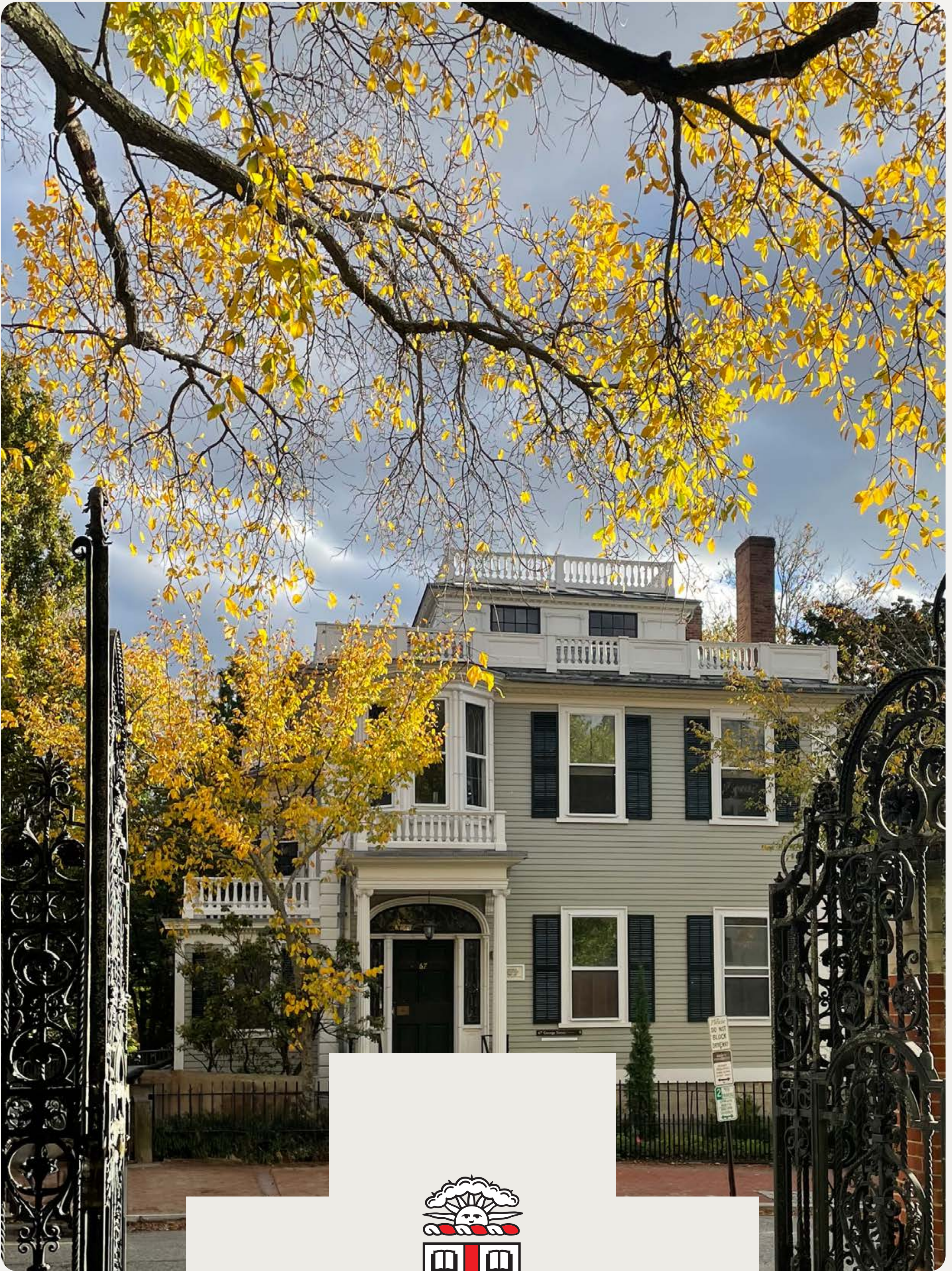


NAISI

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24



BROWN

Native American and Indigenous
Studies Initiative

About NAISI

The Native American and Indigenous Studies Initiative (NAISI) fosters innovative scholarship and cross-disciplinary collaboration, with a primary focus on supporting the undergraduate concentration in critical Native American and Indigenous studies at Brown University. The initiative focuses on teaching, research and community-based engagement to increase understanding of the cultural traditions, histories, political experiences and contemporary experiences and knowledges of Native American and Indigenous peoples; it includes administrative and student staff, plus faculty from across the University in these disciplines:

- American Studies
- Anthropology
- Behavioral and Social Sciences
- Chemistry
- Environmental Studies
- Hispanic Studies
- History
- History of Art and Architecture
- International and Public Affairs
- Linguistics
- Music
- Religious Studies
- Science, Technology and Society

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

brown.edu/go/naisab



COVER PHOTO

67 George St., home of the Native American and Indigenous Studies Initiative, as viewed from College Green

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Table of Contents

About NAISI	2
Letter from the Executive Director.....	4
News and Updates.....	5
Letters from the NAISI Staff.....	5
Letters from the NAISI Tribal Community Members in Residence.....	6
Highlights from the 2023-24 Year	7
Research, Engaged Projects and Course Developments.....	7
New and Visiting Instructors and Scholars	11
2023-24 Courses.....	12
Lectures, Discussions and Events	13

Letter from the Executive Director



In its eighth year as an initiative at Brown University, NAISI continued to expand in a number of ways over the 2023-24 academic year. Much of this growth was thanks to funding from a Mellon Foundation grant supporting the development of Native American and Indigenous studies (NAIS) at the University, which again supported two Tribal Community Member in Residence (TCMR) positions (Ruth Torres and Cameron Greendeer), as well as a number of research projects (outlined below).

The Mellon grant also supported several visiting scholars this year, who developed and expanded courses focused on heritage language, federal Indian law and Indigenous human rights. NAISI has been able to assist faculty this year who developed new NAIS-focused courses or expanded existing ones with new content. And 2023-24 was the final year of our collaboration with the Department of the History of Art and Architecture, as we jointly hosted postdoctoral fellow Eric Johnson, who taught a number of popular courses over his two years at Brown University.

This grant has also been foundational to the development and launch of the critical Native American and Indigenous studies (CNAIS) undergraduate concentration, which focuses on providing opportunities for students to combine their studies at Brown with the needs and interests of Native and Indigenous peoples, or scholarship serving Indigenous peoples (a primary goal of the concentration). Supporting the first cohort of five CNAIS graduates this year as they completed research for the capstone course this spring semester was a highlight of my year, and provided an opportunity to be back in the classroom and share their progress with them on a weekly basis. Our Mellon grant also funded students in various fields as they engaged in NAIS-focused research and low or unpaid internships this past year, both at the undergraduate and graduate level and including senior CNAIS capstone projects.

NAISI further strengthened its collaborations this past year with colleagues and projects across the campus's departments, centers, institutes and offices, enabling NAIS to be further integrated into important conversations, events and programming at Brown. As well, we provided support and guidance for expanded engagement with tribal communities, locally and beyond. One example is NAISI's continued support of engagement with Indigenous artists by the Brown Arts Institute (BAI) this past year, as the BAI expanded the tribal arts advisory council that provides guidance to that institute and to NAISI's Indigenous Artist in Residence fellowships.

Another of these collaborations manifested in a two-day gathering and symposium that brought Black and Indigenous thinkers "In Conversation" about how to strengthen engagement with history and pedagogy. This gathering was co-hosted by NAISI and the Ruth J. Simmons Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice (see the Events section of this report), one result of an ongoing and multi-year connection between the Simmons Center and NAISI. These are just some examples of how working and collaborating with others has helped to keep NAIS at the fore across the University, continuously expanding into unexpected areas such as the newly formed Office for Community Engagement.

As in past years, this year's report highlights the extensive NAIS-focused programming and events that engaged with a range of topics and occurred across campus over the 2023-24 year, hosted both by our office as well as others at the University. NAISI's second annual Spring Research Symposium expanded to two days this year and included 23 presentations by undergraduate and graduate students

and postdoctoral fellow Eric Johnson. NAISI postdoctoral research associate Megan Harvey also participated in the symposium, serving as emcee for this year's expanded event. Read more about the symposium below.

Critical to the NAISI office and to staying connected with students, the position of Graduate Student Program Coordinator was again held by Chase Bryer (Ph.D. student in behavioral and social health sciences at the School of Public Health), whose focus is on community-based participatory methods to create interventions that improve health for Indigenous queer and two-spirit communities. In the program coordinator role, Bryer has created a stronger intellectual environment for undergraduate and graduate Native American and Indigenous and NAIS-focused students. This year he launched a new series (Lunch & Learn) that provided opportunities for NAIS-focused graduate students to present their research to peers and undergraduate students. This year Bryer was joined by Graduate Student Program Coordinator Julia Upton, who completed her master's degree in urban education policy and provided administrative support to Program Manager Sophia Gumbs this spring and summer. Our student staff was completed by undergraduate students Jenna Lowry '27 and Victor Beck '24, who served as undergraduate program assistants in the NAISI office over 2023-24.

Another exciting development this year for NAISI was supporting a search for two NAIS-focused faculty hires in the Department of American Studies, who will begin their careers at Brown as Mellon Gateway postdoctoral fellows and transition into tenure-track faculty in that department. We also helped to support a Mellon-funded search (sponsored by the Cogut Institute for the Humanities) for a postdoctoral fellow who will join the Department of History in 2024-2025. Be sure to watch for the new courses and research projects that these three scholars will bring to the University in the coming few years!

We look forward to continued growth of the CNAIS undergraduate concentration in the coming years, supporting the work of NAIS-focused graduate students from across campus, and supporting increased engagement with tribes and individual tribal members from the region and beyond. Many thanks go to the NAISI staff for their contributions to this annual report and for all they contribute throughout the year! The continued expansion of NAIS at Brown would not be possible without the incredible hard work of our office's staff, as well as the engagement of faculty, colleagues and students across the campus. I hope you enjoy learning more about the CNAIS concentration, academic programs, community gatherings and accomplishments our office has supported this past year highlighted in this report.

Sincerely,

Rae Gould
NAISI Executive Director

News and Updates

LETTERS FROM THE NAISI STAFF

Sophia Evangeline Gumbs

Program Manager

Different in many ways from my first year serving NAISI as program and administrative coordinator (2022-23), the 2023-24 academic year at NAISI has presented its share of unique learning opportunities, challenges and triumphs. Working very closely with the executive director as program manager for our small (yet mighty!) unit, I have found it particularly rewarding to take on a student management role with our wonderful graduate and undergraduate student staffers Julia Upton, Jenna Lowry and Victor Beck, whose unique and sustained contributions have been indispensable to our office this year. It has also been rewarding to expand the scope of my academic management role as we continue to develop and define our office's capacities as the home of the CNAIS undergraduate concentration and as a touchpoint for interdisciplinary and meaningful community- and tribally-engaged research projects from the undergraduate through faculty levels. As I depart NAISI for Churchill House to begin my scholarly career in Brown's Africana studies Ph.D. program at the end of this year, I owe many thanks to the staff, faculty and students at all levels, both within NAISI and across campus: the Simmons Center, John Hay Library, Department of Literary Arts, Brown Center for Students of Color (BCSC), Sarah Doyle Center for Women and Gender and many other units I have had the honor to work with and to learn from over the past few years.

Chase Bryer

Graduate Student Program Coordinator

Chokma! As I reflect on my time as the graduate student program coordinator for NAISI during the 2023-24 academic year, I am filled with immense gratitude and humility. It has been an honor to champion programming and outreach primarily targeted at connecting and supporting NAIS-affiliated graduate students across the University. Among the many initiatives we launched this year, I am particularly proud of the Lunch & Learn series. This new series provided a platform for NAIS-affiliated graduate students to present their research, fostering an environment of shared knowledge and mutual growth. Witnessing these brilliant students share their work and find a common language within the field of Indigenous studies has been both inspiring and enlightening. These talks have undoubtedly broadened my own understanding of the diverse and dynamic landscape of NAIS.

In addition to the Lunch & Learn series, we piloted NAIS Graduate Connect Meetings. These informal gatherings were designed to provide a space for NAIS graduate students to touch base and support each other. Hosted via Zoom, these meetings were particularly beneficial for students conducting dissertation research in distant locations such as Hawaii or Brazil. It was wonderful to see the strong sense of community that emerged from these virtual meetups, offering a perfect opportunity for engagement despite geographical distances.

I was also thrilled to witness the positive impact of new NAIS faculty, who have been instrumental in further building out the CNAIS concentration. Their contributions have been invaluable to enhancing our program's depth and reach. Moreover, I had the distinct honor of serving as a teaching assistant for Honor Keeler's Indigenous Human Rights course. This experience was truly unforgettable, culminating in a life-changing trip to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, supported by NAISI. Being part of this initiative and watching students engage with global Indigenous issues at such a prestigious forum was a profound experience that I will cherish forever.

As I look forward to the future, I am excited to continue these activities and further contribute to the growth of NAISI at Brown. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to play a part in this vibrant and essential initiative, and I am committed to supporting our NAIS community in every way possible.

Jenna Lowry '27

Undergraduate Program Assistant

As I reflect on this past year with NAISI, I am filled with a great sense of gratitude for being a part of this program. Not only was it the first year of the CNAIS concentration, but it was also my first year at Brown. As you can imagine, this led to many learning experiences this year, and I am so grateful that I had the NAISI staff to support me along the way. It has been an incredible experience working as an undergraduate program assistant along with Victor Beck. Every task and project I worked on served as a stepping stone to help me develop my abilities and widen my skills. With that, I have to thank Sophia and Rae for their insightful feedback and guidance throughout; I am so proud of all we have achieved as an initiative this year. From hosting our second annual NAISI Spring Research Symposium to our most recent CNAIS graduation dinner, this year has been filled with moments I will cherish. Through this position, I have been able to learn more about event support, aid in event advertisement and assist in student engagement, specifically with CNAIS and Native Americans at Brown (NAB) undergraduates, which for me was most rewarding. Overall, I am so glad that I decided to take on this position. If this year was any indication of what's to come, I cannot wait to see all that we achieve next year!

Julia Upton

Graduate Student Program Coordinator

What a joy it has been to join the NAISI team as a graduate student program coordinator. I had the amazing opportunity to work closely with Sophia Evangeline Gumbs, NAISI's program manager, as well as with the executive director. While pursuing my master's degree in urban education policy, I was delighted to broaden and apply my skills in coordination and within NAIS specifically. Through my role, I was able to effectively share meaningful communications about events, fellowships, opportunities and more, both at Brown and outside of the University. Connecting with students, faculty, alumni and the broader community through monthly and weekly newsletters

News and Updates continued

has been a highlight of my time at NAISI. The most important aspect of my job was the information I was able to effectively disseminate and share with the NAISI community, ensuring everyone stayed informed and engaged. Additionally, I compiled meeting notes and assisted with organizing NAISI materials, proud to handle some of the behind-the-scenes work! It has been

incredible to witness the efforts of the initiative, seeing firsthand the impact of our work in fostering a supportive and vibrant community. I am deeply grateful to NAISI for enriching my graduate study at Brown and for the opportunity to contribute to such a meaningful and impactful initiative.

LETTERS FROM THE NAISI TRIBAL COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN RESIDENCE (TCMRS)

Cameron Greendeer

I am very grateful for my time as a TCMR and student engagement assistant this year; the opportunity to work at Brown and work with NAISI has been invaluable. The people I've worked with and met in this position have made the experience memorable. I was particularly impressed with the NAISI events and programming, which were both educational and engaging, and I appreciate the organizers, artists and presenters for their work and dedication. The most memorable moments for me were witnessing student presentations at the NAISI Spring Research Symposium and the graduation dinners, and how our students represented their specific cultures and Indigenous nations. I also enjoyed seeing the students graduate, seeing their smiles and tears, hearing their laughter and making their families proud. I'm grateful for this work, my colleagues and this community at Brown University and look forward to making an impact next fall with other departments and with students at Brown.

Ruth Garby Torres

As a 2023-24 TCMR and student support specialist, it has been my great pleasure to be part of the Brown community. Being "in residence" provides an opportunity for learning and discovery but also to contribute to the important work that NAISI does at Brown. It was a memorable experience to have witnessed the first group of CNAIS concentrators graduate, and I know how much work was involved to achieve this. I just love having a front row seat to history in the making! The investment in resources through the Mellon Foundation grant and the University culminated in this visible success; however, so much credit goes to the students for navigating a new concentration. It was personally and professionally rewarding to organize a tribal leadership workshop and assume a role coordinating the NAISI Spring Research Symposium, but my most important and gratifying work was interacting with our students.

I also appreciated the invitation to speak during a Lunch & Learn for staff members in the Office of the Vice President for Research, where I found an attentive audience as I explained tribal sovereignty and the impacts it has on our lives. I am just beyond the halfway mark in this position and am thinking of how much more I would like to do at NAISI and for students. And I'm thankful to the faculty who invited me to visit their classes, to the students for welcoming me, but especially to my NAISI colleagues for giving me an opportunity to be part of this team.

Highlights from the 2023-24 Year

RESEARCH, ENGAGED PROJECTS AND COURSE DEVELOPMENTS

The establishment of the CNAIS concentration this past year was a pivotal point in the development of NAIS at Brown University. It was also the culmination of many years of investment by faculty and staff associated with NAISI, and the result of years of interest expressed by students. In May 2024 five students completed the capstone course to meet the final requirement of the CNAIS concentration; their senior projects ranged from launching a podcast to establishing a garden on campus. Several of these projects received support from NAISI's Mellon Foundation grant to build NAIS at Brown University. Read more about these capstone projects by the first cohort of graduates in the CNAIS concentration below.

CNAIS Senior Capstone Projects



The inaugural graduates of Brown's CNAIS concentration (Left to right: Marie Bordelon, Shea Hueston, Chandlee Crawford, Ariana Clark, Kaliko Kalahiki)

Marie Bordelon's capstone project focused on the revival of the Tehuana dress, a cherished facet of her Oaxacan heritage. Delving into Oaxaca's cultural commodification, Bordelon examined the history of las Tehuanas, the traditional attire of the Binnizá (her community in Mexico). With its iconic elements like the resplendor headdress and distinctive huipil, the dress embodies tribal identity and a sense of place. Bordelon's project involved crafting her own modern interpretation of the dress, aiming to reclaim its cultural essence.

Under the theme "Seeding Indigenous-Settler Reciprocity at Brown," **Ariana Clark** initiated the creation of a traditional medicine and pollinator Northeast Indigenous garden at the John Carter Brown Center for Advanced Studies, complemented by drafting recommendations for the University to further the commitments related to the University's land acknowledgement. The garden features Indigenous flora from 100 seeds of 20 plant species donated by Elizabeth James-Perry, who served as a NAISI

artist in residence during the spring semester. This capstone was supported by NAISI's Mellon Foundation grant to develop NAIS at Brown, in addition to other support from across the University.

Chandlee Crawford's capstone project delved into Wabanaki wampum culture through academic research and hands-on application. His paper examined how prominent anthropologists have defined wampum cultures in the Northeast and compared the treatment of Wabanaki wampum to others. After exploring the grading of Northeastern tribes' wampum by Western anthropologists, he critiqued the classifications of quality by these academics, arguing that they overlooked the cultural significance of wampum. Additionally, he collaborated with tribal members to recreate an historic wampum belt, following traditional protocols and practices and reusing wampum pieces from an existing belt. As a wampum artist himself, Crawford worked with a tribal elder and mentor to create his wampum belt for this capstone.

Highlights from the 2023-24 Year continued

Shea Hueston focused on suicide prevention on the Navajo Reservation for her CNAIS capstone research project, with a specific focus on addressing the alarming rise of elder suicide among Native American populations and with her tribe, in particular. Her work delved into the recent and devastating increase in Native elder suicide rates and provided proposals for how to address this critical issue, such as elder-in-residence programs at elementary and high schools and allocating more resources to elder care within Indigenous communities.

Kaliko Kalāhiki's CNAIS capstone project "Queering Aloha 'Āina" involved development of a podcast that uplifts māhū and queer kānaka voices and challenges prevailing theories and beliefs about identity. Their work aims to reclaim traditional identities within Ka Lāhui (a native initiative for self determination). In this podcast, Kalahiki shares insights from 13 interviews, spotlighting the experiences of māhū (third-gender people with traditional spiritual and social roles within their cultures) and advocating for their recognition in Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian) culture.

NAISI's Second Annual Spring Research Symposium



The annual NAISI Spring Research Symposium provided an opportunity for more than 20 students and a postdoctoral researcher to share their projects this year.

The annual Spring Research Symposium organized by NAISI, held April 9 and 10 this year, showcased the exceptional work of undergraduate and graduate students engaged in NAIS-focused projects covering a diverse range of topics. The two-day event also provided an opportunity for postdoctoral fellows affiliated with NAISI to share research accomplishments during their time at Brown University. Overall, 23 presenters contributed to this year's symposium as it expanded from a one-day event in 2023 to a two-day event in 2024; a number of the projects shared by the presenters were supported by NAISI's Mellon grant to build NAIS at Brown and undergraduate research projects, specifically.

Undergraduate Student Presentations

Included among the symposium presentations was NAISI Undergraduate Program Assistant Victor Beck's "A Luminous Way to Live," which explored the connections between Southwest Indigenous artists and their crafts, highlighting their passion, expression, and autonomy. Mena Kassa's "Ayahuasca and Community Care" examined the integration of Indigenous traditions in the contemporary use of ayahuasca, promoting sustainability and cultural preservation. These glimpses into the symposium's offerings underscore the breadth and depth of NAIS-focused undergraduate research. A complete list of undergraduate presentations is provided below.

- Marie Bordelon '24 (CNAIS): "Las Tehuanas, el Turismo, y la Venta de la Cultura en Oaxaca"

- Adam Brandt '24 and Arushi Kalpande '24: "The Role of Linguistics Students in Indigenous Language Documentation"
- Ariana Clark '24 (CNAIS): "Seeding Indigenous-Settler Reciprocity at Brown"
- Chandlee Crawford '24 (CNAIS): "Beads of The Dawnland: Navigating Northeastern Wampum Culture in Anthropology"
- Shea Hueston '24 (CNAIS): "Remember Our Elders: How to Age in This Brave New World"
- Kaliko Kalāhiki '24 (CNAIS): "Queering Aloha 'Āina"
- Jonathan Y. Li '24: "How Trade and International Relations Shape Culture: The Ryukyuan Experience"
- Ava Scherlag '24 with Chase Bryer: "Two-Spirited Public Health 101"
- Lola Aguiar '25: "Witnessing Relationship Changes in Brazil: Archaeology and Indigenous Peoples"
- Christina Miles '25: "Knowing and Legislating the Ancestors"
- Maikekai Pedus '26: "Lū'au: Significant in Kanaka Maoli Culture, for Hawaiian Sovereignty, and Now at Brown"
- Annabelle Kim '27: "Re-Understanding Indigenous Perspectives from within the Brown Ivory Tower: A Continuous Journey"

Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Fellow Presentations

The NAISI Spring Research Symposium also provided a valuable opportunity for graduate students to showcase their advanced research. Among the presenters was Laurel Tollison (Ph.D. student in Slavic studies), whose talk on "Indigenous Alaskan Women's Maternal and Reproductive Resistance in the 18th and 19th Centuries" centered the experiences of Indigenous Alaskan women and their resistance to colonial control. Jacob Cousin (MPH '24) presented "Culturally Tailored Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Interventions," exploring the development of culturally relevant mindfulness-based programs for Indigenous communities to address diabetes and stress. Their work also emphasizes cultural representation and community engagement. The list of graduate student presentations, along with one postdoctoral fellow presentation, is provided below.

Highlights from the 2023-24 Year continued

- Chase Bryer (Ph.D. candidate, behavioral and social health sciences) with Ava Scherlag '24: "Two-Spirited Public Health 101"
- Luiz Paulo Ferraz (Ph.D. candidate, history): "Defying Anti-Indigenous Policies: The Path to Brazil's First Ministry of Indigenous Peoples"
- Eric Johnson (Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow): "Factory Wampum: Shell Beads, Settler Capital, and Indigenous Land Defense in the 19th Century"
- Allyson LaForge (Ph.D. candidate, American studies): "How Odawa Land, Nations, and Material Belongings Create Indigenous Futurity"
- Benjamin Salinas (Ph.D. student, anthropology): "Flow Maya: Methods and Concepts of Music-Making in the Yucatan Peninsula"
- Daiana Rivas-Tello (Ph.D. candidate, anthropology): "Crafting Collaborations: Reflections on Collaborative Archaeology with the Community of Huancas"
- Jacob Cousin (MPH '24): "Culturally Tailored Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Interventions"
- Laurel Tollison (Ph.D. student, Slavic studies): "Indigenous Alaskan Women's Maternal and Reproductive Resistance in 18th and 19th Centuries"

Student Research Projects supported by NAISI's Mellon Grant



Ph.D. candidate Chase Bryer (behavioral and social health sciences) was supported by a NAISI grant to present at the NAISA 2024 Annual Meeting in Norway (Sábme).

In addition to many of the projects shared at the annual Spring Research Symposium, the Mellon Foundation grant to build NAIS at Brown University has supported numerous undergraduate and graduate student research opportunities over the past five years. This year's research projects by graduate and undergraduate students are highlighted below.

American studies Ph.D. candidate **Allyson LaForge** received funding for a summer 2024 collaboration with the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians to coordinate exhibits and events surrounding the return of a copy of Andrew Blackbird's

1887 "History of the Ottawa and Chippewa Indians." The book includes a quilled birch bark cover by his sister Margaret Blackbird Boyd. Mellon funding provided LaForge with the opportunity to expand her dissertation research and work with tribal archives and local historical societies to better understand Boyd's material culture and leadership roles.

Chase Bryer, Ph.D. candidate in behavioral and social health sciences, received Mellon funding to attend the June 2024 annual conference of the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA), the primary academic association for NAIS. This year's conference was held overseas in BODØ (Bådådjo/Buvvda/Bodø), Norway (or Sábme) and provided opportunities to meet and learn more about the Sammi people, on whose homelands the gathering occurred, and included the well-known Sammi market, an art exhibit and Soptsestimmie (storytelling) events.

Dual RISD-Brown degree undergraduate anthropology student **Yomi Adegbile** '25 received funding to support participation in a summer archaeological field school, the Open School of Ethnography and Anthropology Maya Anthropology Field School in the Yucatan. Adegbile's research focuses on contemporary Maya society in the Yucatan region and how it relates to the tourism industry (in positive and negative ways) and on the youth's identity with the Mayan language and their indigenous identity in general.

Benjamín Córdova Herrera '26, a chemical engineering concentrator, received Mellon funding for research sponsored by Assistant Professor of Chemistry Emily Sprague-Klein focused on maintenance and medicinal plant keeping knowledge of the garden established by Ariana Clark at the John Nicholas Brown Center for Advanced Study. Herrera used the summer to study the cellular and molecular effects of these plants and their uses for physical and mental healing.

Ph.D. candidate **Luiz Paulo Ferraz** (history) used funding this year to support a four-week trip to Mexico City and Tepoztlán that included meetings with scholars and archival research at the Inter-American Indian Institute (IAII) at the University Program for Studies of Cultural Diversity and Interculturality of the UNAM. In addition, Luiz attended the Tepoztlán Institute for the Transnational History of the Americas to present and workshop one of his dissertation chapters.

Undergraduate student **Isabelle Meza** '25 (CNAIS and computer science) received Mellon funding through NAISI for summer research exploring the relationship and history between Native Americans and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS), including the impact of the Indian Placement Program on Native communities both within and outside of the church.

Anthropology Ph.D. candidate **Daiana Rivas-Tello**'s summer research supported by NAISI and the Mellon grant focused on analysis of ceramics from Peru. The project, part of her dissertation work, is titled "Crafting Persistence: Tracing the History of Pottery Production in Huancas, Amazonas, Peru" and will help her examine how crafting communities in the Andes responded to colonial structures and what these adaptations reveal about Indigenous persistence. The research was

Highlights from the 2023-24 Year continued

undertaken at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Center for Materials Research in Archaeology and Ethnology (CMRAE) ceramic petrography program in Boston.

Faculty Course Development research supported by NAISI's Mellon Grant

NAISI's Mellon Foundation funding also supported a number of research projects undertaken by Brown University faculty to develop or expand existing courses that contribute to NAIS at Brown. Over the past year, course development projects spanned a number of disciplines.

Associate Professor of History **Linford Fisher** received Mellon funding to expand his course First Nations: the Peoples and Cultures of Native North America to 1800. The course development grant from NAISI supported Ph.D. student Kimonee Burke, who provided input to expand and reconfigure aspects of the course's covered time period, readings and assignments.

Visiting Assistant Professor of Slavery and Justice **Mack Scott** was supported by NAISI Mellon funding to participate in a summer research trip to the annual meeting of the Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association (PBC-AHA). His focus is to expand material in CNAIS's introductory course (ETHN 1200 Introduction to Native American and Indigenous Studies) through his ongoing research on the history, experiences and circumstances of Native students at Harvard University during the mid-17th century.

Assistant Professor of American Studies **Kevin Escudero** undertook summer research supported by NAISI that focused on "Decolonization in Oceania: Decolonization Activism in Guåhan and Hawai'i." This project will result in a public digital humanities educational resource: an annotated online syllabus (focused on the themes of decolonization, demilitarization, environmental justice, gender and feminism, healing/health/wellness, and oceanic relationalities) with supplemental materials examining ongoing decolonization activism in Guåhan and Hawai'i and is a collaboration with **Makana Kushi '24** Ph.D. (American studies).

Other Engaged Brown University Projects and Fellowships

Across campus, NAISI has been integrally involved — and provided guidance on — the development and expansion of projects and advisory committees that have engaged tribal communities and individuals undertaken by the Simmons Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice, the Brown Arts Institute and individual faculty. These projects include:

- [Reimagining New England Histories | Simmons Center](#)
- [Stolen Relations: Recovering Stories of Indigenous Enslavement in the Americas](#)
- Brown Arts Institute Tribal Arts Advisory Council (TAAC)

Artist in Residence Fellowships



Spring 2024 NAISI Artist in Residence fellows Elizabeth James-Perry and David Heska Wanbli Weiden



Brown alum Danielle Emerson also received a NAISI Artist in Residence fellowship in 2024.

This past year, NAISI also developed five Indigenous Artist in Residence fellowships, supported by Mellon Foundation funding and the BAI. These fellowships provide opportunities for Indigenous artists to both engage with the Brown community and dedicate time to their craft through the stipend associated with the fellowship. The Spring 2024 Artist in Residence fellows were [Elizabeth James-Perry](#), an Aquinnah Wampanoag artist, and [David Heska Wanbli Weiden](#), a Sicangu Lakota author of crime and thriller novels and professor of Native American studies at Metropolitan State University, Denver. James-Perry's work explored various Northeastern Woodlands Native cultural expressions and Weiden shared his work as a novelist and author of "Winter Counts" (Ecco, 2020). The summer 2024 fellowship was awarded to Danielle Emerson '23, a Diné fiction writer, poet, playwright and Brown University alum who concentrated in education studies and literary arts.

Highlights from the 2023-24 Year continued

NEW AND VISITING INSTRUCTORS AND SCHOLARS

Over the 2023-24 academic year, NAISI's Mellon Foundation grant supported visiting scholars who contributed courses to the new CNAIS concentration at Brown University.

Joseph Dupris joined NAISI this year as visiting faculty, teaching four NAIS courses. A citizen of the Klamath Tribes (Klamath, Modoc, and Yahooskin Paiute) whose homelands span southern Oregon and northern California, he is also of Big Pine Paiute and Cheyenne River Sioux ancestry. Dupris received a joint Ph.D. in anthropology and linguistics and an M.A. in linguistics (focused on Native American linguistics and languages) from the University of Arizona.

Megan Harvey served as a 2023-24 postdoctoral research associate and also focuses on Indigenous languages. Her Ph.D. in linguistics (University of Arizona) and ongoing research focus on language revitalization, with a particular interest in how documenting the process of revitalization can support language teaching and learning. Beyond this, she works on the morphology-phonology interface, with specific areas of interest in Mayan languages and languages of Mesoamerica. In addition to her work with the Tunica-Biloxi tribe and serving as a linguist for the tribe's Language and Culture Revitalization Program, Harvey has worked with the Uspanteko community in the highlands of Guatemala and the Hiaki language and community in southern Arizona. In addition to English and French, Harvey has varying degrees of knowledge in Tunica, Uspanteko, Hiaki, Kaqchikel, Tohono O'odham, Classical Nahuatl, Seri and Spanish. She co-taught NAIS 0100 Learning our Native Languages with Joe Dupris in Fall 2023.

Honor Keeler '05 (Cherokee) returned to Brown as a visiting professor of practice for the 2023-24 academic year, offering four courses focused on federal Indian law and Indigenous human rights. A legal scholar and author, Keeler has worked globally with Indigenous nations to protect sacred places and ensure the return of Indigenous ancestors and cultural items. She worked for over a decade as a partner investigator on several grants based at the Australian National University (ANU) to support the work of the Return, Reconcile, Renew (RRR) Network and repatriation project, and now sits on the RRR Archive Governance Board, in addition to numerous tribally based projects in the U.S. Her scholarship and research focus on Indigenous human rights, the rights of Indigenous women, sacred places and environmental protection, repatriation, Indigenous entrepreneurship and Cherokee studies. Keeler holds a J.D. and an Indian Law Certificate from the University of New Mexico School of Law.

The NAISI Mellon Foundation grant also helped to support Visiting Lecturer **Eduardo de la Cruz**, who offered Nahuatl language courses for the third year at Brown (that contribute to the CNAIS concentration). de la Cruz is director of the Zacatecas Institute for Teaching and Research in Ethnology at Zacatecas State University in Mexico.

Nitana Hicks Greendeer '03 returned this year as a visiting instructor in American studies to offer two courses that also support the CNAIS concentration (see below).

Eric Johnson, a jointly appointed Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in the history of art and architecture (HIAA), NAISI and the Cogut Institute for the Humanities, completed his two-year fellowship at Brown this year, offering courses in HIAA counting toward the CNAIS concentration.

2023-24 Courses

NAIS-focused courses offered in the 2023-24 academic year spanned a number of disciplines, including history, anthropology, environmental studies, religious studies and American studies, among others. Several courses carried the writing (WRIT), Race, Power and Privilege (RPP) or First-Year Seminar (FYS) designations, as noted below.

FALL 2023 COURSES

ANTH 1125/ARCH 1056 Indigenous Archaeologies (RPP), Robert Preucel

ANTH 1622 Archaeology of Settler Colonialism (RPP), Patricia Rubertone

EEPS 1615/ENVS 1615 Making Connections: The Environmental Policy Process (RPP, WRIT), Amanda Lynch

ENVS 1905 Thinking with the Elements: Environmental Theories and Praxis (RPP), Bathsheba Demuth and Macarena Gomez-Barris

ETHN 1200K Introduction to American Indian Studies (RPP), Joseph Dupris

ETHN 1750X Native American Language Loss, Revitalization and Resiliency, Nitana Hicks-Greendeer

ETHN 1750Y Native Pacific Islander Movements for Decolonization, Kevin Escudero

ETHN 1751A Indigenous Laws, Environmental Racism and #LandBack (RPP), Honor Keeler

HIST 0233 Colonial Latin America (WRIT), Jeremy Mumford

HIST 1360 Amazonia from the Prehuman to the Present, Neil Safier

NAHU 0100 Beginning Nahuatl (RPP), Eduardo de la Cruz

NAHU 0500 Advanced Nahuatl (RPP), Eduardo de la Cruz

NAIS 0100 Learning Our Native Languages, Megan Harvey and Joseph Dupris

NAIS 1100 Federal Indian Law: Native Nations, Resistance and Indigenous Rights, Honor Keeler

POBS 0630D A Luta Continua: African, Asian and Indigenous Responses to Coloniality in the Lusophone World (RPP, WRIT), Kevin Ennis

POBS 2500C Brazilian Landscapes of Crisis and Hope, Leila Lehnen

RELS 0090B Indigenous Ecologies (FYS), Mark Cladis

SPRING 2024 COURSES

AFRI 0130 This is America: Reimagining the American Saga, Mack Scott

AMST 1700S Native American Identity: Public Perception and Self-Determination, Nitana Hicks Greendeer

ANTH 1621 Material Culture Practicum, Patricia Rubertone

ANTH 1901 Anthropology in/of the Museum, Christina Hodge

EAST 1702 Pacific Indigeneities: From Māori Mythology to James Cameron's "Avatar," Manimporok Dotulong

ENVS 1233 Underground Studies: Extractivism and Decolonization in the Americas/Abiyala (RPP), Regina P. Pressly

HIAA 1626 Settler-Colonial Placemaking: From Vikings to the Homestead Act (RPP, WRIT), Eric Johnson

HISP 0750Y Stories of Nature, Iris Montero

HIST 0150K Curators, Hoarders and Looters: The Long and Curious History of Collecting, Neil Safier

HIST 0255A Mexican American History (RPP), Mark Ocegueda

HIST 1031 Southern Africa Before Segregation: A History From the Earliest Times to 1885, Nancy Jacobs

HIST 1457 History of the Palestinians (RPP, WRIT), Beshara Doumani

HIST 1501 The American Revolution, Seth Rockman and Philip Gould

HIST 1512 First Nations: The People and Cultures of Native North America to 1800 (RPP, WRIT), Linford Fisher

NAIS 1201 Native American Languages, Joseph Dupris

NAIS 1202 Language, Race and Indigeneity, Joseph Dupris

NAIS 1204 Indigenous Women and the Power of Rematriation, Honor Keeler

NAIS 1205 Indigenous Human Rights, Honor Keeler

NAIS 1900 Critical NAIS Capstone Course, Rae Gould

RELS 0260 Religion Gone Wild: Spirituality and the Environment, Mark Cladis

Lectures, Discussions and Events

The following NAIS-focused events over the 2023-24 year were hosted or supported by NAISI (often in collaboration with other units across campus), or hosted by offices across campus. During this academic year, NAIS-focused programming increased substantially, with departments and centers offering a number of events engaged with many different areas of the field.



NAISI hosted a welcome back gathering in Fall 2023.

NAISI Welcome Back Gathering and CNAIS Info Session

SEPTEMBER 11

NAISI hosted a fall welcome back gathering for students, faculty and staff that also included an information session on the new CNAIS undergraduate concentration for students interested in learning more about NAIS at Brown.

Lunch & Learn with Dominique Pablito

SEPTEMBER 25

The Lunch & Learn series of 2023-24 allowed NAIS-focused graduate students in departments across the University to present their research to peers and undergraduate students over lunch in the NAISI office. The first talk of the year featured Dominique Pablito (Zuni, Navajo and Comanche; Ph.D. student in molecular biology, cell biology and biochemistry), whose research targets new therapies for glioblastoma multiforme. Her talk focused on maximizing success as an Indigenous college student.

NAIS/Religious Studies Graduate Student Mixer

SEPTEMBER 26

The NAIS and religious studies graduate student mixer provided an opportunity for individuals to meet fellow graduate students, enjoy pizza and get acquainted with the now shared graduate student study spaces at 67 George St.

Fellowships and Opportunities Information Session

SEPTEMBER 27

Native and Indigenous students, as well as CNAIS concentrators, were invited to join NAISI and the Swearer Center for a fall information session on undergraduate- and graduate-level fellowships and other opportunities in the BCSC formal lounge.

An Evening of Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer Joy with Tavi Hawn

SEPTEMBER 29

NAISI hosted a special evening for Indigenous students with Tavi Hawn (Tsalagi, Cherokee and adopted Kewa Pueblo), a multi-racial, two-spirit, Indigiqueer, nonbinary healer. They work with Indian Country Trans ECHO, Native American Lifelines and Reclaim and Rise Therapy and have been serving in the mental health and healing justice fields for over 15 years. Hawn is the author of “The Gender Identity Guide for Parents” and “Cultural Awareness in Therapy with Trans and Gender Non-Conforming Adults and Older People,” and they served on the planning council for the first Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia (DMV) area Eastern Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer Gathering.

CAUSA Central American Heritage Celebration

SEPTEMBER 30

Organized by the Central American United Student Association (CAUSA) and co-sponsored by NAISI, the Central American Heritage Celebration featured a performance by the Marimba Sentimiento Chapin group and celebrated Central American culture and heritage.

Lectures, Discussions and Events continued

Our Children Are Not Your Captives: History, Memory and the Making of Historical ‘Truth’ in Colonial New England

OCTOBER 2

NAISI’s first Faculty Brown Bag talk of the semester featured Visiting Assistant Professor of Slavery and Justice Mack Scott, who discussed the presence of two Narragansett children at Harvard University, predating John Sassamon (often considered the first Indigenous person to attend Harvard). The talk also explored how colonial leaders reinterpreted relationships with Indigenous peoples to advance expansionist agendas.

Indigenous Peoples Day Student Retreat

OCTOBER 9

NAB traveled to New York City for Indigenous Peoples Day. The decision to travel off campus was deemed essential by many students to foster a sense of community beyond the institution’s confines. By prioritizing community care, the retreat allowed students to acknowledge this holiday without feeling obligated to assume leadership roles in educating the campus or public about Indigenous issues. Activities included attending the New York City Indigenous Peoples Day powwow on Randall’s Island and enjoying weekend activities such as movie screenings, bingo and exploring the city. The trip’s success was made possible by the dedicated efforts of students Ariana Clark and Isabelle Meza (who served as Native Heritage Series coordinators at the BCSC on campus).

Panel: Indigenous Russia and the War in Ukraine

OCTOBER 10

Organized by the Institute at Brown for Environment and Society (IBES) and co-sponsored by NAISI, Vera Solovyeva visited campus as a dean’s visiting professor in the humanities. Solovyeva (a Sakha environmental scientist and social justice advocate) was joined by Pavel Sulyandziga (Udege economist and human rights activist) and Charles Norchi (international human rights lawyer) for a discussion focused on the profound pressures facing high north Russian Indigenous peoples, including Russian human rights violations, climate and environmental degradation and the war in Ukraine. The panel was moderated by NAISI-affiliated faculty member Bathsheba Demuth, associate professor of history and environment and society.

CNAIS Concentration Information Session

OCTOBER 11

NAISI hosted an information session on the newly launched NAIS concentration.



Eric Johnson’s Faculty Brown Bag talk this year focused on wampum.

Wampum Factories and Munsee Stonework: Archaeological Engagements with Indigenous History in New Jersey

OCTOBER 25

The second Faculty Brown Bag talk of the semester featured Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow Eric Johnson, who provided an overview of his archaeological work in northern New Jersey focused on the lesser-known history of wampum’s 18th and 19th century afterlife. His research sheds light on the complex relationship between capitalism, American imperialism and Indigenous sovereignty through the production and exchange of Native American shell beads. Johnson’s collaboration with the Ramapough Lenape Nation examined state criteria for recognizing Indigenous stone landscapes, proposing innovative approaches to preserving these features.

NAISI/NAB Community Dinner with Jonathan Thunder

NOVEMBER 2-3

NAISI and NAB co-hosted a community dinner with artist and filmmaker Jonathan Thunder as part of his two-day visit to Brown. His mini-residency was sponsored by the Cogut Institute for the Humanities as part of its “Experimental Ethnography” series and was cosponsored by NAISI. Thunder is known for his surreal paintings, digitally animated films and installations; he infuses his personal lens with real-time experiences using a wide range of mediums to address subjects of personal and social importance.

Lectures, Discussions and Events continued

Community Dinner and Lunch & Learn with Makana Kushi

NOVEMBER 6-7

A community dinner with Makana Kushi (Kanaka 'Ōiwi) was followed by Kushi's Lunch & Learn talk the following day. Kushi, who in May completed a Ph.D. in American studies, focused on Hawaiian history, Indigenous language education and the intersections of race, indigeneity, gender and sexuality.



Valerie Red-Horse Mohl and Honor Keeler '05, with Kimberly Toney (front row, left to right) led a conversation about the film "Mankiller."

Student Event and Screening of "Mankiller" at the Hay Library

NOVEMBER 8-9

Co-hosted by the John Hay Library, the Pembroke Center for Teaching and Research on Women, and NAISI, this student-focused two-day event included an introduction to special collections materials related to Native American and Indigenous activism and political engagement at the Hay Library and a screening of "Mankiller," a documentary chronicling the life of Wilma Mankiller (the first woman principal chief of the Cherokee Nation). The film screening was followed by a conversation between Valerie Red-Horse Mohl (Cherokee ancestry, director of the film), and Honor Keeler '05 (Cherokee Nation), moderated by Kimberly Toney (coordinating curator for Native American and Indigenous collections at the John Hay and John Carter Brown libraries).



Geri Augusto was one of many presenters during the two-day "In Conversation" gathering held in Fall 2023.

In Conversation: Black and Indigenous Histories and Pedagogies Symposium and Gathering

NOVEMBER 16-17

Hosted by the Simmons Center and NAISI, this two-day symposium and gathering provided an opportunity for regional Black and Indigenous historians, scholars, storytellers and educators to collectively engage with critical questions focused on higher education curricula related to Black and Indigenous histories and pedagogical approaches to teaching these histories. The focus of this event was knowledge sharing from within Black and Indigenous communities.



A number of students participated in a journaling night co-hosted in Fall 2023 by NAISI, the Sarah Doyle Center and the BCSC.

Student Journaling Night: Gender and Indigeneity

NOVEMBER 29

NAISI co-hosted a student journaling night in collaboration with the Sarah Doyle Center and BCSC Native Heritage Series encouraging students to delve into the intersections of gender and indigeneity in their lives and communities. The event highlighted the personal and intellectual practice of journaling as a historically feminist tradition and tool to document everyday life and reflect on the human condition. Participants engaged with prompts designed to explore these intersections, fostering meaningful dialogue and reflection.

Lunch & Learn with Kimonee Burke

NOVEMBER 30

In the final Lunch & Learn talk of the fall, Kimonee Burke (Ph.D. candidate in history and a citizen of the Narragansett Tribe) discussed the role of Christianity in illuminating the legal legacy of tribal churches. Her larger research project focuses on New England Indigenous history and the impact of federal policies on tribes in the region.

NAISI End-of-Semester Outing with URI students

NOVEMBER 30

The NAISI End-of-Semester Outing to the RISD Museum provided an opportunity for NAB students to mingle with the University of Rhode Island (URI) Native American Student Organization (NASO). Dinner at 67 George St. was followed by a museum tour and allowed NASO and NAB students to connect and celebrate the end of the fall semester.

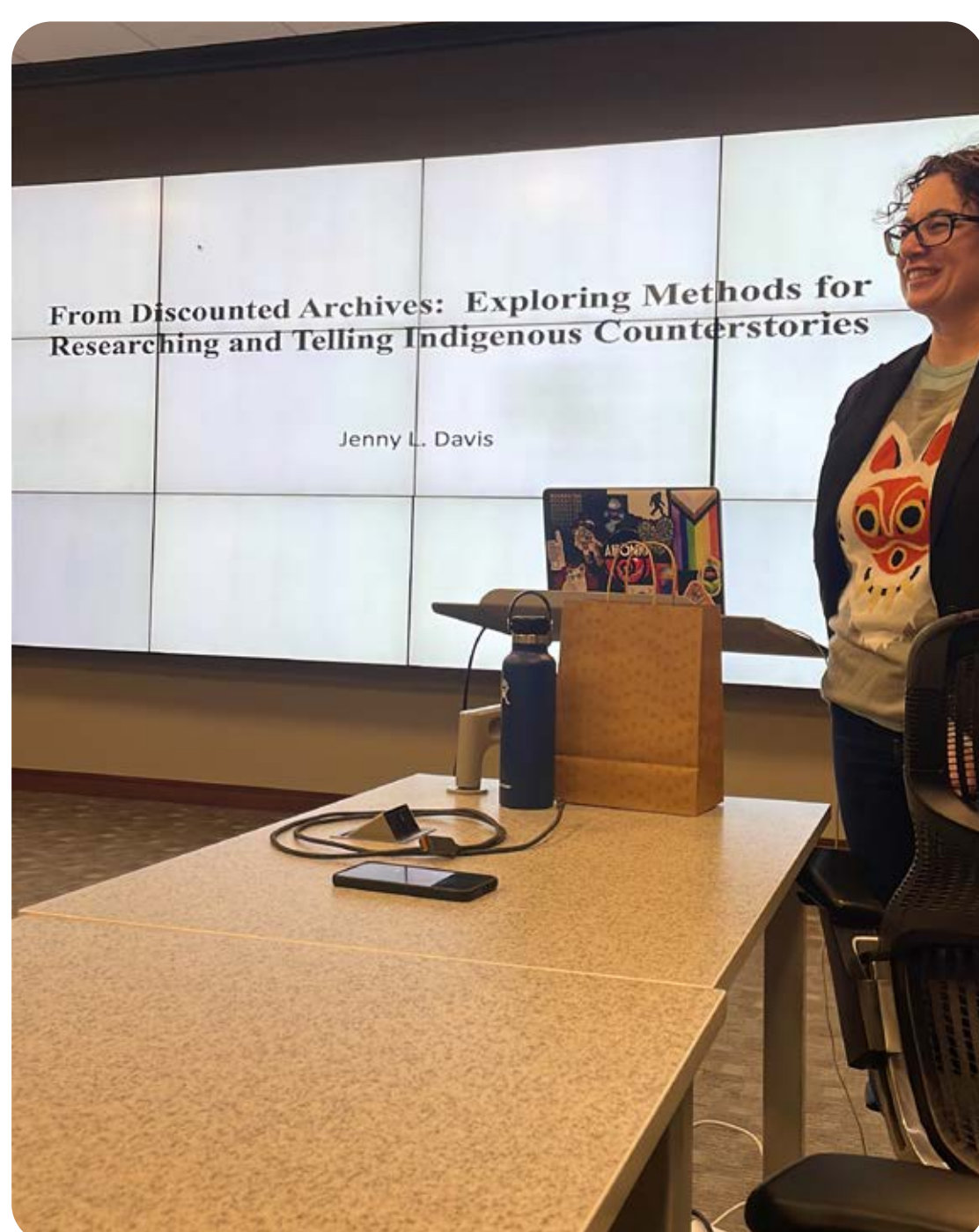
Lectures, Discussions and Events continued

Spring 2024

NAISI Welcome Back Gathering + Fellowships and Opportunities Info Session

JANUARY 31

NAISI's Spring 2024 welcome back dinner reconnected staff, students, faculty and visiting scholars and offered an opportunity to learn about the CNAIS concentration. The event also included an info session with Swearer Center and College fellowships staff, providing information about fellowship, scholarship and internship opportunities and their application processes.



Jenny Davis (Chickasaw) visited Brown University for a two-day mini-residency.

Jenny Davis Visit to Brown

FEBRUARY 26 - 28

Hosted by the Department of Anthropology and NAISI, Jenny Davis presented "The (Past, Present and) Future of Indigenous Languages," exploring Indigenous language futurism. She also led a workshop for NAIS-affiliated students and faculty, "From Poetry and Discounted Archives," which focused on methods for researching and writing Indigenous counterstories. Davis is a citizen of the Chickasaw Nation and an associate professor of anthropology and American Indian studies at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, where she is director of the American Indian Studies Program and co-director of the Center for Indigenous Science. She is also co-editor of the Studies in Language and Gender series at Oxford University Press.

Translation Across Disciplines Modern Language Conference

FEBRUARY 29 THROUGH MARCH 1

Organized by the Center for Language Studies and co-sponsored by NAISI, this two-day conference "Translation Across Disciplines" highlighted cross-departmental interest in the field of translation.

Gather. Make. Sustain. Series: Silvermoon LaRose (Narragansett) Lecture

MARCH 5

Hosted by the Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology, the first event in the Gather. Make. Sustain. series featured Silvermoon LaRose (Narragansett), who explored how the reclamation and preservation of tradition can help to see and appreciate the art around and within us. LaRose (assistant director of the Tomaquag Museum) shared her extensive experience working in tribal communities and her commitment to fostering Indigenous empowerment through education, community building and the sharing of cultural knowledge and traditional arts.



Assistant Professor of American Studies Kevin Escudero presented a talk on coalition building between Indigenous CHamoru and Filipinx immigrants.

Imperial Unsettling: Indigenous and Immigrant Activism toward Collective Liberation

MARCH 6

In NAISI's spring Faculty Brown Bag talk, Assistant Professor of American Studies Kevin Escudero discussed his second book manuscript in progress, "Imperial Unsettling." The talk examined the potential for solidarity and coalition building between Indigenous CHamoru and Filipinx immigrant communities as part of their participation in Guåhan's decolonization movement since 1950.

Lectures, Discussions and Events continued



Ally LaForge shared her research during an informal Lunch & Learn talk with other students in Spring 2024.

Lunch & Learn with Ally LaForge

MARCH 6

The first Lunch & Learn talk of the spring semester featured American studies Ph.D. candidate Ally LaForge, who delved into the collaborative pathways of Odawa material culture and its journey from Waganikising to Vienna and Amherst. LaForge discussed the rich history and interconnectedness embedded within these cultural artifacts.

Tanya Tagaq Artistic Innovators Residency

MARCH 12 - 17

In a residency hosted by the BAI, Tanya Tagaq held a series of events including “Climate Change: Our Response as Activists,” a conversation co-hosted by the BAI and FirstWorks about the responsibilities of artist-activists regarding climate change; an evening of genre-bending music in concert with special guests; and a book signing of “Split Tooth.” The residency culminated with a concert featuring Tanya Tagaq and the Kronos Quartet, premiering their new collaborative work commissioned by the BAI.



Artist in Residence fellow Elizabeth James-Perry led a cornhusk weaving workshop as part of her month-long fellowship sponsored by NAISI.

Spring Indigenous Arts Series: Cornhusk Weaving Workshop for NAIS students with Elizabeth James-Perry

MARCH 19

The first of NAISI’s Spring Indigenous Artist in Residence fellows, Elizabeth James-Perry (Aquinnah Wampanoag Master Artist and Culture Bearer) led a cornhusk weaving workshop for NAIS-affiliated students at the BCSC. Participants delved into the art of weaving with corn husks, known for its sustainability and local sourcing, using small wooden looms. Throughout the workshop, James-Perry shared insights into various techniques and the use of nontoxic, environmentally friendly natural dyes.

Spring Indigenous Arts Series: Wampum Demonstration with Elizabeth James-Perry

APRIL 1

The second event in NAISI’s Spring Indigenous Arts Series provided an opportunity to learn about Wampanoag adornment and history-keeping traditions during this wampum art demonstration. The artist showcased wampum and weaving created during her month-long residency at Brown University.



TCMR Ruth Torres (front left) organized a workshop and opportunity for students to meet national-level Indigenous leaders during the spring semester.

Tribal Leadership Workshop

APRIL 3

Co-sponsored by the BCSC Native Heritage Series, this special evening featured three Indigenous leaders: Shelly Lowe (Navajo, chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities), Lynn Malerba (Mohegan chief and U.S. Treasurer) and Skawenniio Barnes (Kahnawake Mohawk, an attorney and mergers and acquisitions specialist). Designed for CNAIS concentrators, NAB and NAIS-focused graduate students, the workshop was organized by TCMR Ruth Torres and provided an opportunity for attendees to learn about leadership, experiences, careers and life paths. The ensuing conversations inspired and encouraged students to understand their own leadership styles, discover new ways to lead, and consider the value of occasional detours on courses already charted.

Lectures, Discussions and Events continued

Spring Indigenous Arts Series: Major Crimes: Inequalities in the Criminal Justice System on Native American Reservations

APRIL 4

A Spring Indigenous artist in residence and enrolled citizen of the Sicangu Lakota nation, David Heska Wanbli Weiden addressed the harmful criminal justice policies implemented by the U.S. government toward Native American nations and citizens and how they exacerbate the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and relatives in this talk. Weiden discussed the role of legislation such as the Major Crimes Act, federal sentencing regulations and other governmental policies and shared an excerpt from his award-winning novel “Winter Counts.”

NAISI Spring Research Symposium

APRIL 9 - 10

NAISI held its second annual Spring Research Symposium over a period of two days with the support of TCMR Ruth Torres. Undergraduate and graduate students, along with postdoctoral fellows, presented on NAIS-related research projects and topics. Presentations included the University’s inaugural senior cohort of CNAIS concentrators, who shared their capstone projects. Additionally, students in various disciplines and stages of their studies also shared their research, some of which was funded by NAISI’s Mellon Foundation grant to develop NAIS at Brown.

Chris Heaney | Mummifying Museums: The Inca Ancestors of American Anthropology

APRIL 11

Organized by the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies and the Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology and the Ancient World, this presentation discussed the collection of “ancient Peruvian” mummies and skulls by American museums between 1820 and 1920. Heaney highlighted how this practice compounded the historical struggle for ancestral remains in the Andes and emphasized the responsibility of U.S. museums to distant populations. Additionally, Heaney explored the transformative role of Peruvian intellectuals and grave-openers in challenging conventional museum practices.



Artist in Residence fellow David Weiden signs a copy of his book at one of his Spring 2024 events.

Spring Indigenous Arts Series: David Heska Wanbli Weiden Reading and Discussion

APRIL 16

In the final installment of NAISI’s Indigenous Arts Series offered by Mellon-funded artists in residence, David Heska Wanbli Weiden read from his recent literary work and discussed Native American literary, cultural and historical issues alongside Vanessa Lillie. Lillie is author of “Blood Sisters,” a USA Today bestseller and new series centered on the stories of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. Following the reading, both authors discussed their work with the audience.

Lunch & Learn with Shade Rodriguez

APRIL 18

As part of a year-long discussion series involving NAIS-focused graduate students, Shade Rodriguez (Ph.D. student in pathobiology) discussed fostering resilience in scientific academia from an Indigenous perspective.

College Day at NAISI: Community-Engaged Projects in NAIS

APRIL 24

For College Day at Brown, NAISI hosted local high school students for presentations meant to expose them to the possibilities for engaged research in an interdisciplinary undergraduate major such as CNAIS. Students heard from Brown faculty members, staff and students engaged in community-centered projects related to NAIS at and beyond Brown. The session aimed to introduce students to NAIS at Brown and to the potential for involvement in impactful, community-engaged projects during their college years.



endawnis Spears has provided talks across campus on cultural humility.

Cultural Humility and Working With Native Scholars and Communities

APRIL 25

endawnis Spears (Diné/Ojibwe/Choctaw/Chickasaw, practitioner in residence for tribal engagement in the Office of Community Engagement) led a workshop for the School of Public Health (SPH) Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and the SPH Office of Community Engagement. This engaged talk focused on effectively collaborating with tribal and Indigenous scholars and communities.

Lectures, Discussions and Events continued

Reimagining the STEM Field: Indigenous Identity and Higher Ed

APRIL 25

In a conversation facilitated by Christina Smith (Diné, Brown University), Amanda Tachine (Arizona State University) discussed the systemic factors influencing Native American student experiences in higher education, particularly in STEM fields. The discussion — supported by a grant from Brown’s Center for the Study of Race and Ethnicity in America — delved into strategies for reimagining educational development and departmental programming to enhance support for Indigenous learners.



Film Screening and Q&A: “Myaamiaki Eemamwiciki: Miami Awakening”

APRIL 25

A screening of the film “Myaamiaki Eemamwiciki: Miami Awakening,” hosted by NAISI Visiting Assistant Professor Joseph Dupris, was followed by a discussion with producer and director Sandy Osawa (Makah Tribe; Upstream Productions) and Wesley Y. Leonard (Miami Tribe of Oklahoma; University of California, Riverside), who explored the documentary’s creation and ongoing language reclamation efforts. The film portrays the Myaamia (Miami) people’s journey to reclaim their language from documentation, challenging the “extinct” label imposed by academia. Produced over three years, the film underscores the importance of cultural revitalization. Osawa collaborated closely with the Myaamia community, tribal leaders and cultural resources offices to authentically capture their narrative.



Sly Fox Den catered the NABA dinner celebrating Native and Indigenous graduates in May 2024 (top photo). Many tribal members from across the region attend the Annual Spring Thaw Powwow organized by BCSC’s Native Heritage Series and NAB students.

Gather. Make. Sustain. Series: Karen Ann Hoffman (Oneida) Artist Talk and Beadwork Demonstration

APRIL 25

Hosted by the Haffenreffer Museum, this Gather. Make. Sustain. event featured a talk by beadwork artist Karen Ann Hoffman (student of Samuel Thomas and the late Lorna Hill). An advocate for Native arts, Karen has curated opportunities to showcase Native art across Wisconsin and served on the Wisconsin Arts Board, chairing the Wisconsin Woodland Indian Arts Initiative.

A separate demonstration was also offered by this artist, where attendees immersed themselves in the rich tradition of Iroquois raised beadwork, an art form deeply rooted in the Indigenous cultures of the Eastern Great Lakes region. Through beadwork, song and stories, Hoffman explored the profound ways in which simple materials can convey messages connecting the past to the future.

21st Annual Spring Thaw Powwow

APRIL 27

The BCSC Native Heritage Series hosted the 21st annual Spring Thaw Powwow on April 27. NAISI is an annual co-sponsor of this event, which brings together members from across the Brown, Providence, regional tribal and local communities for a celebration of spring’s return with dancing, food and Indigenous art and craftsmanship.

Gather. Make. Sustain. Series: Lei Hulu Workshop with Makana Kushi

MAY 1

The final installment of the Gather. Make. Sustain. series, hosted by the Haffenreffer Museum, featured Makana Kushi, a Kanaka ‘Ōiwi Ph.D. candidate (Class of 2024) in a virtual workshop held on Zoom. Participants engaged in a lei hulu workshop in which they learned to craft Hawaiian lei using eyelash yarn, delving into the cultural and historical significance of this traditional art form. Kushi shared insights into the ties between cultural practices such as lei making and Indigenous land and sovereignty, offering a deeper understanding of Hawaiian heritage.

Lectures, Discussions and Events continued

Lunch & Learn with Chase Bryer

MAY 7

In this event, Ph.D. candidate and NAISI Graduate Student Program Coordinator Chase Bryer discussed ways to indigenize aging with HIV among two-spirit and Indigenous LGBTQ+ elders. The topic is part of his research in the field of behavioral and social health and sciences (in the School of Public Health).



Students and their families celebrated Commencement and Reunion Weekend at an annual dinner hosted by NABA and the Brown Alumni Association, and co-sponsored by NAISI.

2024 COMMENCEMENT ACTIVITIES

Native and Indigenous Student Commencement Dinner and Ceremony

MAY 25

Co-sponsored by Native American Brown Alumni (NABA), the Brown Alumni Association and NAISI, the Natives at Brown Commencement Dinner took place during Commencement and Reunion Weekend, honoring the accomplishments of Native and Indigenous undergraduate and graduate students completing their degrees at Brown University this year.

CNAIS Graduation Ceremony

MAY 26

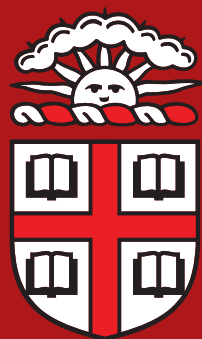
The inaugural graduating class of the CNAIS concentration was celebrated at NAISI's first Commencement gathering. Families and supporters were invited to celebrate the graduates and this milestone in the history of NAIS at Brown.



(left) The first cohort of CNAIS graduates included Ariana Clark and Kaliko Kalahiki (left, with Anne Ponte of the BCSC). (right) Kalahiki receives his diploma from NAISI Executive Director Rae Gould (right).

NATIVE AMERICAN AND
INDIGENOUS STUDIES INITIATIVE

NAISI



BROWN
Native American and Indigenous
Studies Initiative