



# ANNUAL REPORT

**ASU** Sandra Day O'Connor  
College of Law  
Arizona State University

**Indigenous Innovation Initiative**

**2024-2025**

# LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

Dear Colleagues,

This year, we have taken significant steps toward our mission of elevating Indigenous knowledge and leadership by fostering collaboration, nurturing connections, and empowering innovators with the resources they need to thrive. Our vision remains steadfast: to shape a future where Indigenous knowledge systems are recognized and integrated into innovation, research, and leadership.

We are awed and inspired by Innovators working to create worldwide solutions with ideas shaped from a lens of Indigeneity. We have been delighted to highlight the work of numerous faculty and staff who are on the cutting edge of major advances across the sciences, humanities, and creative fields. We have also witnessed transformative conversations happening among faculty--particularly junior faculty--as they incubate new, groundbreaking ideas. And, we've had many opportunities to celebrate and build community through our faculty, staff, and student mixers and networking events.

We remain devoted to supporting Indigenous faculty projects and programs, and increasing institutional capacity for successful ASU Indigenous programming. These efforts will continue to position ASU as a global leader in Indigenous innovation and research, and showcases the university's commitment to advancing groundbreaking research in Indigeneity across all fields and disciplines.

These efforts wouldn't have been possible without the generous support of the President's Strategic Initiative Fund, the Labriola National American Indian Data Center, the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law and Indian Legal Program, and our fantastic Indigenous Advisory Council made of of deeply committed faculty and staff. This council will serve as a critical platform for sharing knowledge, advancing impactful research, and incubating innovative strategies to drive meaningful change. We aim to build a stronger, Indigenized network of changemakers at ASU and beyond, ensuring that Indigenous voices and perspectives continue to shape the future of innovation across the globe.

Thank you for being part of this movement—we can't wait to see what we build together in the year ahead.

**Trevor Reed**  
Faculty Director

**Micheon Gorman**  
Program Manager

**Alfonzo Mendoza**  
Program Coordinator Sr.

# WHAT IS INDIGENOUS INNOVATION?

**Indigenous Innovation** refers to ingenuity rooted in enduring knowledges, principles and practices that drive transformation and enhance the role of Indigeneity across all fields of study, practice and influence.

## OUR VISION

Our vision is a future shaped by Indigenous peoples' knowledge and leadership that brings about meaningful change and solutions to contemporary challenges.

## OUR MISSION

To elevate the role of Indigeneity across all fields of study and influence by fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, cultivating generative research and creativity, and linking innovators to institutional and community support resources.

# BACKGROUND

The concept for the Indigenous Innovation Initiative arose from calls by Indigenous faculty and staff for physical and intellectual spaces at Arizona State University (ASU) where Indigenous knowledge, research, and leadership could be brought to bear on key issues of global importance. The Initiative was initially designed to support the Office of American Indian Initiatives in its role as the “voice for American Indian and Alaska Natives” in Tribal research and community engagement, and the Provost Native American Advisory Council’s efforts “to create an international reputation for excellence in service to native communities” through faculty and staff recruitment and retention. It also sought to complement efforts to generate community around Indigenous scholarship and research, including the Indigenous Research Roundtable, originated by American Indian Studies Director Dr. Angela Gonzales, and the more student-oriented programming of the ASU Libraries’ Labriola National American Indian Data Center, led by Alex Soto and Eric Hardy.

In 2021, with the support of Vice President and Special Advisor on American Indian Affairs, Jacob Moore, College of Law Dean Stacy Leeds, and Assistant Dean Kate Rosier, Dr. Trevor Reed proposed to University President Michael Crow and Provost Nancy Gonzales the formation of a dedicated academic unit that would focus not only on advancement of Indigenous-identifying faculty, staff, and students, but on fostering Indigenous ingenuity itself--Indigenous ways of creating, innovating, problem solving, and leading, which heretofore had not been explicitly included within ASU’s New American University higher education model. In response to that proposal, President Crow authorized in November 2023 an initial award of \$1.25M in direct and matching funds over 5 years from the President’s Strategic Initiative Fund to seed the Initiative.

By mid-2024, these efforts coalesced into a formalized initiative with a mission “to elevate the role of Indigeneity across all fields of study and influence by fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, cultivating generative research and creativity, and linking innovators to institutional and community support resources.” This first year of the Initiative has seen significant progress by hiring exceptional staff (including Program Manager Micheon Gorman and Program Coordinator, Sr. Alfonzo Mendoza), establishing internal and external partnerships (including numerous non-profits, academic centers & programs, and faculty stakeholders), organizing key events (including panels, a speaker series, mixers, and workshops), and securing additional institutional support (including federal and foundation grants). Gorman and Mendoza have taken on the day-to-day management of the Initiative with Dr. Reed and our Faculty Advisory Council providing oversight. In the coming year, we plan to expand the initiative by hosting two large-scale signature events: the Indigenous Innovation Philanthropy Impact Summit and the Indigenous Innovation Convention. Through these events, we hope to place ASU as a national leader in Indigenous creativity and innovation.



# IMPACT STATEMENT

The Indigenous Innovation Initiative has made significant impacts this academic year, establishing itself as a **cornerstone for Indigenous scholarship, community engagement, and leadership at ASU** and beyond. Through a diverse array of events, collaborative partnerships, and research initiatives, the Initiative has successfully amplified Indigenous voices, fostered interdisciplinary dialogue, and advanced the preservation and revitalization of Indigenous knowledge systems.

Events such as *Indigenous Creativity and Intellectual Property* and *Transborder Realities: South American Indigenous Perspectives on Sovereignty* provided critical platforms for exploring pressing issues like Indigenous rights to language and culture to environmental justice, while community-building events like our *Indigenous Connect STEM Social Mixer* and upcoming Indigenous Faculty Mixer (planned for Spring 2025) aim to strengthen networks among Indigenous scholars, students, and allies. Significant focus was placed on creating spaces for incubating new ideas, especially spaces where junior and senior faculty could engage with one another. The *Emerging Indigenous* seminar series, curated by Dr. Krystal Tsosie and Alfonzo Mendoza, and *Cultural Foundations*, a two-day event organized by the Indigenous Design Collaborative, helped lay the groundwork for Indigenous leaders and innovators to generate transformative ideas. These efforts have not only enriched the academic and cultural landscape of ASU but have also **created spaces for Indigenous perspectives to thrive**, ensuring that Indigenous knowledge is recognized as a vital contributor to global innovation and sustainability.

The **Initiative's impact extends beyond the university** through its collaborative projects with Tribal communities, such workforce development in partnership with Indigenous Career Futures, training programs for Indigenous creatives and entrepreneurs in partnership with Change Labs, and participation in numerous national conferences. These efforts highlight the Initiative's commitment to culturally relevant capacity building, emphasizing Indigenous data sovereignty, bioethics, and drawing traditional knowledge into contemporary fields.

Looking ahead, the *Indigenous Innovation Philanthropy Summit* in Fall 2025 and the *Indigenous Innovation Convention* in Spring 2026 promise to further expand the Initiative's reach, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration and showcasing groundbreaking creativity and research. The Indigenous Innovation Initiative continues to **set a powerful example of how academic institutions can honor, support, and elevate Indigenous creative leadership and ingenuity across all disciplines**.

# OUR TEAM

Launched in December 2023, the Indigenous Innovation Initiative has grown into a dynamic platform for Indigenous scholars, students, and allies. Through strategic programming and meaningful collaborations, we have cultivated a space for thought leadership and community-driven innovation.



**Trevor Reed**  
Faculty Director



**Micheon Gorman**  
Program Manager



**Alfonzo Mendoza**  
Program Coordinator Sr.



**Jalpan Pansuriya**  
SW III - Data Specialist



**Alonzo Coronado**  
SW III - Social Media Aide

# EVENTS & OUTREACH

This semester, the Initiative organized several key events that brought together scholars, community members, and leaders:



## FALL 2024

- **Indigenous Creativity and Intellectual Property: Panel Discussion (35 participants)**
  - Explored critical issues surrounding Indigenous creativity and intellectual property rights.
- **Indigenous Connect: Indigenous STEM Social Mixer (60 participants)**
  - A community-building event fostering connections among Indigenous faculty, scholars, and allies.
- **Transborder Realities: South American Indigenous Perspectives on Sovereignty (50 participants)**
  - Highlighted the intersections of sovereignty, land rights, and environmental justice from a South American lens.

Viktor Naquill Gomez presents Mapuche flag to Octaviana Trujillo, Trevor Reed, and Jacob Moore during the *Transborder Realities* event.





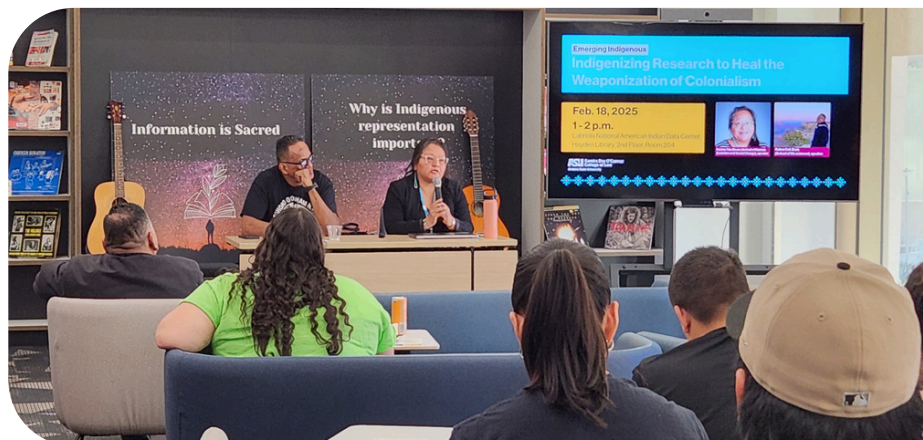
# EVENTS & OUTREACH

## SPRING 2025



- **Emerging Indigenous: Monthly Seminar Series (15-35 participants)**
  - A monthly research-oriented lunchtime series spotlighting internal and external junior faculty and emerging scholars such as Kelle Dhein (Complex Adaptive Systems), Xavier Nokes (Design), Davina Two Bears (SHESC), Ruben Cuk Baak (Life Sciences), and Robin Gray (University of Toronto).
- **Protecting Traditional Plant Knowledge Webinar (270 participants)**
  - Workshop-style webinar to help Tribal Nations prepare for consultations with the US Patent and Trademark Office on the new international Genetic Resources treaty.
- **Indigenous Design Collaborative: Cultural Foundations Panel / From Earth to Sky Film Screening (25/75 participants)**
  - Special film screening, panel discussion and a celebration of the newly established Indigenous Placekeeping + Design master's program.

Ruben Cuk Baak and Davina Two Bears discuss Indigenized research methodologies during a Emerging Indigenous Monthly Seminar.



# COLLABORATION & PARTNERSHIPS

**Collaboration** remains a cornerstone of our work. This year, we partnered with academic and community-driven programs to amplify Indigenous leadership and creativity.

- **Indigenous Career Futures**
- **Labriola National American Indian Data Center**
- **Indigenous Design Collaborative**
- **Indian Legal Program**
- **American Indian Student Support Services**
- **School of Transborder Studies**
- **Indigenous Computational Futures Institute**
- **American Indian Studies Association Conference**
- **Multicultural Center of Excellence**
- **Office of American Indian Affairs**

The collaborative events and meetings with the departments listed above allowed the Initiative to showcase innovative and groundbreaking Indigenous scholars and research around ASU.





# LOOKING AHEAD

## INDIGENOUS INNOVATION IMPACT SUMMIT

Bringing together Indigenous innovators, Tribal leaders, big philanthropy, venture capital investors, and university administration to learn how to increase their global impact through fostering Indigenous Innovation.



- Explore how **Philanthropy and Venture capital can partner with Tribes and Universities** to magnify the impact of funding.
- **Catalyze research partnerships** between between academia, industry, and Indigenous communities.
- **Showcase research** and projects that align with Indigenous knowledge systems and methodologies.
- **Empower Indigenous Communities** by showing how to support Indigenous-led projects that promote community sovereignty, agency, and sustainability.

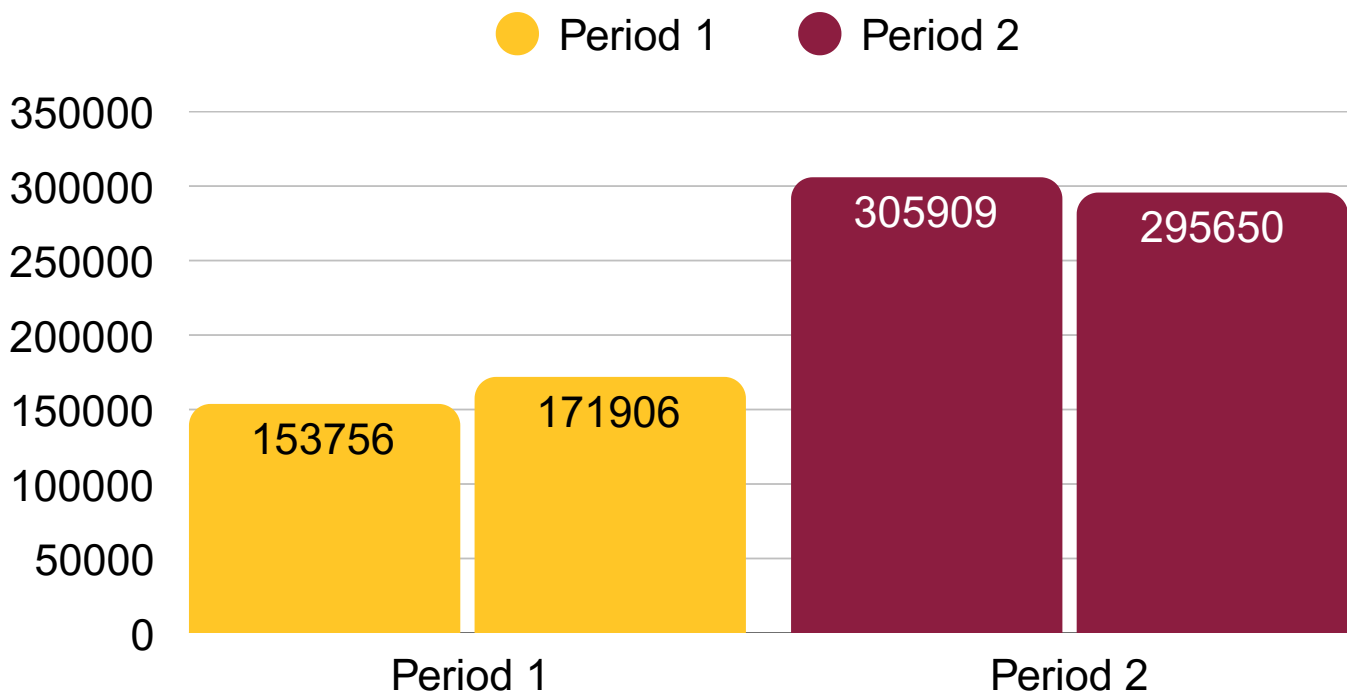
## INDIGENOUS INNOVATION CONVENTION

The Indigenous Innovation Convention brings together Indigenous innovators, thought leaders, and professionals across various fields to celebrate and advance Indigenous-led innovation. This event will foster networking, knowledge-sharing, and collaboration among Indigenous scholars, entrepreneurs, researchers, and community leaders.

- **Highlight Indigenous innovation** in STEM, business, arts, and culture.
- Provide a platform for Indigenous scholars, entrepreneurs, and professionals to **share new creativity, innovation, and big ideas**.
- **Foster collaboration** between academia, industry, and communities.
- **Inspire** the next generation of Indigenous leaders and innovators.

# BUDGET AND SPENDING OVERVIEW

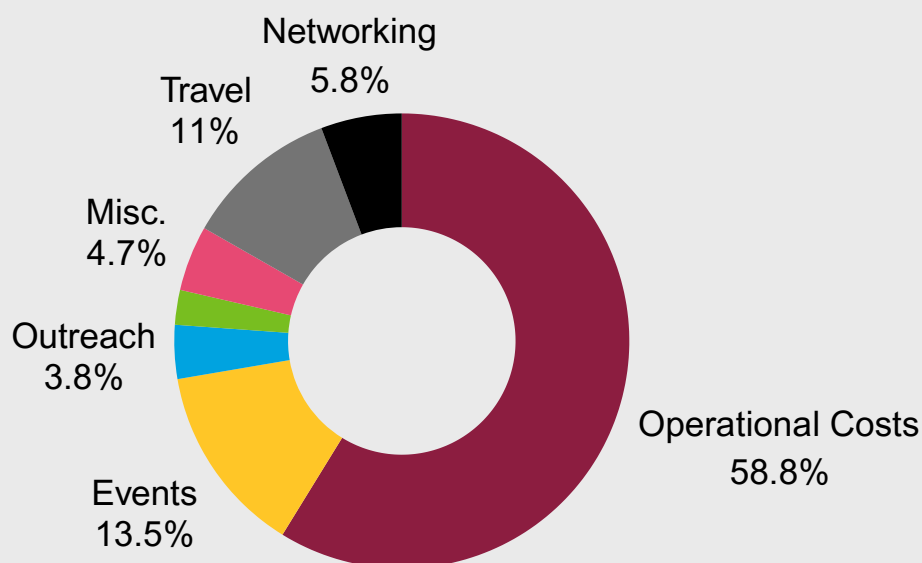
The Indigenous Innovation Initiative has allocated its fiscal year budget for **Period 2 (7/1/24 - 6/30/25)** across several key areas to support its mission and activities. Funding for the Initiative comes directly from the President's Office for a 5-year period. The periods are divided up in the chart below to display the projected spending for each period. **Period 1 (7/1/23 - 6/30/24)** saw the initial groundwork for the Initiative, which included student workers and preliminary staff hires. Period 2 (7/1/24 - 6/30/25) includes all staff salary, event and travel expenses, and equipment costs. **Graph 1** compares the available budget versus actual expenses for Period 1 and Period 2. The left column represents the Available Budget, while the right column shows the Actual Expenses incurred during these periods.



Graph 1: Available Budget vs. Actual Expenses

# BUDGET AND SPENDING

## PERIOD 2 OVERVIEW



Graph 2: Period 2 Spending and Expenses

During Period 2, the Initiative launched several key programs and events, and partnered with many Indigenous ASU and community organizations to amplify and uplift Indigenous research and innovation.

Graph 2 above illustrates Initiative spending so-far in Period 2. The largest portion of spending costs, **\$173,800 or 58.8%**, is dedicated to **Operational Costs**, primarily comprising staff and student worker salaries and fringe benefits. **Events** have been allocated **\$40,000 or 13.5%** to encourage community engagement, support Indigenous innovation and research, and foster knowledge sharing. **Outreach** efforts are supported with **\$11,300 or 3.8%** of this period's budget to broaden the Initiative's impact and awareness through print and marketing materials, promotional items, and staff polos. **Equipment** expenses are budgeted at **\$7,300 or 2.5%** to purchase and maintain necessary tools including computers and docking stations, and **\$13,750 or 4.7%** is set aside for **Miscellaneous** costs to address unforeseen needs. **Travel** expenses of **\$32,500 or 11%** will enable participation in important meetings and conferences, and **Networking** activities are supported with **\$17,000 or 5.8%** to foster collaboration and partnerships beyond ASU. This budget reflects a strategic allocation of resources to advance the initiatives goals effectively.

# BUDGET AND SPENDING

Category	2024-2025 (YTD)	2025-2026 (Projected)
<b>Income</b>		
SIF	\$305,909	\$237,311
Revenue	N/A	\$367,000*
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$250,000</b>	<b>\$617,000</b>
<b>Programming Costs</b>		
Emerging Indigenous	\$3,266	\$7,000
Mixers / Social Events	\$6,329	\$8,000
Public Events	\$7,820	\$237,850*
Travel	\$9,242	\$15,000
<b>Operational Costs</b>		
Salaries & ERE	\$173,800	\$173,000
Faculty/Staff Meetings	\$2,156	\$2,500
Equipment & Misc.	\$4,106	\$7,500
<b>TOTAL COSTS</b>	<b>\$206,719</b>	<b>\$450,850</b>

*\*The Indigenous Innovation Impact Summit and Innovation Convention will produce sufficient revenue to offset the associated costs and produce surplus revenue.*

# CONNECT WITH US

**WEBSITE**

<https://law.asu.edu/indigenous-innovation-initiative>

**EMAIL**

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**SOCIAL MEDIA**

Instagram: [@indigenoussasu](#)

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