Connecting Across Distance & Difference:  
Tribal Citizenship in a New Era

Description: In the interest of creating safe spaces within our communities, this session will challenge participants to think creatively in meeting the needs and enhancing the current realities of tribal citizens beyond all borders in order to foster strong relations. Our presenters will peel back the layers of tribal identity—speaking to the experiences of tribal citizens living off-reservation, in non-Native homes as out-adoptees, and as Two-Spirit persons.

Policy Applications: The information shared in this session will inform policies that protect Two-Spirit people and the rights of Native out-adoptees, support reunification and family repatriation, and maintain investments and cultural connections with citizens living on and off tribal lands.

Co-Facilitators:
Stephen Smith, Councilman, Kiowa Tribe  
Layha Spoonhunter, Eastern Shoshone, Northern Arapaho and Oglala Lakota  
Sarah Schilling, Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians

PRESENTATIONS:

Residence, Community Engagement, and Citizenship: How do non-resident tribal citizens connect with Native nations?

Dr. Jennifer Schultz is a Senior Researcher at the Native Nations Institute (NNI) at the University of Arizona. Schultz’s research program focuses on the social and community factors that promote connectedness and effective decision making for individuals and communities. Schultz is a Sociologist and Social Network Analyst by training, and she continues to incorporate analysis of relationships and social structures into her ongoing work with Native communities.

Stephanie Carroll Rainie (Ahtna Athabascan) is Associate Director of Manager of the Tribal Health Program and Senior Researcher at the Native Nations Institute. Ms. Rainie’s research program explores the links between governance, health care, and community wellness. She was a founding member of the UAs American Indian and Indigenous Health Alliance Club, and is
currently a doctoral candidate at the University of Arizona's (UA) Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health (MEZCOPH).

Rachel Starks (Pueblo of Zuni & Navajo Nation) NNI Senior Researcher and Research Coordinator, has over ten years of experience studying Native governance and social and economic development. Rachel has participated in research on per capita distributions, Native arts, border tribes, asset building, tribal justice systems, and Native control of health care. She has an MA (2002) in Sociology from the University of Arizona.

ABSTRACT

A pilot survey collected information on the experience of tribal citizens living away from tribal lands. Particularly, we wanted to better understand the role that tribal citizens living away from tribal lands play in the community and civic life of their tribes. What are the avenues available to those who wish to serve their community as citizens? What can tribes do, and what are they already doing, to facilitate enduring connections and engagement with their young adult, off-reservation populations? Finally, are there tribal policies that can enhance avenues to political and civic engagement for tribal citizens living off tribal lands? We report on the current state of political engagement for tribal citizens living off tribal lands. We discuss potential avenues for tribes to increase engagement with tribal citizens living off tribal lands.

Experiences of Adopted and Fostered Individuals: An Anonymous Study to Break the Silence of Adoptees

Sandy White Hawk is Sicangu Lakota, enrolled member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, and a United States Navy Veteran. She is the founder and Director of First Nations Repatriation Institute and an international spokesperson on the adoption and foster care system’s effects on First Nations Peoples. She is a Commissioner for the Maine Wabanaki State Child Welfare Truth and Reconciliation Commission and served as an Honorary Witness of the TRC on Residential Schools in Canada.

Dr. Erma J. Vizenor was elected as the Chairwoman of the White Earth Reservation in 2004 and is the first woman to lead the largest tribe in Minnesota. Previously, she was appointed Secretary/Treasurer in 1996 and then elected to the position in 1997. As Chairwoman, she represents all districts both on and off the White Earth Reservation. Erma has worked her entire career in education on the White Earth Reservation. She holds an undergraduate degree in Elementary Education; a master’s degree in Guidance and Counseling; and a specialist degree in Education Administration from Minnesota State University Moorhead. A Bush Leadership fellowship gave Erma the opportunity to earn a master’s degree in Community Decision-Making and Lifelong Learning; and a doctoral degree in Administration, Planning, and Social Policy from Harvard University.
ABSTRACT

Prior to the passage of the Indian Child Welfare Act a generation of Indian children were removed from their homes and communities. In Minnesota 1 in 4 babies were removed from their home. What can we learn from their experience? What is the impact psychologically, physically and spiritually of living separated from family, community and heritage? Can reunification with family/tribe help ease some of the impact? We conducted an anonymous on-line survey of U.S.-born adoptees from all race groups with 336 responses including 95 from natives who were adopted into non-native families. The survey covered a range of questions pertaining to childhood and adult experiences, including mental health, abuse experiences, and reunification experiences. We will focus the presentation on the native adoptees adopted by whites, but draw comparisons to the experiences of other transracial adoptees as well as whites adopted by whites. We address these questions because of their significance for policies and programs by sovereign nations and social service providers that are aimed at previously adopted native people as well as their potential to improve the experiences of native children in the future. We also see opportunity for tribal leaders to support the healing of tribal people who have lost their own relatives to this form of cultural genocide.

Two-Spirit People: Sex, Gender & Sexuality in Historic and Contemporary Native America

Harlan Pruden is a co-founder of the NorthEast Two-Spirit Society, a NYC based organization, where he worked with the Two-Spirit community locally, nationally and internationally. In August 2014, Harlan was appointed to the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS (PACHA). Harlan is one of the lead organizers of the National Confederacy of Two-Spirit Organizations; and serves as the principal Two-Spirit consultant to Substance Abuse Mental Services Administration (SAMHSA) Tribal Training and Technical Assistance Center. He is currently working on the launching the TwoSpiritJounal.com, a multi-platform Two-Spirit news outlet.

Se-ah-dom Edmo was born and raised in the Portland-Metro area and has strong ties with local and regional Native communities. She has worked extensively with AmeriCorps, OMSI and OHSU’s School of Medicine where she coordinated the Diversity Achievement Programs assisting students from groups underrepresented in medicine to pursue medical careers. She was active as a descendant of the Celilo community in preparations for the commemoration of 50 years since the inundation of Celilo Falls (March 10, 2007).

ABSTRACT

The Indigenous peoples of North America have many cultural traditions that have often been misrepresented or suppressed through the colonization process. Many of these are significantly different perspectives about sex, gender and sexuality than those imported from Western Europe. In the 21st century, one tradition that was nearly lost is what is referred to as Two-Spirit (lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender Native peoples). This presentation examines these traditions from a pre-
contact and to a present day context. The presentation concludes with a discussion of the 2nd edition of the Tribal Equity Toolkit 2.0 was the unveiled at the Two-Spirit Justice Summit in November 2013. This toolkit is a set of model Tribal codes and resolutions for Tribal Governments which work to protect all Tribal citizens and families. The presenters will also include a step-by-step guide of conducting a comprehensive mapping project to identify leaders and tribes who are ready to engage in the next steps of implementing the Tribal Equity Toolkit. The toolkit provides tribal leaders with tools and knowledge to support for their Two Spirit citizens and work for Two-Spirit justice in their Nation, in policy and Tribal law to ensure equity is an enduring community value for today's Native people.