

A row of several white teepees is set up in a grassy field. The teepees are arranged in a line, with some in the foreground and others receding into the distance. The sky is bright blue with scattered white clouds. In the background, there are some hills and a building with a dark roof.

American Indian Education: The Ups, Downs, and Roundabouts

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Intent

- Share my experience and observations about Indian education, including Indian higher education
- The Ups and Downs and Roundabouts
- Raise more questions than answers
- Things to think about as we move forward



**Student Success
What we strive
for in our work**

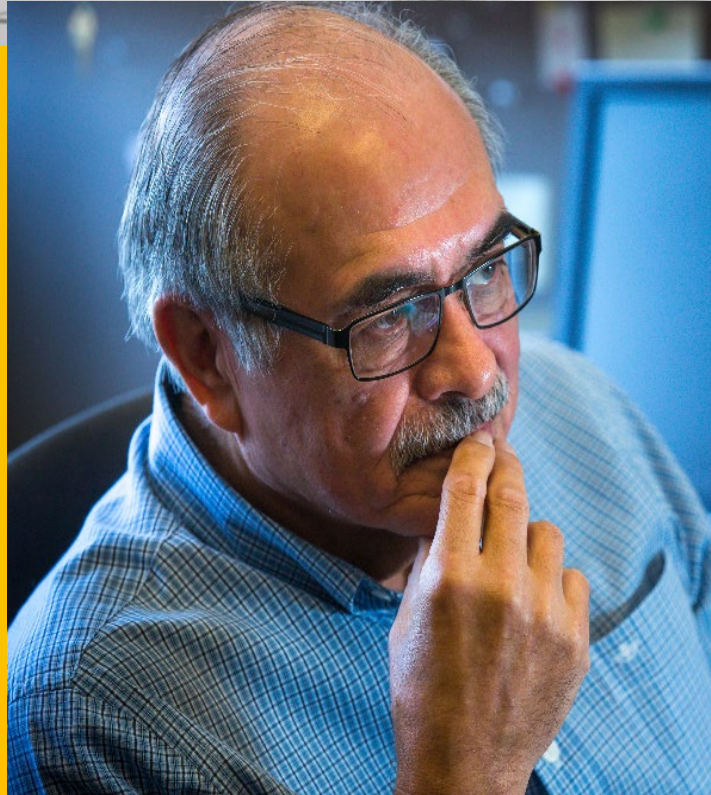
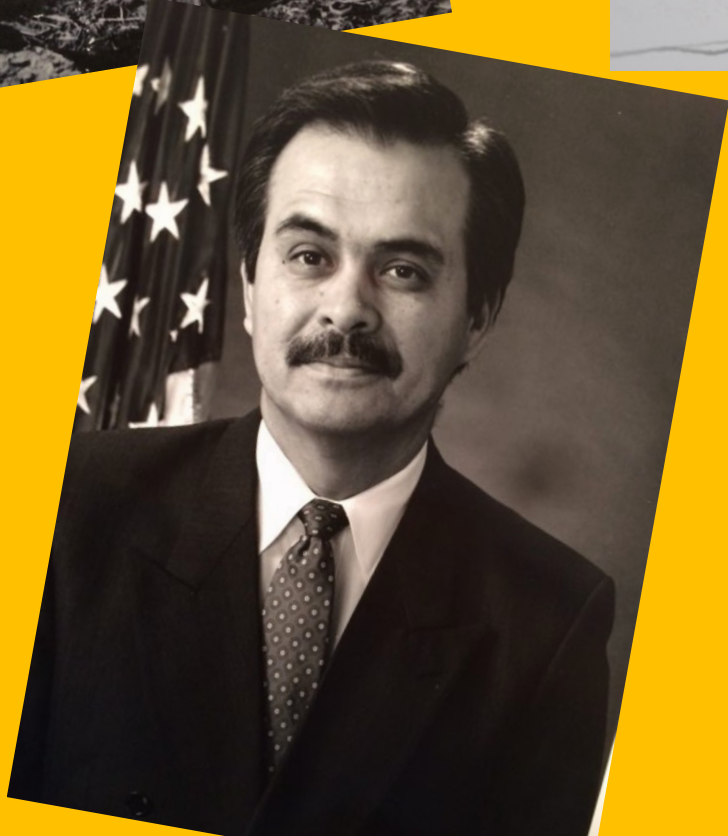
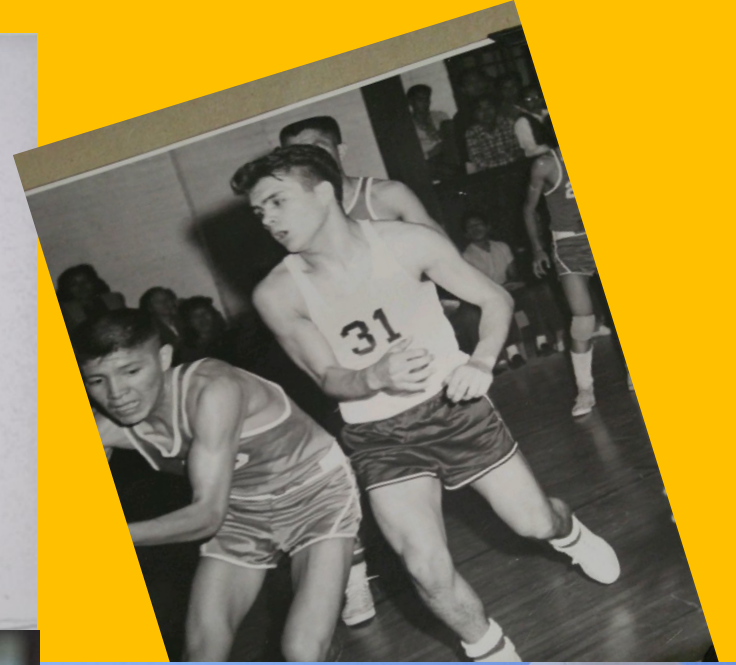
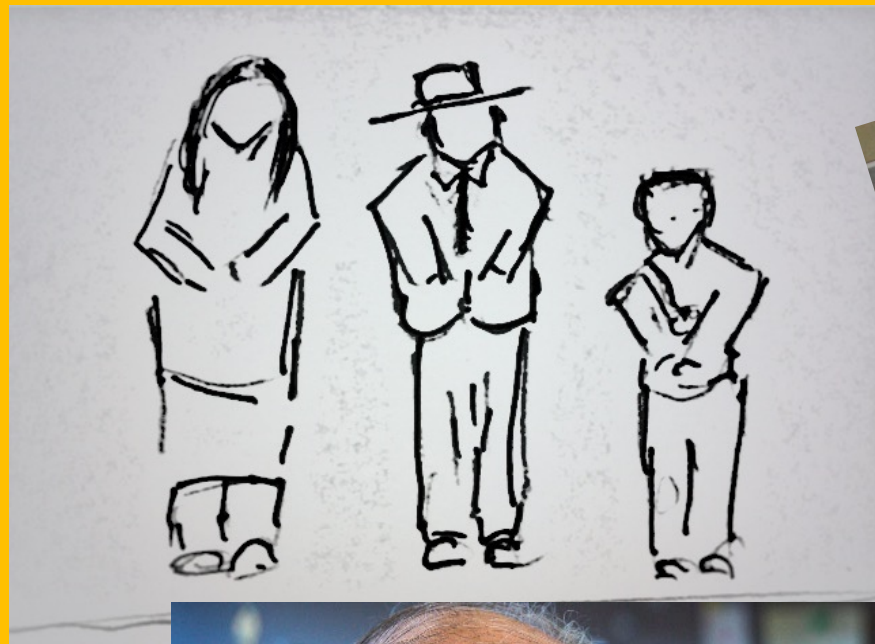


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About Me

- Member of the Comanche Nation / Cherokee
- Grew up between Oklahoma and New Mexico.
- Worked in NM, AZ, PA, Washington, DC & CA
- Travelled and worked across Indian Country
- Experience
 - ✓ Educator / At different levels
 - ✓ Administrator / Leadership Positions
 - ✓ Vice President of Diné College
 - ✓ Director of Indian Education positions in Washington, DC
 - ✓ Professor at Penn State University and Arizona State University
- Retired from Arizona State University as Director of American Indian Studies
- Moved CA in 2016





A Few General Observations

- Education is about people
- Indian Education is complex, frustrating, complicated, rewarding
- Natives are more involved and more in control, but...
- Think in terms of generalities, to be all inclusive, there are always exceptions. There are many stories to be told
- For many Native Americans, it is not easy to be Native American
- There are many challenges with long existing issues; there are also success stories
- Cultures and languages are emphasized
- Difficult to sustain progress
- Education is political

Students

- More students
- More aware and knowledgeable
 - Technology and Social Media
 - Language and culture?
 - Community oriented / want to give back
- More opportunities for students
- More Female than Male students
- Experience more stress, anxiety, trauma issues
- More vocal / outspoken / challenging
- Students don't always get along
- What are students, at all levels, going to be like in the future?

Identity

- Identity is important
- Numbers are important
- What does it mean to identify as an American Indian, Native American or Indigenous? Or a specific Tribal nation member?
- Federally recognized tribes/state recognized/not recognized
- Tribal membership / Descendants / Indian but not Indian
- What is it going to mean to be Native 10, 20 or 50 years from now?
- What will culturally responsive education mean in education?

Faculty

- There are more Native faculty today
- Need for more Native faculty
- Need for allies
- Faculty Responsibility: Teaching, Research and Service
 - Native voices and perspectives are need in mainstream institutions
- Hiring is changing: Tenure track (P/T), Part time, Practice Professors
- What type of faculty are needed and where are they being prepared?

Research

- Has improved over time
- More Natives involved in research publishing / presenting
- Use of Indigenous methodologies
- Community based research
- Tribes are taking control of research by developing tribal protocols
Havasupai Blood Case
- Need for scholars with quantitative skills
- A lot of research questions that need to be addressed



High Education Environment

Mainstream Institutions

The higher education experience is challenging for many Native students, faculty and programs. Political ideologies, policy shifts, budgets, demographic changes, public accountability, and the growing collaborative and entrepreneur model in higher education have presented challenges, resistance, threats and limitations to the Native perspective, including awareness and acceptance of the sovereign status and experiences of Native peoples.

Institutions of Higher Education

Some Observations

- Business model – Money is the bottom line / Cost continues to increase
- Governance / Decision-making is often top down
- Fund raising is a major activity
- Numbers / data and recognition / status is important
- Higher education is political
- Diversity is promoted
- Collaboration is advocated
- Outreach is encouraged
- Courses delivery is changing – more on-line
- The environment / climate is often hostile for different perspectives

Institutions of Higher Education

Suggestions to better serve Native students

- Recognize sovereign status and acknowledge traditional lands
- Student Focus: Recruitment, Access, Retention, Graduation, Follow Up
- A strong, recognized and supported Native visible presence on campus
- Hire Indian faculty / support staff / tribal liaison / leadership positions
- Native recognized groups on campus
- Provide space and place
- Provide student program support
- Stand alone programs that are not isolated
- Recognize and build relationships with tribes and tribal communities

Institutions of Higher Education

Suggestions to better serve Native students

- Connect / collaborate with tribal colleges and universities
- Connect with K-12 education / Pipeline
- Direct Development offices to work with Native programs
- Support AIS programs and other Native programs (Educator training)
- Give Indian programs priority status
- Strong Commitment from the top that is visible, recognized and given to the entire university/college community
- Annual assessment of Native programs

Future

- Optimistic

- The bumpy journal will continue, but the Ups will be greater than the Downs and Roundabouts
- Students, faculty, staff and programs will continue to grow
- Faith in our young people / current students

Thank You

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