Executive Summary
2020

ALASKA INDIGENOUS RESEARCH PROGRAM
PROMOTING RESILIENCE, HEALTH AND WELLNESS
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This program is supported by the National Institute Of General Medical Sciences of the National Institutes of Health under Award Number S06GM127911. The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institutes of Health.
Project Background

The Alaska Indigenous Research Program (AKIRP) works to further advance the resilience, health, and wellness of Alaska Native and American Indian (AN/AI) Peoples and their communities, students, health professionals and researchers. There is a great need to move beyond the limitations of currently available research training programs and for locally available research education and training opportunities. The program offers cross-cultural research education and experience for students, health practitioners, researchers, or community members who are interested in Indigenous health research. In collaboration with AN/AI communities, AKIRP was designed to increase the cultural competency of health researchers and scientists by emphasizing the importance of conducting research with a Tribally-driven and culturally responsive framework.

Overall Goal

The goal of this collaborative and capacity-building project between the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium and Alaska Pacific University is to develop a three week credit-bearing program at the APU campus in Anchorage, Alaska. The objective is to offer a local research training program for AN/AI college students, researchers and health professionals, as well as non-Native people who were trained outside of Alaska or not familiar with Alaska Native communities, traditions and practices. The program offers an opportunity for researchers and health professionals to strengthen their capacity to conduct culturally responsive and respectful health research which addresses the unique structure and health needs of Indigenous Peoples through the following learning objectives:

Overall Program Learning Objectives

- Understand Indigenous and Western ways of knowing as a foundation for Alaska Native health research
- Understand Indigenous methodologies in Alaska Native health research
- Understand community-based participatory research and how it aligns with the research process
- Recognize levels of community engagement and ownership of Alaska Native health research
- Understand the principles of ethics in Indigenous health research
- Describe the impact of past health research practices on current perceptions of health research among Indigenous/Alaska Native peoples

Memorable Quotes from Participants

“Thank you again for including me in this experience, it was quite inspirational and valuable. I was able to hear some of my mentors and researchers whose work I have learned a great deal from during grad school. I was reflecting to colleagues and mentors that the content presented pulled components and lessons I learned throughout grad school together and gave me a sense of real world applications.”

Course Learning Objectives

Week One: Advanced Research
May 4-8
Integrate Indigenous research methods and ways of knowing
Implement community-based participatory research practices
Apply best practices in community engagement: building rapport and connections with communities
Implement meaningful communication strategies and practices in dissemination of findings to communities
Recognize the role of historical trauma and research and how it impacts research projects

Week Two: Research Ethics
May 11-15
Understand the historical context of the Alaska Area Institutional Review Board (IRB), university IRBs and Tribal review
Describe the role of historical trauma in health disparities and Indigenous mistrust in research and researchers
Understand how to navigate IRBs and the Tribal review processes
Manage varying expectations of IRBs and Tribal review
Describe researcher pathways for ethical health research with Indigenous communities

Week Three: Introductory Research
May 18-22
Describe Indigenous and Western research methods
Understand how to implement community-based participatory research practices
Articulate the steps involved in the research process/cycle
Understand the role and value of different members of the research team
Describe different genres of health research
Understand the role of Indigenous health research in public health and its impact
Understand culturally relevant dissemination practices
Creation of Spirit of the Wolf Design

During the planning phases of 2020 AKIRP, Joseph and Martha Senungetuk, Elders-in-residence at APU and renowned artists provided creative input and designs to Matthew Bailey, Marketing Media Web Specialist with the Alaska Native Epidemiology Center at ANTHC who digitized and edited their work into a logo called, “Spirit of the Wolf,” a mask representing the Alaska Indigenous Research Program’s values, goals and mission. Together, Joseph, Martha and Karli Tyance Hassell described the significance of the mask to include in publications (see Appendix A).

The mask design was used in marketing materials such as schedules, flyers, website design, and promotional items. The promotional items included a tote, pen, notebook, mug, folders, and a water bottle. These items were mailed to participants who attended the weekly sessions in full and to the speakers for participating in or contributing to the program.

“In our every deliberation, we must consider the impact of our decisions on the next seven generations.”
- Iroquois philosophy

Year 2 in Review

The second year’s theme was, “Promoting Resilience, Health and Wellness,” from May 4-22, 2020.

In light of the significant and ever-changing impact of COVID-19, the 2020 AKIRP planning team canceled the in-person research program. After shifting to an online format, the planning team delivered program materials through a series of daily segments for 2.5 hours through APU’s Blackboard Collaborate Ultra platform. See Figure 1. Blackboard course homepage for Week 1 below.

AKIRP’s Facebook Group Page

During the 2019 program, participants and speakers wished to keep in touch and stay informed of Program news. The Facebook group now has over 145 members, including past speakers, participants and those interested in the Program. As a private page, it is not currently open to the public and a request must be made to join the group. The Facebook group serves a repository of information related to Program news, in addition to sharing research opportunities, training or Indigenous-health research related topics. The Facebook group can be found at https://www.facebook.com/groups/akirp.
Year 2 in Review, cont.

Each session began with a prayer or blessing from Elders Joseph and Martha Senungetuk, or Amy and Doug Modig. Karli Tyance Hassell, ANTHC Research Associate, provided a song and drumming to close sessions. The sessions featured audio-video content facilitated by speakers, presentations, and in-depth, reciprocal conversations among participants. Participants now have access to recorded sessions, reference materials, and more following the program.

The AKIRP Online Seminar Series was designed to support participants with varying degrees of research experience and equip participants with practical and empowering knowledge and skills regardless of their health research journeys.

The online sessions encouraged participant discussion and networking through a variety of interactive features such as live polling, whiteboards, breakout groups, discussion boards using the Blackboard Collaborate Ultra platform.

An important component of the program was discussing the history of intergenerational trauma and the history of mistrust between research entities and Tribal communities. The program aims to increase health researcher’s cultural humility and sensitivity emphasizing the importance of Tribally-driven and culturally responsive research and building research capacity by supporting and growing Indigenous researchers and scholars.

AKIRP Online Sessions Schedule and Recordings

Week One:

Decolonizing and Indigenizing Research Methods presented by Danica Love Brown, PhD
Link: https://bit.ly/375r0Xg

Advancing Community-Centered Research presented by Anne Jensen, PhD
Link: https://bit.ly/375r0Xg

Indigenous Mentoring Network & Community Engagement in Research presented by Cheryl Barnabe, PhD
Link: https://bit.ly/2ISDB8v

Two-Eyed Seeing Workshop presented by Drs. Alexandra & Malcolm King, Sharon Jinkerson-Brass and Candice Norris
Link: https://bit.ly/2JlJY9d

Indigenous Logic Modeling Workshop presented by Stacy Rasmus, PhD
Link: https://bit.ly/375mjMx

Indigenous Connectedness as a Framework for Relational Healing presented by Jessica Ulrlrich, PhD
Link: https://bit.ly/3pVAcLq

CBPR: A Journey of Self-Discovery presented by Jordan Lewis, PhD
Link: https://bit.ly/3pVAcLq

Week Two:

Calricaraq Yup’ik Wellness Model presented by Rose Domnick, Moses Ayagalna and Leona Johansson
Link: https://bit.ly/3pVacLq

rETHICS – Research Ethics Training for Health in Indigenous Communities presented by Cynthia Pearson, PhD
Link: https://bit.ly/3m3xegM

Special Considerations: Genetics Research presented by Katrina Claw, PhD
Link: https://bit.ly/3mbe88k

The Alaska Area Specimen Bank presented by Brenna Simons-Petrusa, PhD
Link: https://bit.ly/3mbe88k

The Critical Role of Alaska Native Elders in Research presented by Melissa Castaneda, Rebecca Ervin and Maria Crouch, MS
Link: https://bit.ly/3mbe88k

IHS/AAIRB – Human Subjects Principles presented by Terry Powell
Link: https://bit.ly/3kZ08eM

Public Health Surveillance and the 2018 Common Rule: Ethical and Regulatory Considerations presented by Laura Youngblood, MPH
Link: https://bit.ly/3kZ08eM

Tribal Review of Health Research presented by Abbie Willetto, MA
Part 1 Link: https://bit.ly/3kZ08eM

Week Three:

Indigenous Ways of Knowing presented by Agatha Panigkaq John-Shields, PhD

Developing a Research Proposal presented by Sarah Nash, PhD

Study Design, Data and Analysis & Where to Find Data presented by Gretchen Day, MPH

Creating Ethical and Inclusive Spaces of Engagement for Indigenous Research presented by Larissa Crawford

Becoming a Resilient Scientist presented by Sharon Milgram, PhD
Link: https://bit.ly/3nQOWVq

Health Careers & Medical School: Tricks, Tips, Techniques for Applying presented by Mary Owen, MD
Link: https://bit.ly/3nQOWVq
**Attendance & Demographics**

AKIRP brought together a diverse group of roughly 135 participants and guest speakers. Quantifiable characteristics and associated information were obtained through participant application forms and demographic analysis was completed. There are a few notes to highlight about the participant data:

1. Participants were allowed to select more than one ethnicity or race and profession or occupation on their program application.
2. Due to the cancellation of in-person programming, the planning team made exceptions for last-minute participant registration and therefore were not able to obtain some demographic information.
3. Participants who attended multiple weeks were encouraged to fill out the second part of the evaluation once. These questions included overall program feedback.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week Number</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Participants</td>
<td>101*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The total participant number is 101 because some participants could have been registered for more than one week.

**Geographic Reach**

*Figure 2.* Geographic reach of the program participants.

**Memorable Quotes from Participants**

“I applied to be a mentor based on one of the speaker’s presentations. I’m considering a PhD program, so exposure to more current research is inspiring and helps organize my own thoughts.”

“So many great ideas and methods to fit with my world view.”

“Being aware of the importance of CBPR and decolonizing my research is something I will carry forward.”
Demographics

A total of 101 unique participants participated with many attending more than one week. Approximately 45% of AKIRP participants identified as Indigenous which includes Alaska Native, American Indian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Maori, Mexican Indigenous, 37% identified as white, 2% identified as Hispanic-Latino, 4% identified as Asian, 4% identified as Black/African American and 8% were listed as unknown because the information was not provided or explicitly stated. Participant’s education level for all three weeks reported 7% with high school degrees, 1% Associates degree, 40% with bachelor degrees, 27% with Graduate degrees, 14% PhDs and 11% reported Other.

**Figure 3. Participant Race/Ethnicity**

**Figure 4. Participant Gender**

**Figure 5. Participant Occupation & Area of Work**
Figures 6 and 7. Educational Background

### AKIRP Participant Level of Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School/GED</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### AKIRP Participants: University/College Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College Status</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alaska-based Colleges/Universities</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of State or International</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Undergraduate Credits**

Due to COVID-19 and the cancellation of in-person programming, we were not able to offer any credits for this year.

**Interns**

Due to COVID-19 and work-from-home guidelines administered by ANTHC and the APU campus closure, we were not able to offer internships. We received 11 internship applications total, with 6 applicants for the undergraduate-level internship and 5 applicants for the graduate-level internship positions. Many of the applicants were highly qualified and encouraged to apply next year.

**Favorite Presentations**

Participants were asked to vote for their favorite presentation of the day and provide any comments (Table 3).

#### Table 3. Favorite Presentations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presented by</th>
<th>Presentation Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1 Danica Love Brown, PhD</td>
<td>Decolonizing and Indigenizing Research Methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2 Rose Domnick, Leona Johansson, and Moses Ayagalria</td>
<td>Calricaraq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3 Larissa Crawford</td>
<td>Creating Ethical and Inclusive Spaces of Engagement for Indigenous Research</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Program Evaluation

Participants were asked to submit weekly, anonymous evaluations to provide participant feedback on expertise, presentations, online support and general program improvement recommendations.

![Alaska Indigenous Research Program Logo]

**PROGRAM EVALUATION**

**WEEK 1**
- Proportion of evaluations completed: 30%
- How likely would you recommend AKIRP to others: 71%
- How likely are you to attend a future AKIRP: 42%

**Week 1 Participant Quotes:**
- “Really fabulous presenters. I took 16 pages of notes!”
- “I have already incorporated some of the practices and knowledge into my graduate work from earlier this week. Hearing and seeing learning from strong Indigenous people is always inspiring and helps with burn out. These presentations are always reassuring and inspiring.”

**WEEK 2**
- Proportion of evaluations completed: 20.5%
- How likely would you recommend AKIRP to others: 85%
- How likely are you to attend a future AKIRP: 60%

**Week 2 Participant Quotes:**
- “Every day brought something new and engaging. I really enjoyed everyone’s participation and work they put in for this to happen during these challenging times.”
- “I learned so much not only about Indigenous knowledge and research methods, but also about myself. Thank you.”
- “Again, too many ways to list, but I am very grateful and honored to have had this wonderful learning experience early in my research career so that I may build upon it throughout my life.”

**WEEK 3**
- Proportion of evaluations completed: 34.3%
- How likely would you recommend AKIRP to others: 83%
- How likely are you to attend a future AKIRP: 83%

**Week 3 Participant Quotes:**
- “Every presenter had a great sense of Identity and knowledge that translated well in their presentations.”
- “Before this program, I carried with myself the knowledge of my experiences being an Indigenous person in higher education, but this program built upon that and expanded my knowledge relating to research methods. This program has strengthened my education holistically as an Indigenous learner.”
**Week 1 Feedback:**
After AKIRP, how much has your knowledge about Indigenous knowledge and research methods improved?

![Graph showing feedback](image1.png)

**Week 2 Feedback:**
After AKIRP, how much has your knowledge about Indigenous knowledge and research methods improved?

![Graph showing feedback](image2.png)

**Week 3 Feedback:**
After AKIRP, how much has your knowledge about Indigenous knowledge and research methods improved?

![Graph showing feedback](image3.png)
2020 Alaska Indigenous Research Program in Review

During the first week, Karli Tyance Hassell asked participants to draw words of encouragement and any negative feelings or emotions they wished to give up or offer to the Creator. She sang the Love Hymn and ended Week 1 and 3 with this Blackboard whiteboard exercise:

Table 4. Listing of some negative feelings or emotions

| • Shame        | • False understandings                    | • Scared                      |
| • Anxiety      | • Inadequateness                           | • Politics                    |
| • Fear         | • High blood pressure                      | • Hecticness                  |
| • Stress       | • Isolation                                | • Sickness                    |

Table 5. Listing of some words of encouragement

| • Love         | • You are loved                             | • Think positive, be positive |
| • Self-care    | • You are enough                            | • Caring                      |
| • Indigenous rising | • You are capable                        | • Trust                       |
| • Path making  | • Respect Elders                           | • Community                   |
| • We are not alone | • Believe in yourself                    | • Gratitude                   |
|                |                                           | • Patience                    |
|                |                                           | • Health                      |
|                |                                           | • Family                      |
|                |                                           | • Grace and mercy             |
|                |                                           | • Radical creativity         |

Interactive live poll during Dr. Stacy Rasmus’ presentation on Logic Modeling:

Dr. Ullrich starts her presentation on Indigenous Connectedness with a beautiful quote:

“May we raise our babies with our indigenous love, rather than with our colonial pain”
During the Community of Learners discussions, the team used the breakout session rooms so participants could discuss what they learned throughout the week. Here are a few of their thoughts and reflections on research:

- Love Calricaraq model; Elders protecting and Guiding
- Having representation of Indigenous peoples in the research
- Nice to know right steps of meaningful research
- Indigenous voice heard equally if not more than research voice
- Themes for ethical research with Indigenous communities
- Loved having this community
- Great learning about the technical side - regulations of IRB
  Nothing about us without us!
- There is a transition happening - powerful elevating Indigenous voices
  Understanding historical trauma
- Having Elders in research and sexual health research too; more trust coming from Elders

What is an important aspect or theme of ethical research with Indigenous communities?

- Community driven research questions
- Involving community throughout the process
- Consent, transparency, community involvement
- Respecting first, tribal sovereignty when conducting research
- Even if it can benefit the community, if it isn’t their primary, respect what is important to them
- Flexibility, priorities might change, be willing to stop the research
- Be creative in finding ways to communicate and do our work
- Expect to make life long relationships when you do research
- Life long fears and mistrust of science if done incorrectly
- Beneficence with the individual, but also the entire community
  - Different opinions within the community
  - Different community/government entities

Dr. Katrina Claw incorporated interactive polls using polleverywhere.com to entice participation and to get to know participants in the session asking the question “What single word comes to mind when you think of ‘genetics’?”