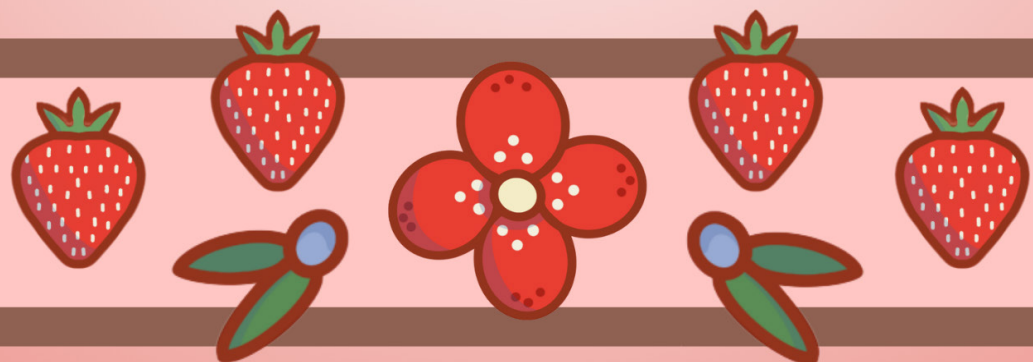


NATIVE STUDENT CELEBRATION

MAY 2, 6PM

**STUDENT ACTIVITIES BUILDING
530 S STATE ST, ANN ARBOR**

MAIZE & BLUE AUDITORIUM

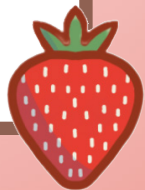




LAND AND LABOR ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Since its inception, the University of Michigan has been founded on violence against Indigenous communities, and it upholds this legacy through the continual harming of Native students, Black students, and other students of color and marginalized groups. The land where the Ann Arbor campus stands was taken from the Anishinaabe peoples—the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Bodewadmi—through the 1807 Treaty of Detroit, which promised rights that were never honored. The University’s very founding was made possible by the 1817 Treaty of Fort Meigs, in which thousands of acres of land, primarily in what is now Ohio, were taken from the Anishinaabeg. This land and its assets were later liquidated to fund the University’s establishment. Article 16 of the treaty promised education for Anishinaabe children in exchange for this land—a commitment the University has yet to meaningfully fulfill.

While the University references these treaties in limited ways, it has not instituted a formal land acknowledgment nor taken substantive steps to uphold its responsibilities. Land acknowledgments without action are empty gestures. We urge the University to honor its treaty obligations and take real steps toward addressing its institutional neglect for Black, Indigenous, and people of color across Michigan and beyond.





CELEBRATION WELCOME LETTER

Aanii,

Congratulations to the Graduating Class of 2026 and the participants of this year's Native Student Celebration.

It is an honor to gather in recognition of this moment. This university stands on the traditional homelands of the Anishinaabe people, and in acknowledging this, we honor the history, presence, and continuity of Indigenous communities.

Today, we celebrate you—your journeys, your presence, and the ways you have shaped this campus with care, intention, and community. What you have built here carries meaning that extends beyond this moment and will continue to live on in the spaces and relationships you have nurtured.

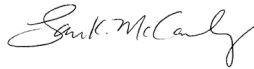
This celebration reflects the importance of family and community. The traditions honored here, including the presentation of blankets, carry messages of protection, strength, and care as you move into your next chapter. You carry these teachings with you, along with the connections that have supported you along the way.

Your time at Michigan has been shaped by the ways you have shown up for one another. Through gatherings, ceremonies, and everyday moments of care, you created and sustained community. That presence has made this university stronger.

We are deeply proud of you and grateful to celebrate alongside you. Miiigwetch, and Go Blue!



Domenico Grasso
President



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



Martino Harmon
Vice President for Student Life



Angela D. Dillard
Interim Vice Provost for Access &
Opportunity and Vice Provost for
Undergraduate Education





OAMI'S EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE

Dear Graduates,

It is a true honor to celebrate with you at this year's Native Student Celebration at the University of Michigan.

We gather here with a deep understanding of place and time. This university stands on the traditional homelands of the Anishinaabe people, and in recognizing that, we honor not only the history of this land but the living presence, strength, and continuity of Indigenous communities.

Today, we celebrate you, your journeys, your presence, and the ways you have shaped this campus with care, intention, and community. In the spaces you have built and sustained, there is a sense of connection that reaches beyond any single moment, something rooted, something carried forward.

It has been a true honor to walk alongside NASA and support in any way we can. There is so much care, love, and commitment in all that you do, from the Native Student Welcome, the Gaa-Bigooshkaaning Round Dance, the Dance for Mother Earth Powwow, and in the everyday ways you show up for one another.

As you move forward, you carry more than what you have accomplished here. You carry a connection. You carry tradition. You carry community and that will continue, wherever you go.

We are deeply proud of you and grateful to celebrate alongside you.

With much respect and appreciation,

The Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives





ORDER OF PROGRAM

OPENING

Masters of Ceremonies

Katie Lynch & Kennedy Bekisbah Jamison

WELCOME

Dr. Angela D. Dillard

*Interim Vice Provost for Access & Opportunity
and Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education*

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Dr. Kyle Whyte

*George Willis Pack Professor in the School of Environment
and Sustainability and University Diversity & Social
Transformation Professor*

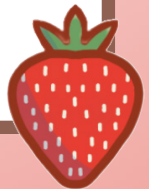
CLASS RECOGNITION

HONOR SONG

CLOSING

Andrea Wilkerson

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



MASTERS OF CEREMONIES



Katie Lynch

Katie Lynch is an enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation and a researcher passionate about building Indigenous-led systems of care. As a Ph.D. Student in Health Infrastructures & Learning Systems at the University of Michigan, she studies Indigenous conceptualizations of learning health

systems and food sovereignty, with particular interests in place-based healing and collective resurgence as forms of radical hope and Anishinaabe futurism. Outside of academics, Katie is the Chair of the Youth Advisory Board for the Center for Native American Youth at The Aspen Institute, a TEDx speaker, and a former White House Intern. In the future, she hopes to pursue a career at the intersection of academia and policy, focused on Indigenous food system restoration as a public health mechanism.



Kennedy Bekisbah Jamison

Kennedy Bekisbah Jamison is a Diné third-year undergraduate student from Las Vegas, Nevada. She is currently majoring in Movement Science on the pre-med track with minors in Mathematics and Native American Studies.

She hopes to use her knowledge gained from her studies and her community to

further medical technologies and practices to help others and her people. She is currently serving as the co-chair of NASA as well as an active member in NASA's singing and drumming group, Stick City. Outside of NASA, she is involved in Groove Percussion and Performance Group, Intramural Soccer, and Kinesiology Student Ambassadors.

WELCOME SPEAKER



Dr. Angela D. Dillard

Interim Vice Provost for Access & Opportunity and Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education

Angela D. Dillard is the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and the Interim Vice Provost for Access & Opportunity at the University of Michigan; former chair of the

Department of History in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts (LSA); and the Richard A. Meisler Collegiate Professor of Afroamerican & African Studies and History. She also maintains affiliated faculty status within the Residential College, where she is a member of the Social Theory & Practice program.

Dillard is an interdisciplinary scholar trained in history and political theory with a Ph.D. in American Studies, from the U-M's Department of American Culture. She specializes in American and African-American intellectual history, particularly around issues of race, religion, and politics — on both the Left and the Right sides of the political spectrum.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Dr. Kyle Whyte

*George Willis Pack Professor in
the School of Environment and
Sustainability and University
Diversity & Social Transformation
Professor*

Kyle is a faculty member at Michigan where he is George Willis Pack Professor in the School for Environment and Sustainability and University Diversity and Social Transformation Professor. On campus, Kyle teaches in and coordinates the School's environmental justice graduate specialization. He is founding Faculty Director of the Tishman Center for Social Justice and the Environment, Principal Investigator of the Environmental Justice + Humanities Hub, co-Principal Investigator of the Global Center for Climate Change and Transboundary Waters, Faculty Associate of Native American Studies, Principal Investigator of the Secretariat for the Pathways Alliance for Change and Transformation, STRIDE Committee member, affiliate Professor of Philosophy, and Senior Fellow in the Michigan Society of Fellows.

Kyle's research on environmental justice centers moral and political issues that Indigenous peoples are addressing in the areas of climate change, conservation, and cooperative relationships with science institutions. He is an enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. His publications appear in journals such as *Climatic Change*, *Weather*, *Climate & Society*, *Science*, *Daedalus*, *WIREs Climate Change*, *Environment & Planning E*, and *Sustainability Science*.

CLOSING SPEAKER



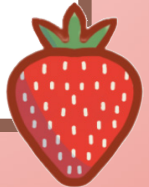
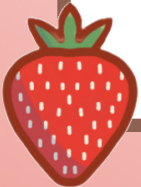
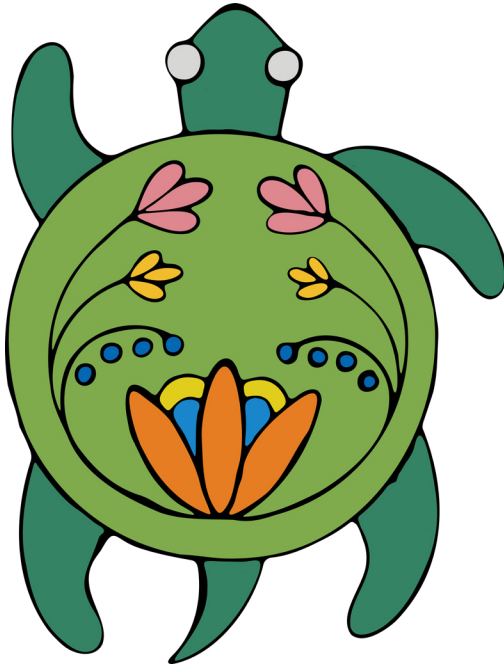
Andrea Wilkerson

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 is inspired every day by the amazing students she gets to work with and is so proud of them!

**CONGRATULATIONS TO
THE CLASS OF 2026!**



DOCTORAL GRADUATES



Liv Akkerman-Byram

Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians

Law School

Juris Doctor in Law

I want to thank my Son, Henry, my Brother, Elias, and my Partner, Charles, who made this possible by believing in me and supporting me every single day.



Elle Brown

Sault Ste. Marie Chippewa Tribe

Law School

Juris Doctor in Law

Thank you to my husband, Andrew. And my amazing friends and family that have helped me along the way.



Jacquelynn Gutierrez

Navajo Nation

Law School

Juris Doctor in Law

DOCTORAL GRADUATES



Andrew Druart

Chickasaw Nation

Law School

*Juris Doctor in Law – Tribal Law
and Federal Indian Law*

Yakoke to NALSA for their support and community! To my friends, family, and faculty who supported me!



Ashley Hamilton

*Kaw-Kee-Kah-Quah (Fast,
Walking Woman, Kickapoo);
HuucNāchiPiWinga (Good, Kind-
Hearted Bear Woman, Winnebago
Tribe of Nebraska)*

Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska;

Kickapoo Tribe in Kansas

Law School

Juris Doctor in Law - Federal Indian and Tribal Law

Pinagigi, Kepiihcihi, Thank you, from the bottom of my heart to my MLaw NALSA and National NALSA community. I am forever changed by and grateful for our shared experience and impact on MLaw and the legal community on the whole. I know we will change the world for the better! Thank you to everyone who supported us all through these taxing three years - especially my mom, Winnie, and Roo. All my pride and support, Ashley

DOCTORAL GRADUATES



Jasmine Neosh

Nāēnawēhtawiahkiw

Menominee

Law School, School for
Environment and Sustainability

*JD (Law); MS Environment and
Sustainability (Environmental
Justice)*

*Thank you to NASA for all of the support over the years and
for providing much-needed community, laughter and fun.
You make every space feel like ceremony.*



Amanda Swan

Diné

Law School

Juris Doctor in Law

*This is for you, Grandpa. Gracias
abuelito, y gracias mamá.*

DOCTORAL GRADUATES



Davianna Velasco Valdivieso

*Quichwa
Law School
Juris Doctor in Law*

*Forest, your love held me together these past three years.
You are my light, you are my dream. Kuskamachupayacha
kananchikkama.*



Jamie Yellowtail

*E'se'vone meo na'e
Northern Cheyenne/Crow
Rackham Graduate School
Psychology*

*To my family-- thank you for your support and encouragement
over the course of my graduate program.
I love you all so much.*

*To the RISE Center and Culture Collaboratory-- it has been a
gift to be in community with you all for the past six years. I have
so much gratitude for the heart-work that comes from
our space.*

MASTER'S GRADUATES



Sarah Allen

*Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa
Indians*

*School for Environment and
Sustainability*

*M.S. in Environment and Sustainability
with a specialization in Environmental
Justice*

Chi-miigwech to my family, friends, and mentors. You all have brought such valuable kinship, love, and laughter into my life these past two years. You'll forever be apart of my journey down the good red road <3



Jalen Greene

Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina

Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy

*Master of Public Policy, Concentration
in Public and Non-Profit Management*

MASTER'S GRADUATES



Coral Avery

Shawnee Tribe

School for Environment and
Sustainability

*Environment and Sustainability with
specializations in Environmental
Justice and Behavior, Education &
Communication*

Niyaawe to my mentor, Kyle Whyte, for giving me the opportunity to come back to school and to Kyle and the Tishman Center team for helping me navigate the challenges of a masters program and find community. Niyaawe to my family, friends, partner, and peers for your support through all of the good and bad that have come over the past two years; kita'kweelemele. To my grandmother who passed on during my program, kinaanataweelemele. To the many Elders, youth, and knowledge holders from my Tribe and those I have been lucky to meet since I began my higher education pathway, niyaawe for sharing your stories, encouraging me to pursue this program and pushing me to continue my work in Tribal climate adaptation and environmental justice. To Sarah, Andrea and NASA - kiila niskoden no'ki niila kistoodis! I look forward to seeing where life takes us all post-grad. This slice of the midwest has my heart thanks to all of you <3

MASTER'S GRADUATES



Jade Prange

Oglala Sioux Tribe

A. Alfred Taubman College of
Architecture and Urban Planning
Urban & Regional Planning

Thank you to everyone who has helped me along the way.



Keilani Nishimoto

Oneida Nation of Wisconsin

School of Public Health
*Masters of Public Health - Hospital
Molecular Epidemiology*



Ayebah Wilson

Diné

University of Michigan-Dearborn
*Masters of Arts in Community Based
Education*

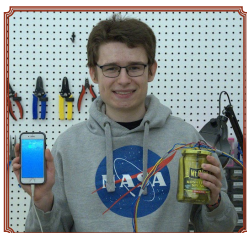
The work was mine to do, but it couldn't be done without my mom, siblings, partner, clan family and friends for uplifting me and reminding me of my strength as I navigated a system that saw me as an anomaly.

BACHELOR'S GRADUATES



Dylan Doney
Littleshell Chippewa
College of Engineering
Aerospace Engineering

Thank you to everyone at NASA, OAMI, and my friends and family who helped me accomplish this, I couldn't have done it without you.



Gage Matt
Choctaw Apache Tribe
Of Ebarb
College of Engineering
Robotics



Ndio Mitchell
"N'dio Ogema" Battice Mitchell
LRBOI/Coastal Band Chumash
College of Literature, Science, and
the Arts
Physics & Biopsychology; Cognition,
and Neuroscience

BACHELOR'S GRADUATES



Gavin Purnell

Stockbridge Munsee Band of Mohican Indians

College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

Ecology, Evolution, and Biodiversity

I would like to thank my family for being so supportive through college, and I want to thank NASA for being such a welcoming and impactful community.



Dani Sanchez

Oneida Nation of Wisconsin

College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

*American Culture Major (Native American Ethnic Studies sub-plan);
Digital Studies Minor*

Yawłko to Jasmine Teyutkwa Jimerson (Onkyote?á-ka, Wolf Clan) for all her teachings, encouragement, and knowledge of Ukwehuwenéha language and Lotinuhsú-ni culture. A special thanks to the administrators in American Culture (University of Michigan), American Indian Studies (University of Wisconsin-Madison), and respective registrars for their collaborative efforts and support of Indigenous languages.



Haley Tolan

Sault Ste. Marie tribe of Chippewa Indians

College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

Cognitive Science - Decision and Cognition



NATIVE STUDENT CELEBRATION PLANNING COMMITTEE

The 2026 Native Student Celebration is coordinated by the Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives and the Native American Student Association.

CELEBRATION MISSION

The Native Student Celebration brings together communities across the University of Michigan to create space for connection, reflection, and recognition. The celebration highlights Indigenous cultures, identities, and traditions while honoring the accomplishments of participating students. 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.

While the celebration centers Indigenous experiences, it is open to all students and members of the university community who wish to participate and celebrate in this space, contributing to an environment grounded in respect, cultural expression, and shared responsibility.

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





STATEMENT OF FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

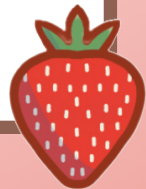
The University of Michigan strives to create an open forum in which diverse opinions can be expressed and heard. Members of the University community, speakers, artists, and other invited guests have a right to express their views and opinions, and the University will protect that right. The University 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 POLICY 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, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The University of Michigan is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination and equal opportunity for all persons regardless of race, sex, color, religion, creed, national origin, or ancestry, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability or Vietnam-era veteran status in employment, educational programs and activities, and admissions. Inquiries or complaints may be addressed to the Senior Director for the Office of Equity, Civil Rights and Title IX/Section 504 Coordinator, Office of Equity, Civil Rights and Title IX at 2072 Administrative Services Building, 1009 Greene Street, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 48109, 734-763-0235

REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Jordan B. Acker, Huntington Woods
Michael J. Behm, Grand Blanc
Mark J. Bernstein, Ann Arbor, chair
Paul W. Brown, Ann Arbor
Sarah Hubbard, Okemos
Denise Ilitch, Birmingham
Carl J. Myers, Dearborn
Katherine E. White, Ann Arbor
Domenico Grasso, *ex officio*, President



OAMI STUDENT CELEBRATIONS

OAMI Student Celebrations take place during graduation season to honor the achievements, shared experiences, and diverse backgrounds that shape our students' journeys.

All of OAMI's celebrations are open to all students at the University of Michigan, recognizing and honoring the diverse experiences and identities within our community.

CELEBRATION SYMBOLS

These symbols are used by OAMI and the organizing committees to represent the eight student celebrations:

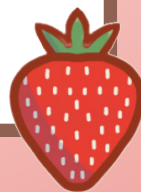


Native Student Celebration
La Celebración Latina

Black Celebratory
Asian Student Celebration
Oceania Student Celebration
Middle Eastern & North African Student Celebration

First-Generation Student Celebration
Undocumented Student Celebration

oami.umich.edu/celebrations





OFFICE OF ACADEMIC MULTICULTURAL INITIATIVES
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN