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Los Angeles

Indigenous Student Affairs Professionals as Cultural Knowledge Brokers

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Education

by

Renee White Eyes

2023

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Indigenous Student Affairs Professionals as Cultural Knowledge Brokers

by

Renee White Eyes

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2023

Professor Ananda Marin, Chair

This dissertation draws on Indigenous research paradigms including Critical Indigenous Research Methodology, the 4 Rs, and Indigenous Storywork to explore the ways Indigenous student affairs professionals (SAPs) navigate the university. Conversational interviews and talking circles were the primary methods for gathering Indigenous SAPs stories of their experiences working at higher education institutions. A bottom up and top down approach was used to code the interviews and generate themes. Indigenous Feminisms was used analytic lens during the coding process in order to foreground how Indigenous SAPs experience the settler colonial history of universities. Participant profiles were crafted in order to further analyze the stories that were shared. Findings are presented in the form of story composites with researcher reflections interwoven between composites. Participants' stories showcase how Indigenous SAPs draw on their experiential knowledge to translate university admission policies with Indigenous students and communities. Their stories showcase the intellectual work Indigenous student affairs professionals engage in as they move between Indigenous communities and the university, or what I call cultural knowledge brokering. Learning from these Indigenous student affairs professionals can shed light on how to inform better university policy for Indigenous

students and staff at public four-year institutions by creating a cultural knowledge brokering framework.

The dissertation of Renee White Eyes is approved.

Teresa L. McCarty

Shannon Speed

Jessica C. Harris

Ananda M. Marin, Committee Chair

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CURRICULUM VITAE
RENEE WHITE EYES
rwhiteeyes@ucla.edu | 760-315-3940

EDUCATION

University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)
Doctoral Candidate in Social Research Methodology 2017 – 2023
Dissertation Committee: Ananda Marin (Chair), Teresa McCarty, Jessica Harris, Shannon Speed

University of San Diego
M.A. Counseling May 2008

California State University, San Marcos
B.A. Human Development May 2006

HONORS AND AWARDS

UC Berkeley Gardner Research Seminar on Higher Education Fellow	2022 - 2023
Spencer Postdoctoral Fellowship Semifinalist	2022 - 2023
Summer Institute on Global Indigeneities Fellow	Summer 2020
Graduate Student Research Mentorship, UCLA	Summer 2020
Graduate Council Diversity Fellowship, UCLA	Spring 2020
Walking Shield, Inc.	2017 – 2019
Little Eagle Free, Inc.	2017 – 2022
American Indian Chamber of Commerce	2018 – 2019
Eugene V. Cota-Robles Fellowship, UCLA	2017 – 2021

SELECT PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

White Eyes, R. (2020). [Review of the book *No Study Without Struggle: Confronting Settler Colonialism in Higher Education* by L. Patel]. *American Indian Culture and Research Journal 44*(4).

Marin, A., Orellana Faulstich, E.N., Bordeaux, C., Clark, H., Gravell, J., Lindberg, L., Morales, D., Rodriguez, L. & **White Eyes, R.** (2020). The embodied and relational dimensions of video as substrate. In Keifert, D. (Symposium Chair) *Analytical Designs: Goodwin's Substrates as a Tool for Studying Learning.* Nashville, TN: International Society of the Learning Sciences.

Marin, A., Stewart-Ambo, T., McDaid-Morgan, N., **White Eyes, R.**, & Bang, M. (2020). Enacting relationships of kinship and care in research and educational settings. In A. Ali & T.L. McCarty, (Eds.), *Critical Youth Research in Education: Methodologies of Praxis and Care* (pp. 243-264). Routledge.

White Eyes, R. (2019, November). *American Indian Recruiter Experiences at an Elite Four-Year University* [Roundtable Session]. Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) Conference, Portland, Oregon.

White Eyes, R. (2019, April). *Accounting for Culture in Undergraduate Admission: Holistic Review and the Experiences of American Indian Students and Admissions Staff.* In S. Waterman (chair), The College Experience for Indigenous Youth: Facing Roadblocks While Engaging with Cultural Identity and Policy [Symposium]. American Education Research Association (AERA) Conference, Toronto, Canada.

White Eyes, R. (2018, May). *American Indian Recruiter Experiences at an Elite Four-Year University.* In T.Ambo (chair), College Holistic Review and Native American Students [Symposium]. Native American and Indigenous Studies Association, Los Angeles, CA.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Assistant, Department of Education, UCLA 2018 – 2022
EDUC 222A: Introduction to Qualitative Methods & Design Issues in Educational Research (Fall 2018, 2019, 2021)
EDUC 222B: Participant-Observation Field Methods (Winter 2019, 2020, 2022)
EDUC 222C: Qualitative Data Reduction & Analysis (Spring 2019, 2020, 2022)

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Graduate Student Researcher 2022 – 2023
Supervisor: Dr. Cecilia Rios-Aguilar, School of Education and Information Studies, UCLA

Graduate Student Researcher Summer 2018, 2019, 2022
Supervisor: Dr. Ananda Marin, School of Education and Information Studies, UCLA

SERVICE

Association for the Study of Higher Education 2020 – 2021
Indigenous Land Acknowledgment Working Group, Special Interest Group (SIG)

American Education Research Association 2019 – 2020
Graduate Student Representative, Indigenous Peoples of the Americas (SIG)

Department of Education, UCLA School of Education and Information Studies 2019 – 2020
Graduate Student Representative, Social Research Methodology Division
Graduate Student Representative, Qualitative Methods Faculty Search Committee

TRIBAL AFFILIATIONS

Tribal member of the Fort Yuma Quechan Indians, Descendant of the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California, Bridgeport Indian Colony and Oglala Lakota

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In 2019, as part of my doctoral studies at UCLA, I conducted a qualitative study about the experiences of three American Indian women who worked as American Indian recruiters at a public, four-year university. I was originally interested in how they navigated the university and how they made decisions when reviewing the files of prospective applicants. What was shared during the interviews was so much more than I had anticipated. The participants shared how their previous educational experiences influenced their work. For example, the ways in which their American Indian identity influenced their work as recruiters was a topic of discussion. They remembered institutional agents who gave them negative messages about attending college as well as those who assisted them with their own college applications. The recruiters felt it was important to reciprocate the same support to the students they worked with. Moreover, all three women mentioned experiencing acts of erasure in the workplace and the steps they took to educate their departments in order to create better working conditions for themselves. Participants also felt compelled to draw on Indigenous worldviews and cultural practices at the workplace in order to give prospective Native students the best chance at admission. Related to this, the recruiters also felt the need to translate admission policy to Indigenous communities to give prospective youth a competitive chance at admission. For example, Sally, one of the participants in my study, shared with me a conversation she had with her supervisors about how to assess "extraordinary talent" when reviewing Native American students' application materials:

> Okay, I have a student here from out of state. She's the only Tewa speaker in this entire pool. So it's like in 112,000 applications, I only have one tribal speaker. Can you view this as extraordinary talent? Can you view our knowledge as extraordinary because it is.

In this exchange, Sally, an American Indian recruiter, explains that tribal knowledge (i.e., speaking an Indigenous language) is important to Indigenous communities. She also describes taking on the perspective of tribal communities to explain to the admissions office why speaking an Indigenous language should be considered an "extraordinary talent" and how this talent fits within the admission review process. This is one of many examples that participants shared which demonstrated how they wove together cultural knowledge (e.g., being a fluent tribal language speaker) and knowledge on university admission policy (e.g., extraordinary talent) in order to make a case to an admission committee about why a particular Native American student should be considered competitive in the context of their community environment and the admission process. I have termed this translation of knowledge *cultural knowledge brokering (CKB)*. What I learned from these recruiters about cultural knowledge brokering has led to the design of this dissertation study, and my exploration of CKB.

Problem Statement

Despite a long distrust of government institutions, American Indian communities see higher education as a tool for supporting communal goals including nation building (Brayboy, 2005; Brayboy, Fann, Castagno, & Solyom, 2012; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006). One reason for this distrust is the way that government agencies have used education, both secular and religious, as a tool for removing American Indian children from their homes with the goal of assimilating Native people to live in what is now known as the United States (Fryberg & Markus, 2003; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006). Despite this, American Indian communities recognize schools as possible sites where individuals and collectives can advance Indigenous self-determination (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006). Developing diverse pathways for American Indian students to attend institutions of higher education is one of several ways to

support self-determination and Native nation building. Indigenous student affairs professionals (SAPs) are crucial players in these efforts.

In their role as cultural knowledge brokers, Indigenous SAPs translate university policies to Indigenous communities and educate the university on Indigenous peoples. For example, they are tasked with providing recommendations and feedback to prospective Indigenous applicants about the various aspects of the college application process. At some institutions, this can include explaining how students can effectively communicate their cultural knowledge and experiences in ways that are relevant to the criteria for admissions. Indigenous SAPs also educate university personnel on Indigenous communities. When I worked as an American Indian recruiter in undergraduate admission, I remember having to explain the following: what sovereignty is, what it means to be a federally recognized tribe, and the diversity of tribal people in California. These examples show how Indigenous SAPs often find themselves in the role of cultural knowledge broker, taking on the perspectives of both Indigenous students and the institution for which they work and sharing these perspectives with diverse groups of stakeholders.

Although the Indigenous SAPs recognize the importance of this knowledge brokering, it comes with a price. They have to struggle with an internal dilemma when recruiting, knowing that while their work can be pivotal to supporting Indigenous students and their goals around giving back, the students they recruit will likely encounter hostile campus communities/environments when pursuing the degrees they plan to use for the economic and political betterment of their communities, communities that themselves have ambivalent attitudes toward mainstream educational institutions (Brayboy, Fann, et. al., 2012; Minthorn & Nelson, 2018). In addition, these Indigenous SAPs also face "hostile" campus environments and seek out safe spaces to survive the job they do.

My dissertation is centered around self-identifying Indigenous SAPs and how they engage in cultural knowledge brokering to navigate the university and their job. My research was guided by Critical Indigenous Research Methodology (CIRM), and Indigenous Storywork. I also drew on Indigenous Feminisms as a framework and mode of analysis for this study. With CIRM, I centered the principles of culturally responsive representation, beneficial research, honoring traditional customs, and holding oneself accountable to the Indigenous participants I engaged in research with (Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008). Cree scholar Shawn Wilson (2008) argues that Indigenous researchers cannot be separated from the research because we are accountable to our people, and therefore, must demonstrate relational accountability throughout the research process. I held myself accountable to the Indigenous SAPs who agreed to participate in my dissertation project through the methodological design of the study. For example, while conducting my pilot study I learned that participants' stories foregrounded how their work gives voice to Indigenous students and the communities they represent. Building with this knowledge, I utilized CIRM and Indigenous Feminisms as methodological frameworks, both of which position stories as a reliable form of data and highlight the important role of stories for meaning making and theorizing (Brayboy, 2005; Brayboy et al., 2013; Goeman, 2013; Miranda, 2013; Risling Baldy, 2018). In addition, I utilized the 4R's (respect, reverence, reciprocity, and responsibility) throughout the research process. I discuss this further in Chapter 3. I complement my use of these theories and methodologies with Indigenous Storywork. I engaged in the process of Storywork to gather participants' stories about their work at the institution.

My research is motivated by the following question: What stories do Indigenous student affairs professionals share about their experiences working at the university? I explore how Indigenous SAPs story their relationships with Indigenous knowledge systems, the colonial

histories of universities, and their work with Indigenous students. This dissertation is guided by the following questions:

- How do Indigenous student affairs professionals use Indigenous ways of knowing and their knowledge of university policies to advocate for Native students?
- How do Indigenous student affairs professionals understand the colonial history of the university?
- What does this history mean for the work of Indigenous student affairs professionals with Indigenous students?

To answer these questions, I used a variety of methods discussed further in this Introduction.

Conceptual and Methodological Framework Guiding This Study

My research design and choice of methods was guided by Indigenous research methodologies. Specifically, I drew on the 4 Rs (respect, reciprocity, relationships, and responsibility) to recruit and establish connections with participants. Once participants were identified, I invited them to participate in a conversational interview (Kovach, 2010). My approach to conversational interviewing was guided by Jo-Ann Archibald's Indigenous Storywork, the 4 Rs, and Seidman's phenomenological approach. For example, I invited participants to a talking circle in order to gain their feedback on cultural knowledge brokering but allowed them to lead the discussion. I grounded my analytic approach in Indigenous Feminisms and the 4 Rs by reviewing transcripts for the role of power, gendered experiences, the role of relationships and reciprocity.

Significance of Study

I have yet to find scholarship on American Indian education that views higher education from the perspective of Indigenous student affairs professionals. There is literature on access,

underrepresentation, and retention of Indigenous students in higher education (Brayboy, 2005; Brayboy, Fann, Castagno, & Solyom, 2012; Brayboy, Gough, et. al. 2013). However, research has not explored the cognitive and emotional demands that Indigenous staff experience as they assist Indigenous students. Understanding the workplace demands of Indigenous SAPs and the role they play is important and can inform practices and policies around recruitment, admissions, and retention as well as workplace wellbeing. In addition, this research can assist with deconstructing monolithic representations of Indigenous peoples in higher education by sharing the diverse experiences of Indigenous SAPs. Although the challenges facing Indigenous SAPs are unique, many minoritized communities wrestle with monolithic representations of their communities (e.g., Eason, Brady, & Fryberg, 2018; Leavitt et al., 2015). For example, an international SAP who is tasked with servicing international students is responsible for multiple countries/territories. All of the students they represent are different from one another, with different cultures and traditions, but are still being categorized under one group. Likewise, a student affairs professional for Latin American students could face the same fate. Better understanding how Indigenous SAPs navigate and resist monolithic representations can contribute to the larger field of research on the experiences of minoritized SAPs at higher educational institutions. This research can also potentially contribute to diversity and equity initiatives by examining how Indigenous SAPs are disrupting two structures that are foundations of higher education institutions -- settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy.

A Note on Terminology

Before proceeding, it is important to point out terminology that will be used throughout this dissertation and the purpose for using these terms. Following the lead of Native scholars in the field of American Indian education, I use the terms “Native American,” “Native,” “American

Indian," and "Indigenous" interchangeably. I do this for a few reasons: to honor the multiplicity of ways that Native people refer to themselves, to recognize international and global relations among Indigenous peoples, and more particularly in North America (Shotton, Lowe, & Waterman, 2013; McClellan, 2018), and to showcase that Indigenous SAPs work with diverse groups of students who self-identify as Native American, Native, American Indian, and/or Indigenous. I also recognize that these terms can be seen as problematic. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2013) points out that referring to all Native people with the single term Indigenous can erase distinct and important differences between Indigenous communities. However, I want to honor the different ways that students may refer to themselves and also honor the complexity of the terminology that Indigenous SAPs encounter in the day-to-day experiences of their professional and personal lives.

The next chapter provides a broad overview of the history of higher education and Native communities, historical factors surrounding recruitments of AI/AN students, current enrollment trends for AI/AN students, history of student affairs professionals, and literature on Indigenous higher education. At the end of the chapter I discuss cultural knowledge brokering and how I came to a working definition of the concept. Chapter three explains the research design of the dissertation, the methodology that guides the design, and the theoretical framework that I utilize for analysis. Chapter four presents the stories of the participants. I conclude with findings and implications in chapter five.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this dissertation, I draw on the lens of historicity, which involves understanding how present-day interactions are tied to the histories of individuals and cultural communities. As Gutiérrez et al. (2017) explain:

> Thus, each moment is interwoven with not only the surroundings in the present day but also the historical legacy of each time scale that manifests through artifacts, including language (Cole, 1998). Historicity is thus fundamental for developing a full understanding of the structural conditions that mediate people's lives, as well as how people come to see who they are and who they can become (Gutiérrez, 2016). In centering historicity, we are better able to understand the tensions, constraints, and possibilities of activity systems (Engeström, 1999) and focus on the history of people's participation in practices to understand what gives meaning to their lives (Gutiérrez, 2016) (p. 42).

I argue that the colonial history of education and higher education institutions shapes the experiences of Indigenous student affairs professionals. For this reason, I briefly review the history of Native education and higher education. My intent is to better situate the underrepresentation of Indigenous students and staff at higher education institutions (HEIs) and why HEIs need Indigenous student affairs.

This chapter begins with a review on the broad history of higher education and Native communities and historical factors surrounding the recruitment of American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) students. I provide background on current enrollment trends of AI/AN students, and the history of student affairs professionals (SAPs). I then transition to discuss research on campus climate for Indigenous staff. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion on what has

been written about knowledge brokering as well as a working definition of cultural knowledge brokering.

A Broad Overview of the History of Higher Education and Native Communities

Literature about American Indians in higher education is sparse. According to Minthorn and Shotton (2018), Indigenous perspectives have been represented in only 1.3% of higher education scholarship. They note that this underrepresentation "is testament to the sheer invisibility of Indigenous people in higher education scholarship" (p. 9). Disrupting this invisibility will require institutional commitments to both deepening understandings of the history of American Indian education and institutional recognition of universities' roles in the "systemic power, privilege, and historic oppression of minority groups" (Hakkola & Ropers-Huilman, 2018, p. 422). For example, although land acknowledgements have been adopted by many universities, higher education institutions rarely orient staff and students to their historical and contemporary relationships with Indigenous communities or the history of American Indian education within their geographical regions. As Minthorn and Nelson (2018) point out, the timeline used in diversity and equity efforts focus their beginnings on civil rights movements on college campuses. Although important, starting here does adequately address the settler colonial roots of HEIs. These Native scholars argue that "History should not be internalized as a stagnant moment of time that happened years ago but rather seen as a continued force that informs everyday norms and operations (Weiss & Fine, 2012)" (p. 75). Basically, to understand what Indigenous staff and student are experiencing at HEIs, campuses have to understand the historical relationship between Western education and Indigenous communities.

In this section, I discuss how some institutions funded their campuses and/or were granted land to build their campuses to locate where many Indigenous SAPs find themselves and the historical atrocities that occurred at these institutions. Indigenous communities remember what has occurred on some of these campuses (for example, at the request to Indigenous communities both the University of Denver and Northwestern University created commissions to investigate the role of one of the founders, John Evans, in the Sand Creek Massacre). Many Indigenous SAPs wrestle with these histories as they carry out their work and move between university campuses and Indigenous communities.

Historically, higher education has been a tool for assimilating Native people to Western ways of knowing and being, and converting Natives to organized religion (Wright & Tierney, 1991). Here I briefly sketch this history by using the California mission system as an example to contextualize the harm that stemmed from forcing California Native communities to live within the mission system. When Indigenous SAPs work at a university in California, they work with Indigenous students that are from California Native communities, and need to understand why these Native communities may distrust these institutions even while supporting youth to attend them.

There were twenty-one missions that branched from San Diego in southern California, all the way to Sonoma in northern California (Sandos, 2004; Risling Baldy, 2018). On the West Coast in the 1500s, California Indians experienced colonization from the Spanish and enslavement into the Franciscan mission system (Sandos, 2004; Hackel, 2005; Risling Baldy, 2018). The overriding goal of the mission system was to occupy Indigenous lands and waters. To accomplish this goal, the mission system created programs to educate the “savages” to be more civilized and convert them to organized religion (Sandos, 2004; Risling Baldy, 2018). In

addition, schools were set up on reservations as well as off reservation locations by the Catholic church and other organized religions for vocational training, domesticating, and ultimately converting the local Native people to religion (Harley, 1999). The mission era, from 1776 – 1836, had a devastating impact on California Indians (Miranda, 2013). Over this period of time which spanned sixty years, 80% of the California Indian population died as a result of missionaries "reeducating" the Native (Miranda, 2013).

On the East coast in the 1600s, European colonizers selected a group of local Indigenous people to attend higher education in the hopes that this group would be enlightened to the Western way of living and return to influence others in their Indigenous communities to the Western way (Brayboy et. al., 2012). In 1617, a college, which eventually became the College of William and Mary, was created for the "savages" in Henrico, Virginia (Wright & Tierney, 1991); in 1654, Harvard built an Indian college that could accommodate up to thirty Native students in 1693; and in 1769, William and Mary was officially founded to educate American Indian communities (Wright & Tierney, 1991; Brayboy et. al., 2012). These examples demonstrate the long historical relationship between higher education and Indigenous communities as well as to demonstrate reasons for Indigenous communities not trusting Western education.

The practice of creating educational programs as a means to "civilize" Native peoples and solve the "Indian problem" was taken up through federal policymaking in the 1800s and extended well into the 1900s. The mission of educating Indigenous people was linked to the founder of the Carlisle boarding school, Richard Pratt, who introduced the larger idea of " killing the Indian and saving the man" (Pratt, 1908; Wright & Tierney, 1991; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006). The federal government was counting on these assimilated Natives to return home and educate the rest of their community with their "enlightenment"; however, some Native students

refused to return home (Brayboy et. al., 2012). We see this throughout the history of education. For example, during the boarding school era, many boarding schools used punitive measures to regulate behavior. American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) children were punished for speaking their language, practicing their cultural traditions, and attempting to escape in order to return to their communities (Brayboy, 2005; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Brayboy, 2013). AI/AN children were poorly taken care of and many died due to disease (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; McCarty & Lee, 2014). The policies during this time period supported U.S. nation building efforts. These policies attempted to assimilate Native peoples through education and by displacing Native peoples from their lands. Higher educational institutions were also used in U.S. nation building efforts and one example of this is land grant institutions.

In 1862 and 1890, the Morrill Land Grants Acts were passed, which allowed "public" land to be donated to or purchased by the states in order to provide space for the construction of higher educational institutions for public access (Stein, 2020). The land deemed as "public" was Native territory and in many cases, land that Native communities had been forcibly removed from. As Wilder (2013) documents, private universities on the East Coast funded their campus operations by "renting" enslaved peoples. Other forms of funding also came from the purchasing of land that was once occupied by Native communities and leasing lands as real estate property. Wilder (2013) notes that President Monroe "...urged Congress to vacate Native Americans' land rights and settle Indians in such ways as to encourage the western expansion of white people" (p. 249) through the Indian Removal Act. This allowed governmental officials, plantation owners, and others to buy the land Indigenous communities were displaced from. Other universities used land grants to tap into the agricultural economy to generate funding for their campuses. While some of these universities were created specifically for "educating" Indigenous people, like

Dartmouth and William and Mary, they were also using slave labor for their own purposes, such as construction, maintenance, and farming just to name a few.

As we progress to the 1900s, foundations and the federal government backed a series of investigations and policies that had a significant impact on American Indian education. The Meriam Report, published in 1928, critiqued the federal government's treatment of American Indians, which included the boarding school era of Indian education (Meriam et al., 1928). What dawned from the Meriam Report were programs aimed at assisting the health and economic wellbeing of Indigenous people with the hope of supporting their integration into mainstream society (Meriam et al., 1928; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006). As head of the BIA, John Collier worked on several pieces of legislation that were associated with the Indian New Deal. In 1934 the Indian Reorganization Act was passed as well as the Johnson O'Malley Act, which offered federal resources to tribes to support social service programs. This included providing funding for educational programs, which had an impact on Native student enrollment at institutions of higher education. Vocational programs began to emerge in the 1930s for Native students, and HEIs were able to access federal funding for these programs (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006). Veterans began to access the World War II GI bill (one of the New Deal reforms), and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) began to offer scholarships (Brayboy et. al., 2012). These scholarships caused a dramatic increase of Indigenous students enrolled in HEIs. For example, 385 Native students entered HEIs in 1932. By the 1950s, enrollment numbers increased to two thousand Native students. By 1965 seven thousand Native students were enrolled in HEIs. However, when compared to the national average, Native students still only made up 1% of the national student enrollment at each time point (Brayboy et al., 2012; NCES, 2005a). Around the

same time that the number of students in HEIs increased, student affairs professionals (SAPs) at HEIs saw an increase in their administrative duties which will be discussed more in depth later.

Historical Factors Surrounding Recruitment of AI/AN Students

Tribal communities' complex and unique history with the federal government is one of the reasons why recruiting and retaining AI/AN students is different from other student groups. AI/AN communities are "...a political group combined with social, economic, and geographic factors [that] present unique challenges for delivery, access, and quality of services…" (Brayboy, Solyom, & Castagno, 2015, p. 154). Although the U.S. government acknowledges the political status of tribes in Section 1 of the 2004 Executive Order 13336 (2015), it is important to remember that Native peoples are inherent sovereigns and their sovereignty predates the settler government constitution (Brayboy, 2005; Brayboy et al., 2012; Brayboy, 2013; Brayboy, Solyom, & Castagno, 2015). This is important because as sovereign nations, Tribal communities have a government-to-government relationship with state and federal governments. In addition, it was through treaty making processes, that the United States government "…promised American Indian peoples access to healthcare and educational services" (Brayboy et al., 2015, p. 156).

In his work on Tribal Critical Race theory Brayboy (2013) argues that Native people occupy liminal spaces by holding racialized and political identities. He states, "...our political/legal standing is located in 'old pieces of paper,' [the Constitution, Supreme Court rulings] while our status as members of a racialized group of people is rooted in twentieth- and twenty-first-century policy and legislative acts" (p. 94). For example, the racialized and political identities of Native peoples are factors in recruiting and admissions practices. Many of these practices are shaped by factors like affirmative action which has been legislated in the courts.

The University of California (UC) campuses is a system where the political status of AI/AN is considered in admissions. In July 2008, the University of California Board of Admissions and Relation with Schools (BOARS) passed a motion "… to include an applicant's membership in a federally recognized American Indian tribe as one of the many considerations in undergraduate admissions." (M. T. Brown, personal communication, August 14, 2008). The Guidelines for Implementation of University Policy on Undergraduate Admission list a selection of criteria that is acceptable to consider during the application review that includes personal background and life experiences, where membership in a federally tribe is recognized (2008). What this means is that American Indian students who apply to the UC, and are members of federally recognized tribes, are a plus factor in the admission process. This admission policy by the UC was in response to California's voting for Proposition 209 that prohibited admissions decisions from being made on the basis of race or ethnicity (https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/infocenter/admissions-residency-and-ethnicity). Therefore, the UC campuses began using a holistic review admission process to increase diversity on their college campuses (https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/infocenter/admissions-residency-and-ethnicity). As a result of implementing this policy, we have seen a slight trend in AI/AN student applications to the UC. In 2008, there were 796 AI/AN student applicants out of 122,382 total number of applicants (https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/infocenter/admissions-residency-and-ethnicity). There has been an increase in 2020 of 1,035 AI/AN applicants out of 215,544 total number of applicants (https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/infocenter/admissions-residency-and-ethnicity). While there has been an increase of AI/AN applicants since the holistic review has been implemented at the UC, there has also been a dramatic increase in student applications

across all student populations, but the number of AI/AN student applicants still remains below 1% since 2008. It is inconclusive on whether the holistic review is the cause for the increase in AI/AN applications to the UC system.

As these examples demonstrate, there are numerous factors that can impact the admissions, enrollment, and persistence of Indigenous students. As we move to the state of Indigenous students in higher education institutions today, it's important for HEIs to acknowledge the historical trauma that these institutions have caused for Indigenous communities. As Brayboy et al. (2012) state, "…if institutions of higher education were more knowledgeable about the unique political status of Indigenous people and nations, they would better understand students and the institution's responsibility toward Indigenous students and communities" (p. 1). The ignoring of this history by HEIs sets Indigenous student affairs professionals up for failure. These SAPs can only do so much in educating staff about these historical atrocities but until the institutions themselves acknowledge this history, change on campus cannot occur. This is one of the many tasks that Indigenous SAPs have and also why having these SAPs who know about the historical trauma is so important.

Current Enrollment Trends for AI/AN Students

Research on diversity in the admissions and enrollment process at four-year universities, rarely mentions American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) students or group AI/AN students into one category (Antonovics & Backes, 2014). In addition, research on American Indian recruitment tends to focus on the need to recruit AI/AN students, and AI/AN student motivations for pursuing higher education. I argue that Indigenous SAPs are one reason for Indigenous students attending higher education institutions and in order to recruit more Indigenous students,

the campus needs to reflect the populations they are trying to recruit. Indigenous SAPs also play a critical role in retaining AI/AN students, which I will go more in depth throughout this study.

What is available in the literature states the concern for the low number of AI/AN students enrolled at institutions of higher education, and who are the least likely to receive a college education. The issue of low enrollment and low retention rates for AI/AN students begins before stepping onto a college campus. AI/AN students have the highest high school dropout rates (Brayboy et al., 2012), and recent data on 2018 high school graduation rates show 73.5% of Native students graduated, compared to 92.2% of all other graduating students in the U.S. (High school graduation rates, 2019). For the Indigenous students that continue on to HEIs, the population of AI/AN students has increased over the past thirty years, but despite the increase, enrollment for AI/AN students remains around or below 1% (Brayboy et al., 2012; Shotton, Lowe, & Waterman, 2013). Meanwhile, other student group enrollment numbers have increased over time (Shotton, Lowe, & Waterman, 2013; McClellan, 2018). Scholars have found multiple reasons for low enrollment at HEIs: low high school graduation rates, lack of college preparation, first-generation status, admission requirements, cost of tuition, and family expectations, just to name a few (Brayboy et al., 2012; Brayboy, Solyom, & Castagno, 2015). In addition, once on campus, Native students are away from their community and may not find an active Native community on campus, which can lead to feelings of isolation and dropping out of the institution (Brayboy et al., 2012; Brayboy, Solyom, & Castagno, 2015). Based on my own experiences and the stories that other Indigenous SAPs have shared with me, I believe that SAPs hold all this knowledge and broker their knowledge to help in the recruitment and retention process.

Indigenous scholars indicate that one way to enroll and retain AI/AN students is by hiring more Native staff as they bring this familiarity and culture to their work (Brayboy, 2005; Brayboy et al., 2012; Brayboy, 2013; Shotton, Lowe, & Waterman, 2013; Brayboy, Solyom, & Castagno, 2015; McClellan, 2018; Minthorn & Shotton, 2018). However, just as there are low numbers of Native students at HEIs, we also find low numbers of Indigenous staff in HEIs. What challenges are these professional staff having to face? How are Native individuals navigating these spaces? What kind of intellectual and emotional work happens within these institutional agents to navigate these environments? I believe that the field can learn from these experiences and better inform resources at the institutions.

History of Student Affairs Professionals in Higher Education

In order to situate the climate and context of Indigenous student affairs professionals working at four-year universities, I provide a brief overview of student affairs professionals (SAPs) in higher education. A synthesis of literature on the history of student affairs was conducted by Michael Hevel in 2016. This synthesis reviewed works across a 20-year time span (i.e.,1996 – 2015) in order to contribute to scholarship on the history of education. As Hevel (2016) explains, historians of higher education have primarily focused their research in the following areas: positions and practice, professionalizing the field and creation of organizations, and how SAPs experienced sexism, racism, and homophobia. In addition, how the field of student affairs developed historically reflects what was occurring in U.S. society. It wasn't until the 1990s that scholarship on the history of student affairs professionals started to appear more widely.

As Hevel (2016) documents, student affairs professionals were first hired to address the needs and welfare of college students. The student population in HEIs started to increase after

World War II due to veterans taking advantage of the G.I. Bill and the increasing availability of scholarships. More SAPs were hired to meet student demand and fulfill administrative responsibilities. Some of the tasks for SAPs included student discipline, housing issues (operation and constructing), student enrollment, and addressing why students were dropping out. With increased responsibilities, SAPs saw the need to gather with others to converse about the issues occurring on their campuses. This eventually led to the formal organization of groups like the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) in 1951.

In addition, Hevel (2016) discusses the sexism, racism, and homophobia that some SAPs experienced. In the 20th century, there was unequal treatment between men and women that was noticeable through the salary and expected responsibilities. Women were paid less, some were denied raises, and others were expected to live on campus to supervise female students on campus whereas men did not have the same expectations. Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) were not generally hired as SAPs at universities. However, as a result of the civil rights movements in the late 1960s and 1970s, higher education institutions started to see an increase of BIPOC students. HEIs began to hire more BIPOC staff to reflect the change in the student population. HEIs also incorporated “diversity training” amongst its staff. Homophobia also shaped institutional policies. Between 1920 to 1960, SAPs were given the task of disciplining, expelling, or even leading LGBTQ+ students to commit suicide. This started to change in the late 20th century; however, it is important to note that the history is mostly written from a Western, cismale perspective (Hevel, 2016; Patton, 2016). While the treatment of LGBTQ+ staff and students is not a focus in this research, I believe it is worth mentioning as a product of the settler system and something to incorporate for future research.

When utilizing historicity as a lens (Gutiérrez, 2016), we can better understand perceptions of the past and historical practices that have silenced and erased the voices and experiences of Black, Indigenous, and people of color student affairs professionals. The development of SAP positions has also followed the trajectory of higher education, which silenced and erased Indigenous students (Patton, 2016). As Thelin (2003) argues, higher education has played a role in "...'transplant[ing] and perfect[ing] the English idea of an undergraduate education as a civilizing experience that ensured a progression of responsible leaders for both church and state' (p. 5)." This progression has been enabled by SAPs, including cis-white, males who uphold settler colonial heteropatriarchy. Shotton, Lowe, & Waterman (2013) argues that "Awareness of the history of the land on which the university is built can also be very important because it may be culturally significant to the tribes in the area or region" (p. 43). Keeping this context and history of SAPs in mind, I segue to literature on Indigenous higher education.

Literature on Indigenous Higher Education

Literature on Indigenous higher education tends to be centered around Indigenous students at postsecondary institutions, or how the support and presence of Native staff assist in the persistence of Indigenous students. The research on Native American recruitment more often than not centers students' experiences with recruitment. In 2020, I conducted a holistic review of articles published on American Indian/Indigenous education. I bounded my review to articles published in the Journal of American Indian Education (JAIE) because of its primary focus on American Indian and Indigenous education. My review included articles published from 1960 to the Fall of 2019 and included the following search terms: college recruit*, college retention, retain*, higher education, student affairs, and persistence. I found 84 articles on American

Indians and higher education from these search terms. Seven of the articles looked at tribal colleges, Indian education centers at universities, the 4 Rs, strengthening language and culture, institutional responsibility and accountability, and experiences of Indigenous faculty at HEIs. Table 1 showcases a breakdown of how many articles were written for the different themes. This gave me additional motivation to engage in this research as I couldn’t find literature on Indigenous student affairs professionals.

Table 1

Review of the Journal of American Indian Education

Theme	Number of Articles
Tribal Colleges	2
Indian Education Centers at Universities	1
The 4 Rs	1
Strengthening Language and Culture	1
Institutional Responsibility and Accountability	1
Experiences of Indigenous Faculty at HEIs	1

I believe the work Indigenous SAPs engage in is beneficial to HEIs and Native communities. I also believe that their stories need to be told and are valuable in diversity and inclusion at these institutions.

Climate of Indigenous Student Affairs Professionals in Higher Education

In *Beyond the asterisk: Understanding native students in higher education* (Shotton, Lowe, & Waterman, 2013), various authors give recommendations on how HEIs can better support Indigenous students and why their recommendations are necessary. A few examples include integrating Indigenous culture into student affairs, the experience of first-year Native college students, and the experience of one author as special advisor to a university president on Native American affairs (Shotton, Lowe, & Waterman, 2013). While I draw on this literature extensively in this dissertation to support my arguments, there wasn't a chapter on Indigenous SAP experiences at four-year universities. According to Shotton, Lowe, & Waterman (2013), Native staff are only 0.6% of the total staff population across the nation in HEIs. More than

likely, the Indigenous staff that are at the institution are the only Native staff in the department. Research demonstrates that Indigenous SAPs are confronted with constantly educating their non-Native colleagues, staff, faculty, and administrators on Indigenous communities (Shotton, Lowe, & Waterman, 2013). They experience isolation, invisibility, and loneliness, just like the students they serve. Serving Indigenous students helps combat the feelings of loneliness and isolation, gives Native staff members a sense of community, and motivates their work.

Indigenous student affairs professionals at higher education institutions are "…positioned as influential figures in the retention and success of [American Indian and Alaska Native] students" (Hakkola & Ropers-Huilman, 2018, p. 427). The available literature tells us the importance of Indigenous SAPs: they connect with key personnel across campus to build relationships and support for Native students, they serve as role models for Native students, they can serve as buffers between Native students and the campus bureaucracy at times, and they support Native students grow spiritually, personally, and academically (Shotton, Lowe, & Waterman, 2013; Minthorn & Shotton, 2018). Most importantly though, Indigenous student affairs professionals are a shining light in the darkness of academia, a welcoming and warm place that American Indian students can go where they will not be questioned or put in a position to explain traditional practices (Shotton, Lowe, & Waterman, 2013).

Having Indigenous staff to recruit and retain AI/AN students is important, as staff at HEIs tend to lack the knowledge about the history and needs of AI/AN communities (Brayboy, Solyom, & Castagno, 2015). Their knowledge and understanding of tribal nations are extremely valuable and important to the success of AI/AN students. Indigenous SAPs must know how to respectfully approach different Native communities due to the historical trauma from boarding schools and the mistrust of the federal government. Indigenous SAPs also have to deal with the

political dynamics that accompany Indigenous nations. These SAPs work with federally recognized communities, state recognized communities, non-federally recognized communities, urban Indigenous communities, and non-profit organizations that service Indigenous people in addition to the different departments, administrators, and students on campus (Shotton, Lowe, & Waterman, 2013).

Indigenous SAPs may have knowledge of the admission policies of the institution they work for, and if they do not, then they know someone at the campus who does. They have knowledge of the resources available to AI/AN students in order to set these students up for success at the institution (Brayboy, 2005; Brayboy et al., 2012; Brayboy, 2013; Shotton, Lowe, & Waterman, 2013; Brayboy, Solyom, & Castagno, 2015; McClellan, 2018; Minthorn & Shotton, 2018). This translation of cultural knowledge into the administrative process and vice versa is complex. I believe they engage in cultural knowledge brokering because university administrators "...often do not understand the fundamental facts about American Indians and . . . . complicate the task of the university administration" (Champagne & Stauss, 2002, p. 6). By educating the department on Indigenous communities, our ways of knowing/being, and demonstrating how traditional practices fall within administrative policy, these Indigenous SAPs are critiquing the structure of higher education institutions through the educating of student affairs professionals.

Funds of Knowledge

Funds of knowledge in education was first developed to analyze the cultural practices of working-class Mexican families in way that resisted deficit orientations (Rios-Aguilar et al., 2011). Moll, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzalez (1992) defined funds of knowledge as "...historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or

individual functioning and well-being" (p.133). Over the years, education scholars have continued to build out this concept to more fully address the power dynamics in educational settings. For example, Rios-Aguilar, Kiyama, Gravitt, and Moll (2022) have utilized funds of knowledge to highlight the "competence and knowledge embedded in the life experience of under-represented students and their families" (p. 164) to understand the transition and experience of these students at the university level. I draw on the concept of funds of knowledge to understand how SAPs draw on their experiential knowledge in the workplace. As I explore in the findings section, participants often used skills they had developed over time to translate admission and university policy to Indigenous communities. This practice is highly relevant to the phenomena of interest in this dissertation – cultural knowledge brokering.

Community Cultural Wealth

Another related concept in the literature for cultural knowledge brokering is community cultural wealth. Literature indicates that "...White, middle class culture [is] the standard…" in mainstream U.S. society and "...all other forms and expressions of 'culture' are judged in comparison to this 'norm'" (Yosso, 2005, p. 76). Meaning that the privileged members of society, the White and middle class, dictate which forms of knowledge, skills, and abilities are valued because they are viewed as the top of a hierarchical society and everything is deemed beneath or less than (Yosso, 2005). Because of this, the educational system is structured to view disadvantaged students, who are often from underrepresented communities, as lacking knowledge and abilities that the privileged members of society deem valuable (Yosso, 2005). Indigenous communities pass down traditional and cultural knowledge as well as ways of being, but as experts state, this cultural knowledge "...is not considered to carry any capital in the school context" (Yosso, 2005, p. 76). Cultural knowledge is an essential component for Indigenous

students. These students may bring this knowledge and ways of being to the application and university contexts, and may be written about in personal and scholarship statements. The university may overlook the value of traditional knowledge and not understand how this knowledge fits within the application context. This is why it is important to understand how Indigenous student affairs professionals conceptualize their work, and how they translate knowledge to the university as well as Indigenous communities.

Cultural Knowledge Brokering

Indigenous student affairs professionals, in their professional capacities, are often attempting to address the invisibility of Native communities. They engage in this larger scope of work by developing relationships with Native communities while simultaneously learning university admission policies and translating these policies to Native communities. As previously stated, I view this as a practice of cultural knowledge brokering. While I have not found literature specific to cultural knowledge brokering, I did find research on language brokering and knowledge brokering. For example, Marjorie Faulstich Orellana's (2009) work on language brokering, "a cultural practice that is shaped by the experience of being an immigrant," (p. 3) has influenced how the field of education understands the relationship between language, culture, and knowledge. Orellana (2009) argues that whenever people are "using" language, they are also "using" cultural knowledge. In these instances, we can think about "using" as brokering knowledge across cultural planes of activity.

Knowledge brokering has different definitions including the creation, assimilation and dissemination of knowledge, how organizations create new knowledge, and being the recipients of learning new knowledge (Oldham & McLean, 1997). For the purposes of my dissertation, I build on a definition of knowledge brokering that says the purpose is to "…[bridge] the gaps

between social worlds" (Burt, 2004, p. 353), and extend this definition to include cultural knowledge brokering. Building off of the concepts of funds of knowledge, community cultural wealth, and knowledge brokering, I have a working definition of cultural knowledge brokering as gathering new knowledge, identifying traditional cultural knowledge in order to translate and bridge the gaps between tribal communities and HEIs. Engaging in cultural knowledge brokering requires an immense amount of cognitive and emotional labor of Indigenous SAPs. With this dissertation I am building on studies of knowledge brokering, funds of knowledge and community cultural wealth as well as the Indigenous SAPs experiences to introduce cultural knowledge brokering as a practice of Indigenous SAPs. Cultural knowledge brokering is akin to funds of knowledge and community cultural wealth as Indigenous student affairs professionals use multiple forms of knowledge, including Indigenous ways of being and knowing, to engage in their work to assist Indigenous students. I also want to acknowledge using the term "brokering" sounds patriarchal, white, and heteronormative. I argue that the Indigenous SAPs are working in a patriarchal, white, and heteronormative, and this term is appropriate in this space. For future research, I want to engage more Indigenous SAPs and ask them to name this act that they decide to engage in. I aim to share Indigenous SAPs stories of cultural knowledge brokering and highlight the work they are doing with and for communities in the university setting.

In this chapter I reviewed a broad history of education within American Indian communities. Although limited in scope, this overview provided important information about how the theft of Indigenous lands and waters is directly relevant to the historical and contemporary context of AI/AN education. In addition, this history has motivated my use of Indigenous Feminisms as an analytic frame, which I explore more in Chapter 3. I also covered background literature on the recruitment of AI/AN students, current enrollment trends, and the

history of student affairs professionals. This review of the literature further situates the need to explore the experiences of AI/AN SAPs, including the important role they play in Indigenous self-determination and Indigenous higher education. I concluded this chapter by highlighting scholarship on funds of knowledge, community cultural wealth, and cultural knowledge brokering. These three practices are relevant to the work of Indigenous SAPs and provide a bridge to my conceptual and methodological framework which is further discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

FRAMEWORK

I provided a broad overview of the history of higher education and Native communities in the previous chapter, along with the history of student affairs professionals (SAPs) and current trends for AI/AN students and Indigenous SAPs. I now transition to the conceptual framework guiding my dissertation study. I share what has motivated me to engage in this research, the methodological and theoretical frameworks I utilize, participant demographics, the research activities for this study, and my analytical approach. I believe by understanding how and why Indigenous SAPs engage in this practice, institutions of higher education will have a better understanding of their work and provide more support for the SAPs. As a reminder, my research is guided by the following questions:

- What stories do Indigenous student affairs professionals share about their experiences working at the university?
- How do Indigenous student affairs professionals use Indigenous ways of knowing and their knowledge of university policies to advocate for Native students?
- How do Indigenous student affairs professionals understand the colonial history of the university?
- What does this history mean for the work of Indigenous student affairs professionals with Indigenous students?

Positionality

I write as an urban American Indian woman, who worked as an American Indian recruiter for an undergraduate admission department. I spent four years in this position and had the honor of getting to know and recruit many Indigenous students. I left the recruiter position to

be a manager of an American Indian studies center, where I observed Indigenous women with their doctorate and how they moved within the university space. This influenced me to return to school for my doctorate. This research is personal to me as I was one of the participants in my previous study. As a participant, I relived the time I spent in undergraduate admission, both the good and the bad. I relived the physical symptoms of stress I endured from the position but also the triumphs of the amazing students I had the honor of recruiting. The participants in my prior study, including myself, left their positions to protect their mental health and wellbeing. The fact that each of us had to recover from our time in undergraduate admission, doing work that we believe in, is why I am continuing to do this research.

Native people are doing important work within universities to advance self-determination; however, their endeavors are not without costs. As previously mentioned in the last chapter, the number of Indigenous staff at higher education institutions (HEIs) is quite low. Many Indigenous professionals working within HEIs experience being the only Indigenous staff in their department. Given this context, many American Indian SAPs often find that they need to bring an understanding of colonization and historical trauma to their work which enables them to provide a sense of validation to Native communities (Brayboy, Fann, et. al., 2012). Along with validation, representation also matters to Native people because it allows them to connect to others with no explanation of who they are or having to prove their existence. My previous work as a recruiter and supporting the recruiters that came after me has shown how the admission department was uneducated about Native communities and that some Native recruiters decided to educate the department on the importance of traditional tribal knowledge (White Eyes, 2020). I believe that this is a choice made for several reasons: to be able to advocate for Native students during the admission process, to correct stereotypes staff may have of Native people, and to

create a more inclusive space for future Native staff. We faced many obstacles in our work, and there is little in the literature showcasing our story as student affairs professionals. I feel strongly about the work that Indigenous SAPs at postsecondary institutions do, and the treatment they endure while trying to do the work they were hired for. What I have learned thus far is that these Indigenous SAPs who are working with Native students for the university are doing so much more than what is written in their job description and are paving the way for more equitable and fair treatment in the workplace for other current and future Indigenous SAPs.

In this dissertation, I argue that systemic inequities are present in higher education institutions (HEIs). The history of colonization has created these inequities and is present throughout the institutional culture (Brayboy, 2005). Despite these systemic inequities and the challenges they create, Indigenous SAPs continue to use their roles within HEIs to support Native communities. They do this by engaging in cultural knowledge brokering. With this dissertation project, I aim to explore how Indigenous SAPs engage in cultural knowledge brokering (CKB) at higher education institutions. As I reflected on my past experiences as a recruiter and my last research project, it was important for me to create research activities that respect and honor Indigenous SAPs and Indigenous worldviews. This is why I utilized Indigenous research methods to explore the experiences of Indigenous SAPs and how they engage in cultural knowledge brokering (CKB). Critical Indigenous Research Methodology states that the use of methods is intimately related to one's epistemic foundation and positionality (Archibald, 2008; Denzin, Lincoln & Smith, 2008; Wilson 2008; Brayboy, Gough, et al., 2012; Smith, 2013). My methodology and research design reflect both my positionality as an American Indian recruiter as well as an American Indian woman.

Indigenous Research Paradigms

Historically, research has functioned as a tool of colonialism by denying the "... validity of Indigenous peoples' claims to existence, to land and territories, to the right of self-determination…" (Smith, 2013, p. 1). Indigenous researchers have worked to change this relationship by engaging in community-based collaborations. Their research articulates how they utilized Indigenous research paradigms, ethical principles, and methodological frameworks grounded in Indigenous Ways of Knowing (Archibald, 2008; Behrendt, 2019; Denzin, Lincoln, * Smith, 2008; Wilson, 2008). The four R's, and Critical Indigenous Research Methodology (CIRM) are examples of this work.

In an Indigenous research paradigm, the ontology, epistemology, methodology, and axiological concepts differ from Western research. Shawn Wilson (2008) described these four elements of Indigenous research paradigms in *Research is Ceremony.* An Indigenous ontology is about the relationship one has with the truth or as Wilson (2008) explains, "...reality *is* relationships or sets of relationships" (p. 73). There are also multiple realities because everyone has a different relationship with another person, object or thing. Epistemology emphasizes that knowledge is built and gained from multiple kinds of relationships (e.g., environmental, spiritual, etc.). Working from the premise that knowledge is relational, an Indigenous research paradigm does not ask if the results are worthy or statistically significant. Indigenous research paradigms are more concerned with the research relationships with participants and Indigenous communities (axiology) and prioritizing being accountable throughout the research process. This includes being respectful in the methods chosen for the study as well as having results that are useful to the community being studied to enact reciprocity.

Critical Indigenous Research Methodologies

One element of my research is to foreground culturally responsive representations of Indigenous people and their communities. I also aim to disrupt how Western research has subjugated and silenced Indigenous ways of being and knowing. I do this by centering critical and Indigenous methodologies in my research (Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008). Critical Indigenous Research Methodologies (CIRM) "...privilege[s] indigenous knowledge, voices, and experiences" (Smith, 2013, p. 87). As Brayboy et al. (2012) explain, methodology is "…the theoretical and philosophical considerations of how to engage in the process of doing research" (p.427). Methods are the research activities used to collect data for the study. in this dissertation because. Methodologically, I draw on Indigenous Ways of Knowing in the organization of research processes. I also work to hold myself accountable to the Indigenous participants who agreed to participate in this research by sharing access and control over the research findings and how the research is disseminated (Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008).

As Wilson (2008) explains "relationships are the essential feature" of Indigenous research paradigms (p.127). A crucial component as a researcher and researching with Native communities is relational accountability because of the long history of betrayal, intrusions, and the loss of everything that is theirs. CIRM disrupts Western research while also embracing a more relational, and caring way to do respectful research. The power of CIRM is that WE get to decide what is researched, what is acceptable, and what is not acceptable (Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008). We are now seeing amazing research in Indigenous higher education that is being conducted in ways that are responsive to our communities (e.g. Archibald, 2008; Brayboy, 2005; Minthorn & Shotton, 2018; Smith, 2013; Tachine, 2018; Waterman, 2018; Wilson, 2008). Keeping this context in mind, a goal methodologically for this dissertation is to imagine different

ways of conducting research in partnerships with Native people and communities that prioritize their ways of knowing.

The Four Rs

For many Indigenous communities, ethical research centers respectful relationships and incorporates Indigenous ways of being (Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008; Wilson, 2008; Brayboy et al., 2012). The "Four R's" (respect, relationality, reciprocity, and responsibility) shifts research processes to address the needs of Indigenous communities (Brayboy, Gough, et. al., 2012; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991).

Respect. Indigenous communities are the experts and carry their traditional knowledge. They also know the needs of their community and what they would like to see changed. Respect for Indigenous peoples' knowledge and traditions is important throughout the research process and wasn't given historically (Brayboy, Gough, et. al., 2012; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991). This also relates to how institutions and Western research has not historically respected traditional knowledge or oral traditions (storytelling) but made numerous attempts at assimilating us to the knowledge that they deemed important (Brayboy, Gough, et. al., 2012; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991).

Relationships. My dissertation study is rooted in relationships, both with the participants but also holding myself accountable to my participants (relational accountability). I do this through my methods and checking in with participants, which I will go more in depth further in the chapter.

Responsibility. As an Indigenous woman, asking Indigenous SAPs to participate in my research, I feel that I have a personal responsibility to my participants and the stories they have shared with me. I, therefore, purposely designed the methods and analysis in order for the

participants to have ownership over their stories and telling me what they are okay with sharing in the dissertation.

Reciprocity. Lastly, the way I demonstrated reciprocity to the participants was by starting their stories with a reflection of the artifact they shared with me and why it was meaningful to them. If they forgot an artifact, then I started the story with a personal note about the participants of how I connected with them for this study. In addition, I view my dissertation as a form of reciprocity to the participants as I want to use the ideas expressed here to create a framework in future research to assist other Indigenous SAPs and marginalized communities in their work at higher educational institutions. The creation of CIRM and the four R's provides Indigenous researchers with paradigms to conduct research using traditional knowledge and methods that respect and complement Indigenous ways of being and knowing. I chose a theoretical framework that also respects and complements Indigenous ways of knowing through storytelling with Indigenous Feminisms.

Indigenous Storywork

I utilize Storywork to weave together research activities to engage in different ways of learning, conceptualizing, and teaching to honor the ways Indigenous communities operate and view the world. Jo-Ann Archibald came to develop Indigenous Storywork after she had a dream that she felt pointed her to research oral tradition and how to apply these traditional stories in education (Archibald, 2008). Archibald describes Storywork as a process of "learning about the nature of indigenous stories and . . . their application to education" (2008, p. 3). She also outlines seven principles within Storywork. These principles interface with the 4 Rs and include: respect, responsibility, reverence, reciprocity, holism, interrelatedness, and synergy (Archibald et. al 2019).

Storywork allows for the participants to have a voice, while centering and humanizing the participants' experience (Behrendt, 2019). Storywork also emphasizes that stories are a reliable source of data and knowledge that counters settler colonialism (2019). I utilize Storywork to allow for life experience to be told in a story that "…contain[s] values, background or contextual information, and issues…" (Archibald, 2008, p. 108) and used as a form of teaching (2008). Using stories in research is also a way to counter the settler colonial structure of the academy (Behrendt, 2019) as it is how we have passed down information historically.

Storywork works well with the CIRM as well as Indigenous Feminisms by emphasizing the experience of the participants, honoring their words, and co-theorizing through story meaning making. These theoretical concepts also allow for researcher accountability through the four R's: respect, reverence, reciprocity, and responsibility. As an American Indian woman, working with other American Indian women, I am responsible for how and with whom I share the participant's stories (Archibald, 2008; Wilson, 2008; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991; Brayboy, Gough, et al., 2012; Smith, 2013). I enact ethical and respectful research relationships by including participants in each stage of the research process, ensuring that contexts were created for them to exercise agency with how their ideas will be used. This research design was specifically created to respect the participants busy schedules as well as being sensitive to the concerns surrounding COVID (enacting reverence), the knowledge that I have learned from the participants and create results that they and the institutions they work for can use for a better working environment. We enacted educational reciprocity together by creating and co-theorizing cultural knowledge brokering together that I hope will benefit everyone at HEIs, including Native communities.

Participants

Site selection and participant recruitment is also influenced by an Indigenous research paradigm. In order to align with respect and relationality, I thought about how to approach recruiting participants. The time I spent as a Native recruiter allowed me to build connections and relations across the Nation. I felt it was important to return to those relationships in order to start identifying potential participants as the colleagues could speak to my character and heart in my work. I also felt this was a respectful way to approach Indigenous SAPs that I did not know. I then contacted potential participant via email regarding my study. I also utilized snowball sampling to help with identifying additional participants. As an incentive, I provided all participants with a $50 Amazon gift card to thank them for their time in this study.

This study explores the experiences of 10 self-identifying urban Indigenous SAPs, who work or have worked at four-year universities across the nation. This study is not focused on how Indigenous SAPs worked during the pandemic and therefore, an important requirement to participate in this study is being in the position at least two years or more because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The term "student affairs professional" has a wide range of meaning in academia. The participants in this study are in academic advising, undergraduate admission, ethnic studies departments, resource centers, residential halls, and outreach programs. Table 2 on page 36 includes additional information on each participant.

Table 2

Participant Demographics

Participants	Status (currently in position, not currently in position)	Job Title	Number of years in position	Participated in focus group (y/n)
L.J.	Currently in position	Director	2 years	Yes
Shawn	Currently in position	Director	1 years	Yes
Louise	Not currently in position	Academic advisor	5 years	Yes
Elizabeth	Currently in position	Director	7 years	Yes
Paloma	Not currently in position	Director	7 years	No
Rose	Currently in position	Associate Director	3 years	No
Justice	Not currently in position	Recruiter	1 year	No
Beth	Currently in position	Administrative coordinator	1 year	No
Natasha	Not currently in position	Administrative coordinator	5 years	Yes
Helen	Not currently in position	Director	1 year	No

Participants had a wide range of job titles, i.e., Director, Associate, Director, and Recruiter just to name a few. To maintain the confidentiality of participants, I asked participants to choose a pseudonym for themselves. Because the work of higher education and Indigenous student affairs if extremely small, I do know and have worked with some of the participants. I do not name who I know in order to maintain anonymity and to protect participants. In agreement with participants, I have left out any information from their stories that would identify who they are and the institution they work or have worked for.

The majority of participants indicated that their university siloed them from other Native resources and support programs. This is important to note as majority of the participants stated

that this kind of siloing makes it challenging for Native students to navigate the university and also for them to support Native students. Lastly, while the Indigenous SAPs in this study work in different departments, with different job titles and job descriptions, they all have similar frustrations and challenges working at HEIs. These similarities are talked about in their individual stories and touched upon in the analytical commentary.

Methods

I asked participants to partake in conversational interviews, and a talking circle to generate data to answer my research questions. Conversational interviews are a relational in nature and based in storytelling traditions (Kovach, 2010). Taking a conversational approach is one way that I demonstrated my interest in participants' stories (Olson, 2016). Similar to conversational interviews, talking circles are a cultural practice that support the collective sharing of stories (Wilson, 2008). According to Ravitch and Carl (2019), one must think through the strategic sequencing of methods because "…the order of methods and the order in which participants are interviewed or surveyed must be justified…" (p. 103) as the data sources are in relation with one another. The research activities occurred in the exact sequence as described because each method builds off of the other from the concepts learned. The talking circle occurred last so participants would be ready to make meaning of their experience and build off of one's another's ideas of CKB. These different modalities (oral one-on-one conversational interviewing, and group interaction) are being woven together to help generate recollection of recruiting and engaging in cultural knowledge brokering. This sequence of research activities was also created to ensure data triangulation or the "…strategic juxtaposition of multiple data sources to achieve greater rigor and validity in a study" (Ravitch & Carl, 2019, p. 103). By showcasing the different methods that will be used, and the sequencing of methods, this

demonstrates validity for the research design, while also drawing on theory for strategies on analysis (2019).

It is important to note that 6 of the 10 participants were invited to participate in the talking circle. The decision of who to ask to participate was based on availability as not everyone was available during the day and time majority of participants were able to meet as well as the content of the conversational interviews. When looking at the conversational interviews I made note of participants who gave a variety of examples of situations they felt were important to share, reasons for giving those examples, and how they navigated challenges that arose. I also noticed that the participants who attended the talking circle had been in their positions for over a year. Those that were able to participate were able to provide a well-rounded experience of working at HEIs.

Table 3

Research Activities

Method:	**Duration:**	**Purpose:**
Conversational Interview	60 minutes	Interview participants individually to learn about their experience working at public, four-year higher education institutions
Follow-up Interview	30 – 60 minutes	The second interview will be a follow up to the first for clarification or elaborations of concepts discussed.
Talking Circle	90 minutes	Brought 6 participants together to dialogue about their experiences.

Conversational Interviews

According to Kovach (2010), conversational interviews are viewed as a "…method of gathering knowledge based on oral storytelling traditions congruent with an Indigenous paradigm" (p. 40). This method is relational as conversation is a natural way to gather

knowledge between individuals. I view conversational interviews as one modality for "...understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience" (Seidman, 2019, p. 9). This method of inquiry allowed me to learn about how these individual participants conceptualize and the work they do as Indigenous SAPs.

Each conversational interview was 60 – 90 minutes and focused on participants' experiences working at a higher educational institution, including challenges and their favorite time of year (Appendix B). I conducted the interviews over Zoom because of the busy travel schedules of some of the Indigenous SAPs, and the uncertainty of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. To maintain privacy, I conducted the interviews in a private room. I started the first interview with an introduction of the study and I shared who I was and my background working at HEIs. I then transitioned and asked the participant to bring an artifact that they felt was representative of a meaningful moment of their work in higher education. In addition, I listened carefully for stories that about the practice of cultural knowledge brokering. The second interview was used as a follow-up and was driven by any clarification, direction, or elaboration of the content discussed from the first conversational interview.

Talking Circle

I invited six of the ten participants to a talking circle. The talking circle focused on the work at the university to learn how the participants engage in cultural knowledge brokering. The talking circle was organized so that participants could discuss and build off of one another's ideas (Wilson, 2008; Ali & McCarty, 2020). This method is viewed as a "…cultural way to share individual perspectives and understandings of a story…" (Archibald, 2008, p. 115). By bringing these participants' together in this format, I was able to note their similarities as well as note what stories they shared with others that they felt were important. The talking circle format

allows everyone to listen, reflect and contribute. Second, talking circles allows for the participants to engage in collaborative storying, where "...each person has a role to play and uniquely contributes to the co-construction of knowledge for use" (Ali & McCarty, 2020, p. 243). This enables participants to feel a sense of ownership in the ideas and concepts being discussed (Wilson & Wilson, 2000), which is an important aspect in this research. While I, as the researcher, am introducing my initial conceptualization of CKB, the participants are helping me to understand the different elements of CKB.

Talking circles are meant to occur in person, gathered in a circle, and an eagle feather or other sacred object passed around (Wilson & Wilson, 2000). I changed this format in a number of ways. First, the talking circle was conducted over Zoom. This allowed me to bring together participants from across the nation. Second, I asked participants if they are okay with the eldest, or someone willing to volunteer, in the group to do a blessing as is traditional protocol for Indigenous communities. Third, I started the conversation with a question based off of what I saw in the conversational interviews and allowed the participants to take the conversation wherever it leads. While I, as the researcher, am introducing my initial conceptualization of CKB, the participants are helping me to understand the different elements of this theorization. The protocol for the talking circle can be found in Appendix D

I brought these methods together for this dissertation study because they allow me to highlighting the stories of these Indigenous SAPs. Oral traditions, or Stories, have always been central to how we, as Indigenous people, theorized, researched, and structured our governmental systems (Risling Baldy, 2018). These research activities have allowed me to understand the experience of how the participants process, understand, and share their understandings of cultural knowledge brokering. Many Indigenous scholars use stories as part of their research. Stories are

crucial to our future, our culture, and our survival as Native people (Brayboy, 2005; Archibald, 2008; Risling Baldy, 2018).

Analysis

My voice as a researcher is woven throughout the study, through my choices of methods, the theories guiding this study, and how I report my findings. More importantly, the voice of the participants is the highlight of my research, and my dissertation would not be possible without their stories. In this section I explain how my methodological stance guides my processes of analysis.

Thematic Analysis

Creating a context where participants have control over their own interview is an important element to this study, affording them the relational accountability that is critical to Indigenous research methodology. In line with the principle of relational accountability, I shared transcriptions of interviews and talking circle with participants after each phase. I invited participants to change, delete, add and/or approve transcripts from their interviews.

After sharing transcripts with participants, I started the analysis process by creating content logs for each participating. Individual content logs were organized sequentially and included excerpts from interview transcripts that were related to my research questions. Logs also included columns for reflections and preliminary codes. Working with these logs and the transcripts, I began creating codes of what I was seeing in the excerpts. This involved a process of open and in vivo coding to find common themes and ideas as well as a top down approach (Ravitch & Carl, 2019). Throughout this process, I took a bottom up down and top down approach and created codes using a combination of the Indigenous SAPs phrasing and Indigenous Feminisms as an analytic lens. For example, token Indian, moderating, translator, and

invisibility are examples of first round coding. I used these codes across all of the participants interviews and I made note of them in the content logs. I then went through another round of reading and reviewing interview transcripts and included any new codes in the content logs. After this phase, I transitioned to cross referencing codes between participants and grouped similar codes together to create concepts (Charmaz, 2006). I finalized concepts into three themes: continued erasure and invisibility, the 'token' Indian, and cultural knowledge brokering.

Crafting Stories of Cultural Knowledge Brokering

I further explored the themes I generated through content logging and coding by engaging in a process of crafting participant profiles (Seidman, 2019). I intentionally ordered my analytic process in this way so that the stories I crafted would address the themes I identified while coding. Moreover, this was an especially important step in my process because it provided me with another way to practice relational accountability. As Seidman explains, participant profiles "…present the participant in context, to clarify his or her intentions, and to…experience the participant through their stories." (Seidman, 2019, p. 122). For the participants that participated in the talking circle, I made note of stories that they repeated in the talking circle. I did this because I realized the repeated stories held a lesson or meaning to the participant, and they were sharing their understandings of the story (Archibald, 2008). I also drew on Indigenous Storywork during this process as the stories being shared with me are a "…way to teach others" (Archibald, 2008, p. 108). The stories hold meaning, value, and lessons that myself and higher education institutions can learn from (Archibald, 2008).

My process for crafting profiles included drawing on participants' words to develop meaningful narrative units that aligned with the thematic relationships I initially identified. This allowed me to further develop themes in a way shared the concrete specificness of participants'

lived realities. Ultimately, crafting profiles provided a process and format for sharing stories of Indigenous SAPs meaning making of their experience working in higher education while also using their own words.

Indigenous Feminisms as an Analytic Lens. Given my interest in settler colonialism, power, and gender, I also drew on Indigenous Feminisms as an analytic lens. Doing so allowed me to highlight the ways that Indigenous student affairs professionals at higher education institutions experience the colonial history of universities and how they proactively respond to these histories. While there isn't a single definition for Indigenous Feminisms, it is flexible in its use as a tool of analysis. It is used to question the settler colonial logics and heteropatriarchal norms of structures, or in this case, the structure of the university (Risling Baldy, 2018). It is important to remember universities operate under settler colonial norms that value and empower cis white male voices (Goeman, 2013; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Patel, 2016).Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill (2013) state Indigenous Feminisms addresses "…the consideration of Indigenous peoples remains rooted in understanding colonialism (like state- sanctioned slavery) as an historical point in time away from which our society has progressed" (p. 9). One of the many goals of Indigenous feminisms is to address the oppression of Indigenous people, both within our community as well as outside the community both historically and in present day (Suzack et al., 2010). Theories within broad Indigenous feminisms stress how the values of responsibility and relationality are enacted in order to empower Indigenous communities (Waterman, 2018). Paula Gunn Allen, writing about feminist traditions in American Indian communities, explained how the traditions of Indigenous people, including storytelling, have had an impact on Indigenous communities in theory and in supporting our Native nations (Gunn Allen, 1992). Our reclaiming of voice and power can be seen in different arenas, we have always been part of decision-making

processes, and in positions of power within our communities (Suzack et al., 2010). Through the reclaiming and restoring of Indigenous people's traditional practices, we will see the benefit in the lives of everyone within the Indigenous communities (Waterman, 2018). Indigenous Feminisms highlights the use and power of storytelling as one method to accomplish this. Ultimately, I utilize Indigenous Feminisms to support the conceptual framework of using stories as a form of data as well as to address higher education institutions as settler colonial institutions.

In this chapter, I developed a conceptual and methodological framework grounded in an Indigenous-feminist lens. Drawing on the larger body of work in Indigenous research paradigms, I brought together writings on Critical Indigenous Research Methodology, the 4 Rs, and Indigenous Storywork to argue for the need to take seriously the stories of Indigenous SAPs. Using Indigenous feminisms as an analytic lens, I drafted composites of the Indigenous SAPs stories that highlight their complex understandings of power relations within HEIs which are themselves are settler colonial institutions.

In the next chapter, I present a profile for each Indigenous student affairs professional that participated in my study. Each profile includes stories about particular moments and experiences that are related to the three themes. At the end of the chapter I discuss the themes of continued erasure and invisibility, the "token" Indian, and cultural knowledge brokering and further synthesize my findings.

Chapter 4: Indigenous Student Affairs Professionals' Stories

We explored a broad history of higher education and Native communities, history of student affairs professionals, campus climate for Indigenous student affairs professionals (SAPs), current enrollment trends of Indigenous students, cultural knowledge brokering, and the methodological framework for this dissertation project. We shift to the stories of the ten participants in this study and how their stories answer the following research questions:

- What stories do Indigenous student affairs professionals share about their experiences working at the university?
- How do Indigenous student affairs professionals use Indigenous ways of knowing and their knowledge of university policies to advocate for Native students?
- How do Indigenous student affairs professionals understand the colonial history of the university?
- What does this history mean for the work of Indigenous student affairs professionals with Indigenous students?

The Indigenous SAPs opened up about the challenges working at settler colonial institutions, how they understand the history of these institutions, and the motivation that keeps them going. The stories they shared about their experiences of working at the university centered around three themes: continued invisibility of Indigenous communities by the university, feeling like the token Indian, and cultural knowledge brokering. Participants have described that they have witnessed or experienced acts of invisibility by the university, which we will see from the examples they shared with me in their stories. Participants also described feeling like the token Indian. This included being in situations where universities asked them to serve on committees or attend meetings when the Indigenous voice is needed. Lastly, participants described having to

translate or act as a moderator of different knowledges (i.e. traditional Indigenous ways of being/knowing and university culture and policies), between Indigenous students and university administrators. These three themes emerged from the similar challenges the participants experienced working at higher educational institutions.

Oftentimes, researchers view participants' stories as data. The stories shared here are not just data, they belong to the individuals who agreed to participate in this journey with me. Therefore, I start each story with a personal reflection of the participant. I do this to humanize the participants and I view this as a way for you, the reader, to see participants as more than data.

The stories within each profile are rich in content; a lot of emotions were felt and shared in relation to participants' work at HEIs. Therefore, I weave my analyses of the three themes throughout all of the profiles. Although reading about these themes in the participants' stories may seem repetitive, I felt it was important to showcase the themes so that similarities across participants' stories can be easily identified. In addition, this analytic aspect of writing, highlighted for me how particular kinds of challenges motivated these Indigenous SAPs to engage in cultural knowledge brokering (i.e., gathering new knowledge, identifying traditional cultural knowledge in order to translate and bridge the gaps between tribal communities and HEIs). Multiple participants mentioned engaging in this process, and for future research, I want to continue looking into this concept to develop a framework.

What the participants share in their stories is personal, deep, and emotional. They were vulnerable during our conversations, and some even cried. They even brought me to tears at times. It is with their permission that I share their experiences in this dissertation.

L.J.'s Story

I connected with L.J. through a mutual acquaintance. I had known of L.J. through the work she has done in higher education, and I was really excited that she had agreed to participate in this study. L.J. became involved in student affairs through her parents, both of whom work in higher education. She grew up on college campuses, attending college events and thus gained institutional knowledge early on. She describes her experience as being "institutionally privileged" but she also said that her family moved around a lot and that she did not grow up on her tribal homelands. Because of this, she prioritized listening in her practice as an Indigenous SAP. As described in the vignette below, this practice was critical for navigating experiences with invisibility.

"These Institutions Forget About Students All the Time"

> I have been in my current position for two years as Director at a four-year university. I am a tribal member from a Midwest tribe, and I feel deeply connected to this area because it's where my bloodlines are from. My mother's a first language speaker, that's in my heart. That's a part of who I am. I carry that with me. My mom and my partner both grew up here, but I didn't grow up here. So, I have to be really willing to listen. I don't know every tiny town along the interstate and in this work, I have had to be quiet and listen to people.
>
> In my role as director, I meet with students at a Native center that is located on campus and I also meet with different entities on campus. I make it a point to listen to what the student needs. Because these institutions forget about students all the time. They're never included in anything. We can't operate without them. What is the point of our work? It blows my mind the number of committees that I'm on where I'll ask, "Well,

did we ask students what they want?" and the response I'll receive is, "Oh, yeah. That's crazy. We should ask the students what they want." We're not listening to students.

L.J.'s process as an Indigenous SAP includes listening and learning from the Indigenous students that she is working with. She found this to be especially important because as she explains HEI's often forget about Native students. Learning the needs of her students allows her to advocate for them when she attends administrative meetings because as she states, the students are not included in any of the campus decisions.

"If I'm Not There, Then Who's There?"

L.J. also shared how the challenges she encountered during these meetings provided motivation for engaging in cultural knowledge brokering.

> The hardest challenge in my position is working with the populations that don't understand Native people. I work in a Native student center that's been on campus since 1988. Hundreds of Native people have rolled through this building. You can feel that in this space. Then I go out to the rest of campus and am asked to do a presentation. Afterwards, I am asked questions and have this moment where I realize, "Oh, that's what you think about Native people. That's actually what you think." It makes me question doing the work and what we should be doing.
>
> Those of us that work in student affairs, or are Native on a college campus, we are pulled in a million different directions. You have to sit on this committee, or you have to be in this meeting, and then it's constantly this feeling of, "if I'm not there, then who's there?" I've accepted invitations to be on committees that are not within my organization because I'm afraid that if I don't, there's not going to be anybody to represent Native students. For all of the reward and the incredible aspects of working with students and

> being with students, it's exhausting. It's really, really exhausting. I don't say that to say I don't love my community, and I don't feel affirmed by the work. I think a lot of times, myself included, we put a lot of pressure on ourselves to do this outward facing, the glass is half full persona, because I think that's what our students deserve. They deserve to see a real human being, but they also deserve to be affirmed. For so many of us that are in administration and staffing positions, we also don't have the protection that faculty have. So, I feel like there's work that I want to do that I can't do.

As L.J. shared, a lot of the departments she works with at the university do not know or understand Indigenous people. Because of this, she feels the need to sit on committees or attend meetings that may not be involved with her job. Other participants discussed having similar experiences and explained that being afraid of how decisions will be made and impact Indigenous students leads them to commit to numerous service requests. This goes back to the tension of who will be at these meetings to advocate for Indigenous students if these Indigenous SAPs are not there, especially if those present do not understand Indigenous communities. It is understandable as to why Indigenous SAPs feel exhausted and why these positions are underappreciated. L.J. shares her view as to why she feels this way, at times, during her work at the university

“We Have Been Used”

> These systems of higher education weren't created for us. They weren't made for us. I was approached by a professor from the university to partner on a research grant. When I wasn’t able to make the meeting to discuss the grant, I received an email from the professor that stated they added my name to the grant application and submitted it. I replied that I had not given consent. As Native people, we really have to advocate for

> ourselves at the institution. I feel like I am approached to be on committees or grants because they need a Native person to sign off. We have been used as a fundraising tool, and these institutions don't understand our familial systems. There's a lot of spaces where I think that the university is not always willing to meet us half, or even a quarter of the way. I don't want you to meet me halfway. I want you to meet me like three quarters of the way and bend a little bit because we're already asking our students to bend a lot to your rules. We are already doing that. In certain situations, I wish that they were willing to bend a little bit more. We so often in these roles have to be the translators of that. We're not always perfect, and we're going to screw it up, but that's why our students need us there on campus to be translators between faculty and staff.

This excerpt demonstrates how L.J. has felt like the token Indian in certain situations, particularly when she has been asked to serve on various committees for diversity reasons. L.J. has to speak up for herself when others decide to put her on a grant without her permission. For L.J., this is an example of feeling like a token Indian to this faculty member. It seems as if the faculty member just wanted to put her name on this grant and not the knowledge as well as expertise that she brings. No staff member at the university should be put in this position, and it is alarming to hear that something like this has occurred.

> One example that comes to mind is when an Indigenous student is in mourning. There are tribal protocols when it comes to mourning a family member or a member in the community. I have to educate administrators and faculty that Native students have to go home for a certain amount of time, which is part of their community norms, and to not penalize the student for missing time in class. Another example is when I am helping a student with financial aid. I understand those forms really well because of working in an

> admission office a while back. I have the student who I care for very much. I care about their wellbeing, their mental health. I have the financial aid administrator who sees numbers. They don't understand why this is so hard for the student. I have to act as the moderator and be like, "I see your point of view. I see your point of view. Let's marry these together and get this damn form done" so the student doesn't have to be stressed out about their family and the wellbeing of their family. The financial aid administrator doesn't have to be stressed out that they're violating any federal regulations. I just want these spaces of higher education to be better for Native students.

As with other participants, L.J. shares how she served as a moderator between the student and the financial aid counselor by educating about Native students and cultural traditions as well as explaining financial aid information to Native students. By doing so, L.J. is able to assist in finding a solution that is agreeable to all parties. I view this as engaging in culture knowledge brokering. I believe one of the reasons L.J. engages in CKB is due to racialized differences of Indigenous students from other students, which is what she shares with me in the next part of her story.

"You Don't Do That to Your White Students"

> Working in student affairs is trying to play the game and make the rules easier to navigate for Native students. I wish the institution would meet them a third of the way but I feel like Native people are always doing the bending. The institutions should be asking themselves what went wrong and how the institution failed when a student drops out. Instead, the blame is always put on the student. I've seen it time and time and time again. They just don't do that for the white society. You don't do that to your white students. You say, "He had a tough semester and he'll come back," or whatever. With Native

> students, it's always this scale of failure. It's never the possibility that they stop out and they come back five years later. The Native students feel that too and then their communities feel that forever. We have that happen all the time. "Well, we sent a student to you and they failed." We should take that personally that we messed up, not that they messed up. Somebody dropped the ball. If we didn't make that student feel like they belonged, that's our fault. I think because other people don't see it that way on campus, a lot of us that are doing this work, we end up putting a lot of pressure on ourselves to try to figure out how to make that better for those students. We're asked to change a lot and that can be really difficult. It's hard, and the work is exhausting, but the reward is working with students. Sometimes you return from a meeting that was really hard, but then a student comes in and just makes you laugh, or soothes your soul in some way, or affirms you. I think that's the thing that continues to keep me going.

In this excerpt, L.J. points to racialized differences in how students are treated. She argues that Native students unlike white students are blamed when they “dropout” and that this has repercussions at individual and community levels. As an SAP, she also questions how HEIs can do better and create spaces of belonging. I argue L.J. is demonstrating cultural knowledge brokering by learning how the university system operates towards Indigenous students and uses this knowledge to motivate how she engages in her work. From what I have learned from the participants in this study, working in student affairs can be difficult, especially on mental health. L.J. shares what keeps her going as well as questions she asks herself when she engages in this work.

“How Much Are You Willing to Sacrifice?”

> One of the things that I really question, and maybe this is across other perspectives too, is that I think all of us that are Indigenous or from communities of color that are doing this work hear something that just really messes you up. One of the administrators at my campus said, "We're going to let you down. We're going to let you down at some point." That's not really what you want to hear coming into a job, but I think that's the hardest part of all of this is that then you see the students. They're the ones that are going to go and give back to their communities, or they're going to walk across the graduation stage. That's what pushes you to keep going ultimately. But it's how much you're willing to sacrifice your own integrity, or your own rest, or your own healing to do that work?

In this excerpt, L.J. highlights reasons for why she continues to work in student affairs and it's because of the Indigenous students. L.J. was told by the university that they were going to disappoint her but she knows the students she serves will go back to serve their communities. This is important in Indigenous communities and she is in her position to help the students meet their goals. However, she brought up in her story about feeling overwhelmed and exhausted. She questions how far one is willing to go in this work as an Indigenous SAP; this is the same question that all of the Indigenous SAPs who participated in this study asked of themselves.

As we wrap up L.J.'s story, she shared with me what she enjoys about her work in student affairs:

"We Have to Be Grateful to Those Who Fought"

> I think that for all of us that work in student affairs, both Native and non-Native people, there were a lot of people who fought for us to get these positions in the first place. I understand that the work that I'm doing is building upon the work of other people. Somebody else will come in and build upon what I've done. I'm so grateful for all of the

> people that have really pushed higher education to see us, to build centers, and to build divisions. I imagine that those challenges were even more tremendous than the things that I face day-to-day. I think that we have to be grateful to those who fought, and I don't take that for granted, even on days that are frustrating.

L.J.'s story demonstrates the three themes of experiencing continued acts of erasure and invisibility, feeling like the token Indian, and cultural knowledge brokering. In the story excerpt "If I'm Not There, Then Who's There?" we learn that L.J. attended meetings that were outside of her job description. The fact that there was no representation of Indigenous people at the meetings and no one to advocate for Indigenous students (other than herself) motivated her to engage in cultural knowledge brokering. The themes of erasure and invisibility and feeling like the 'token' Indian are also foregrounded in L.J.'s story. For example, she was put on a grant application without her approval because the principal investigator needed include an Indigenous person. The grant did not actually address the needs of Indigenous people, therefore leading L.J. to simultaneously feel invisible and like the 'token." For L.J., the Indigenous students make the job worth it despite these challenges.

Shawn's Story

I met Shawn through a mutual friend and while I was familiar with some of the work he has engaged in, I learned a lot from what he shared with me during our interview. Shawn brought a picture from twelve years ago of a group of youth he worked with for a summer position as his artifact. He says he learned a lot that summer and saved every group picture that was taken every summer he worked in this position. He carries these pictures with him as it reminds him of why he works in student affairs: it's for the Native students. They motivate him to keep going when the work becomes exhausting. The following excerpt introduces Shawn:

"It's Important for Us to Learn From the Past"

> I was born and raised as an urban Native in a mountainous community. I am a tribal member from the Midwest and moved back to my homelands as an adult. The university I work at is an open enrollment institution and located close to a few Midwest Native communities, which includes my own. For me, it was important to return to where my ancestors call home and work on tribal homelands.
>
> I currently work as a Director at a four-year university here in the Midwest. I have been in this position for a year and have been building the position to work with alumni of the university but also recruiting Native students as well as assisting with transitioning and retaining these students. When I first started my position as Director, I researched what the university has done in the past with recruitment, retention, and alumni relations with Native students. It's important to know what has succeeded, what didn't, and what enabled or discouraged Native students from attending the university. I didn't want to do something that has already been done, and it's important for us to learn from the past. I travel extensively during the recruitment cycle. I also attend a lot of meetings to engage alumni. I make calls across different departments to assist students with challenges they come across. What I have found that has not been successful historically at this university is recruiting Native students from local communities nearby, and we need to be better at that.

By learning the historical programming this institution has implemented, Shawn utilizes the knowledge he gained about the history of programming activities to assist him in advocating for programming and resources that have proven to help Indigenous students at the university. This is a form of cultural knowledge brokering as Shawn is using the knowledge of institutional

programming to help advocate for Indigenous students. Shawn shares that he is constantly advocating for Indigenous students, even if this advocacy is not directly related to his job of recruitment and alumni affairs of Indigenous communities. Because of this, Shawn shares, in the next excerpt, that he needs to be strategic in his work.

"It's a Delicate Conversation"

> I need to be strategic in my position, and that is why I approach my position the way I do with educating, attending meetings and researching what has worked and what has failed. As Native people, we need to be innovative. What I mean by this is that we need to get buy-in from other resources and departments to invest in our Native students. As much as I would love to ask for every student to be funded, I can't and it sucks because you have to pick and choose. I always have to be really strategic, and say, 'This student seems like a really, really worthwhile investment.' That success is hopefully going to open up the door for them to fund more students. It's a delicate conversation oftentimes because we have other students who need the funding as well. So, you have to be really strategic in that. Early on I received a lot of no's, or they were giving out $500, but this amount has slowly crept up as they're seeing a little bit more of the investment. This includes sharing big successes of the Native students that resources/departments have invested in. One story that comes to mind is calling admissions and telling them about a student who dropped out a year ago, but is wanting to return because they're a parent now. They are older, more mature, and wanting to come back to do better than they are now. I said, 'I know the GPA is really low. I know this isn't normally who you would fund, but they invested. They decided to do a small scholarship, but this student had an amazing year. They almost had a 4.0 GPA, and made the dean's list both semesters. I made sure to share

that with them. This student we supported, you supported, did really well even though GPA was terrible coming in here. Some of these conversations have been about a year-and-a-half long process, but the university is starting to figure out and get it. I think those everyday conversations, we're advocating, and have to be strategic in those conversations.

I believe that Shawn engages in cultural knowledge brokering by approaching different campus departments to "invest" in certain students. He says that departments will not invest in every student and has to choose students that show the potential of persisting to graduation. Shawn is being strategic in his work, and shares that this takes time but this is what needs to be done in advocacy work for Indigenous students. When departments do choose to invest in students, Shawn makes sure to share their successes with the department so they may be willing to continue to invest in the future. Shawn describes his work as being innovative, and that Indigenous SAPs need to be innovative when working at HEIs. I believe he does this by learning what kind of information departments need in order to invest in students. Shawn mentions other strategies he has engaged in as an Indigenous SAPs and motivations for engaging in CKB.

"I Am Educating the Administrators"

Another strategy, as well as challenge, is continuing having the same conversation as many times as needed. Because part of my job description includes recruitment, I am asked by departments on how to recruit Native students. There tends to be a focus on the number of admitted students. I receive this question a lot, and oftentimes, it's the same conversation. I think it's important for them to understand that there needs to be a change in the way the department recruits and retains Native students, what draws them in, what support systems and resources need to be in place for their success. Therefore, I am

> educating the administrators on why their strategies for recruiting Native students is problematic or why there won't be a huge increase of Native students right away. Sometimes, it seems like they didn't hear what they wanted, so they just don't do the work. Another possibility is they realize it's going to take a lot more than just handing out some pamphlets, brochures, or giving out scholarships. It's exhausting, but sometimes I have to say the same thing 20 times before it starts to sink in.

We see Shawn engaging in cultural knowledge brokering once again in this excerpt. Part of his job is the recruitment of Indigenous students, and departments all across the university ask for his opinion on recruiting Indigenous students for their programs. Shawn states that what really draws in Indigenous students is the support and resources, but he says that some departments really don't want to put in the work of recruiting and retaining Indigenous students. He feels that they are only concerned about increasing the quantity of Indigenous students, not actually doing what needs to be done in order to recruit them. How can an institution be an inclusive and welcoming place for Indigenous students if they are not willing to do the work to do so, especially when they ask an Indigenous person in charge of Indigenous recruitment? As Indigenous scholars state this is a contradiction to the university's overall message and there needs to be change (Brayboy, Solyom, & Castagno, 2015). As we move forward with Shawn's story, he shares another strategy he employs in order to get what he needs to serve Indigenous students.

"Sometimes You Have to Let the White Guy in the Room Come Up With the Idea"

> I've also noticed that if I have an idea, and the white guy in the room says the same thing, he gets more traction than I do. I have learned that if I need buy-in from other stakeholders, then sometimes you have to let the white guy in the room come up with the

idea. I've learned to just say it out loud, and then when he comes up with it, I'll praise him. So I think you just have to accept it. I'm fortunate because I'm a male, and I can also assert it more than a lot of women can. I think that's been an interesting thing that we've had to deal with that we have to be strategic on, too.

Shawn is the one participant who shares that he allows someone from a different race to use his ideas. While other participants don't mention someone's race taking their ideas, others have mentioned strategizing with male colleagues in order to make the requests that they need. We see a male's perspective in this situation and admitting that they can assert themselves more than a female can in this space. Both situations demonstrate to us that Indigenous SAPs use this as a strategy for their overall goal of serving Indigenous students, which I argue is a form of CKB. These are all obstacles that Indigenous SAPs like Shawn have to face and navigate, which he continues to share in this next excerpt.

"The Grant Needs a Native Person on the Proposal"

Another obstacle to deal with in this position is being asked to sit on different committees when a Native voice is needed. I am asked to be the Native voice for all Native people on campus. Some of these committees are related to my position but I have also received other requests. One example I can think of is being contacted to be a principal investigator on grants, even though some of the proposals are not about sustaining and supporting Native students. I feel I'm being contacted because the grant needs a Native person on the proposal. The dilemma about these proposals is that if I'm not involved then the grant will still move forward regardless if I sign off or not. Sometimes I feel like the token Indian. It is an interesting challenge that I have to grapple with and figure out

> the best use of my time and resources. I can't be everywhere, do everything, and I am trying to avoid burnout.

Shawn states that he feels like the token Indian at times because he is expected to be the one voice for all Indigenous communities. To be the "one voice" for ALL Indigenous communities is not engaging in respectful community work. Different communities have different needs. To learn what their needs are, Indigenous SAPs need to maintain a consistent presence, which is crucial in order to work with Indigenous students. This adds another layer of stress because Indigenous SAPs are putting their personal reputations on the line as Indigenous community members, along with the added pressure from the university. Shawn even shared that he was asked to be part of a grant that had nothing to do with supporting or sustaining Indigenous students. He demonstrates a tension between avoiding burnout but also concerned about grants being written or committees making decisions that may impact Indigenous students. As another participant states, the institution expects student affairs professionals to bend over backwards in their positions, but this isn't sustainable and it is not a solution. This is also creating an acceptable culture of burnout at these higher education institutions. Shawn shares what keeps him motivated during these challenges:

"I Look Forward to Graduation Every Year"

> I am engaging in this work because of the Native students. Watching our students first enter the university, grow every year, and graduate is amazing to witness and worth all the obstacles thrown my way. I look forward to graduation every year to recognize and celebrate these amazing students.

Shawn's story showcases engaging in cultural knowledge brokering at the university as well as feeling like the "token" Indian. He has the same conversations about how to recruit and retain

Indigenous students with the university over and over again. As Rose, another participant whose story will be shared later, states, "You put in a lot of time because you really believe in [the work]...it's just one of those areas where…everybody's just expected to bend over backwards…I think a lot of times they miss the person in the position quite often" and this type of expectation is leading to Shawn starting to feel burned out. There clearly needs to be changes at the university as well as more support for someone like Shawn to continue his work with Indigenous students. Louise's story continues this thread of needing more support for Indigenous SAPs and challenges she has faced during her work at the university.

Louise's Story

Before Louise agreed to be part of this dissertation study, I was already familiar with the work she has engaged in with Indigenous students. We realized that we know many of the same people, and how small this world is for Indigenous people in academia. A memorable moment Louise shared with me during her conversational interviews was being gifted a star quilt. The Indigenous community at this university welcomed her when she first started the position and Louise remembers thinking, "There's no turning back." She feels this was a way to keep her accountable to the Indigenous students and community.

Louise begins her story with who she is, and what she did at the university she worked at. She also shares reasons for why the first year in the job was a challenging one.

"I Had a Steep Learning Curve"

> I am a doctoral student at a four-year university in the west and a tribal member from the southwest. Before becoming a doctoral student, I was an advisor for an American Indian studies program here at the university for six years. I am not from this area, and didn't attend college here. I had a steep learning curve and tackled a lot of different tasks in my

position: admission for the AIS master's degree program, academic probation, meetings with different department divisions; attended trainings on fund management; advised students, both undergraduate and graduate, on academics; lectured a few American Indian studies courses; attended community events; attended Native student-led events; met with and advised students; and assisted with event planning.

Louise shares the work she engaged in when she worked at the university. Her story showcases the workload some Indigenous SAPs have at HEIs. It is not surprising then when participants like L.J. say that the work can be exhausting. Louise continues her story by sharing that she engaged in some of this work, even though some of it was outside her job description, because it was important for her to serve Indigenous students.

"I Made It a Priority to Connect With the Local Native Communities"

> I advised students for an American Indian studies program, which also included students who received a minor for the program. I was the only advisor for the program and had a supervisor who was a faculty member for the university. This meant that I had to look at transcripts of prospective and admitted undergraduate students to determine which classes were transferable and satisfied academic requirements. I also saw students who would visit my office to talk about their major, and some would visit me to cry because their original plan wasn't panning out, like being pre-med or failing statistics. Some of these Indigenous students weren't in the AIS major, but they're coming to me because they can't go talk to the Economics advisor or the Psychology advisor or the Sociology advisor. Those offices have hundreds of undergrads that are coming through. What is one Indigenous student who didn't pass statistics in a bucket of hundreds of students who didn't pass statistics? I was helping that handful of Indigenous students who were trying

> to figure out what to do because they couldn't be the major they originally set out to be. For the master's degree, I was making sure that they were taking the required classes they needed as graduate students and advising them how to supplement their graduate education.
>
> Since I'm not from the area, or even from the state, I made it a priority to connect with the local Native communities and learn about the challenges these communities face. I noticed that when I attended the local Native events, I was expected to know what was going on at the campus in relation to Native events. I decided to engage in meetings and events outside of the job description because I felt I needed to be a good ally and community member for Native people. The community also saw my presence as representing all of the campus. It didn't matter if I wasn't involved with powwow or in undergraduate admission. I was expected to know what was happening on campus, and I made sure to arrive with this knowledge at community events.

Louise shares examples of ways she has gone above and beyond her job description to assist Indigenous students. This included serving Indigenous students that were not in the AIS major. Majority of the participants in this study also mention the same thing as this is what it takes to support Indigenous students at the university. In the perspective of the university, all it takes to support students is advising and showing where to go for resources but for Indigenous students, there needs to be community building and safe spaces where they can be themselves. Indigenous SAPs, like Louise, use this knowledge in order to support Indigenous students, which I argue is a form of cultural knowledge brokering. Louise demonstrates what it took for her to be a good community member for Indigenous people at the university.

We now transition to Louise's thoughts on why she encountered challenges when working at the university and different concepts on "power."

"Universities Are Set Up for People Who Already Have the Power to Succeed"

> I think what frustrates me about the university system is when I would challenge those systems, people think it's about power. They thought I wanted to be in control, and honestly, I didn't. I just wanted students to graduate with degrees, but have an okay time doing it, and where it didn't feel like they're ripping their soul in half to get a degree. The universities are set up for people who already have the power to succeed, and that's not right. What gives power to Native communities is very different than what gives power to white people with trust funds. Those are two very different things.

In this excerpt, Louise explains there was a power struggle at the university. While Louise was involved at the campus in order to know what was happening with Indigenous events, other staff thought she wanted to be in a power position. I relate this back to the settler colonial structure of the university where it is all about being in positions of power. It was hard for campus staff to understand that Louise was involved in order to assist Indigenous students and the larger Indigenous community. In this next excerpt, Louise mentions what she learned while working at the university, and what she shared with the students she worked with as well as reasons for this.

"There's So Much Passive Gatekeeping"

> Looking back, I wonder if we just duped a bunch of students for coming into this really violent system and making them navigate it? We could have all the resources in the world, but if those resources are emotionally and spiritually inaccessible, then I feel there's a lot of passive gatekeeping that happened on campus of people saying, "Well, that's the way the system is. Well, that's the requirements. So you don't meet them.

> There's so much passive gatekeeping, and I feel like a lot of what I would try to help students understand, because what I learned about working at the institution, is there's always an exception to the rule. If students hit a roadblock, then find that resource on campus that will help you. The problem is that those resources, the staff that are really willing to go the extra mile for a student are very rare because they're so burnt out because they've been trying to support students who don't fit into the system.

Louise brings up gatekeeping at the university, and says she has learned how to get around that. I argue this is a form of cultural knowledge brokering as she has learned how to get around an administrative obstacle and shares this knowledge with Indigenous students. As Louise mentioned in the above excerpt, "what I learned about working at the institution, is there's always an exception to the rule. If students hit a roadblock, then find that resource on campus that will help you." Louise also shares that it is not only Indigenous SAPs who feel burned out at the university but those who go the extra mile when serving students. This should demonstrate to HEIs that more needs to be done systematically to support SAPs in their work of serving students.

We transition in Louise's story to her thoughts on diversity and why tribal diversity is different. She explains how she utilized her knowledge about tribes when advocating for Indigenous students.

"I Needed to Explain Cultural Differences to the University"

> I also noticed that I needed to explain cultural differences to the university about different aspects of Native culture. An example that comes to mind is when we would recommend awarding certain students funding and how their cultural differences fit within diversity requirements. The graduate division offers diversity fellowships and the way that their

ranking equates diversity is a very generalized 'want diversity for all.' It's for the benefit of all black, Indigenous, people of color (BIPOC). BIPOC, that phrasing wasn't popular when we were staff, but I think about that idea of equity and diversity, it means everyone is equal in what they're accessing and how they're articulating their connection to community. I think what is important, and it's complicated in Indian country because there's so many non-federally recognized tribes, is how autonomy, self-determination, and sovereignty is articulated. That is the complication. The fact that we have to think about and consider autonomy, self-determination, and tribal sovereignty within a particular framework of government-to-government relationship with the hindrance of the United States government. In addition, diversity and equity to the university is like, "Well we just have brown people that are here," but do they? What is their connection to a tribal community? Which causes a whole other layer of complication, but I think that's where that misstep is. Just because someone talks about indigeneity or talks about being a person of color, doesn't mean that they are operating from a worldview that is grounded in tribal ideologies. We had one student that was the only graduate student from her nation, who talked about issues that were specific to her tribal nation in her application, but she seemingly came from a place of privilege because she had an Ivy league education and her parents had college degrees. Her application didn't fit in the Graduate Division's realm of a poor brown student. The students that they were uplifting were, and not to dismiss these students, but the student that they had ranked the highest had very generic language about Indigenous communities, demonstrating no ties to a tribal community. It was just a very broad Indigenous reconnecting story about being brown, but because they were brown, poor, and said all the right diversity words. They were

ranked higher than our student who had a very clear connection to her tribal community, and was the only person from her tribal community. That system is set up to allow participation as a person of color because we are painting with broad strokes, as opposed to a system that really supports specificity, because that is what is important. If we're thinking about who is the most dispossessed, we need that specificity. We need to understand that support.

> I believe the university tends to have a generic idea of diversity, which doesn't understand the complexity and differences of Indigenous communities. When thinking about the foundations of the United States, knowing and understanding the historical trauma caused to Indigenous communities is rarely taught, let alone understood. Because of this, I felt I needed to figure out how to articulate these differences about tribal diversity, and how these experiences are different from other students of color. My main priority was to advocate for our Native students, and I needed to educate the administration about these differences. Having this knowledge also helped when I assisted students with applying to the university. I was able to explain to prospective Native students the importance of mentioning their tribal background, their connection to their Native community, and the kind of work they would like to engage in once graduating from the university.

Louise explains that the university has a generic idea of diversity but does not understand tribal diversity or the issues that impact Indigenous students. Therefore, she educates the university on tribal diversity, settler colonialism and sovereignty to explain why Indigenous students would mention this in their applications. She also shares that she would mention the importance of talking about these topics to Indigenous students when applying to the university. Louise

demonstrates cultural knowledge brokering not just to the university but also to Indigenous students.

In this next excerpt, Louise demonstrates the strategies she used when working at the university through networking, and reasons for why she used these strategies.

"I Needed Support When I Felt Powerless Against the Internalized Racism"

> From the trainings I attended on university policy, the university structure, and how everything operates, I made connections with key people in different departments that came in handy later when assisting students. They helped answer questions on how to help students with their questions or admission decisions. I found support and allies, both Native and non-Native, at the University. This was especially important when I needed support when I felt powerless in my job or powerless against the internalized racism and microaggressions at the university. Thinking about my time at the university, I feel the university can do more to help Native students. Embracing and understanding tribal diversity versus encouraging systems where power is upheld by cis white males. A lot of this is about power and resources, systems of white supremacy and heteropatriarchy. When I say white supremacy, this idea that those who have access to resources, are of a specific skin tone, are male. When I say heteropatriarchy, who are straight men or who uplift a binary of male, female, where men are in power. I think these systems keep reforming and reforming every time those who are the most dispossessed try to challenge it or bring new ways of thinking. These systems just reform to keep ensuring that specific people with money and power stay in power.

This excerpt explains reasons for why white supremacy and heteropatriarchy were threatened when they perceived Louise engaging in community work as trying to be in a position of power.

Settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy is a structure that is constantly reforming itself, and this demonstrates how settler colonialism has formed when Louise was working at this institution.

As an Indigenous person working at a settler colonial institution, Louise shares that there is a tension between community expectations and work expectations.

"Tension Between the Expectations"

> I am fortunate that I only had to answer to the chair of the department, and they gave me space and freedom to figure things out, but supported me when I needed that. This flexibility really allowed me to engage in community building and outreach. This was not part of my job, but because of what I was noticing in the community, I wanted to bridge all the different resources for Native students together. I started to notice a tension between the expectations of the urban Native community and alumni versus the expectations of the university of my position. I also found support from the connections I made with Native community members in the local area and had a space where I didn't need to explain what it was like to be a Native person. These support systems and allies helped when I had questions about my job, or helped me find answers to questions. I also utilized the connections I made when there was a student in trouble and a solution needed to be found. I was able to communicate with students about the different resources available, funding opportunities, and connect with specific individuals who can help. It was the students that made the job worth it and I looked forward to seeing them graduate every year.

Louise, much like the other participants, talked about the importance of networking and having allies in other departments across the university. As Louise explains, university administrators were not aware of tribal diversity. Therefore, she educated the university on tribal diversity and

how tribal diversity fits within their scholarship requirements in order to assist and advocate for Indigenous students. In addition, she viewed her efforts to support and be an ally to the local Indigenous community as connected to her efforts to build community for the Indigenous students at the university. She also made efforts to build relationships with staff across the university in order to assist Indigenous students when challenges arose. All of these actions are forms of cultural knowledge brokering. Importantly, the actions Louise took went above and beyond her job description. In order to do this though, she had to educate the university as to why she was engaged in meetings and committees that did not relate to her job. In this way, engaging in cultural knowledge brokering came with additional costs. For example, as Louise shared, some university administrators her actions as wanting power and therefore, they felt threatened by her. However, the steps Louise took were done in order to gain knowledge about what was happening at the university so that when the local Indigenous community asked her questions she could answer them. I argue that this is a form of cultural knowledge brokering. Her story showcases what Indigenous SAPs may do in order to serve Indigenous students and that the university continues to be unaware of and doesn’t understand why or how Indigenous SAPs engage in cultural knowledge brokering.

Elizabeth’s Story

I met Elizabeth through a mutual acquaintance, and we connected through our similar experiences working at the university. Elizabeth brought wood carvings to our conversational interview. She bought these carvings from a local Indigenous elder that she looked up to as a student, who was involved with the campus. The wood carvings are of a mama bear and little baby bears. She views herself as the mama bear and says she was once the baby bear that had a

mama bear, and now the roles have reversed. As Elizabeth explains in her introduction, she is now the mama bear to these Indigenous students that come through her office:

“They May Somehow Feel Like That They Don't Belong”

> I am a Native person from a tribe in the Midwest. While I did not grow up in a traditional, Midwest tribal home, I always knew mostly because society let me know that I was not white, that I was something else just because of my appearance, I am very dark complicated. I carry this in my work as Director of a Native resource center at an institution in the Midwest. I make sure to share my story of being stereotyped in a certain way and having a sister that does not look like what society would describe as Native. As a white-presenting Native person, they may somehow feel like that they don't belong, or that they're not accepted. That they continuously have to provide this caveat to their Native identity of, “I know I don't look Native, but I am” kind of thing. I believe these stereotypes come from media portrayals and images of Native people. My overall goal is to make the students more comfortable and always provide an open door for these discussions.

Elizabeth starts her story for why she engages in the work at the university by sharing some of her own personal story. I feel that her overall motivation is woven throughout her story as an Indigenous student affairs professional. Next, Elizabeth shares how she views her work and her role at the university.

“We Have to be in the Spaces Where We Can Advocate for Students”

> I view myself as an advocate for our Indigenous students. I tell the students that when they're not sure where to go or who to ask, to come to our office. We'll be sure that if it's something that we can provide them or help them with, we will do that directly. If we

need to pick up the phone and call another department, or figure it out, we'll do that with them. So often, when students come in, we're on speaker phone. We're going to call the department, financial aid, or whatever it might be. I am strategic in forming relationships with people in those departments so that when I pick up the phone and call financial aid, I could call the director. I can call the director of the bursar's office and the registrar's office. And maintaining good relationships with them. They know that I'm passionate about serving Native students and that I'm not trying to be a thorn in their side when we're trying to figure out a way to navigate a special situation. We tell students that even if it's not something that our office could handle, we can help them navigate those conversations. And then the next time, the student can pick up the phone themselves and remember, "Oh yeah, this is the form they wanted. I just need to get this tax form and take it to this person," and it's not so scary. But that first time, especially if you get transferred three or four times, it can be really frustrating, and you don't always know the questions to ask or what your options might be. So, I just want students to know they can come to us for whatever they need and we'll make sure that they get taken care of.

I think as an advocate for Native students, we have to be in the spaces where we can advocate for our students. If we're not in the spaces, we're not a part of the conversation. We're not even able to attempt to serve our students in that capacity. I do think it is part of the job as an advocate. I guess I never really thought about saying no. For example, "No, I'm not going to do that and I can't really tell you why," except that I feel like it's my obligation to say yes and to be there when they ask for me to be there. There certainly is a lot of education within these conversations of trying to explain why our Native students might feel a certain way or what their experience, the Native experience, has been in

> education. I think that trying to provide that perspective is something that comes along with making those arguments about certain policies. Just educating them on the experience of a Native student. There's a lot of that involved. I remember attending a meeting about implementing a new policy that would remove students from enrollment in their classes if they didn't have their bill paid in full by a certain day. I said, "Wait a minute, you can't do that. Some of our tribal scholarship deadlines aren't even until October 1, so you can't not let them enroll in their classes especially if there's funding coming." Most of the people, luckily, at the table who work with students agreed with me. It would negatively impact all of our students, and wasn't too terribly difficult to stop from happening.

Elizabeth expressed a tension about feeling like the “token Indian.” She felt this way due to the number of committees she was asked to sit on but not seeing any change occur for Indigenous students. However, she was also worried about not being present during these meetings. If she’s not there and Indigenous staff are not present at these meetings, then there is no one to advocate for Indigenous students and how decisions will impact them. Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill (2013) suggest a solution of seeking alliances at the institution where “... differences are respected and issues of land and tribal belonging are not erased in order to create solidarity, but rather, relationships to settler colonialism are acknowledged as issues that are critical to social justice and political work that must be addressed” (p. 19). Elizabeth feels like she, and other Indigenous SAPs, need to be present at these meetings in order to use their Indigenous ways of being and knowing in order to advocate for Indigenous students. If there are more allies at the institution who are more aware of the challenges Indigenous students face, Indigenous SAPs, like Elizabeth, may not feel the need to be at meetings and/or sit on committees that are not directly related to

their job description. Elizabeth gives an example, in this next excerpt, as to why having Indigenous SAPs at meetings is important.

“They Need to Focus on Their Academics and not Their Culture”

> Another example I can think of is attending a meeting in regards to graduation stoles, and it was another person on the academic affairs team. She was basically insisting that students couldn't wear more than one stole at graduation. They're very strict about what you can wear at commencement. I asked, "What about a student who may be involved in a student organization, or even honor society that provides chords or stoles, but then they also have their tribal stole that they want to wear?” My office offers stoles for any Native student. We have a stole specifically for American Indian students that's even more general. This started before tribes started offering stoles, and not all tribes do offer them. We want to celebrate, and we want to be able to see our Native graduates out there. We want to emphasize how many Native graduates we have. This administrator made a comment, "Well, this is an academic event, and they need to focus on their academics and not their culture." Basically, saying students needed to separate their culture from their academic experience. I got pretty upset, and reminded her about federal Indian policy as it relates to education. How it was introduced to us, how our institution was founded as a result of a tribe wanting educated citizens, and that it was my job to try to help students bring their culture and academic life together, not separate them. This is the work that I do. Luckily, again, I did have another colleague who understood. She had her doctorate, so I'd say she's probably more respected in some ways by that individual. She stood up for me and was equally appalled at the suggestion. We were able to keep that policy from being enacted.

Elizabeth shares an example of engaging in cultural knowledge brokering during a meeting about graduation. She educates the university of the importance of wearing stoles at graduation and the harm of separating culture from academia. Elizabeth also shares that she had a colleague who also spoke up in agreement with her. Elizabeth feels that her colleague was looked to as more of an authority figure and is the reason why the policy was not enacted. I argue that this is a form of invisibility by the university when not taking Indigenous SAPs seriously when bringing up problematic issues. However, HEIs are willing to acknowledge the Indigenous presence when they need to. Like Louise, Elizabeth mentions in the next part of her story: a tension between expectations from the Indigenous community and the university.

"They Need Me to Be There"

> I feel like the "token Indian" at times. I have brought up concerns, or I have brought forth an opinion about something, and it's not that I feel like they ride it off. But in some of those higher-level discussions, let's say of a vice president hire, it's not necessarily at the forefront. They need me to be there so that they can say they had a Native person on the committee. But in terms of elevating my voice on behalf of our Native community, it doesn't really seem like the top priority. Being in a position like this comes with a lot of responsibility, and you have to wear many hats and do lots of different things. I think it's an honorable position to have. I'm very honored to be able to serve my community in this way. I don't take that lightly. I always want to think through my decisions and how I handle situations as thoroughly as I can. There are some situations where you have to act quickly, but most of the time you can take a step back and think through the outcomes and try to make the best decision that you can. I think the challenge is sometimes the different roles that we play. I have a role as a member of the Indigenous community, as a

> tribal citizen, and I have a role as a staff member at the institution, an employee of the state. There are certain obligations that I have in each of those, just those two roles on their own. They can be at odds with each other. Having to make difficult decisions about when is it time for me to focus on being a community member, and when is it time for me to focus on me being a Director at the university? This is how I make a living and pay my bills, and don't want to be fired. I think that's probably the most difficult challenge.

Indigenous feminism tells us that "...the academy's common modes of …exhort[ing] Indigenous studies, as well as… the erasure of Indigenous [people] in ways that are not simply token inclusion of seemingly secondary (or beyond) issue" (Arvin, Tuck, & Morrill 2013, p. 14). Basically, Indigenous SAPs like Elizabeth are being asked to attend meetings or sit on committees in order to meet diversity initiatives set forth by the university. The participants themselves may be tasked with confronting settler colonial epistemologies as well as educating on Indigenous epistemologies. As a reminder, settler colonialism is the "...continuous set of structures designed to claim land and to do whatever necessary to erase Indigenous [people]..." (Risling-Baldy, 2018, p. 10). I feel Elizabeth and the other Indigenous SAPs do so in order to make institutional spaces more welcoming and inclusive for Indigenous students. We end Elizabeth's story with reasons for why she continues to be an Indigenous SAP.

"Higher Education Can Be Difficult"

> The students make the challenges I encounter worth it. Anytime a student comes in and they tell me about an internship that they got, or a scholarship award, or getting into grad school. The fact that they wanted to come tell me just makes my day. It doesn't matter what the news is. The fact that they're excited to come and tell me about it just makes me feel good. I find that very rewarding. Knowing that I had some part in helping them do

> that and helping them feel better is also a very positive rewarding experience as well. I can't imagine doing anything else than what I'm doing now. Even though higher education can be difficult in times where funding is always a question, I enjoy this work and it's something that I think I can do to make a difference in our communities. I used to say, if I could help one student get to college, then I've, at least, given back what was given to me. But it goes far beyond that now, I think, of just getting them to college, but helping them have a good experience while they're here. It's so rewarding to be in this position, and that outweighs any of the frustrations that you might have from day to day.

Elizabeth shares a story of university administrators not wanting to include cultural stoles at graduation because of their belief that students should focus on their academics and not their culture. In her role as an Indigenous SAP she educated the administrator on the cultural importance of stoles and federal policy as it relates to Indian education. The administrator's actions as retold by Elizabeth clearly represent how Indigenous ways of being are erased and made invisible at the university. Elizabeth's response to this situation is also a demonstration of cultural knowledge brokering.

Elizabeth also brings up a tension between feeling like she has to be present at meetings and participate in committees, regardless of whether or not they are related to her position because of the fear of how decisions will be made and impact Indigenous students. If she's not there to speak up, then who will be there to advocate for Indigenous students? This tension is also experienced by other Indigenous SAPs and is one that each and every participant described navigating as well as how they figured out a solution that worked for them. However, Indigenous SAPs should not be put in this position of having to navigate this obstacle. We see something similar in Paloma's story.

Paloma's Story

Paloma and I know some of the same people in academia. When she decided to participate in this dissertation study, we started our conversation connecting about who we knew. Paloma has a calm, soothing tone to her voice. She is also someone who does not show a lot of outward emotion; however, during our conversational interviews, there were a few times that she raised her eyebrows or the tone of her voice elevated. During these moments, I understood that the event being described really impacted her. One such instance was describing the artifact she brought to the conversational interview, which was a buffalo figurine. The buffalo was gifted to her from community members when she left a position to go on to the position she talks about during our interviews. This buffalo made her emotional because it said, "We want you to go forward with the strength of a Buffalo and know that your community here is 100% behind you." It meant so much to her because this was the validation that people that she loved and cared for as friends and as mentors believed in her ability. Paloma carried this knowledge with her as she started a position as Director for a resource center.

"Invisibility of Native Students on Campus"

> I served as director of a resource center for Native students at a four-year university on the west coast for seven years. My office was located in a central area where other resource centers for other underrepresented students were also housed. The entire mission of the center was to raise awareness about the needs of American Indian students. It was a physical space where the students could congregate and be together.
>
> I observed and overheard conversations occurring between all the students around the invisibility of Native students on campus. I remember listening to a Native student share with a non-Native student, "...at least you don't have people thinking you're not

even here." Overhearing conversations like this was an opportunity to talk to these students, ask them questions like "How does that feel?" and "How do we navigate it without getting defensive and hostile or shutting down?" This allowed students to share their story as well as discuss strategies of how to have these conversations about invisibility in the future.

Paloma mentions two instances of witnessing students experiencing a level of invisibility during their time at the university. She explains the close working proximity of her student workers and the student workers of the other centers sharing different experiences at the university, including the experience of having to explain that Indigenous people still exist. Paloma took the opportunity to walk the Indigenous students through those conversations and provide them the space of figuring out how to have those conversations. This example demonstrates the type of experiences that many Indigenous students have at four-year universities, which includes educating others that Indigenous people are not extinct. This is more than just a structural issue at the university but an issue of how the history of Indigenous people are portrayed in the United States. Paloma gives another example of experiencing invisibility at the university.

"I Understand the Students' Frustration with Invisibility"

Another dimension of the position was reaching out to faculty once in a while. One example I can think of was when a student approached me about a professor stating in class that Indigenous languages are no longer spoken. This student was what I would consider raised in a traditional manner, meaning she will not challenge an authoritative figure. When she came to me, we already had an established relationship. She said, "You know, I didn't say anything in the class because I don't like to speak up. But this sent the wrong message to the class." The student herself was not so much offended as she felt

she lamented the fact that now these students left the class with this impression that nobody speaks any Indigenous languages anymore. That bothered her. We talked it through, and I asked her what she felt she would like me to do. She said, "Well, can you call him and just don't tell him who I am, but say that there's a student in the class." I said, sure. I emailed him first and said, "I am the director of the center, and I work with Native students, and this has come to my attention, and I'd like to speak with you about it." He agreed to a telephone call, and when we got on the phone, he was not really interested in a conversation as much as he felt he was in some way obligated and didn't want to be perceived as someone who would not engage. It was less about, "Wow, I want to learn what I didn't do right or didn't do well," but instead "I need to check the box that, yes, I spoke to you. You get to tell me what you're upset about and then we're done." Now this class of over a hundred students believes that there are no fluent speakers of any Indigenous language. Quite the contrary. There are many hundreds of tribes that are in the United States that have fluent speakers, and this tribe in particular is a very large tribe. They are a powerhouse, and it's important that you correct that in class. The professor did, but it was a very flippant kind of, "Oh, I mentioned in the last class that there are no Native speakers, there are…" kind of thing. Whether the students absorbed that or not or he's going to make a statement like that again in the future, it's impossible to know. I understand the students' frustration with invisibility when situations like the one I just mentioned happens.

In this second example, Paloma shares a story about an Indigenous student who asked her to talk to one of their professors about a comment they made in class that Indigenous languages are no longer spoken. Paloma clearly links this experience to students feeling invisible on campus.

This example also showcases how Indigenous students at the university continue to encounter beliefs that Indigenous communities are no longer present. Both of these examples demonstrate how Indigenous students and SAPs manage the continued invisibility of Indigenous peoples at HEIs. They also demonstrate how Paloma, as an Indigenous SAP, works with Native students to develop strategies to assert their presence. Combating invisibility as Indigenous people, I argue, is a form of cultural knowledge brokering as Paloma and her students are educating others about Indigenous communities. As we move forward with Paloma's story, she shares a third example of the university contributing to the invisibility of Indigenous communities but this time it is from an administrative office.

"Why did You not Include Native People?"

> Another example of invisibility that comes to mind is a meeting I attended a few years ago. The office of diversity, equity and inclusion hosted this big campus wide meeting. It was during COVID. It was remote on Zoom. The whole entire presentation was about the demographics of the campus. They shared how many staff identify as different groups. There were zero American Indians, zero. They never mentioned Native people once in the whole presentation. When the presentation was over, I was angry and said, "I have a question. Why did you not include Native people?" This is, again, a process of creating a level of invisibility that we have to live with every day, all day. I can't believe that our office of diversity, equity and inclusion didn't see that. This is the problem that even our own office, which is given the task of presenting the facts about this campus, is not including us. They really went deep and just completely excluded American Indians. That was probably the most egregious moment and the most frustrating. They were apologetic, said they would correct it, and they did. However, it's too little too late. Now all these

> people didn't get to learn that, yes, there's about 1% Native students on our campus. We sat through that painful presentation and didn't see ourselves in it, and we're not going to see ourselves in it because you're not going to give it again. That's what I think being a Native person in the work is about, because it is exhausting work, student affairs is really underappreciated.

This third example of witnessing and having to confront the continued erasure and invisibility of Indigenous communities is egregious, especially because it comes from a department tasked with diversity, equity, and inclusion. Indigenous students are experiencing acts of invisibility from professors who are "experts" in the field and are faced with a decision on whether or not to speak up to correct this authority figure. As we see from Paloma's example, Indigenous students are going to Indigenous SAPs like Paloma. They are sharing their experiences with Indigenous SAPs and these SAPs are stepping in to correct these acts of erasure and invisibility. Not only that, Indigenous SAPs are also having to work with Indigenous students as to why these acts of erasure and invisibility are still occurring at higher educational institutions as well as how to move forward from these acts. Paloma also witnessed a campus wide presentation where Indigenous people were not mentioned at all and was forced to speak up about Indigenous numbers. All three examples given by Paloma showcase that there is a structural problem at the university when it comes to working with Indigenous communities.

As we progress in Paloma's story, she shares another challenge she ran into, and where she found allies in her work.

"We Have to Stand United"

> Another challenge I ran into is trying to receive funding or support for a smaller community. I would be in meetings and every once in a while, I would be asked, "Well,

what do you most want to see for your population?" Which most times was really just deflecting, or not deflecting, but just basically placating because they didn't really care about what Native students needed. I would always say, "What I really want for my community is to never hear, ‘There's Native students on this campus?’ again,” which I heard pretty regularly. Our numbers are so small on this campus. We have 17,000 students and 114 Native students. That's all self-identified through the application process. If a community is large and vocal, it's much more difficult to ignore them than a community that's small and tends to be not as visible. It's easy to say, "Well, we've got this X community over here and then we have you, and we have to give attention and funding and X, Y, and Z to this group because of whatever the reason is." I was really blessed to work with other directors from other centers that understood those tactics could really undermine our efforts collectively. I remember walking to this chancellor's meeting with the other directors and was told, "Well, we have to give the funding here and we have to do this and we have to do this." It felt a lot of times like the Native students were always on the short end of the stick. What I appreciated is that the other directors would often say, "Well, the director for the American Indian center's here, why aren't you asking her those questions too?” or “How come the American Indian population isn't getting mentioned even? There's the American Indian students too." Having that commitment to each other, as far as saying, "We have got to stand united" and that includes the women's center and the queer center as well, because we're all intersectional. We knew enough that if the administration could make it seem like they were prioritizing one group over another, playing favorites that way in any capacity, and causing tension as a consequence, we worked really hard to ensure that, "Hey, that's not

> okay," and, "No, this isn't right." So when those conversations happened, we always had each other's back.

This excerpt demonstrates the Directors of the centers standing united with one another so that they were not pitted against one another for scarce resources or funding. While Paloma does not explicitly say that the administration purposely did this, Paloma did observe that Indigenous students weren't being mentioned or considered in these meetings, in effect invisibilizing Native students and communities. Diversity and equity for all does not mean that each community should have to fight one another for resources to help them succeed at the university. Resources are scarce but there must be another way to make sure every group has what they need to succeed.

"It's a Memory I'll Carry with Me Forever"

We end Paloma's story with a meaningful moment that stood out during her time as Director:

> I am no longer in this position, and left recently for a new position. I wasn't emotional while I was telling the students, but a beautiful thing happened where one of the students said, "Sometimes when we don't have the words, we should sing a song. So I want to sing a song for you." Everybody stood up and he sang this song that I'll never forget as long as I live. He said, "This is an honor song and just thank you." They could have given me gifts, but what mattered was in that moment for me. I allowed myself to feel through it because of the cultural connection. Because that's the gift of doing the work. When we're working with other Native people, we understand what a song is. We understand, we stand up, we take a moment, and we take a breath. I'm not going to have that in any other

> workspace again, unless I go back to working with Native people. It's a memory I'll carry with me forever, and I remain really grateful for it.

As I mentioned at the beginning of Paloma’s story, Paloma is not one to show emotion. Her showing emotion when a Native student sung an honor song for her demonstrates how meaningful this work experience with Native students was. In addition, this also demonstrates how meaningful this experience was for Native students as an honor song is not sung for just anyone. This cultural way of demonstrating thanks and honor held deep meaning for Paloma and is why she is grateful for this work experience, despite the challenges she encountered.

Paloma gives three clear and distinct examples of witnessing or experiencing acts of erasure and invisibility of Indigenous people at the university. She also coaches her Indigenous student staff around conversations of these acts of erasure. These examples showcase how the ongoing invisibility of Indigenous people is an ongoing problem in university settings. Paloma’s story also highlights that not only are Indigenous students experiencing this but she, as a student affairs professional, is also experiencing this. What is most alarming, is Paloma’s example of the presentation hosted by the office of diversity, equity and inclusion. The department that should be inclusive of all communities had the opportunity to mention Indigenous people at the university but did not do so. When an office dedicated to diversity and inclusion makes the mistake, this tells us that there is a larger issue at hand that is bigger than just the university itself. As we move on to Rose’s story, we see a different type of erasure and invisibility experienced.

Rose’s Story

Rose and I connected through one of the other participants in this study. Rose is from a Midwest tribe and grew up in a small rural town in the Midwest. She attended college as a first

generation, low income student and had to hustle during her time at the university. As a college student, she worked full time as a resident assistant in the residence halls, and this allowed her to have housing taken care of. In her intro, Rose mentions she is a mom, is now at a university in the southwest, and has been there for six years.

"Our Leadership Just Doesn't Get It Sometimes"

> I currently work as a Director in housing, which is part of student affairs. I am in charge of running a department, but I wasn't always in housing. Before moving to the university I work at now, I was working for a student support services program. I found a lot of purpose when I worked in that position. I think it was just probably something innate about coming from similar backgrounds and really being able to provide those resources and information and be the sounding board for somebody who was just like me going through school, who didn't have parents or family members who really knew how to navigate that environment.
>
> I have run into many challenges throughout my time in student affairs. A big part of my role has been advocating on behalf of students. This advocacy included a lot of recruiting as well as a lot of education taking place with other departments because to be able to have first generation, low income students at the campus, we had to have resources available for them. I built relationships across the university to have good working relationships and to go to these key people when an Indigenous student needed assistance. I noticed that some of the conversations I had with other departments were sometimes difficult because at times, unless you can provide that qualitative information to say, "Look, this is really hard on students," our leadership just doesn't get it sometimes. I find quantitative information to show these are students who are going to have these

similar kinds of experiences and year after year, these are the number of students who are remaining on our waiting lists because they didn't have the prepayments, or they didn't have access to the resources earlier, or we just put barriers on people's way and are the barriers necessary? I am always drawing on my past experiences when I am advocating for Native students because I find often that if I can couple storytelling and personal experience with quantitative data to back that up, then usually we have an easier time demonstrating why something needs to change.

Throughout her time in student affairs, Rose has learned to weave together her personal experience in higher education, quantitative data, and qualitative data from Indigenous students and staff in order to showcase how change is needed for Indigenous students to succeed. Rose leans on her past educational experiences to be that Indigenous student affairs professional who supports Indigenous students. She does this through advocacy in meetings and by doing so, engages in cultural knowledge brokering. Rose demonstrates drawing on multiple forms of knowledge to advocate for Indigenous students because as she says, the leadership doesn't understand. What is troubling is there is research that shows what Indigenous students need to succeed at the institution. The literature review in this dissertation even states that the majority of research on American Indian education is around recruiting and retention efforts. The question is why Rose is having to provide different forms of data to try to create change for Indigenous students? Indigenous SAPs should be given the tools they need to do their job and receive more support from the department. As Rose progresses in her story, we move on to the assumptions of her colleagues that she is not Indigenous based on her outward appearance. This is a common problem that is experienced by other participants but also the students they work with.

"I Start to Feel Like the Token Indian"

> In a lot of ways, I feel like the token Indian on campus. I have a light skin complexion, and because of this, staff on campus do not think I am Indigenous. When I hear comments that there are no people of color present at a meeting, I will speak up and correct that statement. Once administrators discover that I am Indigenous, I start to feel like the token Indian because people will look to me when a perspective is solicited on Native American issues. We've had a lot of conversations around supporting our Black colleagues given the unrest and the salience of the Black Lives Matter movement where people say, "I'm tired. I'm tired. I've always having to explain why these things matter and why something needs to be done about them." I can definitely relate to that because I'm 0.1% of our population on campus. When there's a question about Native American or American Indian, or Alaska Native perspectives or experiences, I'm the one that gets picked, which is a blessing and a burden, but it can definitely get exhausting. I think about what has happened to the American Indian population since colonization, losing languages, cultural traditions, and assimilation. If language isn't spoken, if stories aren't told and not passed down, it's forgotten. The white man has won because then we become assimilated so much that we've lost our culture. We lose the importance of what our ancestors died for. If Indigenous people don't fight and speak up for themselves, no one else will. I feel a personal responsibility to make sure that the Indigenous voice is heard. It's easy to become invisible, to get tired and to just say, "You know what? I'm done. I'm not going to answer any more questions. Go do your own research." But I think about the Indigenous population being so small and feel, in a lot of ways, your voice as an Indigenous person becomes more impactful.

In this excerpt, Rose thinks about the history of Indigenous people, colonization, and

assimilation. She says, “If Indigenous people don’t fight and speak up for themselves, no one else will,” but Rose also feels that we as Indigenous people continue to be invisible at the university by not speaking up. Because of this, she feels a personal responsibility to speak up when it comes to Indigenous issues in her position, even though it is exhausting. She doesn’t want to become invisible and sees herself as an advocate for Indigenous students. Rose is not the only one who feels this way and she mentions that other colleagues are feeling the same way.

This is a heavy burden, as Rose indicates, and there’s a shared burden around this with other colleagues, which could contribute to staff burnout. Other participants mention feeling burned out and I would say this is a shared experience across institutions in the country. This is a bigger issue as indicated by my participants who are spread out across the nation and Indigenous scholars state that higher education institutions are unable to truly serve Indigenous populations because they lack the knowledge, and do not understand why changes need to be made (Brayboy, Solyom, & Castagno, 2015). This in turn falls on the Indigenous SAPs to engage in cultural knowledge brokering and having the same conversations, over and over again. Because of this, Rose mentions feeling exhausted in this next excerpt.

“Student Affairs Is Generally a Thankless Job”

> I actually had to do quite a bit of research looking at a landscape of student affairs professionals and looking at burnout and attrition from the profession because of the fact that student affairs is generally a thankless job. You do a lot of work. You put in a lot of time because you really believe in it, and you're not always either compensated well for that or appreciated for that. It seems like it's just one of those areas where getting thanks or appreciation is hard to come by because everybody's just expected to bend over backwards for a student. I think acknowledging the exhaustion, there's some shared

experience there, but knowing that if we don't fight for ourselves, if we don't speak up for ourselves, no one else is going to do it. So it's just one of those things where we just can't give up, like it's not an option. We don't exist at the same numbers that we used to. So as we become fewer and fewer through history, I think it becomes more important that people are willing to carry on the work of advocating for Native culture.

Rose shares her thoughts on the history of Indigenous people and her reasons for continuing to speak up. As Rose says, "...if we don't fight for ourselves, if we don't speak up for ourselves, no one else is going to do it." This sums up the reasons why many of the Indigenous SAPs I interviewed continue to educate HEIs on Indigenous communities. Rose mentions feeling like the 'token' Indian but also the importance of speaking up because if Indigenous people don't, then we are contributing to invisibility. She does state it's exhausting educating the university administrative why Indigenous issues are important, and she contributes this to historical settler colonization as they are not aware of Indigenous history or historical mistrust. In this way I view Rose engaging in cultural knowledge brokering in order to combat invisibility through educating the university as well as speaking up when feeling like the 'token' Indian.

The next story highlights how Indigenous SAPs educate colleagues and supervisors in order to advocate for Indigenous students during the admission application process.

Justice's Story

I met Justice through mutual friends, and I was excited to hear her story as a previous recruiter in undergraduate admissions. We started our conversation by sharing our experiences out on the road for fall recruitment. We connected through this, and I enjoyed sharing a lot of laughs with her. Justice's story has given me, as a researcher, the motivation to engage in future research with more Indigenous recruiters at the university.

Justice's introduction is filled with challenges, and I feel this is a thread of all the participants in this study.

"I Was Really Lonely at the University"

> I was born in the Midwest and that is where my tribal community is from but we moved from the Midwest when I was about four years old to a mountain community. I consider that my home because that's what I remember the most. I was involved with a Native student group when I came to the university and I saw a lot of missing components of the diversity centers and even just the universities in general when it came to Native students. I went to a predominately white institution where 92% of the student body was white. I was really lonely at the university and the university had such a troubling history with Native peoples but didn't want to do anything to address that or even just talk about it. I was really frustrated, and I wanted to know why my university was really failing to recruit Native students. Even though I was experiencing these challenges, I saw the opportunities that attending higher education, studying abroad, and the classes that our communities could benefit from. I think I fell into this position of American Indian recruiter through what I had experienced at the university. I decided to move from my home to the west coast for this position.
>
> I didn't know the Indigenous community or know about the university policies when I moved for the American Indian recruiter position. I also understood in some ways that my identity would be political in this field because I'm a Native woman in Native recruitment. This would be very personal to me and separating professional and personal as they try to make you do is going to be really different for me because I am a community member. I think what really pushed me with this position was learning to

work with tribal nations that I have never met before. I'm used to the Northern Plains and the Southwest because those are the students that would come through back at home, but the west coast as a whole is its own experience and being Native is amplified in its own experience. That is just so unique to this area. How do you encompass that entire experience as a Native recruiter? That was something I was just not prepared for. That's something student affairs can never teach.

In this state, you're not allowed to have a specific recruiter for a specific ethnicity because it's considered special privilege and violates a state law. However, American Indian recruitment doesn't violate this state law because tribal sovereignty is considered a political status, not an ethnicity. So just knowing that you're the only person that gets to have that special title, I felt it's valued but not valued. I feel some people in the department valued the position of American Indian recruiter, but the translation of how my recruitment plan was different from other recruiters didn't get across. Others didn't understand why my engagement with the Indigenous community was different. I think it's because people didn't know or understand what tribal sovereignty means. While everyone in the department had to submit documents for their recruitment strategy, I had to justify my recruitment plan and reasons for attending specific events when the department was numbers driven. For example, I would be asked, "How many people did you talk to? How many students did you meet?" Whereas, I would fly somewhere just to meet with one student, but that one student could be competitive during the application process and further their degree. I think that justifying that extra step is what they don't understand. I tried to explain to my supervisor and Director that I would never see the type of numbers that a regular recruiter would see when out at events. My role was to

reach Indigenous students that would be competitive at admission for a selective university but also was involved in their Indigenous community. This meant that the number of Indigenous students that fit in this category would be low.

Being an American Indian recruiter can be emotional especially given the historical mistrust between tribal communities and universities. These Indigenous student affairs professionals know that creating and maintaining these relationships requires earning the trust of tribal communities which takes time. Many Indigenous SAPs carry these relationships with them wherever they go, regardless of who they work for. The relationships created with tribal communities do not belong to the institution; therefore, each new Indigenous SAP that is hired must start all over in relationship building with tribes they may have never interacted with. That being said, once trust is created, and the Indigenous recruiters have permission to work with Indigenous youth and their families, they share what's required of students in order to be considered a competitive applicant for admission. When a denial or waitlisted admission decision is made for some of these students, this has the potential to destroy that fragile relationship, a relationship that the recruiter has worked so hard to build. Meaning, a tribal community has their top student applying, but for the university, that may not equate to this prospective Native student being a top student in the admission review. Justice shared with me that trying to explain this to the tribal administration doesn't always go well as recruiters can only apologize and say, "It was a competitive year" so many times. As a community member and wanting to maintain the delicate relationship with the Indigenous community, Indigenous recruiters have to figure out how to navigate these challenges. Justice gives an example in this next excerpt on how she tried to navigate this challenge.

"Disconnect Between the Institution and Indigenous Communities"

When it came to application and admission decision season, I would always look at the list of Indigenous students who would be waitlisted or denied. Out of that list, I would look at those who I may be able to advocate to be admitted. I would look at everything the student said in their application, and pick up on any details that may have been missed during the admission review. For example, I had a student who was a fluent speaker in their Indigenous language. A non-Native person reading this application wouldn't understand how extraordinary this was or why this was important. I brought this to the director of admission and said, "This student in particular, in all of our applications, is fluent in their tribal language. And, I don't see any other talent of someone who can speak a tribal language. And someone that has this knowledge, to me, is an extraordinary talent, because that's a skill that she's the only one in the whole pool with." In order to admit this student, the director had to look at other factors, in addition to what I brought to them, before they could admit the student. The challenges Indigenous students face is not translatable to some of the administrators at higher education institutions This creates a disconnect between the institution and Indigenous communities. It's hard for them to understand the conditions some of these Indigenous students are in. They can't imagine rural, reservation living that may not have running water or electricity. It's hard for administrators and admission readers to understand tribal activities as extraordinary talent but are seen as average or not even important. This is the kind of knowledge that you come with as a Native person.

The above excerpt is all about utilizing the knowledge Justice gained from the position and paired this with the knowledge of Indigenous communities and how Indigenous cultural ways of being fits within the admission preview. Using this knowledge, Justice engages in cultural

knowledge brokering in order to assist Indigenous students in the college application process as well as to work with the university to demonstrate how Indigenous students being involved in their traditional practices does fit within application guidelines. Justice does not have to engage in cultural knowledge brokering but does so because admission reviewers are not aware of the struggles Indigenous students face as we see in this next example.

"They Were Convinced the Experience at Our University Was Better"

> I feel another part of my position was educating the department on Indigenous communities. Some administrators didn't understand why a student wouldn't want to attend a selective and prestigious university. Some administrators thought that the name of the institution would be enough for any student to attend. I was asked to make a plan to get Native students to turn down full funding packages to Ivy League schools to come to our university because they were convinced the experience at our university was better. I tried to explain that the name wasn't enough for an Indigenous student to turn down full funding package offers from other universities. They did not want to understand or believe that people didn't want to pay for this experience and if you understand Native students, we're going to follow the money, the funding package, and the support. Trying to translate this to some administrators was difficult.

Justice gives an example of engaging in cultural knowledge brokering when she was asked to plan out an idea for Indigenous students to turn down offers from other institutions. Instead, she attempted to educate the administration on what was important for Indigenous students when looking at higher education institutions. As we continue Justice's journey in CKB, she gives a different example of engaging in CKB and why.

"The Importance of Being a Part of the Indigenous Community"

> Another challenge I encountered was trying to explain to administrators the importance of being part of the Indigenous community. While general recruiters can go out and recruit students, being a recruiter for Indigenous students means showing up and supporting the Indigenous community. I am not from this area, and I had to do the work of getting to know the local Indigenous communities. Indigenous communities will not allow just anyone to come and work with their students. It takes time and consistent presence before being allowed into the community, and that was hard for the department to understand this.
>
> I think for me, being in this position, I always saw myself as part of a student's journey. It's such an honor to be a part of our students' lives and their experiences, whether that's finishing, whether that's watching them figure out life or stumbling. I love that in student affairs, you're able to be in those moments to help a student through when they need it, and then that's part of their larger, bigger journey for later.

What we learn from Justice is the different ways she engaged in cultural knowledge brokering and reasons for why she did so. She engaged in CKB to advocate for Indigenous students during the admission process as well as to educate her department as to why her recruitment strategy looked different than other recruiters. She also mentioned engaging in CKB in order to give reasons why she should attend certain conferences, or travel to meet an Indigenous student. Justice felt she had to educate her department in order to do the job she was hired for, which was to specifically recruit Indigenous students. How would she be able to recruit Indigenous students if she did not engage in CKB? This story showcases an Indigenous SAP educating her department just so she can do the job she was hired to do. Our next story also showcases reasons for why she engages in the work at HEIs the way she does.

Beth's Story

I met Beth through one of the participants in this study, and when we had our conversational interview, this is when I started to realize how many participants had or were going for their doctorate degree. Beth has experience working in student services as well as has had opportunities to move up into higher administration of dean and vice provost positions. She is from the Midwest and currently works at a university in the Midwest. However, she shared pictures of herself with students because this is where she started to figure out where she belonged in higher education, and that is working with students. The higher up you climb the ladder, the less student interaction you have, and that bothered Beth. She didn't think she would be as motivated and passionate in her work if she was not active with students. This is where Beth's story begins.

"What Can We Do to Get Them Back on Track?"

> I currently work with an educational outreach program that services marginalized students as well as being a doctoral student. I grew up in a small, midwest town and attended college further south in the Midwest. I am a tribal member from the local area, and interestingly, the institution that I currently work at originally started as an Indian boarding school. It has a lot of history behind it, with historical ties to the tribe itself. It is very impactful for me to be able to work in my tribal homelands, with this history tied to the university, and with students that I can relate to who are low income, first generation.
>
> I have worked in student affairs for about eight years, and I hold a master's in higher education, which I received five years ago in 2017. After I received my master's degree, I started to explore other avenues in higher education. I worked at a grant funded program from a non-tribal institution working with Native students on academic advising,

counseling, and tutoring/mentoring. What we did there is assisted the Native American college students on campus by providing all those things that are vital to student success, but specifically for our Native American students on campus. I got to work more with the Native community in that role and I was there for four years. Because it was a grant program, I had to move on from that when the funding ran out. I was able to dip my feet in the water as far as teaching at the collegiate level. I really enjoyed that. I had Native students in class. I was enrolling them. I was advising them. Now I'm back to where I first landed with a student support services group.

In my current position, I oversee tutoring and career services. I also supervise student staff, assist with academic workshops, and meet with students about any issue they encounter at the university. A common issue that I meet with students about is figuring out the FAFSA. I can't tell you how many times I've helped students complete the FAFSA because they didn't know how. Other common issues are helping them figure out enrollment because they didn't know what classes to take next, what kind of resources we have, if we had a food pantry because they were dealing with needing groceries. A lot of students are dealing with struggles outside of here. They are struggling with finances. They aren’t aware of how to find a job or they are struggling academically because they aren’t aware of how to find a job or are working full time. They need someone to talk to, and they need a little bit of academic intervention. What can we do to get them back on track? There’s a lot of personal counseling and academic counseling wrapped up into that, because a lot of times they just might get discouraged and it might lead them to dropping out.

Beth shares the struggles Indigenous students are facing when she meets with them. She is mixing personal and academic counseling in these sessions because the students may start to feel discouraged at the university. In order to assist Indigenous students, Beth asks herself what she can do to help them. I argue that Beth is engaging in CKB as she is using the knowledge she has of the struggles Indigenous students face outside of academia and how she can best help them in order to persist at the university. As we continue this story, she mentions how she does this through hosting workshops.

"It's Important to Take Care of Themselves"

> Part of what we do at our center is host workshops, and we base these workshops on what we have observed in what our students need. All these things that you would see in a success toolkit is what we're covering. We're talking about maximizing tutoring, visiting with your professors, how to effectively study, how to effectively take notes, and topics like that. I try to keep it a little different because we do have classes on campus that are orientation classes. They cover a lot of these topics. So, we try to not be too redundant. We do have self-care workshops where we have had a massage therapist come in and you can make appointments on self-care. The staff enjoys that too, and we try to let the students know that it's important to take care of themselves as well.

Beth's job description may focus on tutoring and career services but what we see from these examples is that her position goes far beyond that. Indigenous students feel safe enough to ask for help from Beth, and she goes beyond her job description to help these students in order to prevent them from dropping out.

We also see Beth's department has done in order to assist students in succeeding at the university, and that is crafting workshops in areas that students are struggling with. Beth also

shares that besides the academic workshops her department hosts, they also host workshops on self care. These workshops also help the staff in being mindful and the importance of self care. While not stated, the Indigenous students witness staff taking in the same information and practices, which I would argue is a way to build community between students and staff as well as another avenue of creating a supportive environment.

Beth continues her story and mentions advocating for Indigenous students and why she feels compelled to do so.

"Telling Those Stories Is Important"

> I also advocate for students to have more permanent services versus grant funded services that end, and a new program takes its place. Being able to be their voice when they didn't really feel like they had one, we were able to be there as staff that could pick up the phone and probably make more of an influence. Whereas the student may have not been able to go around about that. Students become close with one another and with the staff but when the program ends, the students feel disconnected when a new program, with new staff takes its place. Advocating for a permanent service so that students don't feel disconnected and maybe even abandonment. Because I knew that, being in a grant world it was going to end, but the students latched onto those things because they were so impactful. I think telling those stories is important and the students were probably heavier in that and the fact that they showed their progress and they showed how well these programs affected them. Having something permanent would be more beneficial for students, and I share student success stories for administration to realize what this program's doing to impact students and we're retaining them, and they're graduating.

Beth is an advocate for Indigenous students and in different ways. In the excerpt above, she advocates for grant programs to be permanent as these temporary programs have an impact on the students. She uses the knowledge she has about grant programs and the students she knows to share their stories with administration. In this way, she is being a cultural knowledge broker to advocate for more permanent programs. We see Beth engaging in CKB with other staff and faculty at the university by explaining some of the challenges Indigenous students face with this next example.

"Speak in The Language That Is Understood by Our Students"

> I communicate with faculty and advisors that our students don't always feel comfortable going to them when it comes to questions about classes, when they want to enroll, or even knowing how to connect with the professor in general. I had one student who didn't know how to use Canvas and ended up failing an exam because she couldn't log in to take a test. I stepped in to be that support person for the student and emailed the professor to ask how this could be resolved. I received a response email quickly, but the student had been waiting weeks. And so that is an example of one of the ways I had to intervene. Other times my students would come to our office frustrated because of something their advisor told them that was completely over their head. That's what we had a discussion with advising for, and faculty are advisors as well. They have to just speak in the language that is understood by our students. It really discourages our students because they have no idea what was going on. It is a lot of reminding everybody that we work with in the campus community that there are populations of students that don't understand the terminology.

Beth advocates for students by engaging with faculty on their behalf and sharing what students are struggling with. She says that students may not feel comfortable asking faculty questions or are unaware of how to use some of the systems at the university. This demonstrates that the university can do more to help prepare students and should not have to fall on departments like the one that Beth works at. Beth mentions other challenges she has faced with this next excerpt:

"I Have Been Pulled into Events or Situations for Publicity Only"

> Being in this position, I have been pulled into events or situations for publicity only and not actually receiving support for Indigenous programs. You might see Indigenous students on the website, on the billboard, or in pamphlets. But are Indigenous students really that valuable when it comes down to it at the institution? The administration probably doesn't even know who the student is and they were pulled in for a picture and now they're being put around town on billboards. I've always had issues with what the campus is trying to portray to others. Are you providing the type of support the Native students need, or are they just another way to make the money? Are we just part of your marketing tool, or are we actually valued and supported?

While Beth does not explicitly say feeling like the 'token' Indian, what she describes is how others have named as Indigenous people being tokenized. Beth sees this as a problem when HEIs are wanting to use Indigenous people as a marketing tool when she's not seeing the support. Beth wraps up her story by sharing why she chooses to engage in this work.

"This Is Also the Way I Am Able to Give Back to the Tribal Community"

> While it's challenging, I see Native representation on the move and in a positive way, especially in student affairs, and I'm happy to see that. I enjoy working with the Indigenous students and watching them grow during the time they are at the institution. It

> is one of the best parts of my job. This is what motivates me to stay where I am even though I am qualified to move into Dean level positions. If I were to be a Dean, that would take me away from working with students, and I don't think I would be as passionate as I am now. I'm very driven by student interaction because I value those relationships. This is also the way I am able to give back to the tribal community.

As we finish Beth's story, she pivots to share her observations of what she has witnessed in her position. She mentions publicity and being pulled into these situations because she is Indigenous, but does not actually see any support for Indigenous communities at the university. She is describing what other participants have called feeling like the "token" Indian. This is the university saying that they welcome diversity and care about Indigenous communities but from what we have heard, Beth and her colleagues have demonstrated this care and support from how they strategize workshops. If Beth's department was not at the university, where would the Indigenous students go for support? Let's remember from the literature that higher education institutions were not made for or designed for Indigenous people. Instead, higher education was used as a tool for assimilation (Archibald, 2008; Brayboy, Fann, et al., 20120; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Minthorn & Chavez, 2015) and Beth's story showcases this through the lack of support for Indigenous students as well as for Indigenous SAPs. Lack of support was a big issue for our next participant, Natasha. Natasha talks about lack of support for herself in her position as well as a lack of support for Indigenous people.

Natasha's Story

Natasha is another person who knows and is friends with some of the same people I know. I wasn't too familiar with her background, but quickly realized how her past experiences have influenced her today. When meeting Natasha, you soon learn about her aunt who has been a huge

influential figure in her life. You also learn that her aunt has passed on, and when Natasha talks about her aunt, it is with a lot of love and emotion.

We started our conversational interview with Natasha sharing the mascot stuffed animal her aunt had bought her when she graduated from college, and that she brings this stuffed animal with her everywhere as it helps her feel close to her aunt. This artifact also serves as a reminder to Natasha of everything she has endured and overcome thus far in her life.

"It Was Important for Me to Be Involved with Indigenous Related Activities"

> I would describe growing up as unstable but my aunt was a huge influence throughout my childhood. She was an aide at the elementary school I had attended, and kept an eye on my academic development. She even stepped in to conduct an assessment when I was struggling in class. I was on the lower level academically, but my aunt found out I was struggling with an unstable home environment, not with the content in the classroom. Now I am a doctoral student at a prestigious university. My aunt passed away seven years ago and I pray to her, ask for guidance, and continue to talk to her.
>
> Before I started my doctoral program, I worked at a four-year university on the west coast. This was the same university I attended as an undergraduate. This was a unique experience in that I attended and worked at an institution that was situated on the ancestral land of my people. There is even a room on campus named in relation to my ancestors. As an Indigenous person, it was important for me to be involved with Indigenous related activities and committees on campus. I made it a point to mention that during my interview for the position.

Natasha starts her story by sharing she wanted to work with the Indigenous population at the university when she was hired. This was important to her as the university sat on ancestral land of her ancestors. This will pop up again in her story later, but is important to note here.

We progress in Natasha's story as she shares how she began servicing Indigenous students, even though she wasn't a counselor in her department.

"It Became Known That If There Was A Native Student, Then They Would Talk to Me"

> I worked in a student services department that worked with students who came from historically disadvantaged backgrounds. I dealt with administrative forms, student intake, bringing students to their counselors, and checking out equipment like laptops to students. I also had access to student information that would help with pointing them to different resources that could be utilized. Upon my hiring, I was put in charge of a group of student workers. I had to learn quickly and also connect with the students. Whenever there was just a student with a high-risk situation, they would automatically get forwarded to a counselor, or the director. I didn't really get student cases, but the only time I got a student case was when they were Native American. It became known that if there was a Native student, then they would talk to me. I wasn't a counselor though, and I wasn't trained like a counselor to support them. When this happened, I approached the situation with, "Okay, well we need to get you into this counselor because I know this counselor, and they're good at this and they'll help you." I would still have to walk them back to the counselor and tell the counselor what the student needed and then the counselor would help them.

Natasha was doing the duties of a counselor for Indigenous students but was not given the title or the compensation of a counselor. However, she would be assigned Indigenous students, and she

would figure out what their needs were and then walk the students to the counselors where she would let the counselors know what the students needed. This was not part of her job description but as we progress in Natasha's story, she shares an important fact that she was the only Indigenous person in the office and hence the reason for Indigenous students being "assigned" to her.

"I Was Constantly Speaking Up on Behalf of Indigenous Communities"

> I was the only Indigenous staff in the office. I felt that I was constantly speaking up on behalf of Indigenous communities during meetings because while staff knew about the low numbers of Indigenous students and retention issues, nothing was being done for Indigenous students. I love working with all groups of students. Everything I did was for them, and I loved my work. But I would get so frustrated because we didn't really have anything for Native American students. I would be in staff meetings and we would be shown research on low numbers of different student populations. I'm sitting there learning about these populations, and in the back of my head, I'm thinking, "Okay, but Native American populations are still worse." Our numbers are so bad. We're the worst. I've always felt that. I would always wonder, "Why aren't you doing anything for us?" That was how I always felt, but then I always had a hard time expressing that because I also felt like if I said anything, then I was taking away from the other groups. It's hard when we're all people of color who are struggling and we're all trying.

Natasha struggled during her time in this position. She was witnessing her department servicing other students while nothing was being done for Indigenous students. This is a form of invisibility by the department of Indigenous communities, even though they were aware of the quantitative data. We can only guess as to the reasons for why the department decided to do this,

but Natasha struggled with not saying anything as she did not want to pit marginalized student groups against one another for resources. Natasha should also not be put in a position to struggle about this as the department should be servicing all students. I view this as a form of cultural knowledge brokering as Natasha is thinking about all these elements and trying to advocate for Indigenous students in a way that won't take from other marginalized students. In this next excerpt, Natasha shares feeling like the "token" Indian in the department but also frustrations she experienced.

"I Was Their Token in a Way"

> I was also attending events and meetings related to Indigenous communities on campus. When I started my job, I knew that they wanted me there to support Indigenous students. This also means that I need to build relations with Indigenous faculty and Indigenous staff members. I would put it on my calendar, but when I'd come back, I was questioned with "Where were you? We needed this financial information, we needed that." They didn't care that I was trying to be out there, building relationships because we're a small population, and I was literally doing my best with what I could. It was part of my job, and what I advocated for when I was hired. Towards the end, I did not have a good relationship with the staff members. Everyone was letting me fight for my right to be out there with Indigenous students, and build relations. Nobody cared that I was doing that, but yet they wanted me to do that, because I was their Native employee. I was their token in a way. They always said, "Oh yeah, we have Indigenous support for Indigenous students." But yet, they would hassle me when I was trying to do that. I'd get so frustrated.

At the beginning of Natasha's story, she shared that she had advocated to work with Indigenous communities during her interview for this position, and this was agreed upon at the time of her hire. However, Natasha did not experience support for this part of her job and instead, was questioned by her colleagues as to why she was gone, even though she put all of her meetings on the work calendar. Her colleagues were also aware that attending meetings with other Indigenous staff and faculty at the university was part of her job, and even stated that they had someone working with Indigenous students. She felt like the token "Indian" for the department but as Natasha stated, nothing was being done for Native students. Natasha was speaking up on behalf of Indigenous communities, was attending meetings concerning Indigenous issues on campus, but was constantly questioned by her colleagues about time spent outside of the office. When an Indigenous student affairs professional is hired to do a job but is being questioned when doing that job, it creates frustration, as Natasha mentioned, but it also creates a hostile working environment for them. What also created a hostile, unwelcoming working environment for Natasha was experiencing microaggressions.

"I Felt I Had to Laugh It Off"

> I also dealt with microaggressions from my employer. During a meeting, my boss made a comment about Native people, and I spoke up, stating that the comment was inappropriate. However, it took another staff member in the meeting to agree with me as well as make another point for my boss to back down. Later during the day, my boss called me into the office to apologize for the comment made and said, "The minute I said it, the way you looked at me, man. I knew you were ready to come for me with that bow and arrow." That was another microaggression. At that point, I felt I had to laugh it off.

Natasha spoke up on the racial comment made by her employer but wasn't taken seriously until her coworker backed her up. When your employee tells you that what you said was a microaggression, that should be taken seriously. It shouldn't be questioned. Her employer's actions further contributed to the erasure and invisibility of Indigenous persons. This same employer apologized but during the apology, made another microaggression.

Natasha shares her thoughts as to why microaggressions occur at the university and feeling invisible.

"This Continued Colonization is a Structure"

> When I was a student, I always felt invisible, but when I was working, I felt even more like, "They don't even know that I'm here as a staff member." I remember receiving an email that went out to the whole campus. It had been about land acknowledgements and talking about my tribe. I literally read the email and thought to myself, "Wow. If the chancellor knew that he had me working here." but at the same time felt like, "Nobody knows I'm here." Nowadays I look back, and I feel like that definitely goes back to this erasure that all Indigenous people face. From my experience, non-Indigenous people live their life thinking that there's really not that much more Native Americans. If you're a Native American, then you dress a certain way, or you look like a warrior, or an Indian princess. That's what you're supposed to be, but that's not what we are. If we dress in our regalia, it's because of our ceremony, or because of different activities that we have to do, for religious purposes or whatever, I just feel now that it's this continued erasure. This continued colonization is a structure.
>
> While I had a frustrating experience, I think the most memorable moments were being with students. They would just come to me, sit down and start chatting with me. I

> literally felt like I was hanging out with them. I just felt that community. I think that's why that's so memorable, because I just felt community, even though I was staff, they were students. That was honestly the best.

Natasha was in a unique position of working at a university that sits on her ancestral homelands. She even shared that there is a room dedicated to her Indigenous community. This is a special and meaningful experience for her, even though she mentioned frustration in her position. However, Natasha has always felt invisible, both as a student and as an employee. She contributes this invisibility to continued colonization, and the university is a colonized structure. Meaning that the mission of colonization was and is to erase Indigenous people and take their land. Natasha and the other participant's stories demonstrate these colonized structures keep contributing to the invisibility and erasure of Indigenous peoples. Our last story is about a different form of invisibility, and brings up a gendered perspective of being silenced and having to strategize with a male colleague to get what she needs. Let's remember that another participant, Shawn, brought up a gendered perspective but form the male point of view. Both Helen and Shawn agree that a male SAP can say and have their ideas heard and/or accepted than a female SAP.

Helen's Story

Like a few other participants in this study, Helen and I know similar people in academia. I was somewhat familiar with her story but was unaware of her experience as Director. Helen brought a shawl for our conversational interview that was given to her when she graduated from her master's program. She brought the shawl with her to the university she was working at, and placed the shawl on the couch in her office. She recalls Indigenous students playing with the fringe on the shawl and some of them asking where the shawl came from. Helen shared with

them where it came from and that the shawl is the color of the university she graduated from. This shawl also represents her educational journey and the Indigenous people that helped her along the way, and continue to check in and watch out for her. I feel this is an important theme that we see immediately at the beginning of Helen's story.

"Didn't Have Any Support to Assist with The Workload"

> I am a tribal member from the southwest and grew up on the west coast. As an urban Native, I grew up in a big family and didn't really know what I wanted to do. I attended a local community college and transferred to a world-renowned university. I was involved with Indigenous student associations but didn't consider working in student affairs until I graduated from college.
>
> I worked as temporary Director of a cultural resource center in the southwest for one year. I was the only staff member in the center, and didn't have any support to assist with the workload. I also didn't receive funding or support for hiring student staff, even though I repeatedly asked for this. I even got in an argument with someone who was well connected at the university about not being able to hire student staff, and I think that made my time there more challenging. What actually prevented me from applying to the Director position permanently was not receiving support from my current supervisor. My supervisor told me I wasn't ready due to personal challenges that I was going through at the time. I was also told that other staff would push back against me applying for this position, and I would need student support. In the end, I didn't apply and instead, left to work at a well known Ivy League institution across the country.

Helen shared with me that this lack of support, even for the hiring of student staff, really made her job difficult. Helen is someone who is soft spoken and can usually go with the flow.

However, she has become so frustrated about not being able to get what she needs for her position. Her experience demonstrates how the institution is hostile and not welcoming for Indigenous staff to work at, which contradicts messaging of higher education institutions being spaces of welcome and inclusivity (Brayboy, Solyom, & Castagno, 2015). Helen continues her story, with an example of not receiving support when she really needed it.

"I Was Excluded from Staff as Well as the Native Community"

> I felt like an outsider in my work because I wasn't an alumn of the institution. I never really felt supported, and I was excluded from staff as well as the Native community. I had conversations about this with another colleague who wasn't an alum as they also experienced the same exclusionary behavior. A situation that comes to mind is when I was talking to a reporter from the local news who requested to film a Native campus event. When I said no to this request, the reporter became angry and started yelling at me. I looked to another staff member, who I didn't have a great relationship with, for backup and support but didn't receive either. I tried to emphasize to the reporter that the Native students organized and were running the event. They were not welcome to film the event. In the end, the reporter filmed the event that was shown on the local news later on that day. I was upset, angry, and really let down that my colleague wouldn't support me during this confrontation.

Helen's example with the reporter demonstrates a lack of respect for cultural protocol as well as the reporter dismissing Helen and the wishes of Indigenous students. In addition, Helen mentions exclusionary behavior from colleagues, especially during this confrontation with the reporter. These acts form the reporter and Helen's colleague contributed to the erasure and invisibility as an Indigenous person by not taking the time to understand cultural protocol or respecting those

protocols. Helen's story continues with an act of invisibility but this time as a woman in academia.

"His Requests Would Be Prioritized Over Mine"

> During my time as Director, I encountered sexism, which is something I hadn't dealt with before. These encounters and expectations with male staff and students were really hard on me. One of my male colleagues and I both knew that his requests would be prioritized over mine. We started strategizing on who said what during meetings because if we wanted to accomplish something, he would have to ask because they wouldn't listen to me if I asked. One example I can think of that was frustrating was having to deal with requesting furniture to replace the broken chairs and tables that had been donated to the center. Unfortunately, this never happened while I was working at the institution. One of my colleagues, who took over when I left, made the same request, and his request was granted.

As we see Helen's story progress, we see more examples of colleague's not supporting Helen, especially during events when she could have used an extra voice of support. Helen expresses feeling hurt, sad, angry, but also being excluded because she was not an alum of the institution. Helen describes how experiencing acts of sexism in her workplace, contribute to feeling invisible as a woman. Helen's story demonstrates multiple acts of erasure and invisibility on a cultural and gendered level, which relates back to settler colonialism. Meaning academia being historically dominated by white men. Helen navigated this obstacle by strategizing with a colleague, who was male, about what to say and who said what in order to get what she needed. The fact that Helen had to do this, and her male colleague was also aware of this that he strategized with her,

tells us that this campus does not value Helen as an Indigenous woman. We continue to see evidence of this as Helen continues her story of other challenges she faced in her position.

"They Didn't Want to Represent the University"

> Another challenge I encountered was my compensation didn't reflect my title. I reached out to the financial department about my pay rate many times, but it took months before the change occurred. I wasn't the only one who experienced this issue. I knew of other colleagues who weren't getting paid. I also observed and heard from other colleagues about the institution having a difficult time retaining Black, Indigenous, and people of color employees. Everyone who had the same title, we're all not paid the same. The institution overworks people. I was severely overwhelmed. I was physically worn out. I was not sleeping. I was grinding my teeth in my sleep. The Native staff that I know are there, they also feel alienated. There's also other Native staff who are leaving or planning on leaving. I think the institution could be a really great place if everyone was on the same page.
>
> Working with Indigenous students on campus is what helped me get through the day to day. The students would share their critiques of how the university recruited and retained Indigenous students. With permission from the students, I would share their criticisms with the administration, and I don't think that was well received. I would also receive requests for any Native students who wanted to participate in social media campaigns, and be highlighted by the university. I would ask the students if they wanted to participate, but they would always say no because they didn't want to represent the university. They were also critical, I think, of how they're being portrayed but also that there is a lack of support from the university. I enjoyed working with students. I feel like

> they're the highlight because they have the jokes and remind you to not take things so seriously, but also a lot of them remind me of my family. I think it reaffirmed my commitment to Native people, because a lot of the work that I see, I would see it as working with families as a holistic thing. These students come in with their goals, dreams, and hopes. I want to get them through these universities, as tough as they can be. The goal is not only to support them, but to also make sure that their families know that their kid, these kids are safe, that they have people to lean on.

Helens wraps up her story by sharing feeling overwhelmed from the work as well as the university having a difficult time retaining Indigenous and Black student affairs professionals. This indicates a larger issue at this campus of employing a welcoming environment as well as possible burnout. Helen enjoyed working with the students but the hostile working environment is what ultimately motivated her to seek employment at a different campus. Her story sums up possible reasons for why other Indigenous SAPs may do the same.

Synthesis of Findings

In this study I explored the experiences of Indigenous student affairs professionals (SAPs) in higher education. All the participants spoke about experiencing similar challenges including continued invisibility and feeling like the "token Indian." A majority of participants mentioned how these challenges motivated them to engage in the practice of cultural knowledge brokering. While my dissertation focus is about cultural knowledge brokering (CKB) and exploring this concept, CKB is a theme due to majority of participants mentioning engaging in this practice. It popped up so many times that I could NOT include this as a theme. I write about the themes separately, but they are all interwoven together throughout the participants' experiences. I also present the themes as a building argument for motivation to engage in CKB.

Continued Erasure and Invisibility

Participants mentioned different examples of erasure and invisibility at their higher education institutions. We see this in Helen's story and her experiencing sexism in the workplace. Not only is she experiencing invisibility as an Indigenous person but also as a woman. However, she navigates this by strategizing with a male colleague in order to get what she needed to serve Indigenous students. Helen's example showcases her superiors not only dismissing her needs to do her job but also gets across the message that they will only listen to her male colleagues. By Helen strategizing with her male colleagues, I view this as a form of cultural knowledge brokering in that Helen is speaking in the language that her supervisors will acknowledge.

Another example that is similar to Helen comes from Shawn's story about allowing someone else to take his idea. This example demonstrates a strategy he has had to learn in order to accomplish his goal of serving Indigenous students. I view this as a form of CKB that Indigenous SAPs have demonstrated by learning how university administration will respond in order to meet their overall goals of serving Indigenous students. These examples also showcase the university responding to staff whose voice they pay attention and at the same time, saying that the Indigenous SAP voice is not important. These two examples are different ways of demonstrating the university contributing to the erasure and invisibility of Indigenous people, but the last example displays an outright case of erasure and invisibility towards Indigenous communities.

Paloma's story about the presentation omitting the Indigenous population on campus by the office of diversity, equity, and inclusion is unfortunate. The literature tells us that universities tend to group small populations together, which contributes to the asterisk problem (Shotton,

Lowe, & Waterman, 2013). As mentioned in the literature review, the asterisk problem for Indigenous people in higher education is where Indigenous numbers are not presented in campus data because the population is so small (Shotton, Lowe, & Waterman, 2013). This omission of data continues to marginalize Indigenous people, contributes to erasure and invisibility of Indigenous people, and contributes to the university not understanding or knowing how to serve Indigenous communities. It is these reasons why Indigenous SAPs experiences are important so as to find solutions for fixing these challenges.

The participants in this study have shared the challenges of experiencing erasure and invisibility by HEIs. They also shared experiencing feeling like the 'token' Indian by HEIs, which tells us that HEIs will acknowledge Indigenous people when they need to.

The 'Token' Indian

Participants describe feeling like the 'token' Indian in their work at HEIs. They describe this as the university reaching out to them to be present at meetings or committees when the campus needs to have an Indigenous voice present. However, participants felt this was because HEIs need to meet diversity and inclusion standards. Elizabeth mentioned feeling this way because her campus reaches out to her a lot to serve on committees. She knows they do this because she feels like she can't say no. Shawn and L.J. also mention their campuses also doing the same thing. In L.J.'s story, she gave another example of a professor reaching out to include her on a grant, but submitted the grant without her approval. Both her and Shawn share that they see this happening a lot on their campus but don't see how these grants will benefit Indigenous communities. They feel that this is happening because these grants need to be inclusive of Indigenous people.

What is interesting to note is that HEIs contribute to the erasure and invisibility of Indigenous people, as we saw in the last theme, but this theme demonstrates that HEIs will acknowledge and seek out Indigenous staff when they need to. The participants in this study contribute this to diversity and inclusion initiatives. However, the participants also say that there haven't been any changes occurring to meet the needs of Indigenous communities. I argue these two themes are reasons for why Indigenous SAPs decide to engage in cultural knowledge brokering in their work at HEIs.

Cultural Knowledge Brokering

We have explored Indigenous SAPs witnessing and experiencing acts of erasure and invisibility as an Indigenous person by higher education institutions for which they work. Indigenous SAPs also mentioned feeling like the 'token' Indian because an Indigenous voice is needed so that the campus is meeting diversity and inclusion requirements. However, participants do not feel that their campus truly cares about the Indigenous voice or they would see change that was been asked for. I present the themes in this way as to present motivation for why the participants engage in cultural knowledge brokering.

I argue that CKB for the participants is in response to the erasure and invisibility they have experienced. These acts prompt them to address what is happening and to speak up on behalf of Indigenous students and communities. A great example of this is Paloma's story about one of her Indigenous students coming to her about a comment made by a professor in class and how there are no Indigenous languages being spoken. As mentioned in the last chapter, this statement is incorrect and contribute to the erasure and invisibility of Indigenous communities and their traditional languages that are being spoken today. However, Paloma spoke up about it and educated that professor on the statement made.

Participants mention other reasons for engaging in cultural knowledge brokering. The Indigenous SAPs mention circumstances when they feel like translators between Indigenous students and the university administration in order to solve an issue that will make both parties happy. They also mention that they educate university administration on Indigenous communities for various reasons but it is always to advocate Indigenous students in some way. Some of the participants still decide to attend and participant in meetings and committees because they are afraid of decisions being made that will impact Indigenous students. Elizabeth's story about attending a meeting and speaking up for Indigenous students wearing traditional stoles at graduation showcases why she decides to attend meetings like this, even though she feels like the 'token' Indian. I believe Indigenous SAPs decide to engage in cultural knowledge brokering in order to serve and do good for Indigenous communities. This is a way to give back to Native communities, or a form of reciprocity.

This chapter explored the three themes that emerged from the conversational interviews and as we can see, participants decided to engage in cultural knowledge brokering for various reasons: feeling like the token Indian, witnessing and experiencing erasure and invisibility as an Indigenous person by the university, advocating for Indigenous students, and advocating to do the job they were hired for. The last chapter in this dissertation will go into the significance and implications of what we just learned and the future research that will need to be done to continue this work.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

In this study, I used Critical Indigenous Research Methodologies and Indigenous Feminisms to develop an Indigenous research paradigm that acknowledges, respects, and honors the voices of Indigenous ways of being and knowing. My purpose in this dissertation is to demonstrate respect, responsibility, relationality, and reciprocity to the stories of the ten Indigenous student affairs professionals who participated in this study. As we move into the discussion and implications that we learn from their stories, I view this chapter as my way of reciprocating to the Indigenous SAPs by making recommendations based off of what has been shared with me.

Discussion

The Indigenous student affairs professionals (SAPs) that participated in this dissertation shared stories of their experiences working at public four-year universities. Their stories are important because they demonstrate the ways the institution still contributes to acts of erasure and invisibility of Indigenous people. The Indigenous SAPs contribute this erasure and invisibility through colonial history of both the united states and higher education institutions. Because of this, their work at the university consists of engaging in cultural knowledge brokering in order to assist Indigenous students.

Indigenous feminism tells us that how Indigenous societies were traditionally run is in direct conflict with the heteropatriarchal structure of settler colonialism (Risling Baldy, 2018). Settler colonialism differs from other forms of colonialism in that the purpose is to take land away from the Indigenous communities in order to settle on it, not just the taking of resources on the land (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Tuck and Yang (2012) describe this as one component of the settler colonialism triad. Land became valuable property to settlers (2012). In order to claim land

that belonged to someone else, Native communities need to be eliminated and this elimination is the second component of the triad (Wolfe, 2006; Tuck & Yang, 2012; Risling Baldy, 2018). Once land was taken from the Indigenous people, the land needed to be worked on and labor was needed. Chattel slavery allowed for free labor to settlers, and is the last component of the triad (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Slave labor became another form of property and wealth for settlers, but the slaves themselves were not seen as human, as valuable (Wolfe, 2006; Tuck & Yang, 2012). The triad shows how settler colonialism is a structure, not an event (Wolfe, 2006; Tuck & Yang, 2012). We see this through the assimilation process and boarding schools of Native communities in the attempt to destroy the Indian, and traditional practices, to save the man (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Harjo, 2019). Why is this important? The Indigenous SAPs have shared stories of working at structures of settler colonialism of higher education institutions and experiencing acts of erasure and invisibility.

The Indigenous SAPs shared feeling like the "token Indian" in their conversational interviews. As we remember from Elizabeth's interview, she explains that a token Indian is "They need me to be there so that they can say they had a Native person on the committee. But in terms of elevating my voice on behalf of our Native community, it doesn't really seem like the top priority". Basically, they are present at the meetings because the institution has to have them there for diversity and inclusion. I also acknowledge that this is contradictory Indigenous SAPs experiencing acts of erasure and invisibility. However, I must stress that this is the everyday reality that Indigenous SAPs are facing in their work, and as the participant's stories have showcased, a challenge they all figure out how to navigate. One way of doing this is, I argue, cultural knowledge brokering.

Higher education institutions (HEIs) need to have an Indigenous voice present but the Indigenous SAPs feel that the institution isn't truly listening to the needs of Indigenous communities. They feel this way because they are not seeing any changes occurring at their respective institutions. The available literature tells us the importance of Indigenous student affairs professionals: they connect with key personnel across campus to build relationships and support for Indigenous students; they serve as role models for Indigenous students; they serve as buffers between Indigenous students and campus bureaucracy at times; and they support Indigenous students grow spiritually, personally, and academically (Shotton, Lowe, & Waterman, 2013; Minthorn & Shotton, 2018). As Brayboy, Solyom, and Castagno (2015) state, "Improving student outcomes requires knowledge and commitment to enforce and embody the virtues and intentions outlined in the institution's mission statement" (p. 155). The presence of Indigenous SAPs at higher education institutions is important as they are doing what they can to help Indigenous students feel welcome and assisting students with the challenges they face. However, HEIs need to become knowledgeable of Indigenous communities if they want to make their campuses truly inclusive and welcoming. Having Indigenous SAPs present at meetings and committees just to check off that they have an Indigenous voice is an act of checking off diversity. The participants mention how stretched they are in their work, and by having to attend these meetings because they are afraid of what decisions will be made that will impact Indigenous communities is contributing to burnout. This is not only true for Indigenous communities, but all diverse communities that HEIs are saying they want to serve. There needs to be change so as to prevent burnout and Indigenous SAPs feel confident HEIs are putting the needs of Indigenous students into consideration.

In the literature review, I demonstrated the need for more research on the experiences of Indigenous SAPs as the majority of scholarship in Indigenous higher education focuses on the student experience but not on the experiences of Indigenous SAPs who serve Indigenous students. The findings presented in Chapter 4, provide multiple examples of how Indigenous SAPs educate the university on tribal sovereignty as well as Indigenous ways of knowing and being and why Indigenous SAPs engage in cultural knowledge brokering. This work contributes to research on funds of knowledge and community cultural wealth by demonstrating the unique experiences of Indigenous SAPs and how they draw on "culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (Moll et al., p.133) as they participate in the higher education workforce. As Rios-Aguilar et al. (2022) highlight how students use their familial and cultural knowledge to transition to the university. My research, as demonstrated by the participants in this study, highlights how Indigenous SAPs are using their cultural knowledge to educate university administrators about what tribal sovereignty is and why it is important to be aware of cultural norms (e.g., L.J.'s example of mourning in Indigenous communities). They draw on this knowledge as they move (i.e., transition) between university contexts (e.g., offices, committee meetings, etc.). Moreover, I demonstrate how Indigenous SAPs, who are working in settler colonial institutions that are built on positions of power, are doing more than just highlighting the life experience of underrepresented students, they are educating the university on how the historical impacts of land and water theft and treaty policies have impacted Indigenous people and the ways that these impacts are still felt today. Although, Indigenous SAPs knowledge may not be viewed as a valuable form of capital by universities administrators, I demonstrate, through my use of theory

and methods, that the knowledge Indigenous SAPs hold and the ways they use their knowledge is invaluable to Native students and communities.

The Indigenous SAPs in this study take on the perspectives of both Indigenous students and the institution for which they work. They felt compelled to and choose to educate their colleagues on Indigenous communities, traditional knowledge, traditional cultural activities, and how this knowledge fits within university policy. This act of translating is what I call cultural knowledge brokering. They also use cultural knowledge brokering to educate staff at the institution so that they will be less likely to perpetuate racial stereotypes. This theme of cultural knowledge brokering helps answer the research question of how Indigenous SAPs use Indigenous ways of knowing and university policy to advocate for Indigenous students. Their stories are in contrast to higher educational institutions stating commitments to diversity and inclusion efforts. Research demonstrates that Native student affairs professionals are confronted with constantly educating their non-Native colleagues, staff, faculty, and administrators on Indigenous communities (Shotton, Lowe, & Waterman, 2013). They experience isolation, invisibility, and loneliness, just like the students they serve. Serving Indigenous students helps combat the feelings of loneliness and isolation, gives Indigenous staff members a sense of community, and motivates their work. As we see from the previous theme, Indigenous SAPs are important for Indigenous students' success. In order to retain Indigenous SAPs at HEIs, the institution needs to be more knowledgeable about Indigenous communities so that they can be more welcoming and inclusive to students, staff, and faculty. More needs to be done to allow Indigenous SAPs to do their work but also to help support them. This includes not only listening to their needs but actually implementing some of these suggestions, which not only benefits Indigenous people but all marginalized populations at the university.

Implications

I believe the stories of the Indigenous SAPs have demonstrated structural issues at the university that allow for these SAPs to feel the need to educate colleagues about Indigenous communities, to feel overwhelmed, and to feel burnt out. Indigenous feminist scholars remind us that higher education institutions are settler colonial structures (Risling Baldy, 2018). Settler colonialism has adapted and keeps adapting (Tuck & Yang, 2012), which is what may be occurring at HEIs. Even with offices of equity, diversity and inclusion in place at many institutions, erasure and invisibility of Indigenous people keep occurring as demonstrated by the stories of my participants.

Participants gave a variety of examples of how and why the choose to engage in CKB. One example is L.J. acting as a moderator between the financial aid office and an Indigenous student to come up with a plan that satisfied both parties. If L.J. hadn't done so, this Indigenous student may have dropped out of the university. When Indigenous SAPs engage in CKB, it is with the intent of helping Indigenous students and educating the university to help them understand Indigenous communities. This is one of the reasons why having Indigenous SAPs at the university is so important. The more university administrators are knowledgeable about Indigenous communities, the less Indigenous SAPs have to educate colleagues, and supervisors, about microaggressions. This is a huge problem and it shouldn't have to fall on the employee to teach their supervisor on why these comments are a problem, especially when they are being put in an awkward position of not having any power or protection.

I argue that cultural knowledge brokering can help combat this, along with a few other recommendations. One recommendation is to look at how resources and funding is allocated, and reconfigure so that groups do not have to fight one another for these resources. Another

recommendation is having more Indigenous SAPs employed in all different departments across campus. The last recommendation is to look at the purpose of DEI offices, and if they are truly meeting their mission or if they are just checking off boxes, and not making real, lasting change. Universities need to listen to the needs of their students and staff as well as their recommendations for change. L.J. mentioned that HEIs don't listen to student needs and forget to ask their input. I argue that HEIs also need to do the same for their SAPs. As the participants have said, the students may not feel comfortable speaking up or approaching the university administration and will ask Indigenous SAPs for assistance. This is another reason why having Indigenous SAPs is important but HEIs need to hire more so that the few already employed, will not feel obligated to take on extra work for the community they serve.

Future Research

My original goal for this dissertation was to create a formal definition of cultural knowledge brokering with my participants and start creating a framework to be used at the university. In the middle of data collection, however, I realized that I need more participants and more interviews to accomplish this. For future research, I want to explore what prompts Indigenous SAPs to engage in cultural knowledge brokering at private universities and explore whether this occurs at tribal colleges. If CKB doesn't occur at tribal colleges, why? In addition, Indigenous SAPs need to be consulted on their views as to what a CKB framework would look like. This dissertation is a starting platform of CKB and reasons as to why Indigenous SAPs engage in this practice.

Another question I am interested in exploring that stemmed from this dissertation is why six of the ten participants are/were in PhD programs. Did they see a need to receive their doctorate from the work they engage(d) in at the university? If so, what was it and why the PhD?

What does the PhD help them do that they currently are unable to do without that degree? How many others have done the same thing? Seeking out participants who have or working on their PhD was not intentional but this is something that I would like to explore more in the future.

Conclusion

As I reflect on the stories shared with me, I want to thank all the Indigenous SAPs that participated in this project. You were open and vulnerable during the conversational interviews and talking circle. Some of you even cried as well as made me cry. I learned so much from each of you, and expressing my gratitude will never be enough. What took me by surprise was during the talking circle. You thanked me for engaging in this work. You all expressed how it felt to express these frustrations you are experiencing and hearing others saying the same thing. You knew you weren't alone but to be in a space to hear it from others reaffirmed your experiences. While I was committed to creating a research design to honor Indigenous ways of being and knowing, this was unexpected. I am honored to have been able to share that virtual space with you. As I engage in future research, I want to continue implementing critical Indigenous research methodologies as it will look different with different Indigenous communities. While I feel this dissertation project was a good first step in that direction, I believe more can be done and I want to explore how to do so.

Appendix A

Conversational Interview Protocol

Although this protocol is semi-structured, depending on the flow of the conversation, unstructured questions may arise.

Thank you for taking time to speak with me today. The purpose of this dissertation study is exploring how Indigenous student affairs professionals draw on cultural knowledge brokering in their work. I will keep all of your responses anonymous by assigning a pseudonym that you create, and eliminating identifying information. In addition, I will share interview transcripts, talking circle transcripts, and your narrative profile with you so that you can make changes and ultimately approve what is written. What would you like your pseudonym to be? Is it okay for me to record our interview?

This one-on-one interview will be focused on getting to know each other, and then we can discuss our journey maps on cultural knowledge brokering.

1. RW - share about yourself
2. Tell me about where you're from and what brought you to this work in student affairs.
3. What has this work experience been like for you as an Indigenous person?

Potential follow up questions:

1. Overall, how would you describe your experience as an Indigenous student affairs professional?
2. What does it mean to you to be an American Indian doing this work?

Interest in Higher Education

1. How did you become interested in working at the University?
2. What interested you in student affairs?

Ground Tour/Daily Rounds

1. Tell me about your work at the University (or the work you did at the University)
2. How long have you been working in your current position? Or how long were you working in the position?
3. What does/did a typical day look like for you?

Reading Applications (recruiters only)

1. Walk me through reading an application and what do you look for in the American Indian applications? What stands out? Are there any words or phrases that jump out to you?
2. What gives you cause for concern when reading an application from an American Indian student?

3. What gives you excitement/hope when reading an application from an American Indian student?
4. When looking at applications, when do you know that an applicant is not going to make the cut?

Challenges/Opportunities

1. Would you share a time when you faced a challenge when working with Native students at a University? What about a challenge working with communities and the university?
2. What challenges do you run into when working at the University?
3. Share a memorable /positive time when working with Native students.

Follow-up Conversational Interview Protocol

Because of the individual nature of each interview, it wouldn't be possible for me to provide a fixed protocol of questions for this follow-up interview. However, this conversational interview will be driven by the following: clarification of points participants made, ask for more details, ask for historical background on concepts, elaboration on concepts mentioned.

Thank you for taking time to speak with me today. As a reminder, the purpose of this dissertation study is exploring how Indigenous student affairs professionals draw on cultural knowledge brokering in their work. I will keep all of your responses anonymous by assigning a pseudonym that you created, and eliminating identifying information. In addition, I will share interview transcripts, talking circle transcripts, and your story profile with you so that you can make changes and ultimately approve what is written. Is it okay for me to record our interview?

This follow-up conversational interview will be focused on clarification and elaboration from the previous interview. You mentioned the following from our last conversation: [insert description and concepts to be discussed]

Appendix B

Talking Circle

Talking circle: this interview will be unstructured and starting with a few prompts. This is to start the dialogue and to encourage all participants to ask questions and provide their suggestions on cultural knowledge brokering.

In early fall, I had conversational interviews about your experience working at four-year universities. What stood out for all three of these activities were the following themes: erasure and invisibility, feeling like the token Indian, and translating/moderating.

Thinking of these themes, think about why you felt these elements were important when translating university policy to Indigenous communities. Is there anything missing that you feel should be included? Feel free to jump into the conversation. My purpose for the talking circle is to engage everyone, and why this is important in our work.

Appendix C

Informed Consent Form

University of California, Los Angeles

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Indigenous Student Affairs Professionals as Cultural Knowledge Brokers

Renee White Eyes, M.A. and Dr. Ananda Marin, Ph.D. from the School of Education and Information Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) are conducting a research study.

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you meet the following criteria:

- You are over the age of eighteen (18)
- You identify as Native American, American Indian, Indian, First Nation, or Indigenous
- You are currently working or have worked at least two years or more at a four-year university as a recruiter for Native students.

Your participation in this research study is voluntary.

Why is this study being done?

This study is guided by two methodological and theoretical orientations: Critical Indigenous Research Methods (CIRM) and Indigenous Feminisms. Critical Indigenous Research Methodology foregrounds culturally responsive representations of Indigenous people and their communities, acknowledges their traditional knowledge and rituals, and commits to Indigenous peoples' access to and control in how the research is distributed (Brayboy, 2005; Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008). Indigenous Feminisms foregrounds Indigenous women's conceptions of responsibility and relationality as a way to disrupt settler colonial logics and heteropatriarchal norms as well as empower Indigenous communities (Minthorn & Shotton, 2018; Risling Baldy, 2018). I am interested in the experiences of Indigenous student affairs professionals who work or have worked at four-year universities to explore cultural knowledge brokering; in other words, how Indigenous student affairs professionals translate university policies and Indigenous ways of knowing as they navigate university and community-based contexts.

What will happen if I take part in this research study?

If you volunteer to participate in this study, the researcher will ask you to do the following:

- Participate in a one-on-one conversational interview about the experiences working at a public, four-year university

- Timing: these conversations will ideally take place during late fall or early winter quarters of the 2021-2022 academic year. While every conversation is different, conversations will last on average of sixty to ninety minutes each.
    - Content: during these conversations, the researcher will ask questions regarding your experience working at the university.
    - Location: the location of conversations will be online via zoom to allow flexibility for work schedules
- Participate in a talking circle with other participants to conceptualize cultural knowledge brokering. The talking circle can last a duration of two hours.

How long will I be in the research study?

Participation will take an approximate total of 7 hours over the course of the 2021-2022 academic year. If needed, participation can continue into the summer academic terms following the 2021-2022 academic year.

Are there any potential risks or discomforts that I can expect from this study?
The researcher does not anticipate considerable discomfort or risk should you agree to participate in the study. This being said, the nature of conversations between you and the researcher might center on uncomfortable topics. At any point, you can decline to answer any question asked; you also will be able to stop an interview at any point should you desire.

Are there any potential benefits if I participate?

You may benefit emotionally from the study by having the space to discuss your experiences and identity in confidence with the researcher. Having the opportunity to openly and honestly discuss concerns and frustrations you have in the context of this study might be cathartic, and in some cases self-revelatory, for you.

The results of the research may lead to publishable work that contributes to academic literature on higher education, specifically work which centers non-cisgender students. There currently is a gap in literature that discusses Indigenous student affairs professionals at four-year universities from their perspective. This research aims to fill in that gap and how recruiters enact cultural knowledge brokering to assist in their work.

Will I be paid for participating?

You will receive $50 in the form of an Amazon gift card for participating in this study. Payment will be provided at the end of the talking circle.

Will information about me and my participation be kept confidential?

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can identify you will remain confidential. It will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. You will be referred to exclusively by pseudonym in any writing or presentation that stems from this

research, unless you specifically wish to be referred to by name for any reason. Additionally, your academic institution will be referred to via pseudonym so as to further protect your identity.

The principal investigator will have sole access to audio recordings, and other intimately identifiable data sources. The principal investigator will have primary access to transcribed interviews, and other completed representations of data; the identity of participants will be removed at this stage of the process.

Confidentiality of data will be maintained by means of storing data on encrypted, password-protected databases. Audio recordings will be recorded and subsequently saved on the researcher's encrypted audio recording device until they can be transferred to an encrypted, password-protected database.

What are my rights if I take part in this study?

- You can choose whether or not you want to be in this study, and you may withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time.
- Whatever decision you make, there will be no penalty to you, and no loss of benefits to which you were otherwise entitled.
- You may refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.

Who can I contact if I have questions about this study?

The research team:

- Renee White Eyes, Principal Investigator: rwhiteeyes@g.ucla.edu, (760) 315-3940
- Dr. Ananda Marin, Faculty Advisor: amarin1@gseis.ucla.edu

- UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program (OHRPP):

If you have questions about your rights while taking part in this study, or you have concerns or suggestions and you want to talk to someone other than the researchers about the study, please call the OHRPP at (310) 825-7122 or write to:

UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program
11000 Kinross Avenue, Suite 211, Box 951694
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1694

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Appendix D

Recruitment Scripts

Email Scripts:

Subject: Research Participants Needed: Indigenous students affairs professionals at four-year universities
To: Academic departments and offices; peers

Greetings,

I hope this email finds you well. I am a PhD student in the Social Research Methodology division at UCLA, and identify as an urban, Native American woman. I am currently conducting a study exploring Indigenous students affairs professionals who are/have recruited Indigenous students to four-year universities, and am looking for participants who:

- Are eighteen (18) years of age or older
- Who identify as American Indian, Native American, Indian, First Nation, Indigenous
- Are/have recruited for a four-year university for two years or more

If you know any Indigenous student affairs professionals who might fit these criteria, could you please pass this email and attached flyer to them? Participants will receive $50 gift card after participating in the conversational interview and talking circles. If participants engage in one of the research activities, they will receive a $25 gift card.

If you or anyone you know have any questions regarding this research, I would love to answer them. Please feel free to email me at rwhiteeyes@g.ucla.edu.

Thank you in advance for your time and assistance!

Best,
Renee White Eyes, MA
PhD Student, Social Research Methodology
UCLA School of Education & Information Studies
Pronouns: She/her/hers

Social Media Posts:

Hi there! My name is Renee, and I am a doctoral student at UCLA. I am a tribal member of the Quechan Indian Nation from Yuma, AZ; my research interests include the work experiences of Indigenous student affairs professionals at four-year universities. I am conducting a study exploring how Indigenous student affairs professionals engage in cultural knowledge brokering, or the translation of admission policies and Indigenous ways of knowing as they navigate

university and community-based contexts. If you are over the age of 18, are currently working or have worked as an Indigenous student affairs professional at a four-year university for two years or more, consider participating! You will receive $50 gift card after participating in the conversational interview and talking circles. You can email me at rwhiteeyes@g.ucla.edu or Facebook message me for more information. Thanks!

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