



Student Newsletter

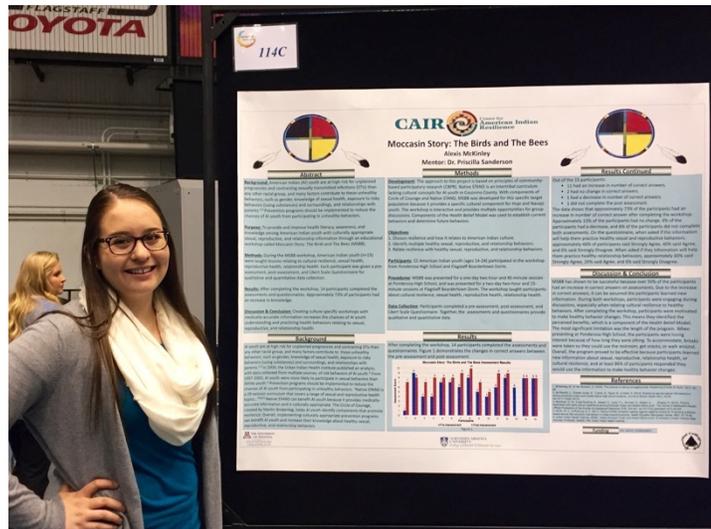
Spring 2016

CAIR Interns Participate in NAU's Undergraduate Symposium

By Alexis McKinley

Northern Arizona University's (NAU) Undergraduate Symposium was held on April 29th at the J. Lawrence Walkup Skydome in Flagstaff, Arizona. CAIR interns Tisimpsha Key, and Alexis McKinley submitted their CAIR project posters for presentation.

Participating in NAU's Undergraduate Symposium solidified the hard work Tisimpsha and I conducted while interning with CAIR. We worked with the center prior to our internships, so we had the opportunity to create our projects ahead of time. This allowed us to plan thoroughly, implement properly, and evaluate efficiently. For us, the Undergraduate Symposium symbolized all the work we put into our projects to: gain public health experience, create tools for American Indian communities, and promote resilience among them as well.



Alexis McKinley presenting her CAIR project at NAU's Undergraduate Symposium.

The symposium provided us an opportunity to see the work and research our fellow health science classmates, as well as other College of Health and Human Services students, have done over the course of the academic year. When approached, we discussed how we used health theories as a foundation to plan, implement, and evaluate our health education programs for American Indian communities. As well as what the programs entailed, why we chose our population, and what sustainability efforts are being made. This type of networking allows us

to represent what CAIR stands for: To partner with American Indian communities to promote health and resilience.

Tisimpha described the impact the symposium on her as an, "...opportunity to share my project and passion with others. It gave me a sense of purpose and made me proud about the work I was doing with my project. The comments and suggestions of the people who viewed my poster inspired me to think about how I could further improve or add to my project. I enjoyed sharing my project with others."

Prior to the poster presentation at the Walkup Skydome, the College of Health and Human Services judged the posters submitted to the Undergraduate Symposium. The categories for judging were research, scholarly analysis, and service. A total of six posters were awarded between the three categories; 23 posters were submitted for research, 13 were submitted for scholarly analysis, and 15 were submitted for service. Of the 15 posters submitted in the service category, *Moccasin Story: The Birds and the Bees* received first place.

As a young public health student and CAIR intern, exercising my skills in a work setting was most beneficial because it was an honor to receive recognition for my work for the course of the year. Yet, I was most pleased with what I received personally. Being allowed to enter the American Indian community and see how culturally influenced they are was a humbling experience. I learned not only how resilient they are, but how much their culture connects with them, which influenced me to connect more with my own culture. At the symposium, I shared my experiences from the public health perspective but also how much is meant to me personally to be involved with a culturally influenced community.

Pleased with the work I have accomplished with CAIR, I was ecstatic to show my work to the NAU community. Sharing this experience with my fellow CAIR interns, health science classmates, and professors, feels wonderful because I know I made my mark in this community. Along with that, I know I will continue to find my place in the field of public health. From Tisimpha's perspective, "It was a privilege to participate in NAU's undergraduate symposium. I interacted with many people and students and met many who shared the same interests as me. It gave me the opportunity to hone my presentation skills and improve my project." Overall, the symposium represented the last stepping stone for us as undergraduate students before our graduation.