



Mission

To alleviate the unequal burden of cancer among Native Americans of the Southwest through research, training, and community outreach programs in collaboration with the communities we serve.

The Partnership for Native American Cancer Prevention (NACP) is a partnership of Native American communities, Northern Arizona University, the University of Arizona Cancer Center, and the National Cancer Institute to address cancer health disparities in Native Americans.

Greetings!

April is National Poetry Month. We encourage you to celebrate this month by finding an inspiring poem. Perhaps something written by Joy Harjo, who is Mvskoke/Creek, and has been appointed to a third term as the U.S. Poet Laureate. Her signature project for this term is called, "Living Nations, Living Words." It will feature Native American poets across the country.

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UACC Research Education Core Staff Changes



Tiffani Begay

The UACC Research Education Core bid a bittersweet farewell to Tiffani Begay in March, while celebrating her career promotion. Tiffani is now a Research Associate Professor with John Hopkins University– Center for American Indian Health. She is working with the Navajo Nation on the Asdzaan Be'eena (Female Pathways) and the Azhe'e Bidzilil (Strong Fathers) programs. Tiffani joined NACP's Research Education Core as the Program Coordinator at UACC in September 2013. She recruited dozens of students to cancer research training experiences, coached them to write career development plans, to create and deliver poster presentations of their research projects and guided them through the application process for graduate-level programs. Tiffani inspired NACP students to strive for balance in their lives. She set an example through devotion to her family, by

training for and running marathons and eating a semi-healthy diet. We are excited for Tiffani's new endeavors and wish her the very best as she continues to serve Native American communities.



Carolina Pineda

The UACC Research Education Core is thrilled to now have Carolina Pineda as its Program Coordinator. Carolina is Kumeyaay from the San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians in Valley Center, CA. She brings enthusiasm, experience, and many inter-tribal connections to her new position with us. Carolina holds a bachelor's degree in Environmental Science and Management with an emphasis in Environmental Education and Interpretation from Humboldt State University. She spent two years with the San Pasqual Tribal AmeriCorps Mentoring Program, working with Native American youth from ages pre-kindergarten through high school. She has studied the impacts of methylmercury on Indigenous populations along the Lena River in Russia and along the Columbia River in Oregon/Washington. Carolina is extremely passionate about Indigenous people's rights and

traditional ecological knowledge. She enjoys hiking, exercising, and hanging out with her husband and their two dogs. We welcome Carolina to our training efforts.

Congratulations Dr. Tommy Rock



Dr. Tommy Rock

NACP congratulates Dr. Tommy Rock (Navajo), an alumnus of Northern Arizona University and NACP. Dr. Rock was awarded the Presidential Postdoctoral Research Fellowship at Princeton University. The program is meant to encourage early-career scholars to pursue a career in academia by supporting their postdoctoral work at Princeton University. The program recognizes and supports scholars who can contribute to the University's diversity, broadly defined, including members of groups that have been historically, and are presently, underrepresented in the academy or in particular disciplines, such as racial and ethnic minorities and women in STEM. Dr. Rock's research focuses on environmental justice projects on tribal lands.



Welcome Ms. Marissa Tenakhongva



We are honored to have Ms. Marissa Tenakhongva as the newest member of the NAU-UA Community Advisory Board. She is Hopi from the village of Hotevilla, on the Hopi Reservation. As a cancer survivor who was diagnosed with uterine leiomyosarcoma 3 years ago, she brings special insight and commitment. Marissa's experience with cancer inspired her to find resources for others who seek someone to talk to or just to let out some frustrations. Friends have called to ask Marissa what they should expect after their parents are diagnosed with cancer. She tells them that we don't all go through the same things and talks about her experiences and what she had to go through. This has provided some understanding and a reassurance that they can call back whenever they need to talk again. Welcome, Marissa!

Dr. Marc Emerson: Native American Role Model Speaker Series



On Wednesday, March 17, Dr. Marc Emerson gave a presentation for NAU's Native American Role Model Series. He began by acknowledging the land and introducing himself in his traditional Diné clans. Through this way, he established relatability with the audience, a concept he finds deeply rooted in harmony, peace, and balance. Dr. Emerson inspired trainees in the audience through the telling of his journey to the current position as a postdoctoral researcher at the Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center and the Center of American Indian Health at the Bloomberg School of Public Health at Johns Hopkins University.

Dr. Emerson grew up between the reservation lands of Shiprock with his father and the urban landscape of Albuquerque with his mother. Dr. Emerson understood the importance of balance and harmony in one's life. He continued to harbor this mindset during his educational journey, earning Bachelor's and Master's degrees from San Diego State and gaining experience in population health. He returned to Albuquerque to work with the Southwest Tribal Epidemiology Center, which furthered his interest in community health.

Continuing on his academic journey, Dr. Emerson's conducted a predoctoral fellowship with the National Cancer Institute and began his PhD studies at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. When his father was diagnosed with cancer, Dr. Emerson returned home to care for him. This was a deeply saddening and challenging time. It further motivated him, though, to complete his doctoral degree and pursue work in the cancer field.

Throughout his educational and research journey, Dr. Emerson encountered many trials and tribulations but still holds on to his core value of *Sa'ah Naaghai Bik'eh Hozhoon* (SNBH); "the life force which is the reason for being and becoming; the pathway for continual learning". He applies these values to his work in cancer prevention and control, as well as his overall passion to address the consequences of social determinants of health in marginalized communities. Overall, Dr. Emerson's Role Model Series talk was truly inspiring and his career journey may just be the epitome of *Walking in Beauty*. You can watch his full talk at : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iuhh1FFEM4Q&t=4s>

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