

Executive Summary

2023

ALASKA INDIGENOUS RESEARCH PROGRAM

Promoting Resilience, Health and Wellness



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Background

Since 2019, the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) and the Alaska Pacific University (APU) have hosted the Alaska Indigenous Research Program (AKIRP). Over the past five years, almost 500 participants have attended AKIRP. This partnership has demonstrated success in implementing a three-week cross-cultural research education and training program. AKIRP differs from conventional approaches to cultural competency education and training by promoting a Two-Eyed seeing or Etuaptmumk approach to research:

“to learn to see from your one eye with the best or the strengths in the Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing ... and learn to see from your other eye with the best or the strengths in the mainstream (Western or Eurocentric) knowledges and ways of knowing... but most importantly, learn to see with both these eyes together, for the benefit of all.”
(Mi'kmaw Elder Dr. Albert Marshall)

This framework speaks to the reality of many Indigenous students and researchers who navigate multiple identities and perspectives in their lives, across disciplines, and within institutions. The framework requires a common ground, or ethical space, where Indigenous and Western knowledge systems, knowledge generators, and knowledge bearers co-exist and engage in knowledge building as equal partners.¹⁻⁴

AKIRP serves as an ethical space of support and empowerment for Indigenous students and scholars to become researchers and investigators. The program aims to nurture their ability to draw on different cultural values and knowledge systems, and to collaborate with Indigenous communities, to find future ways for healing and wellness. Non-Indigenous program participants benefit in gaining an understanding for the need and value in reciprocity, cultural humility and relationality between Indigenous knowledge and Western science to address the health disparities for Alaska Native and American Indian peoples.

Goal

The overall goal of Alaska Indigenous Research Program is to increase the health research capacity of Alaska Native and American Indian

people and communities by providing Indigenous-centered, cross-cultural research education and training and offering internship and mentorship opportunities for Alaska Native and American Indian undergraduate and graduate students at ANTHC, APU and other academic and Tribal entities.

Learning Objectives

- Understanding Indigenous worldviews and the Two-Eyed Seeing framework.
- Conducting equitable and ethical health research with Alaska Native/American Indian communities and people.
- Applying appropriate and respectful research methods (Indigenous and Western) to co-produce knowledge.
- Understanding the historical and cultural context of health research.

Year Five in Review

ANTHC and APU hosted the fifth Alaska Indigenous Research Program: Promoting Resilience, Health and Wellness (AKIRP) May 8-26, 2023. We held this year's program once again in-person on the APU campus in Anchorage, Alaska. AKIRP provided travel scholarships to 21 participants and 4 interns. AKIRP also traveled 17 speakers to Anchorage to present and in some cases attend AKIRP. Participants traveling from rural Alaska and from out of state, including interns, were able to stay at the APU dorms.

To incorporate cultural enrichment and increase a sense of community and engagement, AKIRP incorporated cultural art activities, such as:

- Salve, key chain, and lanyard making workshops
- Traditional foods for lunch on Wednesdays
- Alaska Native dance group performances
- Daily blessings, land acknowledgements, drumming, songs, and stories.

Whova Platform

As in previous years, we continued to use the Whova platform to host AKIRP although it was completely in-person for attendees this year with no virtual participation. However, speakers who were unable to attend in-person presented virtually via Zoom. We utilized Whova for conference registration and check-in, sharing the agenda and detailed session information and networking. Attendees were able to download the Whova app to access all content and connect with others via smartphones. All program content, including PowerPoints that speakers agreed to share, are still accessible to attendees via Whova.

Internships

From May 30, 2023 to July 28, 2023, AKIRP hosted four Alaska Native and American Indian undergraduate students (3) and (1) graduate student as interns from universities in Arizona, Oklahoma and Washington. Their interests ranged from biology and Native American Studies to chemistry, astrophysics, ethnobotany, psychology, and community health. Prior to beginning their internship, the interns participated in AKIRP. During their time at ANTHC, they had the opportunity to assist with a variety of research projects in Community Health Services, Internal Medicine, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Arctic Investigations Program, and the University of Minnesota. Interns also participated in tours and presentations and attended the ANTHC Health Research Review Committee meeting in July as guests. They assisted with the Colorectal Cancer Research Symposium and numerous other learning opportunities. At the end of their internships, the students gave presentations about their experiences and lessons learned.



From left to right: MaKayla Gilbert (AZ), Nizhoni Hiratsuka (WA), Hope Reeves (OK), and Taryn Evans (OK)

Program Attendance

AKIRP brought together a diverse group of 80 participants and more than 70 guest speakers over the course of three weeks. Demographic information was collected at the time of registration. Participants were able to select multiple races, ethnicities, professions, and occupations.

Table 1. Number of participants

Week Number	Number of Participants	Evaluation Survey response rate
Week 1	42	81%
Week 2	21	67%
Week 3	17	59%

Demographics

Participants were able to select multiple options that applied. The majority (83%) of attendees identified as female.

Figure 1. Gender

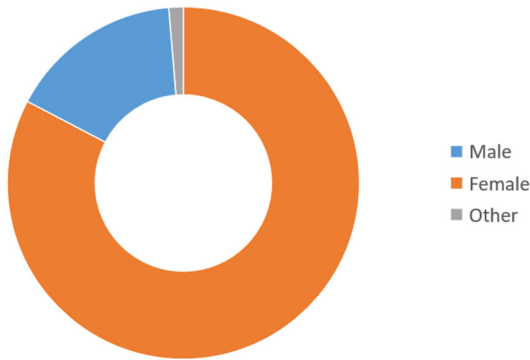
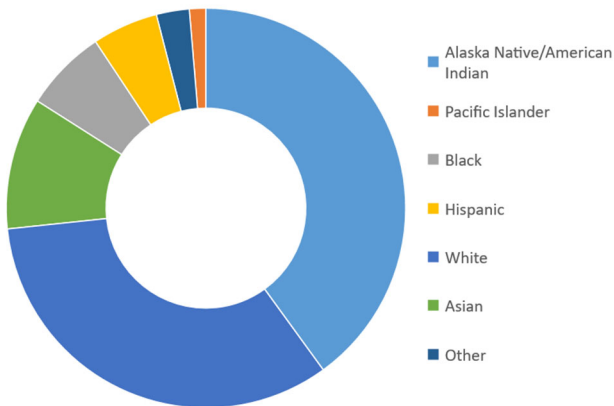
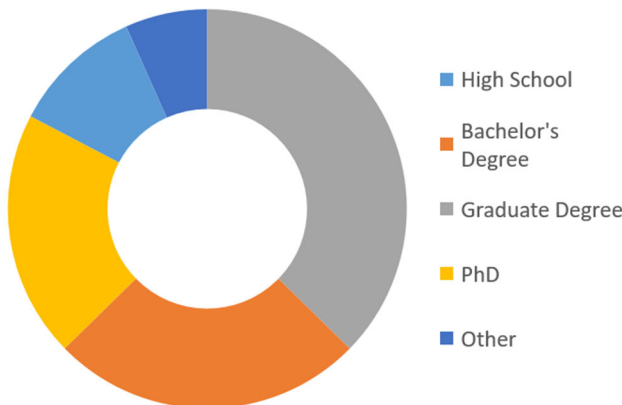


Figure 2. Race/Ethnicity



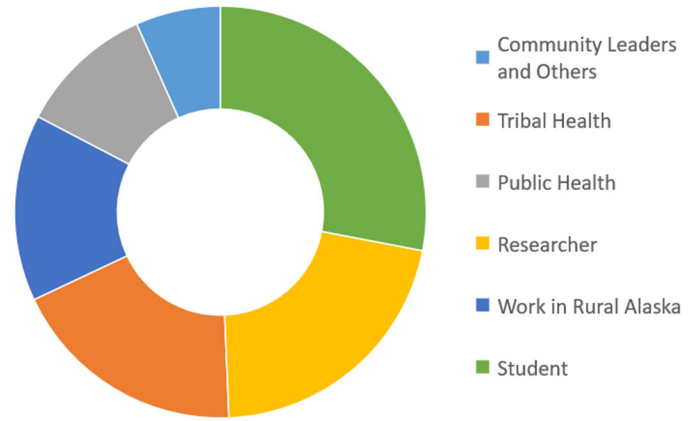
Approximately 40% identified as Alaska Native/American Indian or a combination of Alaska Native/ American Indian and another racial group, 33% as White, 11% as Asian or Asian and a combination of another racial group, 5% as Hispanic, 7% as Black, 1% as Pacific Islander and 3% as other racial backgrounds.

Figure 3. Educational Background



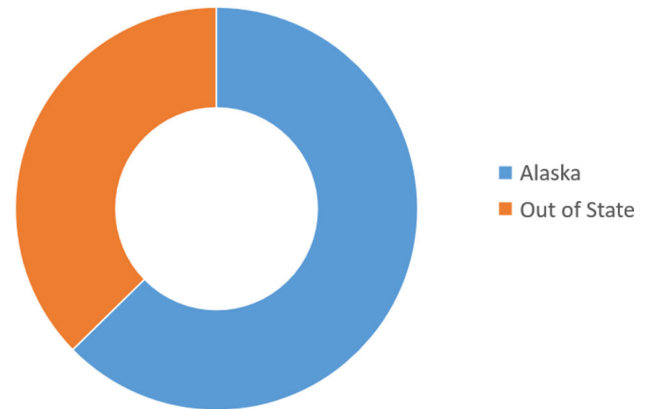
Participants' educational attainment ranged from high school (11%) and bachelor's degrees (25%) to graduate (37%) and doctoral degrees (20%) to other (7%).

Figure 4. Professional Background



Participant's professional background included students (28%), researchers (21%), working in rural Alaska (15%), tribal health (19%), public health (11%), community leaders and others (6%).

Figure 5. In-state and Out-of-State participation



Lastly, 63% of attendees came from Alaska and 37% from other states.

Program Evaluation

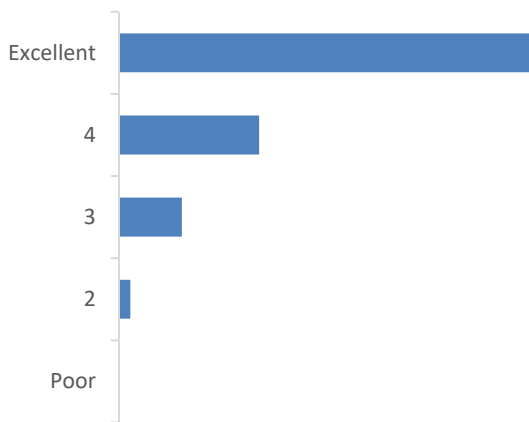
Participants submitted weekly anonymous evaluations about their learning and overall experience at AKIRP. The response rates were 81% for Week 1, 57% for Week 2 and 59% for Week 3. This report summarizes all three weeks.

Table 2. Evaluation Survey Response Rate

Week	Response rate
Week 1	81%
Week 2	67%
Week 3	59%

Overall, participants expressed satisfaction with their AKIRP experience and the format. Likert scales were used for participants to rate their experiences and likelihood of recommending the program to others. When asked how they would rate their overall experience, a majority (65%) of participants indicated having an excellent experience.

Figure 5. How would you rate your experience of the program?



A large majority (71%) of participants indicated that they were “extremely likely” to recommend the AKIRP to others and 58% of respondents indicated extreme likelihood that they would attend the AKIRP in the future (Figures. 6 and 7).

Figure 6. How likely is it that you will recommend AKIRP to others?

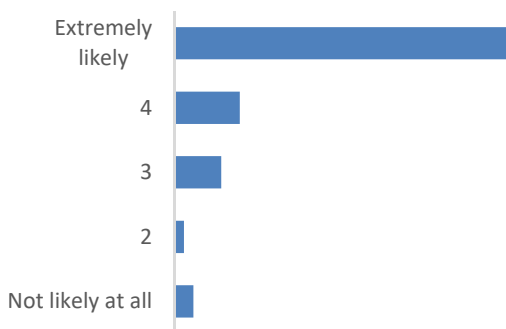
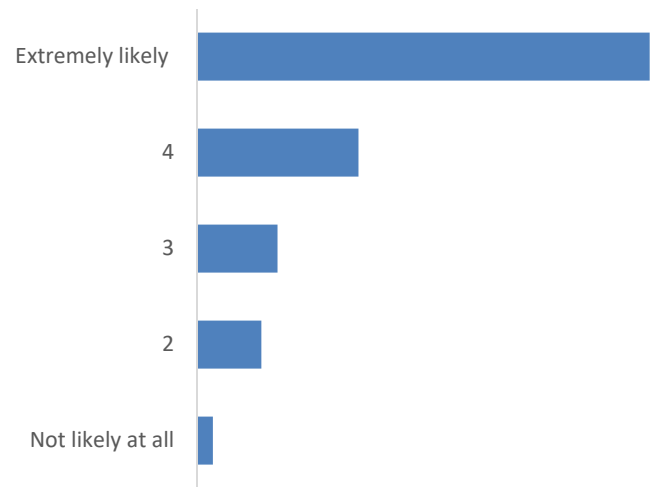
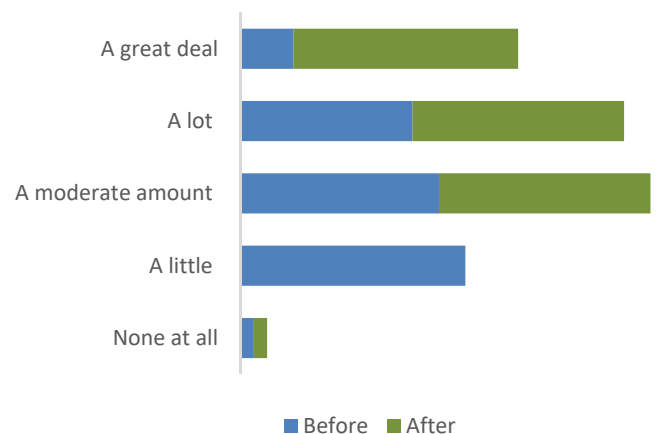


Figure 7. How likely are you to attend in the future?



Respondents rated how much knowledge they had about Indigenous methods and research before and after AKIRP. Figure 8. shows that participants increased their knowledge of Indigenous knowledge and research methods.

Figure 8. Knowledge prior to AKIRP?



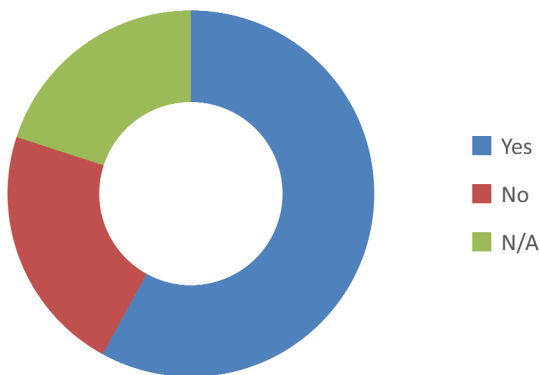
Participants reported what learning outcomes they achieved. Responses ranged from gaining new content knowledge and understanding (44%); sharing of experiences and networking (37%); affirmation of current work, approach and practice (26%); new approaches, strategies and ideas to support current work (38%); and new opportunities for future collaborations (26%); to new prevention, education or treatment skills (17%).

Figure 9. What were your learning outcomes?



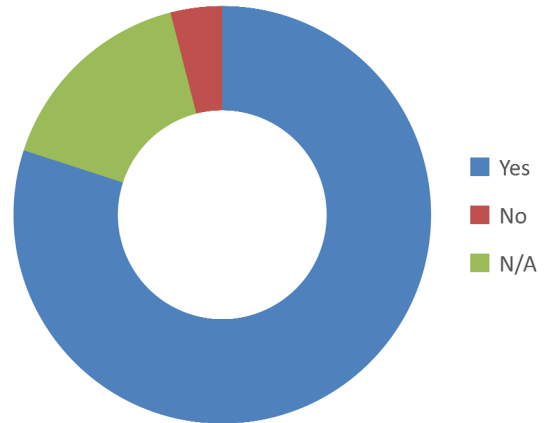
Participants also rated the impact of attending AKIRP on their education, professional practice, and research. A majority affirmed that it would positively affect their educational goals and path (58%).

Figure 10. Impact on educational goals and path?



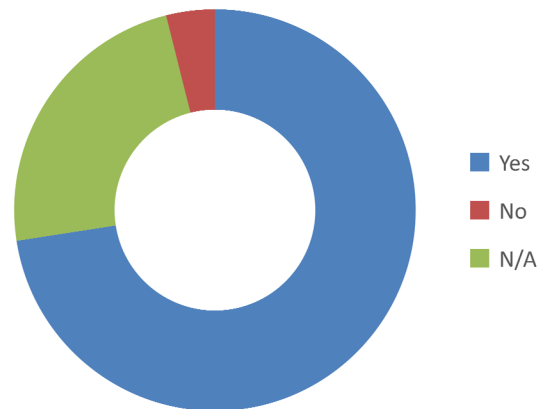
Eighty percent of participants reported that AKIRP would affect their professional practice.

Figure 11. Impact on professional practice?



Seventy-three percent stated that AKIRP would affect their research.

Figure 12. Impact on research?



Finally, participants shared their thoughts on the time allocated for each session. A majority (86%) of respondents indicated that the session length was “About right” (Figure 13). When asked what week they would attend in the future, respondents were split between Week 1 (43%) and Week 2 (46%) (Figure 14).

Participant Experiences

Participants shared many comments on how attending AKIRP will affect their personal practice, educational goals, and research:

Professional Practice

- *Reinforced need for communication with indigenous communities and providing results back to communities in an effective and timely manner.*
- *Learned new resources and connections*
- *I'm now aware of more tools to use and more methods for better collaboration with Native communities.*
- *Always valuable to build deeper relationships with friends and partners across the state.*
- *I sure hope so! I am still thinking about how to integrate my new knowledge into my work but my thoughts and outlook have forever changed and I'm deeply thankful for that.*
- *How to collaborate with indigenous peoples and sustain their leadership in research*
- *It will play a major role in how I select my next position.*
- *What I learned has definitely impacted how I think about my current work and how I will approach future work.*

Educational Goals

- *I'm very interested in indigenous research so this gave me an introduction.*

References

1. Eremine, W. (2007). The Ethical Space of Engagement. *Indigenous Law Journal*, 6(1):193-203.
2. Wilson, S. (2008). *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*. Fernwood Publishing, 144 pgs.
3. Bartlett, C., Marshall, M., Marshall, A., & Iwama, M. (2015). Integrative Science and Two-Eyed Seeing: Enriching the Discussion Framework for Healthy Communities. *Ecosystems, Society, and Health: Pathways through Diversity, Convergence, and Integration*, 280-326.
4. Martin, DH. (2012). Two-Eyed Seeing: A Framework for Understanding Indigenous and Non Indigenous Approaches to Indigenous Health Research. *Canadian Journal of Nursing Research*, 44(2): 20-42.

- *Considering a doctorate in Indigenous Health*
- *The trainings and presentations this week reinforced my plan to pursue higher education so that I could better serve my community.*
- *It clarified what I want to completely dive into in the next school year.*

Research:

- *It might affect the way I write the manuscripts. I will use a more strengths based approach.*
- *As a non-indigenous researcher working in the tribal system, increased awareness of tribal perspectives is helpful.*
- *I'm hoping my experience at this meeting will make me a good candidate to staff future projects on these topics*
- *Slow down, do it right!*
- *This week emphasized the importance of tribal IRBs and understanding the process to get approval from the tribal council to community members. We have to involve stakeholders from the conception of the project to evaluation and dissemination of findings. It is also important to honor and respect the decision of tribal community members.*
- *I hope to become a researcher that puts community needs and aspirations first.*

2023 Alaska Indigenous Research Program Schedule

Week	Date	Session Title	Speaker(s)
	5/8/2023	Addressing cancer care inequities and legacies of settler colonialism in American Indian/Alaskan Native populations	Marc Emerson, PhD
		Reflecting on Indigenous Research and Indigenous Methodologies Through Sharing Stories of Sticking Points	Margaret Kovach, PhD
		Cultural Activity: Naa Luu Disk Gwaii Yatx'ł Dance Group	
		Honoring Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing in research	Siobhan Wescott, MD, MPH
	5/9/2023	Creating a system to monitor Sámi health in Sweden	Petter Stoor, PhD
		Qaneryaraput	Tan'gauc Barbara Amos
		Cultural Activity: Salve Making Workshop	Amelia Simeonoff
		Community-based Participatory Research (CBPR) – Moving from Rhetoric to Reality	JoAnn Tsark, PhD May Rose Dela Cruz, DrPh, Avette Ponce, Kathleen Corpuz
	5/10/2023	Indigenous Perspectives from Canada	Victor Foshion, Lynette Epp
		Healing Centered Engagement Practices for Researchers: Utilizing an Indigenous 5 Cs Framework	LaVerne Xilegg Demientieff, PhD, LMSW
		Cultural Activity: Cultural Fusion Lunch	
		Traditional Health Perspectives on Indigenizing Medicine	Allison Kelliher, MD
		Poster Session	
		Culturally relevant research with Native Hawaiians and other Indigenous Pacific Islanders	Sarah Momilani Marshall, PhD
	5/11/2023	Opening Remarks: Indigenous Perspectives on Climate Change	Jackie Qataliña Schaeffer
		Co-Production of Knowledge	Julie Raymond-Yakubian, PhD, Margaret Rudolf
		Navigating the New Artic Community Extension Office Efforts and Initiatives	James Temte, MA
		Food Trauma, Food Sovereignty, and Food Flourishing in AI/AN Communities	Tara Maudrie, PhD
		Decolonial Epistemologies of Indigenous Women from Abya Yala (Latino American) Co-Production of Knowledge	Itzel Zagal Lisa Wexler, PhD, Evon Peter (Gwich'in)
	5/12/2023	Cultural Activity: Salve Making Workshop	Amelia Simeonoff
		Theoretical and Methodological Entanglements of Indigenous Storying: Frameworks for human learning, development, and wellbeing	Emma Elliott, PhD
Taking Research to the Next Step: Examples of Dissemination Strategies		Jessica Ulrich, PhD	

Week	Date	Session Title	Speaker(s)
Week 2 Research Ethics	5/15/2023	The function of the White House Council on Native American Affairs is to improve the coordination of federal programs and use of available federal resources for the benefit of Tribes and Tribal communities	Dave Wilson, PhD
		Ethics in Intervention Research to Reduce Health Disparities	Francine C. Gachupin, PhD, MPH
		Institutional Review Board Panel	Elizabeth Ferucci, MD, MPH Rachael Tracy, Yvonne Tanape-Druce, Cassie Pinkel
	5/16/2023	rETHICS – Research Ethics Training for Health in Indigenous	Theresa Wells, Timothy Thomas, MD,

		Communities	Abbie Willetto, MA, Travis Wingster
5/17/2023		Ethics in Biobanking – The Alaska Area Specimen Bank and He Taonga Tapu Cancer Society Tissue Bank	Helen Morrin, PhD Brenna Simons, PhD
		Cultural Activity: Key Chain Making Workshop	Amelia Simeonoff
		#DATABACK: Using Next-Generation Data Tools to Operationalize Indigenous Genomic Data Sovereignty	Krystal Tsosie, PhD, MPH, MA
		Capacity Building in Tribal Research Oversight	Abbie Willetto, MA
		Cultural Activity: Kingikmiut Dance Group	
5/18/2023		The Impact of Worldviews on Indigenous Health: A Scoping Review and A Story on Relationship and Reciprocal Growth in Mentorship	Rebecca Ipiaqruk Young, MA, Jennifer McCurdy, PhD
		Cultural Activity: Key Chain Making Workshop	Amelia Simeonoff
		Research Resilience and Wellness	Sharon Milgram, PhD
5/19/2023		Tribal Research Perspectives	Jessica Black, PhD
		Cultural Humility and Research Rooted in Relationship	Lisa Ellanna

Week	Date	Session Title	Speaker(s)
Week 3 Introduction to Research	5/22/2023	Interactive Activity – Collaborative Storytelling with Coyote and Crow	Dalaki Livingston, PhD
		Community Engaged Research in Indigenous Communities: A Personal Journey	Gary Ferguson, ND
		National Institutes of Health Training and Education Opportunities	Sharon Milgram, PhD
		Two-Eyed Seeing: A space for reciprocity and interconnectedness	Karli Tyance Hassell, MS
	5/23/2023	Elder Talk: Alaska Indigenous History	Doug Modig, Amy Modig
		Introduction to Research Ethics	Elizabeth Ferucci, MD, MPH
		Study Design, Data and Analysis	Eve Van Dommelen, MPH Gretchen Day, MPH
		How to Develop a Research Proposal	Abbie Willetto, MA
		Good Practices for Developing a Literature Review	Stephanie Morgan, PhD
	5/24/2023	Elder Talk: Indigenous Healing and Wellness	Doug Modig, Amy Modig
		Cultural Activity: Lanyard Making Workshop	Amelia Simeonoff
		Qaneryaraput	Tan'gauc Barbara Amos
		Alaska Blanket Exercise	Farrah Greene-Palmer, PhD Jasmine Tounni
	5/25/2023	Elder Talk: Indigenous Cultural Values	Doug Modig, Amy Modig
		Indigenous Knowledge and Science	Polly Hyslop, PhD
		Introduction to Community-based Participatory Research	Christi Patten, PhD
		Poster Session	
		Indigenous Values and Redefining Success Navigating Western Higher Education Systems	Rebecca Ipiaqruk Young, MS
	5/26/2023	Elder Talk: How to live successfully	Doug Modig, Amy Modig
		Pathways to Research Panel	Sadie Littlecreek, PhD, Sheridan Sherlock, Madilyn Short, Travis Wingster
		Resource Fair	
		Coyote and Crow Activity	Dalaki Livingston, PhD

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Alaska Indigenous Research Program

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