



WASHINGTON STATE
UNIVERSITY

Foundations for Collaborative Research: Tribal Engagement and Collaboration

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Tribal Nations and Tribal Sovereignty

Summary of the National Congress of American Indians:

"The United States is home to **574 federally recognized Indian Nations** (variously called tribes, nations, bands, pueblos, communities and native villages), with 229 located in Alaska and others across 35 states, plus additional state-recognized tribes. These tribes, culturally and ethnically diverse, are **sovereign nations** with a unique political status recognized since their earliest interactions with European settlers.

Tribal sovereignty enables tribes to govern their people and lands independently, establishing laws, enforcing them through tribal police, courts, and governance structures, and managing essential services like education, health care, and environmental protection. Tribal members hold citizenship within three sovereign entities—their tribe, the U.S., and their state—granting them rights within a unique political framework.

This autonomy and self-determination allows tribes to preserve their cultural identity, protect their communities, lands, and maintain control over their resources and governance structures"

<https://archive.ncai.org/about-tribes#:~:text=Tribes%2ohave%2othe%2oinherent%2opower,tribal%2ocitizens%2owithin%2otribal%2oterritory>

How does WSU Uphold Tribal Sovereignty?

Chehalis Tribe & WSU Signing MOU

November 1, 2024



Agreements, Policies, Practices

- Memorandum of Understanding ([MOU](#)) with 14 Regional Tribes
- Executive Policy 41 Tribal Engagement Consultation and Consent
- Office Of Research (check box)
- Institutional Review Board
- Other agreements (e.g., Plateau People's Web Portal, Clinical Health Agreements with Tribes, data use/sovereignty agreements).
- Tribal Research Permits and Protocols!

Historical & Political Context



The Four R's of Indigenous Research

First articulated by V. Kirkness (Fisher River Cree) and R. Barnhardt, "First Nations and Higher Education: The Four R's," *Journal of American Indian Education* 30, no. 3 (May 1991) 1-15 and *many* subsequent texts

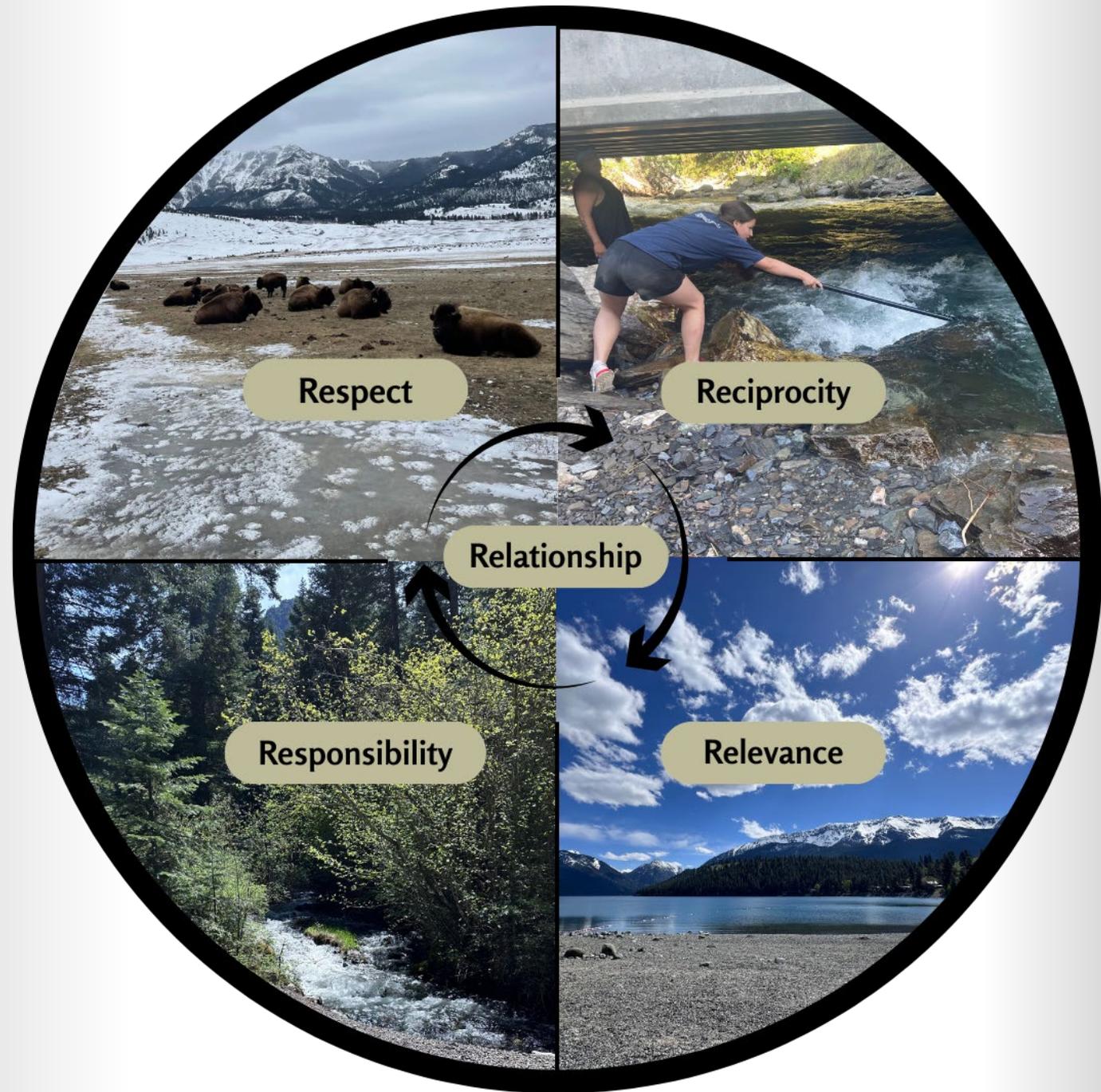
See also 6 R's shared by White House in ITEK memoranda.

R. L. Tsosie (Dine) et al. "The Six Rs of Indigenous Research," *Tribal Coll. J. Of Am. Indian Higher Education* 33, 4 (2002)

Centering Relationship

A Lafferty (Liidlil Kue First Nation) et al. "Navigating the Shifting Landscape of Engagement in Northern Research : Perspectives from Early Career Researchers." *The Northern Review* 54 (2022).

Core Indigenous Values



Respect



Entering with Respect

Listening

Indigenous Knowledge Systems



WSU

Respecting Culture, Values, Worldviews...

“

Conducting research in contemporary Indigenous communities is a negotiated process in which tribal communities expect to give consent and receive benefits. Tribes have their own ways of knowing, and researchers are sometimes not familiar with specific tribal traditions, Indigenous worldviews, or tribal rights, history, and cultural contexts. Before entering a tribal community, it is necessary to learn as much as possible about the culture and issues confronting that community, especially if they are relevant to a research program. An Indigenous studies perspective centers the stories, worldviews, and political and cultural identities of Indigenous peoples and communities, and investigates and interprets data according to the goals, values, culture, rights, and interests of the Indigenous community.

”

Duane Champagne (Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa). “Centering Indigenous Nations within Indigenous Methodologies.” *Wicazo Sa Review* 30, 1 (Spring 2015): 72.

Responsibility

Mutually Respectful, Reciprocal Relations require Responsibility



Pete Standing Alone welcomes Curator Gerry Connaty into Kainai Chieftainship (Robert Janes)

This requires
Time,
Vulnerability,
Acknowledgement of Mistakes,
Ongoing Commitment



Pita Ikimaan

WSU

Covenant of the Salmon People

Responsibility implies Relational Accountability

- Researchers must extend accountability *beyond academic peers* to include Native students and communities.
- In turn, Native communities extend accountability even further.
- **Example:** *Covenant of the Salmon People*

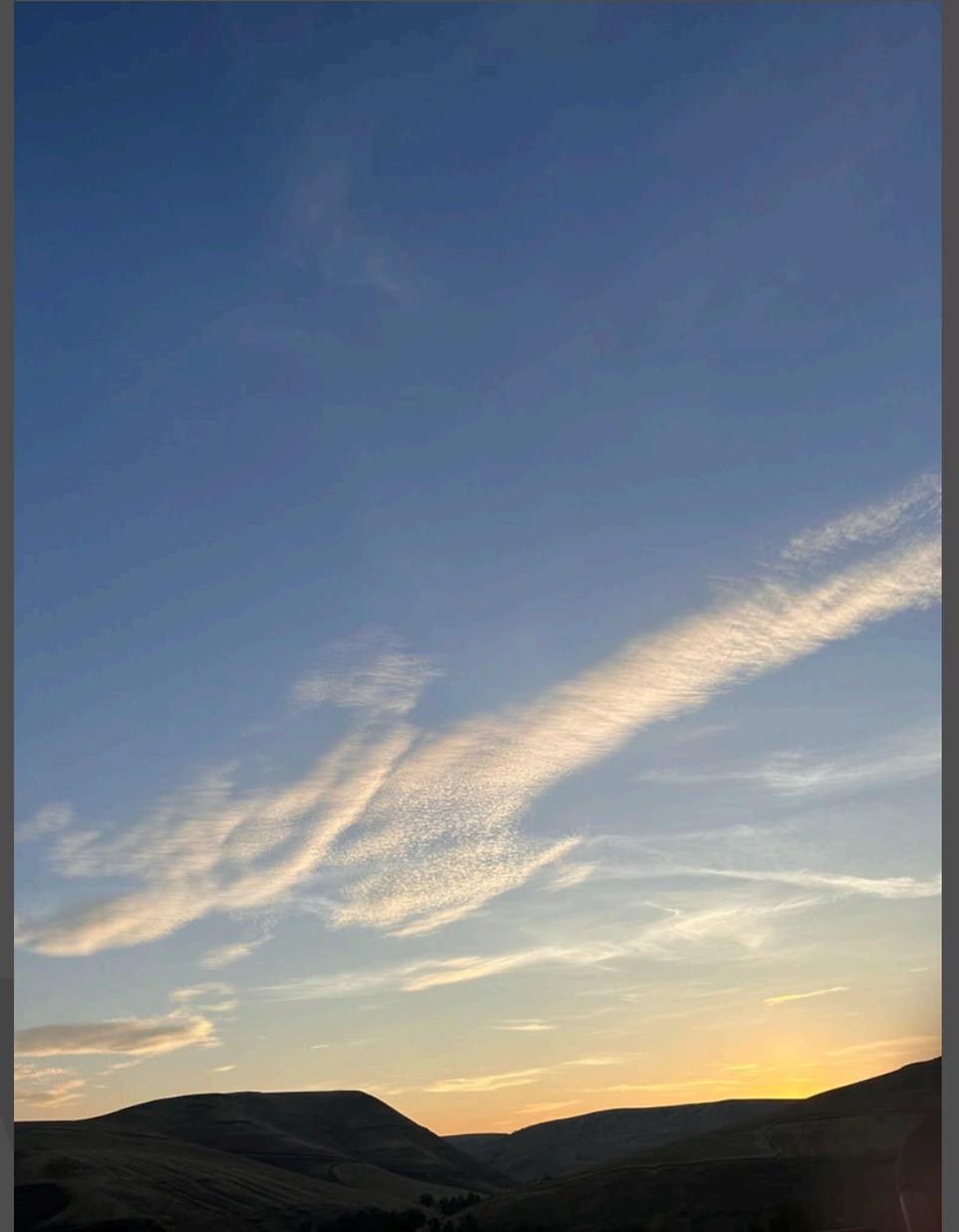
The Nimiipuu and Salmon are accountable to each other. Thus, decisions to engage in research will be determined by impact upon salmon, as relatives.

SWETWATER FILMS AND THE NEZ PERCE TRIBE PRESENT "COVENANT OF THE SALMON PEOPLE" DIRECTED BY SHANE ANDERSON EXECUTIVE PRODUCER SHANNON WHEELER
ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS KAYELONI SCOTT, GREG HALLER AND SHANE ANDERSON EDITED BY JESSE ANDREW CLARK MUSIC BY ERIC PHILLIPS AND LIGHTNING CREEK SOUND DESIGN & MIX BY LUC BROS
PRINCIPAL CINEGRAPHY MAYA CRAIG, SETH HAHN, JESSE ANDREW CLARK, CHRIS CRESSEL, SHANE ANDERSON MOTION GRAPHICS BY SCOTT HANSHEW SHOT ON LOCATION IN WAHAI, WASHINGTON, AND
COVENANTOFTHEWISDOMPEOPLE.COM



Relevance

- Listening to context and needs
- Community –based Values and Goals toward community support





Reciprocity

Nez Perce concept of pi²nit'ipēc—meaning "reciprocal giving, ensuring everyone is taken care of"

Summary of Recommendations

1) Individual Preparation

- Attend trainings
- Spend time with Native community on campus
- Familiarize yourself IRM literature and existing projects

2) Prioritizing Engagement

- Engage experienced Tribal collaborators
- Rely upon CARE Principles (will be addressed on next presentation)

3) Embrace Relational Accountability

- Follow cultural and legal protocols for research design and review
- Create official data management plan.

Efforts toward accomplishing the above should be made before seeking letters of support, letters of collaboration, formal meetings with tribal representatives, etc.



There are approx. 47 Native faculty and staff at WSU

Research Preparation Resources

- Selected Indigenous Research Methodologies and related literature: <https://native.wsu.edu/literature/>
- More Procedural Guidance: <https://native.wsu.edu/cnrc/>
- WA State Governor's Office of Indian Affairs: "[Consultation Process](#)"
- November 14, 2:30-3:30: "We are Still Here: Native American Diversity in Heritage and Research"

In honor of Native American Heritage Month, the Office of Research will be hosting a panel discussion with Native researchers who have made exemplary contribution to the culture, traditions, legacy and achievements of the nation's original inhabitants and their descendants. RSVP to receive the Zoom link <https://orap.wsu.edu/event/native-american-heritage-month-panel/>

Part 2 of Two-Part Series (Sponsored by the Office of Research Advancement and Partnerships)

“Deepening Collaborative Research.”

November 19, 12:00-1:30:

The Office of Tribal Relations, alongside Tribal partners, will discuss key aspects of federal and state legislation and WSU’s Executive Policy 41, which establishes a respectful and reciprocal approach to Tribal engagement, consultation, and consent for research and joint activities with Tribal communities. This policy upholds Tribal sovereignty, cultural respect, and WSU’s partnership with Tribal governments, requiring that university-related activities with potential impacts on Tribal communities involve meaningful consultation. Such consultation seeks to understand Tribal concerns, secure consent when required, and uphold Tribal sovereignty, treaty rights, data sovereignty, and the protection of cultural and natural resources.

As part of this session, participants will also learn about the CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance, which guide the respectful handling of data associated with Indigenous peoples. These principles—Collective Benefit, Authority to Control, Responsibility, and Ethics—ensure that data management practices align with Indigenous rights, cultural values, and sovereignty.

RSVP to receive the Zoom link: <https://orap.wsu.edu/event/tribal-engagement/>

Reflection Questions

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Are you ready to create space in your schedule, research or project design, and thinking to prioritize meaningful engagement with Native American Tribes and peoples as respected partners?

Are you prepared to *listen deeply* and *act on recommendations* from Tribes and Native American partners?

Homework: If you aim to work with Tribes or if your research may impact Tribal communities, lands, natural resources, or wildlife, take time to reflect on these questions. Take time to write down what engaging in this work will require from you, both personally and professionally.



Thank you!

WSU