



CIRCLES
ALLIANCE

Newsletter

Winter 2023-24

Quarterly Notes from the Cultivating Indigenous Research Communities for Leadership in Education and STEM (CIRCLES) Alliance

Featured CIRCLES Intern: Kaylee Brown



Halito! My name is Kaylee Brown, and I am a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. I am currently working on my undergraduate degree in Education with a specialization in Special Education and a minor in Native American Indigenous Studies at the University of Wyoming. Upon graduation I plan to pursue a master's degree in Curriculum Development.

As a non-traditional, first generation, low-income student, I am passionate about creating equitable opportunities and providing support and resources for students within my community to reach their full potential. I am excited for the opportunity

to to work with the Wyoming CIRCLES Alliance as an intern with the UW High Plains American Indian Research Institute and the Wind River Tribal Buffalo Initiative. My work will be focused on organizing and researching educational opportunities and resources for the WRIR community and surrounding areas with a focus on traditional ecological knowledge and informal STEM education.

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State Spotlight

Idaho

by Crissy Oliver

University of Idaho CIRCLES scholars were invited to the Nez Perce Tribe's Annual STEM Fair attended by pre-school through college students on December 7, 2023. CIRCLES scholar Aldwin Keo grabbed the attention of many students who recognized lamprey from fishing. He shared how he is researching their migration behavior on his reservation in Warm Springs, Oregon.



CIRCLES Scholar Aldwin Keo at the Nez Perce Tribe's Annual STEM Fair

The Idaho team is also currently recruiting its second cohort of CIRCLES scholars. Participating graduate students receive funding towards a 13-credit Certificate in Indigenous Research & Education (CIRCE) certificate while contributing to a qualitative study with the team that aims to document how students, faculty, and institutions can engage Tribal Nation building efforts and support Indigenous STEM in partnership with higher education infrastructure. For more information, please contact Crissy Oliver at coliver@uidaho.edu.

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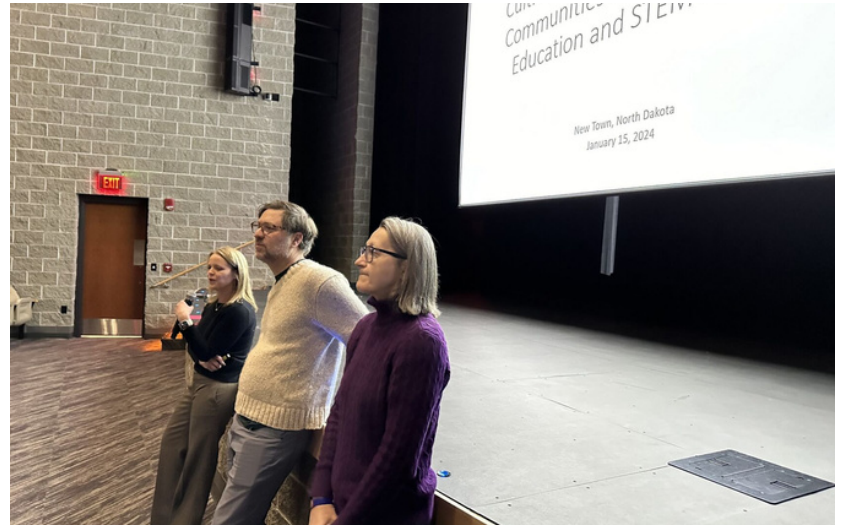


State Spotlight

North and South Dakota

by Stephanie Higdon

The North Dakota and South Dakota teams are collaboratively making strides towards their objectives of developing culturally relevant STEM curricular resources as well as professional development for K-12 educators.



CIRCLES team members (L to R) Stephanie Higdon, Daniel Conn, and Kelly Rush meeting with teachers in New Town, ND

In January, the North Dakota team and Stephanie Higdon, the CIRCLES Alliance Curriculum Development Facilitator and Library Director, visited secondary teachers in New Town, ND, during a teacher in-service. Participating teachers engaged in rich discussions about possible topics for curriculum resources unique to their school district while also learning more about the CIRCLES Alliance project and our professional development opportunities.

The South Dakota team has begun planning a 2024 summer professional development workshop for K-12 educators. This workshop will be offered the first week of June in Fort Yates, ND, with content focused on effective and equitable STEM teaching practices with connections to Indigenous STEM.

Q+A with Elle Findlay

Role: CIRCLES Alliance Project Manager
(based at the University of Montana)

Hometown: Falls City, Nebraska

Undergraduate education: Native American Studies and Anthropology double major at the University of South Dakota

Graduate education: Master's in Applied Anthropology with a focus on Indigenous Education at the University of Maryland, College Park

Highlight of your graduate work: I used the South Dakota Oceti Sakowin Essential Understandings and Standards to create my own lesson plan for the Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska for the middle school social studies class in my hometown.

Favorite part of the job: Getting to talk to everybody in all of the states across the project. I love connecting people.



Something you've learned through CIRCLES: How we can use a more cultural and holistic approach to STEM. Applying Indigenous ways of knowing benefits not only Indigenous students, but also all students.

Favorite thing to do outside of work: I've been really into running lately.

Love or Loath?

Winter: Love

Black licorice: Loath!

Roundabouts: Love

A Look Ahead to Spring

Here are a few of the activities we're looking forward to in the coming months, both within the CIRCLES Alliance and in our greater community:

- March 9-12: AIHEC Student Conference (Minneapolis, MN)
- March 19-20: University of Idaho Tribal Research Summit
- April 1-4: Montana CIRCLES tribal college tour
- April 11-12: U.S. Indigenous Data Sovereignty & Governance Summit (Tucson, AZ)

