

Student Newsletter

January 2015

CAIR Interns Attend 20th Annual Tribal Legislative Day

By Jacqueline Brown and Kwaayesnom Onsae

Monday January 22, 2015 Jackie Brown and Kwaayesnom Onsae attended the Arizona State Capitol for the 20th Annual Arizona Native Nations and Tribal Legislative Day.



Kwaayesnom Onsae (Left) Jackie Brown (Right) with fellow NAU Applied Indigenous Studies Students.

We found this year's event interesting due to the fact that it focused on Native American youth and wellness. The presentations were filled with Native American resilience; the keynote addresses, the youth forum and the suicide prevention presentation.

The keynote addresses were rather interesting, as they spoke of their upbringings. Kwaayesnom found it fascinating to hear of the upbringing and life of our leaders. "It is empowering

to learn that some leaders are faced with personal issues such as drugs, alcohol, and suicide. Their stories of resilience in becoming tribal leaders sent an important message to the students in the galley as well as myself.

The keynote speakers had excellent words of wisdom and advice for the state leaders, yet Hopi Tribal Chairman Herman Honanie spoke directly to the youth in both in his native Hopi Language and English. He was happy to see many youth in attendance to the annual event and encouraged all the students to absorb all they could from the days meetings. He also spoke of the importance of education and encouraged the students to continue their education to their highest ability because they are the future leaders."



Kwaayesnom felt that this year's event was an improvement in involving Native youth. "Although I have seen many high school students from various tribes attend the event, Native students who attend this year had the opportunity to have their voices heard by tribal and state leaders." The Tribal Youth Forum allowed the youth to voice their concerns and possible solutions to the many issues they face on their reservations such as: abandonment, substance abuse, suicide, bullying, domestic violence etc.

Jackie felt the tribal day was a day of insight. "There were some issues that I was aware of that Indigenous people face. Others, not so much. To me, this day was a good starting point for narrowing down research topics and has opened my eyes to possible programming ideas. I would also say that I left with many questions to ask. I was able to meet other NAU students as well as network with professionals and tribal members."

"This single day was not long enough to address issues that many Indigenous people face. It was difficult to delve into serious topics like suicide amongst youth with only two hours to address, at least a dozen factors, which contribute to this epidemic. I was able to see the frustration of tribal members and the disconnect between organizations that were trying to help. As a public health student I can see that there is still a lot that needs to be done."

Jackie Brown is a recent addition to the CAIR student interns. She is a public health major biology and health coaching minor, with interests in food security, social justice, advocacy, nutrition, and fitness. This was her first event involving Tribal relations.