

Greetings!

I sincerely hope this message finds you and yours healthy and in good spirits. While this Autumn saw us continue our classes and our work online, our American Indian Studies Department at the University of Washington has many wonderful pieces of news to celebrate with you.

First, this Autumn 2020, American Indian Studies celebrates its 50th anniversary as a presence at the UW. Our first program as AIS began in the Autumn of 1970. Born from the activist spirits of our original American Indian and BIPOC alumnae, American Indian Studies classes became a reality. [Please use the link embedded here](#) to revisit our founding moment. We hope to feature some of our founders and alumnae this year on our website. Now would be a great time for our alumnae to update their information with Kai Wise (kaiwise@uw.edu).

We think our founders would be very proud of how our program has grown into one of the strongest American Indian Studies Departments in the United States. One sign of that is the full enrollments we enjoyed across all our classes this Autumn--despite dropping enrollments among other undergraduate programs in the U.S.-- ours remained full. We celebrate that so many students appreciate our program and faculty. We made a smooth transition to holding classes online and I thank our faculty and staff for this transition. Our commitment to keeping students, faculty and staff safe has not dimmed our enthusiasm for serving our students and communities.

For the first time since our esteemed Upper Skagit elder Vi Hilbert worked here at the UW, our Department will be the academic home of a full-time Lushootseed language teacher. While we have been able to offer Lushootseed classes intermittently in the past, we are currently conducting a hire for a Full-Time Assistant Teaching Professor in Southern Lushootseed Language.

In that same spirit, our sister program, the Center for American Indian and Indigenous Studies, has continued to help us bring an amazing array of Native Knowledge holders to our classrooms. Our thanks to [CAIIS](#) and the excellent support they continue to give to American Indian, Alaska Native and Indigenous communities at UW and in our region.

Given the activist nature of our founding, we have begun using the banner on our website to honor and support communities with statements voted upon by our faculty, staff and students. We most recently supported Black Lives Matter and Maōri educators. We will continue to bring current solidarity statements to your attention as we find them necessary. Solidarity statements will remain on our website even if they rotate off of the banner.

Save the Date for our next [Sacred Breath Indigenous Writing and Storytelling Series](#) on November 23, 2020 from 6 to 8pm via Zoom. Our storytellers will include Traci Sorrell (Cherokee Nation), Michelle Jacob (Yakama) and Fern Redville (Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate)-- all wonderful artists, educators and storytellers!

And last, but not at all least, if you are thinking about giving a gift to AIS this fall, we suggest that you direct your gift to the Marvin Oliver Endowed Fund for Undergraduate Student Support. It would be a great way to honor our 50 years at the University of Washington. Marvin was not only one of our founding faculty, he was the heart of so much that is American Indian Studies, the wəłəbʔaltx^w, Ravensfeast and AIAN presence here on our campus. Let's fulfill the Oliver family dream to fund Native students at the UW by giving to the [Marvin Oliver Fund](#).

Want to show your AIS Husky pride? [Here's the link to AIS swag](#), another way to celebrate your colors!

With much good thoughts to you all,

Dian

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