

October 1, 2015
Issue 2 Volume 1

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- choctaw and other native languages
- ‘my father’s bones’ comes to yale
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- indigenous peoples’ day



roe cloud
from the yale native community



Left: NACC Peer Liaisons pose in front of a chalk drawing of the NACC logo along with “Hello” written in many Native languages

Below: David Rico (Choctaw, BR ‘16) performs at the annual cultural exploration event

Bottom: Members of the Indian Health Initiative strike their favorite yoga poses after learning from Ashton Megli’s yoga study break

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from the editors

October 1, 2015

Dear Reader,

Almost every night is a late night at the NACC. Students alternate between making procrastination-snacks, scanning books in the NACC library, and writing furiously to turn their papers in on time. And we keep coming back to the house to plan our events and meetings--to build our community within and without these four walls.

Our student groups have become less about putting leadership positions on our résumés, and more about taking responsibility for our community and developing our skills to give back to Indian Country. The Yale Native community is demonstrating its determination to face bigger issues starting this month.

Sisters of All Nations will kick it off with weekly events focusing on Native women's rights and advocacy, since October is Domestic Violence Awareness month. Blue Feather Drum Group has learned three new songs this year, and plans to learn more about the history and tradition of their new large drum from Pine Ridge. The Association of Native Americans at Yale will continue its annual two-day series of rallies, talks, and bonding events on Indigenous People's Day. Peer Liaisons and house managers are planning a discussion on the complex and sensitive nature of Native identity. Fifteen active members of the community are taking Native Studies classes in the NACC. To nicely wrap up a full month of activism and education, the Yale Native American Arts Council plans to tackle the issue of cultural appropriation on Halloween.

Students are prepared to lead these initiatives while navigating the rigorous undergraduate experience. Newly-appointed Dean Kelly Fayard's lively spirit and fierce determination has been contagious in the NACC, like that cold that put "cough drops" high on the house manager grocery list. Armed with the motivation and momentum from last year's hustle, we are more than ready for another year of activism, culture, growth, and love.



meet the dean

October 1, 2015

Dear Students, Faculty, and Staff:

Hesci! Greetings from the Native American Cultural Center! I am so happy to join the team here at Yale. I arrived on campus in late July, eagerly awaiting the arrival of students on campus. It has been a pleasure to participate in this community in the short time that I have been here; I look forward to seeing great things come out of the student groups this year, as well as organizing some great events within the NACC.

A little about my background in case you're curious: I am from the Poarch Band of Creek Indians in Alabama, the only federally recognized tribe in the state. I went to undergrad at Duke with a double major in cultural anthropology and religion. Then I taught school in Atlanta for a few years before moving on to the University of Michigan where I got a Ph.D. in anthropology and a certificate in museum studies. I then taught anthropology at Bowdoin College in Maine for three years. Last year, I had a fellowship at the School for Advanced Research in Santa Fe, New Mexico where I worked on turning my dissertation research into a book manuscript. I will be giving a talk in November on my research in the anthropology department here at Yale, and will be sure to let you all know if you are interested in knowing what my scholarly pursuits are.



I'm still getting to know the community. I have been working with the peer liaisons as well as the house staff to help empower and support students at the NACC. So please, if you have any ideas about events that you would like to see happen at the house, or ideas you have for speakers, guest artists, or other events, let us know! We really value community input and ideas, and we would love to help make your dream a reality.



We have already started a few events that seem to be going nicely. Every week on Wednesdays, you can show up at the house for #Trynafunction, our official study hall, where snacks (healthy and otherwise) await you in the kitchen. But please use the house to study any time of the week. On Thursdays, immediately following the ANAAY meeting, we have our new weekly "baking

meet the dean

and bonding” event. At 8pm, we start mixing up a delicious recipe; so far we’ve had banana bread from Andrea’s family recipe and Santo Domingo-style biscochitos from Charelle. If you would like to share a family recipe with us, let me know and you can lead baking and bonding next Thursday.

For those of you who I have met yet, I look forward to getting to know you. I have tried to meet with individuals as much as possible to get to know folks on an individual basis. So please, reach out to me and let’s meet up to talk story. I hope that you will all see me as a resource. I am here to help you in any way that I can.

Mvto!
Dean Fayard



**Above: Dean Fayard with the other new cultural house directors and Ezra Stiles Master Stephen Pitti
Below: NACC community turns out for first annual retreat at Lighthouse Point beach**



welcome back barbeque



Above, left: Ashton Megli '17, Stephanie Spear '19, Julia Dixon '16 and Tanner Allread '16 enjoy Indian Tacos from Sly Fox Den catering on the NACC's back porch.

Above, right: David Rico '16 giggles in the NACC kitchen.

Below: The extended NACC family gathers for the annual start-of-the-year welcome back barbeque. New faces to join the picture are our new director, Dean Kelly Fayard, dean of student engagement Burgwell Howard, La Casa's new director Dean Eileen Galvez, a handful of new graduate students, and of course the fresh faces of the Class of 2019. Old friends like Professor Jay Gitlin, Dean Chris Cutter, and Professor Ned Blackhawk also joined us to welcome the family.



baking and bonding

Every Thursday at 8pm, right after the ANAAY meetings, students gather **(below)** to bake dessert in the NA-CC's cozy kitchen. So far, we've made goopy brownies, delicious Pueblo biscochitos and pies with Charelle **(left)**, and banana bread using Andrea's family recipe.



cultural exploration exchanges houses



Above, left: Representatives from the Afro-American Cultural Center emcee the event.



Above, right: Roman Castellanos (ES '16) from Ballet Folklórico dancing.



Right: Blue Feather Drum Group singing a roundie while cultural explorations attendees do a round dance.





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 inter-tribal 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 Kodi Alvord, 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: Ashton Megli, ashton.megli@yale.edu

Indian Health Initiative promotes healthy lifestyles for Natives. We have biweekly basketball games that all are welcomed to join. Mondays at 7:00pm and Thursdays 8:00pm. Contact: Rose Bear Don't Walk, mitchell.beardontwalk@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: Autumn Shone, autumn.shone@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.

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: Rose Bear Don't Walk, mitchell.beardontwalk@yale.edu

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

kelly.fayard@yale.edu

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

freshman spotlight: charelle

Charelle Jenee Brown (ES '19)

Hometown: Santo Domingo Pueblo, New Mexico

Involved in: ANAAY, Yale Club Basketball, Yale Sisters of All Nations, Indian Health Initiative

Fun fact: Charelle is a silversmith

What do you want to study at Yale, and why?

I want to major in Architecture because there is bad housing in my community. Some houses are built far from the central plaza, so it is hard to participate in activities, which impacts people's desire to be part of the community and moves the community toward western ideas and lifestyles. I want to redesign and restructure policy around housing in Santo Domingo Pueblo.

What surprised you most about New Haven?

I actually wasn't surprised when I came to Yale because I'd been to New Haven a few times before matriculating. Junior year [of high school] I came to a campus tour. Later I did Yale Young Global Scholars: Science, Policy and Innovation, where I listened to lectures by Yale professors and did a capstone project was on diabetes in Native communities.

What do you want to see more of in the NACC?

I want to bring more of the culture of Southwest tribes to the NACC and to Yale. Specifically pottery, silversmithing, and dance groups. Activities at the NACC represent the traditions of Eastern tribes more, and Yale Natives from the Southwest are mostly Navajos. When people heard that I was from New Mexico they assumed I was Navajo. I also want to learn Keres here at Yale through DILS or the Native American Languages Project. There are difficulties, like finding someone to teach over skype. The fact that it's only an oral language also makes progress hard to measure objectively. My work at Yale, which I want to bring home to Santo Domingo Pueblo, will only be valuable to my people if I can communicate it with them, and I can only communicate with them in Keres. It's difficult to be away from my community.

What's your favorite part of Yale so far?

The support systems. There is academic support for students of color and I quickly found a community. The NACC is a good environment for me to be around because the people here already feel like family. It's only been four weeks! I feel most comfortable expressing myself at the NACC and around friends who understand a little more about what it's like to be Native.



New Haven & Yale

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY



Sunday, October 11

12-2pm: Celebration of Indigenous Unity and Resistance on the New Haven Green, featuring Native music, poetry, and dance

6-9pm: Food of the Americas community feast at La Casa (301 Crown St.)

Monday, October 12

12-2pm: Demonstration on Cross Campus, featuring Blue Feather Drum Group

4-5pm: Keynote speaker at Davenport College

6-10pm: Comida de las Americas Community Feast at the New Haven People's Center (37 Howe St.)



Hosted by the Association of Native Americans at Yale, Unidad Latina en Accion and MEChA. Sponsored by the Native American Cultural Center, La Casa, the Intercultural Affairs Council, the Undergraduate Organizations Committee and Davenport College. Contact christopher.alvord@yale.edu to get involved or order a T-shirt

native american languages project

Community Choctaw language lessons started this week as part of the Native American Language Project. Students are excited to have the opportunity to learn a language that is otherwise not offered at Yale. The Native American Language Project gives members of our community to learn Native languages by skyping with language instructors in a classroom setting.

We are very thankful to Angie Gleason from Yale's Center for Language Study for helping to organize this program and to our instructor Nicholas Charleston for bravely teaching us Choctaw all the way from Calera, Oklahoma. Stay tuned for the start of Mohawk lessons this semester and Cherokee in the spring!

Tanner Allreed, a senior History major, started taking Choctaw lessons last fall with Nicholas. Tanner chose to continue his study because he aims to have a deep knowledge of Choctaw; it is a part of his heritage, and he wants to be able to pass it on to his children. He really enjoys having Nick as an instructor because "he is a lot of fun but also takes it seriously and knows that we can put the effort in as Yale students to learn as much of the language as we can. He pushes us and makes sure that we get everything we want out of the lessons."

Other students of the NACC community are also learning languages through Yale's Center for Language Study in one-on-one settings –Salish, Mohawk, and Hawaiian. In the past students have learned Navajo and Lakota. Look out for Yale Natives speaking Native languages!

-Ashton Megli (Choctaw, SY '18)



yipap performs ‘my father’s bones’

The Yale Indigenous Performing Arts Program kicked off its formation with a staged reading of **My Father’s Bones**, a play co-written by Presidential Medal of Freedom Award recipient Suzan Harjo and attorney and playwright Mary Kathryn Nagle.

Jim Thorpe was a Native American professional athlete, an Olympic Gold medalist, and the first President of the American Professional Football Association (NFL). After his death in 1953, the mayor of a small town in Pennsylvania – now called Jim Thorpe, Pennsylvania – bought his body and used it as a tourist attraction for revenue and fame.

My Father’s Bones tells the story of his family and tribe’s 62-year legal battle to take his remains back to the tribal homelands of the Sac and Fox Nation in Oklahoma. Suzan Harjo and Mary Kathryn Nagle came to Yale to direct the play, which starred students Reed Bobroff, David Rico, Eliza Robertson, Sebi Medina-Tayac, Madeleine Hutchins, Ashton Megli, Haylee Kushi and Kodi Alvord (pictured).



native studies finds a home

This semester there are two classes and a section being taught in the Native American Cultural Center. Professor Ned Blackhawk teaches Writing Tribal Histories, a seminar in which fifteen students will study recent works on American Indian tribal communities and later construct their own “tribal histories”; each student will do a research paper and project on a specific tribal community, nation, extended family, or individual. Students’ motivations for taking the class vary. There are Native students who want to learn about their own tribal heritages, students who grew up around tribal communities and want to study their own homes in an academic setting, and students who have sensed that Native history has been a gap in their general history education.



Professor Ned Blackhawk also teaches the lecture class Introduction to American Indian History – a broader overview of Native North America’s history – with discussion sessions in the NACC. Professor Birgit Brander Rasmussen teaches Native American and Indigenous Literatures. The definition of “literatures” here is broad, as Professor Brander-Rasmussen’s class will study fiction novels, poetry, a graphic novel, literary criticism, music, spoken word and film of Indigenous North America from the pre-Columbian era to the present.

