

# NAISI

ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23



Native American and  
Indigenous Studies Initiative  
BROWN

# About NAISI

The Native American and Indigenous Studies Initiative at Brown University (NAISI) is a cross-disciplinary initiative focused on teaching, research and engagement to increase understanding of the cultural traditions, histories, political experiences and contemporary experiences and knowledges of Native American and Indigenous peoples.

Beginning in 2023, undergraduate students can declare a concentration in critical Native American and Indigenous studies. Learn more about the concentration, its focus and requirements on our website.

[NAISI-affiliated faculty](#) are connected to departments across the University, including American Studies; History; Anthropology; Religion; Theatre Arts and Performance Studies; Cognitive, Linguistic and Psychological Sciences; Hispanic Studies; Environmental Studies; Science, Technology and Society; Latin American and Caribbean Studies; History of Art and Architecture; International and Public Affairs; Music; and Public Humanities, among others. Their courses explore a wide array of topics connected to Native American and Indigenous peoples.

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## THE NATIVE AMERICAN AND INDIGENOUS STUDIES INITIATIVE

Brown University  
67 George Street  
Providence, Rhode Island 02912  
401-863-5972 or 863-5246  
[nais@brown.edu](mailto:nais@brown.edu)

 [facebook.com/NAISatBrown](https://facebook.com/NAISatBrown)

 [instagram.com/naisatbrown](https://instagram.com/naisatbrown)

To join our email list, learn about NAISI, or stay informed of upcoming events visit:

[brown.edu/go/naisab](https://brown.edu/go/naisab)



COVER PHOTO

67 George Street,  
home of the Native  
American and Indigenous  
Studies Initiative

## 2022-23 FACULTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

### **Scott AnderBois**

*Associate Professor of Cognitive, Linguistic and Psychological Sciences*

### **Geri Augusto**

*Senior Fellow in International and Public Affairs,  
Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs*

### **Sarah dAngelo**

*Assistant Professor of Theatre Arts and Performance Studies*

### **Paja Faudree**

*Associate Professor of Anthropology*

### **Janet Blume**

*Deputy Provost for Strategic Initiatives, Deputy Dean of the Faculty, Associate Professor of Engineering*

## STAFF

### **D. Rae Gould**

*Executive Director and Adjunct Assistant Professor,  
American Studies*

### **Chase Bryer**

*Graduate Student Program Coordinator*

### **Dan Everton**

*Graduate Student Program Coordinator*

### **Sophia Evangeline Gumbs**

*Program and Administrative Coordinator*

### **Cheryll Toney Holley**

*Tribal Community Member in Residence*

### **endawnis Spears**

*Tribal Community Member in Residence*



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## Letter from the Faculty Executive Committee



A hallmark of NAISI's growth and expansion this year (our seventh year as an initiative at Brown University) was launching the undergraduate concentration in critical Native American and Indigenous studies. A number of students declared the concentration within the first few weeks it was available, a testimony to the excitement that has existed about engaging in Native American and Indigenous studies (NAIS) at Brown over the years.

Additional growth of NAISI this year was possible thanks to funding from an Andrew W. Mellon Foundation grant supporting the development of Native American and Indigenous studies at the University. Our office expanded the tribal community member in residence (TCMR) position to two TCMRs with the addition of Cheryll Holley, who organized and led culturally focused artisan workshops for students over the fall and spring semesters. Holley joined endawnis Spears in her second year as TCMR, and both engaged with and supported students connected to NAISI and contributed to the Brown campus overall. Holley also served as a fellow with the Ruth J. Simmons Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice while endawnis again offered workshops on cultural humility to a number of offices across campus this year. Through funding for adjunct instructors, the Mellon grant also supported the continuation of heritage language study for students who wanted to continue or begin learning Indigenous languages; this course was led by Nitana Hicks Greendeer this year.

Also thanks to the Mellon grant, NAISI was able to fund student research projects, summer internships and course development grants for faculty to create new courses or expand content in existing ones. Two examples of the new and expanded classes focus on Indigenous Ecologies and Native Pacific Islander Movements for Decolonization. These courses, plus the addition of joint NAISI-History of Art and Architecture postdoctoral fellow [Eric Johnson](#) (also funded by the Mellon Foundation and sponsored by the Cogut Institute for the Humanities), are expanding NAIS-focused courses and the undergraduate concentration even further. Read more about these developments in the executive director's note below.

This year's report also highlights programming and events engaged with a range of topics. The highlights of NAISI's programming this year were the exciting mini-residencies by renowned scholar Robin Wall Kimmerer in the fall and bestselling author Tommy Orange in the spring. Kimmerer's public lecture was standing room only and Orange's talk packed the Martinos Auditorium in the Granoff Center for the Creative Arts; both events drew audiences from the Brown community and beyond, given the popularity of these well-known authors. NAISI also collaborated with colleagues across campus to offer programming focused on topics such as Decoloniality and Brazilian Indigenous Art; Reclaiming Two-Spirits: Sexuality

and Sovereignty in Native America; knowledge shared by Hawai'i educator Kumu Ramsay Taum (with the Contemplative Studies Initiative); and Indigenous mindfulness and neurodecolonization through a mini-residency by Michael Yellow Bird (with Contemplative Studies and the Mindfulness Center at Brown). We have also helped to support engagement with regional tribal artists by the Brown Arts Institute as it prepares for a major expansion and the opening of the [Lindemann Performing Arts Center](#) on campus this fall. These are just some examples of how working and collaborating with our colleagues and different departments, centers, institutes and offices across campus has enabled Native American and Indigenous studies to be integrated into important conversations, events and programming at Brown, and contributed to engagement with local tribes.

The ongoing growth of Native American and Indigenous Studies at Brown, and the impact it has across our campus and beyond, is inspiring! The excitement surrounding the new critical Native American and Indigenous studies undergraduate concentration continues, as it is already providing opportunities for students to combine their studies at Brown with the needs and interests of Native and Indigenous peoples, a primary goal of the concentration. The work of the incredible graduate students engaged in NAIS at Brown also contributes to this goal and we look forward to watching both the undergraduate concentrators and graduate students as they begin to apply what they have learned at Brown out in the world.

*Sincerely,*

Scott AnderBois  
Geri Augusto  
Sarah dAngelo  
Paja Faudree

*NAISI Faculty Executive Committee*



## Letter from the Executive Director



This year's focus on strengthening the academics supported by NAISI provided opportunities to reflect on all that our office does to bring students, faculty and staff across campus together for events and programs, conversations, workshops and research and teaching. Launching the critical Native American and Indigenous studies undergraduate concentration over the 2022-23 year was an exciting development, providing opportunities to combine courses, research and engaged projects (such as internships and similar engaged projects) to benefit the lives of Native and Indigenous peoples in some way. We underscore that research and community engagement are not mutually exclusive and should work together through "scholarship serving Indigenous peoples."

Through our grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to develop the undergraduate concentration and support associated activities, NAISI has been able to assist faculty this year as they have developed new and exciting NAIS courses or expanded existing ones with new content. And our collaboration with the Department of the History of Art and Architecture on the postdoctoral fellowship (noted above) provided an opportunity to develop another new course, Native American Architecture, a popular offering with students from a number of disciplines. The NAISI Mellon grant has also funded students in various fields as they engage in research and low or unpaid internships this year, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Some of the areas these NAISI-affiliated students are engaged in include: health and wellbeing, federal laws such as the Indian Child Welfare Act, research projects like [Stolen Relations](#), re-examining archaeological sites, working at a Brazilian museum, conducting an oral history project, an internship on a Hawai'i farm, and developing an afterschool program for Indigenous youth.

The NAISI office also welcomed new staff members this year. One area of change was the position of graduate student program coordinator, previously held by Makana Kushi and now by Chase Bryer, a Ph.D. student in behavioral and social health science at the School of Public Health. His research focuses on using community-based participatory methods to create interventions that will improve health outcomes, with a particular focus on Indigenous queer and Two-Spirit communities. In the program coordinator role, Bryer serves as a liaison with students and helps to build a stronger intellectual environment for undergraduate and graduate Native American and Indigenous and NAIS-focused students. He also coordinated the visit of Michael Yellow Bird (see more below) and planned our first Spring Research Symposium in late April, where a number of students involved in NAIS-focused studies (both graduate and undergraduate) shared their research and projects

they are engaged in. Students in Nitana Hicks Greendeer's class, Learning Our Native Languages, shared their accomplishments in heritage language studies, while other students presented on topics ranging from traditional foods (with a demonstration and tasting!) to components of their dissertation work. Watch for this event next April, as well.

The continued contributions of NAISI's tribal community member in residence position (also funded by the Mellon grant) also expanded this year as our office welcomed Cheryll Holley, who joined endawnis Spears to create an even more welcoming environment for Native and Indigenous students at Brown and supported learning beyond the classroom through weekly workshops. Public humanities student Dan Everton also joined our office for the spring semester, helping to support events and photography, and Sophia Gumbs (who joined NAISI midyear) keeps our wheels turning with her daily contributions as our program and administrative coordinator. Learn more about Gumbs and her work with NAISI below in this report.

We look forward to continued growth of the critical Native American and Indigenous studies undergraduate concentration in the coming year, supporting NAIS-focused graduate students in their work, and supporting increased engagement with both tribes and individual tribal members from the region. I hope you enjoy learning more about the academics, programming, community gatherings and accomplishments connected to NAISI this past year throughout our report. Many, many thanks to the NAISI staff for their contributions to this annual report and throughout the year!

*Sincerely,*

Rae Gould  
NAISI Executive Director

# News and Updates

## LETTERS FROM THE NAISI STAFF

### Chase Bryer

*Graduate Student Program Coordinator*

As I reflect on my experiences as a graduate student program coordinator for NAISI, I am filled with a sense of fulfillment and inspiration. This role has allowed me to actively contribute to the growth and development of Indigenous studies at Brown University, while creating spaces for Indigenous undergraduate and graduate students to connect, learn and thrive. One of the highlights of my time as program coordinator has been hosting various social events aimed at fostering relationships between Indigenous undergraduate and graduate students. These events provided a much-needed opportunity for students to come together, share their experiences and build a sense of community. Witnessing the bonds forming and the genuine connections being made has been truly rewarding.

Another significant aspect of my role has been serving as a moderator for panels on community-engaged research with Indigenous graduate students and esteemed leaders across Indian Country. Working with renowned figures like Robin Wall Kimmerer and Tommy Orange was a privilege and an opportunity for personal growth. These panels not only showcased the valuable research being conducted by Indigenous graduate students but also brought together scholars and activists who are deeply committed to advancing Indigenous knowledge and decolonizing academia. Being a part of these discussions and witnessing the exchange of ideas has been intellectually stimulating and reaffirmed my belief in the power of Indigenous scholarship. Lastly, my role co-coordinating the first annual NAISI Spring Research Symposium was a perfect way to wrap up the year, providing a platform for students to present their work, engage in meaningful discussions and celebrate the richness and diversity of Indigenous-centered research. Witnessing the passion and dedication that the students brought to their presentations was truly inspiring. It reaffirmed my belief that Indigenous studies at Brown University is in good hands, as these emerging scholars demonstrated a deep commitment to their communities and a desire to contribute meaningfully to Indigenous knowledge production.

### Dan Everton

*Graduate Student Program Coordinator*

As a program coordinator, I worked closely with both incoming NAIS concentrators and our Native American and Indigenous students. I have had the privilege of seeing their ingenuity, commitment to community and drive. Beyond the annual campus events, such as the powwow or our symposium, the students are passionate about the smaller events focused on tradition and our guest speakers. In the future I hope to coordinate educational workshops that center on current issues and new critical Native and Indigenous theory.

With the launch of the concentration, there is a strong sense of purpose among the staff, professors and especially the students. NAISI has enriched me personally and professionally, and I feel privileged to be part of what feels like laying the foundation for an amazing program. I look forward to another great year from NAISI.

### Sophia Evangeline Gumbs

*Program and Administrative Coordinator*

It has been a joy to support the academic programming, administrative and communications needs of NAISI since I joined in November 2022. I am grateful to help facilitate the daily work to resource and promote the growth of this critical field of study at Brown University. The highlights of my time here thus far, aside from the concentration launch and the exciting programming I have helped to plan, have been the moments of knowledge sharing I have had with the incredible community members and visitors at NAISI and across units at Brown. Among the strong community of Native and Indigenous students here, I have witnessed dynamic energy and unwavering dedication to fostering an emotionally safe, spiritually nourishing and intellectually rigorous space for NAIS. They have also taught me about the powerful legacy of marginalized student activism and cross-campus networks of solidarity that greatly contributed to the launch of the critical NAIS undergraduate concentration this year, though its impact certainly doesn't end here. Considering the work that has brought us to this milestone and all that is on the horizon thanks to Native and Indigenous communities of the past, present and future — and those dedicated to the field of critical NAIS both at and beyond Brown — it feels like a particularly special moment to be a part of the day-to-day operations of this office and its programming. I am looking forward to continuing to serve as a support for NAISI and the expansion of critical NAIS at Brown.

## *News and Updates continued*

### NOTES FROM THE NAISI TCMRS

#### **endawnis Spears**

*Tribal Community Member in Residence*

This year has truly been a year of building for NAISI, and I feel the same can be said of the work I have been honored to do in my role as tribal community member in residence (TCMR). In my first year (2021-22), I worked to begin establishing relationships with the students. This second year was focused on building on these relationships: building trust, building a sense of reciprocity and building a deeper sense of community. I maintained the same formula of official office hours and a presence at informal gatherings when possible, and this allowed me to have diverse and varied engagements with students.

I was also joined this year by Cheryll Holley, who increased the number of opportunities for the students to gather and be in community every Wednesday evening in artist and community workshops. As always, these sessions were filled with laughter and time to connect, an important element for our work at NAISI. Cheryll's presence was a wonderful added value to our NAISI staff and I greatly appreciated having her additional knowledge at the ready for the students.

Finally, this academic year I have continued to facilitate cultural humility workshops for Brown staff, having discussions about Indigenous-centric terminology and cultivating a better understanding of the regional tribal landscape, with over 100 participants from a variety of offices across campus. These sessions have proven to be important learning spaces where we can share some of the foundational knowledge of tribal competency while also learning about the particular questions participants have and ways they can be better supported as they work with and for Native and Indigenous students.

#### **Cheryll Toney Holley**

*Tribal Community Member in Residence*

What a great year 2022-23 was for me! In September I started as a tribal community member in residence at NAISI with the intention of providing opportunities for students to engage with the people and cultures of local tribes. We started a series of hands-on workshops on Wednesday evenings featuring local tribal artists, who shared their gifts and stories as students learned new skills. NAISI also provided space every Wednesday evening for students to hang out, eat pizza and work on craft projects of their choice, including projects started with the visiting artists.

During the fall semester, NAISI was visited by multimedia artists Nia Holley (Nipmuc), Julia Marden (Aquinnah Wampanoag) and Brittney Walley (Nipmuc). The students learned to create their own tea blends, and a permanent tea station that includes multiple plant medicines was set up for use throughout the year. The students also learned to paint their own vibrant and colorful pouches and how to twine a pouch.

The spring semester featured bead artist Mishki Thompson (Narragansett), storyteller Silvermoon LaRose (Narragansett) and fisherman Marcus Hendricks (Mashpee Wampanoag). The students created their own fabulous earrings and learned some of the local tribal stories, and then visited a herring run in Middleboro, Massachusetts, learning how to catch herring, remove the roe and take the fish and roe home to cook and eat.

I enjoyed spending time with brilliant people. Listening to the students and their hopes and beliefs gave me much hope for the future of Indigenous people. My fellow staff members are brilliant, as well, and I learned much from them this year. I hope that NAISI will build on this foundation and continue to infuse the students' time with local Indigenous wisdom and skills.

## Highlights from the 2022-23 Year



As part of the year-long series of activity and artisan workshops hosted by Tribal Community Member in Residence Cheryll Holley, students participated in a beading workshop led by artist Mishki Thompson (Narragansett) and had the opportunity to craft their own earrings. (Photo by Nick Dentamaro)



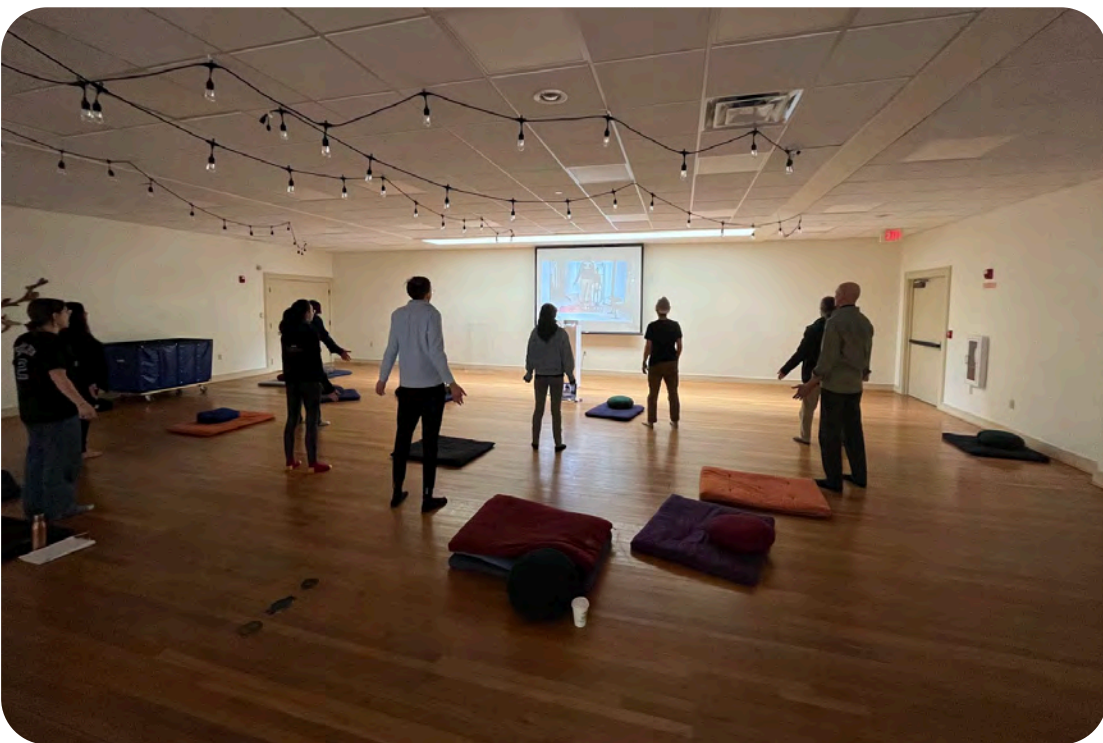
Ph.D. candidate Phoebe Labat presented on “Responding to the Charlevoix Earthquake of 1663,” along with other undergraduate and graduate students who shared their research, community-based projects, internship experiences, heritage language study experiences, and creative works at the first NAISI Spring Research Symposium. This presentation shared part of Labat’s dissertation work in the Department of History.



During his two-day residency at Brown hosted by NAISI, Tommy Orange (author of award-winning novel “There There”) facilitated an intimate writing workshop for literary arts and NAIS-focused graduate students and faculty members. He shared his complex journey as a novelist and valuable lessons learned along the way. (Photo by Nick Dentamaro)



NAISI Tribal Community Member in Residence endawnis Spears (left) and Mishy Lesser (Upstander Academy) led a discussion following a screening of the Emmy award-winning film “Dawnland” for NAISI’s spring semester welcome back event. (Photo by Dan Everton)



Along with a public lecture, workshop with graduate students and faculty, and a community dinner with NAISI faculty, staff and students, Indigenous mindfulness and neurodecolonization scholar Michael Yellow Bird offered a mindfulness workshop for the campus community during his visit in the spring semester.



Students connected to NAISI spent an evening at The Great Escape Room in Providence this year. The outing was organized and led by Graduate Student Program Coordinator Chase Bryer as part of his work to strengthen connections between and for undergraduate students.



## Visiting Instructors for NAIS Courses

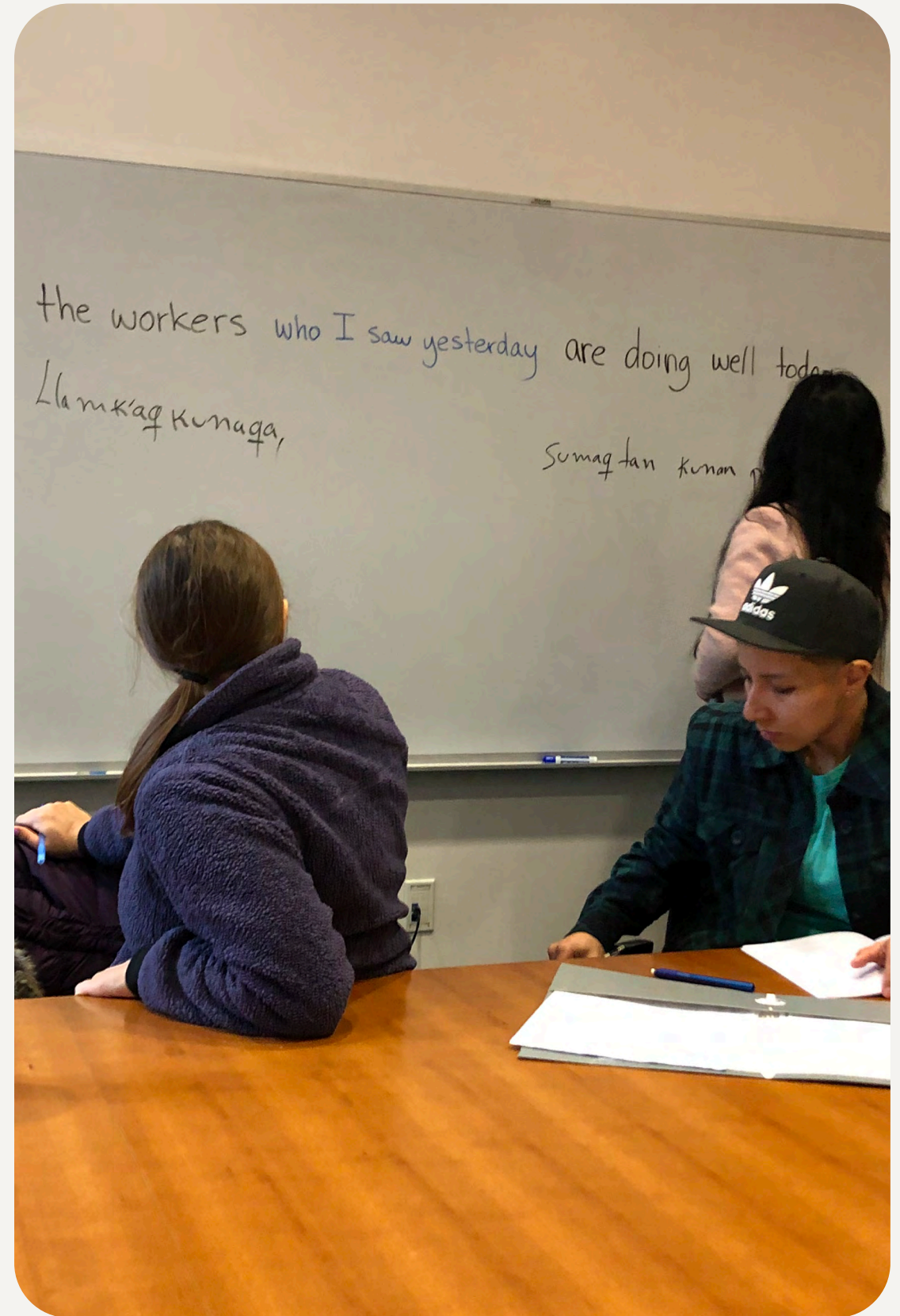
Over the 2022-23 academic year, NAISI's Mellon Foundation grant supported visiting scholars who contributed courses connected to the new critical NAIS undergraduate concentration at Brown University.

### Fall 2022

Nitana Hicks Greendeer oversaw the final semester of the Indigenous Languages GISP before it became an official NAIS course in Spring 2023. Eight students worked independently and with mentors to study their heritage languages, including the related languages of Quechua and Kichwa, as well as the diverse languages of Olelo Hawaii, Keetoowah, Western Abenaki, Navajo, Keres and Tai/Shan. The semester culminated in a showcase where students taught lessons, sang original songs, and shared their language journeys with peers over a meal at 67 George Street.

### Spring 2023

NAIS/AMST 0100 Learning Our Native Languages, offered by Nitana Hicks Greendeer, focused on supporting students learning Indigenous, or heritage, languages. The content of this course is differentiated to each student according to their needs, with guiding questions such as: How will you learn your language? What aspects of your language (reading, writing, listening, speaking, cultural context) will you focus on, and why? What resources will be most helpful to you, and what are the challenges of learning your language in particular? How will they benefit your academic study and professional trajectory? How will your language skills help you serve your community?



## Lectures, Discussions and Events

The following Native American and Indigenous Studies-focused events over the 2022-23 year were hosted or supported by NAISI (often in collaboration with other units across campus), or hosted by offices across campus and connected to the work of NAISI.

### Summer 2022

#### NAGPRA Community of Practice Gathering and Retreat at Brown University

JUNE 23 - 26

*In collaboration with University of Denver Museum of Anthropology*

NAISI hosted approximately 85 Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) practitioners (tribal and nontribal) from tribal offices, museums, institutions and federal agencies at Brown University for a three-day summer training and retreat that provided opportunities for information sharing, training on NAGPRA and conversations about best practices and supporting NAGPRA-related work.

### Fall 2022

#### NAISI Welcome Back Gathering

SEPTEMBER 21

Like many other centers and departments across campus, NAISI hosted a fall welcome back gathering for students, faculty and staff. The event, held at 67 George Street, introduced new and returning staff, NAISI-affiliated faculty, the new TCMR Activity Workshop series with Cheryl Holley and shared other developments planned for the year.

#### Indigenous Graduate Student Social

SEPTEMBER 30

NAISI hosted an informal dinner for Native American and Indigenous graduate students at Brown to meet and network.

#### TCMR Activity Workshop with Nia Holley (Nipmuc): Herbal Medicines

OCTOBER 5

Nia Holley led the first TCMR Activity Workshop of the 2022-23 academic year on herbal and plant medicines, creating tea blends for students to taste while explaining the medicinal uses for each. Following the workshop, a tea stand was established in NAISI's Community Room.

Holley is an interdisciplinary artist whose work is deeply influenced by what survival and healing look like within Black and Indigenous communities, producing works ranging from printmaking to ceramics, metalsmithing and traditional arts, and bringing tribal communities together around food justice, agroecology, land and history. Holley strives to cultivate relationships across tribal borders to rebuild a more inclusive and historical process of kinship and survival.

#### Indigenous Peoples' Day (IPD) Student Retreat and Holiday Acknowledgement

OCTOBER 10

*Natives at Brown (NAB), supported by NAISI*

As in past years, the NAISI office, like other staff across campus, enjoyed a University holiday on IPD. NAISI also supports the Native and Indigenous students at Brown, who have taken a retreat day on this holiday, noting that:

*“Indigenous Peoples' Day is a time to reflect upon the colonial history of the United States and the unceded territories the imperialist state is situated upon. In the past, Natives at Brown have organized to increase awareness of and exposure to Native and Indigenous experiences and our continued struggle against colonialism in its multiformed configuration. While these past IPD celebrations have sparked needed conversations on campus about settler colonialism, the labor is (usually) placed on Native students. This year, we are centering introspective, internally directed, mutually supportive community care to acknowledge the continuous labor we, as Native and Indigenous students, exert.”*

#### Decoloniality and Brazilian Indigenous Art: Artists' Perspectives

OCTOBER 11

*Co-sponsored by NAISI, the Department of Portuguese and Brazilian Studies, the Watson Institute, the Center for Language Studies and the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies*

This roundtable provided an opportunity for discussions about Indigenous art and activism through the eyes of Brazilian Indigenous artists Yacunã Tuxá, Olinda Tupinambá, Uýra Sodoma and João Nyn.

## Lectures, Discussions and Events continued

### Native American and Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA) Conference Abstract Workshops

OCTOBER 25 AND NOVEMBER 1

To support NAIS-focused graduate students interested in attending NAISA's annual conference on May 11-13 in Toronto, Canada, NAISI held a workshop series dedicated to discussing the conference, abstract idea generation and Q&A around how to best prepare for a professional conference.



*Julia Marden (Aquinnah Wampanoag) led a workshop on Eastern Woodland painting for students at NAISI during Fall 2022. The workshop was one of a series organized by TCMR Cheryll Holley.*

### TCMR Activity Workshop with Julia Marden (Aquinnah Wampanoag): Eastern Woodland Traditional Painting

OCTOBER 26

Julia Marden led the second TCMR Activity Workshop of the year, focused on traditional painting. Using toothpicks and acrylic paint, she demonstrated how to paint intricate designs on small leather pouches. Marden is an internationally known artist who specializes in Eastern Woodland art, best known for her 17th century-style twined basketry. Besides basketry, she also twines burden straps, sashes and leg garter sets and is an accomplished traditional painter, painting items such as cradleboards, pipe bags, flute bags, fan handles and pouches. Marden also created a line of dolls called *Eninuog*, which translates to “the people” and is based on 17th century Wampanoag people.

### Robin Wall Kimmerer Residency and Keynote Lecture: Restoration and Reciprocity: Healing Relationships with the Natural World

NOVEMBER 2 - 5

*Co-hosted by NAISI, Environmental Humanities at Brown (Cogut Institute for the Humanities) and the Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology*

As part of a three-day residency at Brown University and NAISI's keynote event of the fall semester, Robin Wall Kimmerer's Lecture (titled “Restoration and Reciprocity: Healing Relationships with the Natural World”) focused on how ecological restoration can be understood as an act of reciprocity, in return for the gifts of the earth. This talk explored the ecological and ethical imperatives of healing the damage we have inflicted on our land and waters. It traced the evolution of restoration philosophy and practice and considered how integration of Indigenous knowledge can

expand our understanding of restoration from the biophysical to the biocultural. Kimmerer noted that reciprocal restoration includes healing not only the land but our relationship to land. In healing the land, we are healing ourselves.

Kimmerer also appeared on a panel with Indigenous culture bearers focused on traditional ecological knowledge. Brown University professor Bathsheba Demuth moderated the panel with Kimmerer, Rashad Young (Mashantucket Pequot/Narragansett), Elizabeth Perry (Aquinnah Wampanoag) and Keely Curliss (Nipmuc).

Also as part of her residency, Kimmerer held a workshop with graduate students focused on Native community-engaged research, as well as two roundtable-style conversations around NAIS teaching and research, one with faculty and staff engaged in NAIS and the other with Decolonization at Brown STEM students and instructors. She also joined the NAISI community for dinner, where students, staff and faculty had the opportunity to share additional time with her.

### Indigenous Alliances and Mobilizations Moving Policies and Practices Seeking Justice and Sustainability Across the Pacific: From Root to Fruit, Remembering the Future

NOVEMBER 10

*Hosted by the Contemplative Studies Initiative and co-sponsored by the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs, the Institute at Brown for Environment and Society and NAISI*

This lecture was part of a multi-day visit by Hawai'i educator Kumu Ramsay Taum, recognized locally, nationally and internationally for transformational leadership in sustainability, cultural and place-based values integrated into contemporary business models.

### TCMR Activity Workshop with Brittney Walley (Nipmuc): Twining

NOVEMBER 16 AND 30

Artisan Brittney Walley led the third TCMR Activity Workshop for the fall semester. In a two-part workshop, she demonstrated the ancient art of weaving for students and staff, who practiced creating soft mini baskets using colored cording.



*Robin Wall Kimmerer delivers her November 3 Keynote Lecture on “Restoration and Reciprocity.” (Photo by Nick Dentamaro)*

## Lectures, Discussions and Events continued



*Kimmerer joined Elizabeth James-Perry (Aquinnah Wampanoag), Kelly Curliss (Nipmuc) and Rashad Young (Mashantucket Pequot/Narragansett) for a panel discussion moderated by Bathsheba Demuth on November 4. (Photo by Nick Dentamaro)*

### CSREA New Book Talk: “Reclaiming Two-Spirits: Sexuality and Sovereignty in Native America,” Gregory Smithers

DECEMBER 8

*Center for the Study of Race and Ethnicity in America*

Before 1492, Indigenous communities across North America included people who identified as neither male nor female, but both. After European colonizers invaded, centuries of violence and systematic persecution followed, imperiling the existence of people who today call themselves Two-Spirits, an umbrella term denoting feminine and masculine qualities in one person. Drawing on written sources, archaeological evidence, art and oral storytelling, “Reclaiming Two-Spirits” reveals how colonizers used language to denigrate and erase Two-Spirit people from history. Their efforts ultimately failed, and the work amplifies Two-Spirit voices, reconnecting their history to Native nations in the 21st century. Gregory Smithers is a professor of American history at Virginia Commonwealth University.

## Spring 2022

### Welcome Back Event: “Dawnland” Screening and Discussion

FEBRUARY 15

NAISI welcomed Brown University students, staff and faculty members back to campus for the spring semester with a screening of the Upstander Project film “[Dawnland](#).” The screening was followed by a conversation led by Mishy Lesser, learning director for Upstander Project and co-director of the Upstander Academy, and endawnis Spears (Diné, Ojibwe, Chickasaw, Choctaw), co-director of Upstander Academy, founding member of the Akomawt Educational Initiative and tribal community member in residence at NAISI.



*Students were excited to receive signed copies of “There There” following Tommy Orange’s keynote talk for NAISI in the spring semester.*



*Tommy Orange offered a book signing for students following his keynote talk in February 2023.*

### Tommy Orange Keynote Lecture and Residency

FEBRUARY 27 - 28

*Co-hosted by NAISI and the Department of Literary Arts*

NAISI welcomed acclaimed novelist Tommy Orange for the spring 2023 keynote event and a two-day residency at Brown. On February 27, Orange engaged in an on-stage conversation with Lanre Akinsiku (Brown University) about his work and award-winning debut novel, “There There,” followed by a Q&A and book signing.

On February 28, Orange joined NAIS-focused and literary arts graduate students and faculty members for an intimate writing workshop and Q&A. The workshop was followed in the afternoon by a panel discussion with poet Joan Naviyuk Kane and writer Paula Peters, moderated by literary arts chair Matthew Shenoda, about their writing and life’s work.

## Lectures, Discussions and Events continued



Michael Yellow Bird's talk during March of 2023 focused on ceremony, contemplative practices, mindfulness and neurodecolonization.

### TCMR Activity Workshop with Mishki Thompson (Narragansett): Beading

MARCH 8

The first TCMR Activity Workshop of the spring semester provided an opportunity for students to craft their own beaded earrings with the guidance of Narragansett artist Mishki Thompson.

### Michael Yellow Bird Residency

MARCH 13 - 14

Co-hosted by NAISI, the Contemplative Studies Initiative and the Mindfulness Center

Michael Yellow Bird (Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara), a leader in Indigenous mindfulness and neurodecolonization across Indian Country, spent two days in residence at Brown. On March 13, he led a workshop with NAIS-focused graduate students on neurodecolonization and community-engaged research. He also delivered a keynote lecture that evening titled "The Power of Ceremony: Indigenous Contemplative Practices, Neurodecolonization and Indigenous Mindfulness."

For the second day of his residency, Yellow Bird led a workshop for the broader Brown community on Indigenous mindfulness and joined NAISI students, faculty and staff for a community dinner.



Eduardo de la Cruz (Nahuatl instructor, fifth from right) led a maize ceremony during a residency on campus during the spring semester as part of a Nahuatl language course he teaches.

### Indigenous Scholar in Residence: Eduardo de la Cruz (Nahua)

MARCH 14 - 16

Co-sponsored by the Center for Language Studies, Department of Hispanic Studies and NAISI

Brown's Center for Language Studies welcomed Eduardo de la Cruz (Nahua) as Indigenous scholar in residence March 14-16. The residency was part of the Nahuatl courses he has taught virtually at Brown since Fall 2020 and included a talk ("Perspectivas y reflexiones de jóvenes nahuas ante la conquista de México") on March 14, Maize Ceremony/Tictlacualtizceh xinachtli on March 15, and a Nahuatl pedagogy demonstration on March 16. Once the lingua franca of the Aztec empire, today Nahuatl is still spoken by around 1.6 million people in Mexico, Central America and parts of North America.

### Indigenous Student Mixer: The Great Escape Room

MARCH 17

Graduate Student Program Coordinator Chase Bryer hosted an outing to The Great Escape Room in Providence, providing a social networking opportunity for undergraduate and graduate students connected to NAISI.



Mark Cladis offered a lunchtime talk during the spring semester on the work of Indigenous writer Leslie Marmon Silko.

### Mark Cladis Faculty Brown Bag Talk: Leslie Silko and the Power of Indigenous Storytelling: Healing and Resistance in Defiance of Settler Colonialism

MARCH 22

NAISI-affiliated faculty member Mark Cladis (religious studies) presented a section of his chapter on the work of Leslie Marmon Silko, radical romanticism and resistance to colonialism in this Brown Bag talk, followed by a Q&A.

## Lectures, Discussions and Events continued

### TCMR Activity Workshop with Silvermoon LaRose (Narragansett): Storytelling

MARCH 22

This educational workshop weaved together the histories and cultures of Indigenous peoples through the art of storytelling by Silvermoon LaRose, assistant director of Tomaquag Museum. LaRose has worked in tribal communities for over 20 years, serving in the areas of health and human services and education. As an artist and educator, she hopes to foster Indigenous empowerment through education, community building and the sharing of cultural knowledge and traditional arts.

### Racism in Health Care and Social Services from a Canadian Context: Exploring Indigenous Experiences of Pregnancy, Birthing and Parenting

APRIL 4

*Co-sponsored by NAISI and the Sarah Doyle Center Gender Equity Series*

Ashley Hayward (Red River Métis), a Ph.D. candidate in peace and conflict studies at the University of Manitoba, is an interdisciplinary scholar with broad interests in Indigenous health, the social determinants of health and culture as a health intervention, as well as a community-engaged researcher working in partnership with a range of Indigenous organizations and social service agencies. Her virtual talk was followed by a Q&A and discussion moderated by Sarah Williams, Louise Lamphere Visiting Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Gender Studies at Brown University.

### College Day at Brown

APRIL 6

For College Day at Brown, NAISI hosted local high school students for a discussion about the field of NAIS, the critical NAIS concentration, and what it means to study NAIS at Brown. This year the University welcomed 350 students and 30 educators from Providence, Central Falls and Pawtucket to experience a day as a college student. College Day provided participants opportunities to expand their understanding about the possibilities of higher education through college classes, athletic programs, community engagement opportunities and interactions with Brown students, staff and faculty.



*A field trip to learn about annual herring runs was one of the opportunities offered this year by NAISI's second Tribal Community Member in Residence Cheryll Holley.*

### TCMR Activity Workshop: Herring Run Field Trip

APRIL 9

TCMR Cheryll Holley hosted a visit to a herring run in Middleboro, Massachusetts, to learn about the significance and context of this annual event. Every spring, herring return from the sea to the freshwater rivers in which they were born to spend summer in the fresh waters, swimming and spawning, before returning to the ocean in fall.

### Voce Vaka Talanoa Session with Dr. Maryann Heather and Ms. Litea Vadiga

APRIL 13

*Hosted by the Department of American Studies, with support from NAISI*

This lunchtime *talanoa* (open dialogue session) with Dr. Maryann Heather (Samoan) and Litea Vadiga (Fijan) focused on how Pasifika healthcare providers and community-based leaders in Aotearoa, New Zealand paddled their vakas (canoes) together to support community needs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### 20th Annual Spring Thaw Powwow

APRIL 15

*Hosted by Brown Center for Students of Color's Native Heritage Series, with support from NAISI*

Members from across the Brown, Providence, regional tribal and local communities came together for the 20th annual Spring Thaw Powwow on April 15, a celebration of spring's return with dancing, food and Indigenous art and craftsmanship.

## Lectures, Discussions and Events continued

### NAISI Research Symposium

APRIL 27

At NAISI's first Spring Research Symposium, undergraduate and graduate students (across disciplines and departments) shared research, community-based projects, internship experiences, heritage language study, and creative works related to Indigenous peoples and/or communities they have worked on over the past year. Among the projects shared were independent heritage language study accomplishments by students of the first NAIS-designated course, NAIS 0100 Learning Our Native Languages, in which students work with language mentors from their communities; an Indigenous cookbook presentation, with a tasting; and how to be a better settler ally when doing community-engaged research.



Ashlyn Lovato receives her NABA stole.  
(Photos by Ashley McCabe)

### Eric Hemenway Residency and Talk: Archival Voices: "A Story Has Multiple Voices"

MAY 2-3

*Co-sponsored by John Nicholas Brown Center for Public Humanities and Cultural Heritage, NAISI, Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology and the Department of American Studies*

As part of a two-day residency at Brown, Eric Hemenway's May 2 talk explored how work in tribal archives helps to expand the historical narrative, from public schools to museums to national parks. This conversation also looked at why it's important to include Native voices in public history and the benefits this has for all. Hemenway serves as the director of repatriation, archives and records for the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians.



Nitana Hicks Greendeer offered the keynote address at this year's NABA Commencement dinner and ceremony. She also hand sews the stoles that students receive each year at this event.

### Spring 2023 Graduate Students of Color Community Block Party

MAY 22

NAISI was one of several units across campus supporting the Spring 2023 Graduate Students of Color Community Block Party, an opportunity for current graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, staff, faculty and other members of the community to celebrate the end of the year and graduating students.

### NAISI Open House

MAY 27

NAISI hosted a Commencement and Reunion Weekend open house for interested relatives of graduating and prospective students, prospective concentrators and others interested in learning more about NAIS at Brown. This was an opportunity to meet or reconnect with NAISI staff, learn about the newly launched undergraduate concentration in critical NAIS, visit the space students frequent during their time at Brown and learn about the exciting academic work that students and faculty engage in.



Kaliko Kalahiki and Ashlyn Lovato at the NABA Commencement event.

## Lectures, Discussions and Events continued



*Josue Zepeda Sanic after receiving his NABA stole.*



*Sherente Harris received their NABA stole from both parents.*



*NAISI staff endawnis Spears and Sophia Gumbs at the NABA Commencement event.*

### Native and Indigenous Student Commencement Dinner and Ceremony

MAY 27

*Co-sponsored by Native American Brown Alumni (NABA), the Brown Alumni Association and NAISI*

This annual gathering celebrated the Native and Indigenous graduates of 2023. Graduates, families and friends shared a meal catered by Sly Fox Den Catering (business of Wampanoag chef Sherry Pocknett), an alumni address by Nitana Hicks Greendeer '03 and a stoling ceremony. Graduating students selected a loved one to present their stoles, handmade by Nitana.

### TCMR Introduction to Tribal Competence/Cultural Humility Workshop Sessions

In her role as tribal community member in residence, endawnis Spears facilitated a number of workshops over the year for University staff across campus with the guiding theme of building cultural competency and humility (focused on Native and Indigenous peoples) on Brown's campus. The introductory session was originally designed for student support deans and, as demand increased, was edited to speak to broader audiences across campus. The intent of the workshops was to provide reliable and accurate basic information that any staff or faculty member at Brown can utilize as they work with Native American and Indigenous students and tribal nations. endawnis has a working background in professional development training with a focus on Indigenous representation and tribal competency and has facilitated these sessions in diverse settings at Brown and elsewhere.



## Native American and Indigenous Organizations on Campus

These organizations, outside of NAISI, often intersect with and work collaboratively with NAISI to support the needs of Native American and Indigenous students during their time at Brown, develop educational and social programming, and support opportunities at Brown University and beyond.

### Native Americans at Brown (NAB)

Native Americans at Brown is a student-originated, -led and -run organization committed to building the local Native community and increasing awareness about Native issues. NAB aims to create a space for Indigenous students to express and explore their identity, to create a means for individuals to relate to one another across various Indigenous backgrounds, and to provide social and cultural support for Native American students. This organization welcomes people from all backgrounds to participate.

### Native American Brown Alumni (NABA)

The mission of Native American Brown Alumni is:

- ▶ to improve the connections and networking among Native American students at Brown University and Native American Brown alumni;
- ▶ to better the learning, living and social experience of Native American students at Brown through support of NAB and NAISI;
- ▶ to increase Native American matriculation to, retention at and graduation from Brown University;
- ▶ to support and foster community between local Native American tribes and the institution of Brown University; and
- ▶ to raise the awareness of Brown University communities about Native American issues.

### Native American Heritage Series (NAHS)

The Brown Center for Students of Color Native American Heritage Series events focus on the politics and culture of Native American and Indigenous peoples. Two programmer positions, employed through the center, work in collaboration with BCSC staff to coordinate events each year, such as a Fry Bread Sale and the annual Spring Thaw Powwow.

## NAISI 2022-23 Course Highlights

Below are three highlighted courses from the 2022-23 academic year. For a complete list of Native American and Indigenous studies-related courses, please see the [course offerings](#) section of the NAISI website.

*Irma Álvarez Ccoscco works with student Adam Brandt as part of the Linguistic Field Methods Course.*



### Linguistic Field Methods (CLPS 1390), Fall 2022

SCOTT ANDERBOIS

This course is a practicum course introducing the methodologies needed to collect, manage and interpret primary data pertaining to the phonetic, phonological, morphosyntactic, semantic and pragmatic properties of an understudied language. The course takes a hands-on approach, with students working in groups and individually with a native speaker consultant of an unfamiliar language (Fall 2022: Peruvian Quechua). Students learned how to test hypotheses about the language as well as construct grammatical descriptions. In addition, the course covered a variety of practical, technological, interpersonal, cultural and ethical issues typically encountered in fieldwork, including reciprocity and engaged scholarship.

### Indigenous Languages of the Americas: An Introduction (ANTH 1840/CLPS 1391/HMAN 1400C), Spring 2023

PAJA L FAUDREE AND SCOTT ANDERBOIS

This course, offered for the first time in Spring 2023, introduces students to the past and present of Indigenous languages of the Americas. A collaboration between faculty from linguistics and linguistic anthropology, the course synthesizes both fields with Indigenous studies and other disciplines. It examines how the distinct grammatical properties of these languages intersect with various aspects of their social contexts — from the politics surrounding their use to their presence in popular culture — and grapples with the complex current realities of these languages in the lives of the Indigenous peoples who speak them and others whose investments span diverse interests.

### Learning Our Native Languages (NAIS 0100), Spring 2023

NITANA HICKS GREENDEER

The purpose of this course, the first to be officially designated as a NAIS course at Brown, is to support students in learning Indigenous languages. The content of the course is differentiated to each student according to their needs, with guiding questions such as: How will you learn your language? What aspects of your language (reading, writing, listening, speaking, cultural context) will you focus on, and why? What resources will be most helpful to you, and what are the challenges of learning your language in particular? How will they benefit your academic study and professional trajectory? How will your language skills help you serve your community?

The scholarly context of this course emerges from a need to address the legacies of destruction to Indigenous peoples. Given the history of cultural and linguistic genocide (via boarding schools, colonization and economic deprivation) the course centers Native voices and ways of knowing in its methodology. This involves using community resources, oral histories and Native scholars to lead discussions on general topics that affect Natives, as well as providing a support network for independent study of heritage languages. Each student is responsible for their own language development, but study is guided by greater principles such as relationship to their heritage language, Indigenous epistemologies, land relations, music and gender.







NATIVE AMERICAN AND  
INDIGENOUS STUDIES INITIATIVE

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