



Student Newsletter

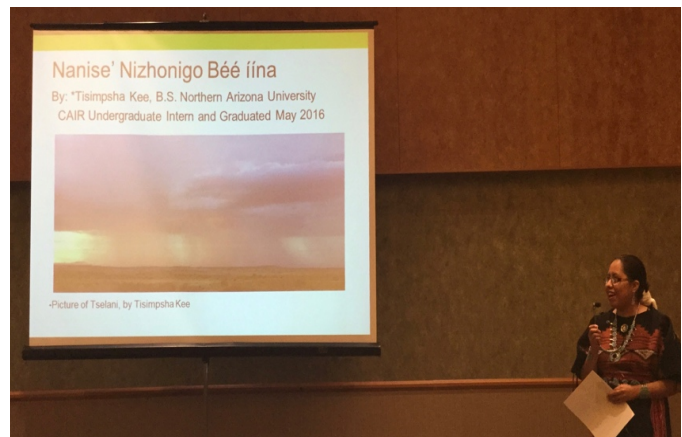
Summer 2016

CAIR Interns Attend the Native Health Research Conference

By Alexis McKinley and Tisimpsha Key

The Native Health Research Conference was held on June 5th-8th at the Harrah's Cherokee Casino Resort in Cherokee, North Carolina. CAIR interns and Leandra Becenti, Angeleeta Greyeyes, Tisimpsha Key, and Alexis McKinley, with Dr. Priscilla Sanderson (CAIR Co-Principal Investigator & Lead Director for Community Engagement-Outreach) and multiple CAIR faculty and staff attended.

The Native Health Research Conference held by the Native Research Network (NRN) was the second conference CAIR interns Tisimpsha Key and Alexis McKinley attended for CAIR. It was the first conference for CAIR's other interns Leandra Becenti and Angeleeta Greyeyes. Tisimpsha and Alexis presented their intern projects they conducted during their public health internship with CAIR the previous semester. During their time at the conference, the CAIR students had positive experiences while attending the conference.



Tisimpsha Key presenting her internship project at the Native Health Research Conference.

In fact, learning more about Native health and what professionals, both native and non-native, are doing to make a positive impact in their local communities was beneficial. We learned who we can contact if we want to provide similar services to those in our community. We also discovered there are many young professionals like us who are working in research. Seeing that many young individuals felt empowering because it shows many people want to make a difference in this field.



Alexis McKinley (left) and Tisimpsha Key (right) in a Q&A session the Native Health Research

Each student had their own impactful experience while at the conference, and the following are from Tisimpsha Key and Alexis McKinley. When asked about her experience in participating in the Native Health Research Conference, Tisimpsha responded, “The NRN Native Health Research Conference is one that I will never forget. It was a great opportunity to learn about the different projects, events, and discoveries going on in and around Indian Country. This experience made me hopeful and inspired me to do more.” She also responded on what she enjoyed most while at the conference, “I loved

attending the sessions and learning about the work of other people and organizations. I enjoyed interacting with many of those who attended the conference. The passion and energy that the presenters had for their work was inspiring. Being in a new place heighten the experience and made it more memorable. I am so thankful that I was able to attend and participate in the conference with my fellow colleagues.” Finally, she provided us with the impact the conference had on her as a CAIR Intern, “The NRN Native Health Research Conference had a huge impact on me as a CAIR intern. I was inspired by the work and passion of the people I met and those who presented. The sessions I attended also gave me ideas about where I wanted to go and what I wanted to do in my career field. Attending the conference and sharing that experience with my colleagues was great.” Overall, Tisimpsha’s experience positively motivated her to do more for her Native community.

Alexis has a positive experience as well, and when asked about participating she said, “The NRN conference was very insightful because I got to see what people are doing around the country for other tribes. We work mostly with Navajo and Hopi tribes, so to see health professionals talk about what other tribes, like Cherokee, Lakota, and so on, was eye opening because there are so many natives that need health services.” When asked about what she enjoyed most about the conference she responded, “Besides learning about other tribes, I really enjoyed hearing from other CAIR faculty and staff had to say during their presentation sessions. We don’t work closely with the U of A staff because they are in the Research core and we are a part of the Community Engagement and Outreach core, so seeing what they are doing was awesome. I also enjoyed it because we got to show others what CAIR does around Arizona, and even New Mexico.” In her final response, Alexis shared the impact the conference has on her as a CAIR intern. “For me, it just reminded me why I want to work in the field of public health. There was a session on sexual health and American Indian youth and the health professionals at the session were actually authors from manuscripts I used for my literature review for my project. One of them even came up to me after my presentation session and talked to me about my project. It was amazing! It felt like it all came full circle.”

After the conference, the CAIR's interns, faculty, and staff were able to explore Cherokee, North Carolina. The beauty of the mountains, the river, and the community overall. They were welcoming and interns enjoyed the cool weather before heading back to Flagstaff and Phoenix. With their experiences at the conference, it's safe to say these CAIR interns learned that they want to continue their work in public health and strive to be successful health professionals/providers in the communities they work in.



(Left to Right) Tsimpsha Key, Angeleeta Greyeyes, Leandra Becenti, Alexis McKinley, and Wehonna Toth.