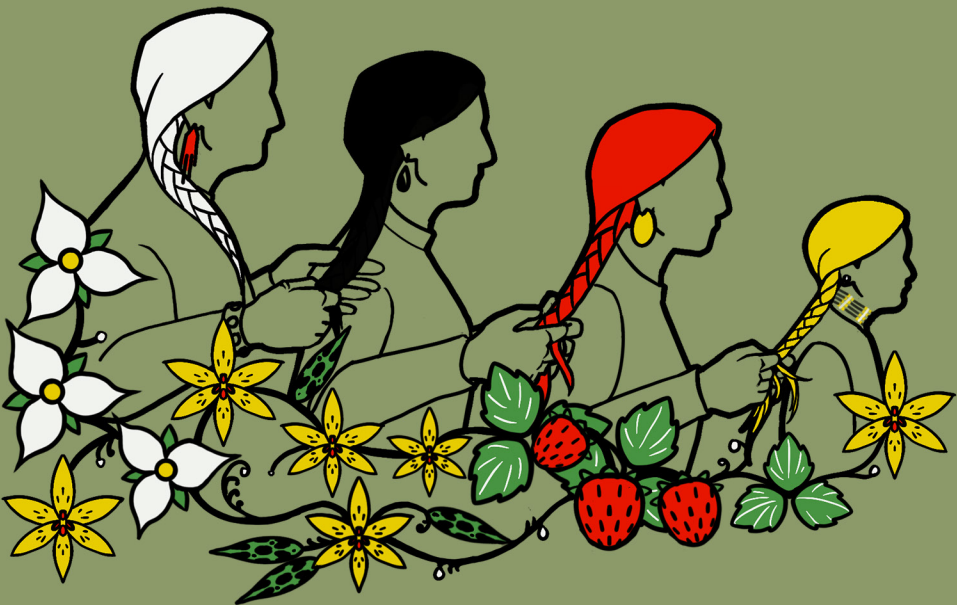




UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

**NATIVE
STUDENT**

GRADUATION CELEBRATION



2024





RECOGNITION FROM UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP

It is with great pleasure that we welcome the University of Michigan 2024 Native graduates.

This feast recognizes the importance of family and friends. The presentation of the blankets symbolizes protection, security and warmth – all of the things we wish for our graduates as they begin the next chapter of their lives.

As we honor you, we are excited about the opportunities that await each of you. We are confident you have the skills, talent, drive and commitment to overcome challenges and make a difference.

From one perspective, we are marking this wonderful occasion of graduation as an ending, the conclusion of a long journey. However, the root of the word “commencement” is the act of beginning. We wish you success and happiness as you begin the next steps of your life journey.

To be a Michigan graduate is not just joining the community of over half a million Michigan alumni spread around the globe – half a million friends, colleagues, and mentors ready to help welcome you into your next chapter. It is also to embrace the idea that the knowledge and experiences you have developed and gained here are gifts to be used and shared.

Go forth and excel in everything you do personally and professionally, and always with integrity and pride. And wherever your journey takes you – Go Blue!

Santa J. Ono
President

Laurie K. McCauley
Provost & Executive Vice President
for Academic Affairs

Martino Harmon
Vice President for Student Life

Tabbye M. Chavous
Vice Provost for Equity & Inclusion
and Chief Diversity Officer





OAMI'S EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE

I want to congratulate you on your immense achievement of graduating from the University of Michigan. You should take pride in what you have accomplished and use the wisdom you have gained from your experiences here to guide your way forward.

Your graduation is not just a personal triumph; it is a testament to the resilience, strength, and determination of Native communities. The number of Native students such as yourself may be relatively small, but your voices and your leadership are powerful. Some of you have completed your studies while facing financial struggle, isolation, and exclusion. But you did not let this stop you. You found your personal strength. You built your community. You relied on the traditions of your spirituality to overcome the hurdles and succeed.

Your presence at the University of Michigan enriched our campus, bringing diverse perspectives and invaluable contributions to our academic and cultural landscape. You helped the university embrace the debt we owe to Native American and other Indigenous peoples as we occupy their land. You helped us connect to your community by collaborating with OAMI on the tremendous milestone of the 50th annual Dance for Mother Earth Powwow. You led us to examine how we can improve the experience of Native students on our campus – for all of this, we owe you our gratitude.

As you prepare to step into the world beyond academia, know that you have made a lasting mark here at Michigan. Remember the rich heritage and traditions that have shaped you. Carry them with pride. Use them as a source of strength and inspiration as you navigate the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

You are not alone on this journey. You are part of a vibrant community of Native scholars, leaders, and changemakers who are making a difference in the world. Stay connected to your roots, support one another, and continue to uplift and empower one another as you embark on your next adventure.

Finally, I wish you success, fulfillment, and happiness in all your endeavors. Remember that the University of Michigan will always be a part of your story, and we look forward to hearing about the great things you will accomplish in the future.

Once again, congratulations on your graduation, and best wishes for a bright and promising future!

Sincerely,

Rachel Dawson

Director for the Office of Multicultural Academic Initiatives





LAND AND LABOR ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The University of Michigan is located on the territory of the Anishinaabeg people. The Ann Arbor campus resides on land ceded through the Treaty of Detroit in 1807. Additionally, in 1817, the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Bodewadami Nations made the largest single land transfer to the University of Michigan, ceded through the Treaty of Fort Meigs, with the agreement that their children would be educated in perpetuity.

We assert the sovereignty of tribal lands and acknowledge the painful historical and ongoing genocide, forced assimilation, and displacement of Native communities in establishing the university.

We affirm contemporary and ancestral Anishinaabeg ties to this land, the profound contributions of Native American peoples to this institution, and the University's commitment to educating the children of Native ancestors.

We further recognize that whether you are on campus in Ann Arbor or elsewhere in the United States, we stand on land developed at the often-fatal expense of forcefully enslaved Black people. We acknowledge that much of this country, including its culture, economic growth, and development has been made possible by the labor of enslaved Africans and their descendants who suffered the horror of the transatlantic trafficking, chattel slavery, and dehumanization through segregation and Jim Crow laws.

We remember those who did not survive the Middle Passage, those who were beaten and lynched, and those who are still suffering while fighting for their freedom. We are indebted to their labor and unwilling sacrifice, and acknowledge the violence throughout the generations and the resulting impact and generational trauma still felt today.

The fights against settler colonialism and anti-blackness will always be inextricably linked. To the land, to the collective, and to the ancestors, we thank you, we thank you, we thank you.





ORDER OF PROGRAM

OPENING

Masters of Ceremonies

Jamie Fuentes & Noemi Tehauno

WELCOME

Dr. Tabbye Chavous

*Vice Provost for Equity & Inclusion
and Chief Diversity Officer*

Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

REMARKS FOR GRADUATES

Cannupa Hanska Luger

Multidisciplinary Artist

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Melissa Isaac

Gizhwaasod: Protector of the Young
Michigan Department of Education

CLASS RECOGNITION

CLOSING

Andrea Wilkerson

*Assistant Director of Native American
Student Enrichment and Belonging*
Office of Multi-Ethnic Student Affairs

HONOR SONG

Joe Reilly and NASA Community





MASTERS OF CEREMONIES



Jaime Fuentes

Native American Student Association

Jaime Fuentes is an enrolled member of the Hopland Band of Pomo Indians and co-secretary for the Native American Student Association at U-M. After completing an M.S. in Cellular and Developmental Biology at California State University, he started at U-M in the Dept of Microbiology and Immunology in 2018, where he is pursuing his Ph.D. in the lab of Dr. Eric C. Martens.

Noemi Tehauno

Native American Student Association

Noemi Tehauno (they/them) is a citizen of the Comanche Nation and a second-year student in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts studying Linguistics and Native American Studies. They are a member of the Native American Student Association at the University of Michigan.





WELCOME SPEAKER



Dr. Tabbye Chavous, Ph.D.
*Vice Provost for Equity & Inclusion
and Chief Diversity Officer*
Office of Diversity, Equity,
and Inclusion

Dr. Tabbye Chavous is the Vice Provost for Equity & Inclusion and Chief Diversity Officer at the University of Michigan. She is also a professor of education and professor of psychology.

A native of Aiken, South Carolina, Dr. Chavous attended the University of Virginia where she received her bachelor's degree and went on to earn a PhD in Community Psychology. Following her graduate work, Dr. Chavous entered the University of Michigan as an assistant professor and moved up the ranks to professor.

Dr. Chavous has held leadership roles at the department, college, and central administration levels during her almost 24 years at U-M. Most recently, she was the director of the National Center for Institutional Diversity and associate dean for diversity, equity, and inclusion in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts. Prior to that, Dr. Chavous served as an associate vice president for research, associate dean for academic programs and initiatives in the Rackham Graduate School, and chair of the Combined Program in Education and Psychology. Across all of her roles, the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion have been central to her leadership approaches and practices and infused throughout the initiatives, programs, and practices she helped develop and implement.

Based on her academic and scholarly work and leadership impacts, Dr. Chavous has been called on locally, nationally, and internationally to consult and collaborate in efforts to broaden access, participation, and retention and thriving in higher education – more broadly and in fields such as science, technology, mathematics and engineering. These efforts focus on all levels of the academy—undergraduate and graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, and faculty.





REMARKS FOR GRADUATES



Cannupa Hanska Luger

Multidisciplinary Artist

Born on the Standing Rock Reservation in North Dakota, New Mexico based artist Cannupa Hanska Luger is an enrolled member of the Three Affiliated Tribes of Fort Berthold and is of Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara and Lakota heritage. Luger is a 2022 Guggenheim Fellow, a recipient of a 2021 United States Artists Fellowship Award for Craft and was named a 2021 GRIST Fixer. He is a 2020 Creative Capital Fellow, a 2020 Smithsonian Artist Research Fellow, and the recipient of the Museum of Arts and Design's 2018 inaugural Burke Prize, among others. Luger has exhibited nationally and internationally including at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gardiner Museum, Kunsthall KAdE, Washington Project for the Arts, Art Múr, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art and the National Center for Civil and Human Rights. Luger holds a BFA in studio arts from the Institute of American Indian Arts and is represented by Garth Greenan Gallery in New York.



Cannupa Hanska Luger with NASA students during his residency at the U-M Museum of Art





KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Melissa Isaac

Gizhwaasod: Protector of the Young
Michigan Department of Education

Melissa Isaac is Anishinaabe, sturgeon clan, and a citizen of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan. She and her husband Nathan have 4 children ranging in ages 7 to 21. The family includes a 4 year old German Shepherd (Einstein) and 1 year old Giant Yorkie (Luisa). Melissa is the oldest of 7 children.

Professionally, Melissa works for the Michigan Department of Education's Indigenous Education Initiative as the Gizhwaasod: Protector of the Young. She is also the owner and founder of Edukwe Consulting where she provides services to help strengthen tribal nation's building through education.

Melissa had the honor of being appointed to Governor Whitmer's Return to Learn Advisory Council in June of 2020 to help safely guide Michigan schools back to learning amidst a global pandemic. She was then named to Governor Whitmer's Student Recovery Advisory Council in February 2021 to make recommendations to address the impact of the pandemic on students.

In October of 2021 Melissa and the Project AWARE team, in her former role as education director for the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe, were honored with a site visit from the First Lady of the United States, Dr. Jill Biden for their work in addressing youth mental health awareness in schools. In March of 2022, Melissa was 1 of 8 special guests invited by Dr. Jill Biden to the President of the United States, Joe Biden's State of the Union Address. In November 2022, she was invited by Dr. Jill Biden to the first-ever Native American Heritage Month Celebration at the White House.

Her academic accolades include an Associate of Arts Degree in Elementary Education from Mid-Michigan Community College, a Bachelor of Science in Education with an Elementary emphasis from Central Michigan University, a Master of Science in Administration with a concentration in Leadership from Central Michigan University, and currently she is a doctoral candidate in the Doctor of Educational Leadership Program at Central Michigan University.





CLOSING SPEAKER

Andrea Wilkerson

*Assistant Director of Native American
Student Enrichment and Belonging
Office of Multi-Ethnic Student Affairs*



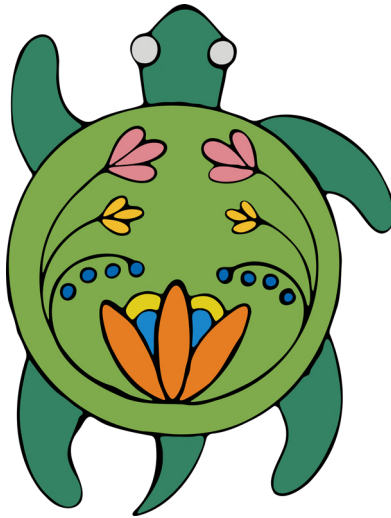
Andrea Wilkerson (Aamjiwnaang First Nation of Sarnia) serves as an Assistant Director of Native Student Enrichment and Belonging in the Office of Multi-Ethnic Student Affairs and the Advisor for the Native American Student Association (NASA). She works closely with NASA to host programs like the Native American Student Welcome, Native American Heritage Month, cultural workshops and conversations, as well as the Dance for Mother Earth Powwow. Andrea could not be more proud of these amazing graduates and honored to have spent time in community with them!

Andrea received her B.A. in International Studies from the University of Michigan, focusing on political economy/development and human rights and is part of Aamjiwnaang First Nation Chippewa of Sarnia. Andrea has spent a number of years in the non-profit environment supporting the fight to end homelessness in Washtenaw County and developing programming/volunteering opportunities to support families impacted by chronic homelessness. Andrea enjoys spending time with family at the hockey rink and singing traditional songs within intertribal community spaces.





CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2023-2024!





DOCTORAL GRADUATES



Julisa Lopez Amah Mutsun
Rackham Graduate School
Psychology



John Robinson
Ni-U-Koçn-Ska (Osage)
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts,
Rackham Graduate School
Chemistry
I'll be in lab.





MASTER'S GRADUATES



Marlowe Camblin

Xhu-Eh Doin

Osage Nation

Stephen M. Ross School
of Business

Business Administration

Maleigha Coronado

Aamjiwnaang First Nation

School of Social Work

*Interpersonal Practice in
Integrated Health, Mental
Health, & Substance Abuse*



Thank you to my friends and family who have provided me with unconditional love and support in every path I have taken to get here. Cheers to the next journey of life with you all by my side!





MASTER'S GRADUATES



Forrest Cox

Prairie Band

Potawatomi Nation

Stephen M. Ross School

of Business

Business Administration

Chi-miigwetch for the support of my wife, my family, my friends, and the embrace of NASA as I returned to Michigan to further my education. It has been a wonderful journey at Ross making new friends and acquiring new knowledge I hope to take back to my tribe and others to further develop our tribal communities. Chi-miigwetch to our ancestors for their resilience, determination, and sacrifice for us today.

Frances Dean

School of Public Health,

School of Social Work

Public Health (Epidemiology);

Social Work (Interpersonal

Practice)



Thank you to my NASA family and lifelong friends that have helped me evolve over time!





MASTER'S GRADUATES

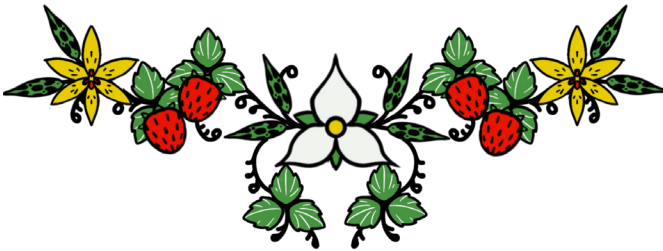


Iris Luna

*Grand Traverse Band of
Ottawa and Chippewa
Indians*

School of Social Work
Welfare of Children & Families

*To my beloved friends, family, and the incredible
NASA community, your love and encouragement
have been the cornerstone of my educational journey.
Thank you all for guiding me, believing in me, and
standing by me through every challenge and victory.
I couldn't have made it without the support of every
single one of you!*





MASTER'S GRADUATES

Ashley Martinez

Aztec

A. Alfred Taubman College
of Architecture and Urban
Planning, School for
Environment and Sustainability,
Stephen M. Ross School of Business

*Business Administration; Environment and
Sustainability; Graduate Certificate in Real Estate
Development*



*Thank you to my family and friends who have always
believed in what I am capable of and pushed me to
grasp it.*



Antonio Morsette

KiEwSis

Chippewa Cree Tribe

School for Environment and
Sustainability

*Environment and Sustainability;
Geospatial Data Science*

*Migwech/Hiy-Hiy (Thank You), Kisahkitin (I love
you) Nichimos and family for supporting me through
my master's program. It was tough at times, but I
made it with your help.*





MASTER'S GRADUATES



Sean-Michael Steele

Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, Stephen M. Ross School of Business

*Business Administration;
Public Policy*

I thank my partner, family, and friends for their support, love, and words of encouragement. Getting to this moment is an act of resistance and honor to my ancestors.

Madison Parrish

Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi Nation (Battle Creek, Michigan)

Rackham Graduate School, School for Environment and Sustainability, Stephen M. Ross School of Business

Sustainability; Business Administration; Marketing, Brand Management, and International Business



Thank you for all of your love and support throughout my graduate school journey and always being there for me! I love you all! Chi Miigwetch! Go Blue!





MASTER'S GRADUATES

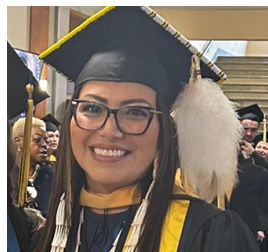
Heather Syrette

Nigiizhigat

*Oneida Nation of the Thames
& Little Traverse Bay Band
Odawa*

School of Social Work

*Social Work Interpersonal Practice in Integrated
Health, Mental Health & Substance Abuse*



I would first like to say miigwetch / yaw^ko to my daughters, Maya, Selese and husband Joe for their patience and love. I would also like to share my gratitude to my parents as they instilled hard work, culture, and language in me through life. I value my traditional teachings as well as what I've learned while at University of Michigan. I believe education is life long we never stop learning, and we are never above anyone. I use these teachings as a way to help my Native people through healing from historical and intergenerational trauma. Miigwetch / Yaw^ko / Thank you University of Michigan, my ancestors, and my family for believing in me this degree is for all of you!





BACHELOR'S GRADUATES

Paige Cushman
*Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of
Chippewa Indians*
Stephen M. Ross School of
Business
Business Administration



Jalen Greene
*Lumbee Tribe of North
Carolina*
College of Literature, Science, and
the Arts
Psychology; Spanish

Thank you so much to my wonderful family – my mom, my dad, my sister, and my two grandmothers for loving me through the past four years! I also want to thank all seven of my lovely roommates for all of their support. And, of course, to my NASA community! I wouldn't be here without you all!





BACHELOR'S GRADUATES

Fionna Noori

Nitaaniimikwesens

I am a multi-ethnic American based on oral history and family artifacts and am recognized as part of the Annishinaabe/Ojibwe diaspora by my family and numerous elders in Minnesota and Michigan



College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

Film, Television, and Media; American Culture; Crime and Justice

I'd like to thank my mother, Margaret Noodin, for showing me everyday what unconditional love and resiliency looks like. I'd like to thank Shannon Noori for being the best big sister ever and exemplifying everyday how to persevere in the hardships of life. And I'd like to thank Michael Zimmerman for teaching me to always stand up for myself and to never lose sight of the little kid inside me.



Fisher Wojtas

*Sault Ste Marie Tribe of
Chippewa Indians*

College of Literature, Science,
and the Arts

Computer Science

Thanks to my parents for always supporting me, encouraging me throughout my college experience, without them I wouldn't be standing here. Also thanks to NASA and the community it gave me I don't think college would have been nearly as fun without them.





NATIVE STUDENT GRADUATION CELEBRATION PLANNING COMMITTEE

2024 Graduation is coordinated by:

Jaime Fuentes
Héctor Galván
Noemi Tehauno
Andrea Wilkerson

CELEBRATION MISSION

The Native Student Graduation celebrates the commonalities and differences that characterize the experiences of native students and other students at the University of Michigan and serves as an example of the University of Michigan's commitment to diversity.

The ceremony acknowledges the value and uniqueness of the native student experience and serves to commemorate the accomplishments of those students that participate in the celebration. The celebration recognizes faculty and staff who provide academic enrichments, research opportunities, programs, and activities that promote the communal striving and sense of accountability that help students to achieve.

The Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives, in partnership with the Native Student Planning Committee, institutes this annual celebration as an expression and tradition of valuing the University's cultural offerings and commitment to diversity.

Thank you to the offices, students, and staff that have supported the Native Student Graduation throughout the years.





STATEMENT OF FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

The University of Michigan strives to create an open forum in which diverse opinions can be expressed and heard. Members of the University community, speakers, artists, and other invited guests have a right to express their views and opinions, and the University will protect that right. The University also supports the rights of those with differing views to express their opinions. In the interest of protecting these rights for all, speech that breaks the law, violates the University of Michigan's code of conduct, or threatens harm to another person will not be tolerated. Persons engaging in such speech may be warned by University representatives, and if the warnings are not heeded, may be removed from the building. The policy extends and affirms University policies set forth by our Civil Liberties Board in our Student Handbook; and in the U-M Standard Practice Guide; Regents Ordinance Article XII, Section 1; and state statutes.

NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

The University of Michigan, as an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer, complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding nondiscrimination and affirmative action. The University of Michigan is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, religion, height, weight, or veteran status in employment, educational programs and activities, and admissions. Inquiries or complaints may be addressed to the Office for Institutional Equity - 734-763-0235, TTY 734-647-1388, institutional.equity@umich.edu.

REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Jordan B. Acker, Huntington Woods
Michael J. Behm, Grand Blanc
Mark J. Bernstein, Ann Arbor
Paul W. Brown, Ann Arbor
Sarah Hubbard, Okemos
Denise Ilitch, Bingham Farms, chair
Ron Weiser, Ann Arbor
Katherine E. White, Ann Arbor
Santa J. Ono, *ex officio*





CULTURAL GRADUATION CELEBRATIONS

OAMI's cultural graduation celebrations supplement the traditional U-M commencement. They are held during graduation week to express appreciation for the achievements, commonalities, and cultural differences that characterize the experiences of graduating students. Additionally, they offer a chance for students to recognize the impact of faculty and staff with awards and honors.

CELEBRATION SYMBOLS

These symbols are used by OAMI and the organizing committees to represent the seven cultural graduations:



Black Celebratory

Native Student Graduation

La Celebración Latina

Middle Eastern/North African Graduation

Asian & Pacific Islander Graduation

First-Generation Students Graduation

Undocumented Students Graduation

oami.umich.edu/grad-celebrations





OFFICE OF ACADEMIC MULTICULTURAL INITIATIVES
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

