators, Native council leaders and even Senior Policy Advisor for Native American Affairs Jodi Gillette.

Sliver of a Full Moon occupies territory defined by *Oliphant vs. Suquamish Indian Tribe* (1978): the Supreme Court case, which decided that Native American sovereign nations did not have inherent tribal jurisdiction to punish non-Natives and would not have such authority unless otherwise decided by Congress. The play explores how this decision affected tribal nations for generations using the stories of a tribal police officer, tribal judge, survivors of domestic violence, senators, and congressmen and women. Harnessing the voices of those affected by VAWA, the narrative issues a powerful dialogue about the political status of tribal nations and underscores the importance of sovereignty in eradicating violence against Native women. But Nagle’s piece is not a static entity: it was recently revised to better represent the exclusion of Alaska Native tribes within VAWA’s re-authorization. The play ultimately questions how we can restore full jurisdiction to tribal nations and ensure safety for all Native women.

The play incorporates stories of survivors in order to deconstruct post-colonial rape culture in Indian Country. *Sliver of a Full Moon* has been shared with audiences at the Women Are Sacred Conference in New Mexico, the convention of the National Congress of American Indians in Oklahoma, alongside the UN World Conference on Indigenous People in New York, and in the United States District Court, invoking a powerful act of indigenous remembrance. The performance was especially significant, as it is the play's debut on a college campus, and aims to educate future leaders about the political status and livelihood of Native American communities. Honorable William Fletcher of the Ninth Circuit of the United States Court of Appeals, Tulalip Tribes Vice-Chairwoman, Deborah Parker and Eastern Band Cherokee Indians Chairwoman, Terri Henry provided introductory remarks. At the end of the play, a short question and answer provided insight on VAWA's impact and the work that still needs to be done. In the words of Lisa Brunner, the 2013 Reauthorization is "a sliver of a full moon of what's needed to really protect us."

Reed Adair Bobroff (ES '16), a very active member of the NACC community and a student in the theatre studies department, worked to get undergraduate students to be involved in *Sliver of a Full Moon*.

"It's a great honor to help bring this play to Yale's campus where, especially in the theater, Native people have frequently been excluded, exploited, or have been non-existent," said Bobroff. "I'm so grateful to Katie Jones and NALSA for their commitment to insert a Native narrative into the Law School and the creative ways that they do so. This play has given undergrads in the NACC community an opportunity to work with professional Native actors and has created a space for Natives to be visible on stage. It's not often that our people are represented fairly and accurately in drama, but through Mary Kathryn Nagle's play, under Madeline Sayet's direction, we can tell the story of a turning point in American history through indigenous eyes."

