

# Committee on Native American and Indigenous Philosophers

---

## *2017–2018 Membership*

Lori Underwood, chair (2020)

Scott L. Pratt (2018)

Andrew F. Smith (2018)

Brian Y. Burkhart (2019)

Anne S. Waters (2019), newsletter editor

Robert M. Figueroa (2020)

James Maffie (2020)

Agnes B. Curry, newsletter editor

Andrea Sullivan-Clarke, newsletter editor

Shay Welch, newsletter editor

**Notes from the Committee Chair for the *Fall 2018 Newsletter on Native American and Indigenous Philosophers***

**Lori J. Underwood  
Christopher Newport University**

Greetings everyone. It's been quite a busy year for the Committee. You may have noticed a name change in our newsletter that reflects a corresponding change for our committee from 'Newsletter on Indigenous Philosophers' to 'Newsletter on Native American and Indigenous Philosophers.' After much consideration and discussion, we decided that this name better represents our vision and our mission.

We also welcomed two new members to our committee this year, Alex Guerrero and Christopher Kavelin. Alex, who has both a Ph.D. and J.D. from New York University, teaches at Rutgers University. Chris resides in Australia, has a Ph.D. in law and indigenous intellectual property from Macquarie University, and is associated with the Institute for Social Justice at Australian Catholic University. Welcome to the committee Alex and Christopher. We look forward to sharing your ideas and insights in the years to come!

One of the highlights of the past year for us was the Pacific APA. This year's the committee sponsored two sessions:

- The session, “Indigenous Contributions in Existentialism, Ethics, Metaphysics, and Social Political Philosophy” and was chaired by Alejandro Santana from University of Portland.
  - James Maffie (University of Maryland) presented his paper “Mexica Ethics: Balance, Nepantla, and Weaving the Good Life”
  - Sebastian Purcell (SUNY Cortland) presented “On What There ‘Is’: The Aztec Approach Existence and Causation”
  - Krista Arias (University of British Columbia Okanagan) presented “Temazcalli: Crying, Bleeding, and the PsychoPolitics of Water Womb and Woman”
  - Brian Yazzie Burkhart (California State University, Northridge) presented “We are Made from Red Earth: Cherokee Decolonial Existentialism from the Land.”
  
- The session, “Epistemic Resistance, Survival Ethics, Social Justice, and Performative Knowledge in Native American and Mexican America” was chaired by Lara Trout of the University of Portland.
  - Sergio Gallegos, (now of John Jay College of Criminal Justice), presented “‘En México no hay Negros, no hay Negras’: AfroMexican Women’s Epistemic Resistance Against Practices of Silencing.”
  - Shay Welch (Spelman College) presented “Dance as Native Performative Knowledge.”
  - Gregory Fernando Pappas (Texas A&M University), presented “How to Approach Injustices? Lessons from Some Mexican-Americans”
  - Lori Gallegos (Texas State University at San Marcos) presented “The Ethics of Making a Home: Tactics of Survival and the Politics of Assimilation.”

The Central Division meeting also featured one panel, co-sponsored with the International Society for Environmental Ethics and chaired by Robert Melchior Figueroa (Oregon State University). Papers were as follows:

- Robert Figueroa, “Memo to Maria: Engendering the Legacy of Environmental Colonialism in Puerto Rico.”
- Chaone Mallory (University of Southern California), “Decolonizing Environmental Philosophy: Whiteness, Gender, Dis/Ability, and Teaching ‘the Canon’ of Environmental Ethics”
- Brian Yazzie Burkhart (California State University, Northridge) “Environmentalism through Being-from-the-Land: Indigenous Decolonial Environmental Philosophy”
- Bjørn Kristensen (Oregon State University), “An Interspecies Perspective on Food Justice in the Majority World.”

We look forward to featuring more work developed from these sessions in future newsletters and to extending our involvement at all three Division meetings in the coming years.

### **Further Information Regarding Committee Activities as per the APA Committee Report Guide**

What were the major projects/activities accomplished by your committee in the 2017–2018 membership year (July 1, 2017–June 30, 2018)?

1. Brought on Associate Chair and new member.
2. Successfully arranged sessions at APA Conferences.
3. Successfully published newsletters.
4. Committee Member received Diversity Award.
5. Nomination made for a Teaching Award.

How did you go about getting them done?

1. Networking of phone calls and emails and good Committee communication.

What were the relevant results for your projects?

1. All successful except for teaching nomination. Very active committee and sessions.

Are any 2017–2018 projects ongoing?

1. Choosing new membership for next year.
2. No arrangements yet made for celebration of 20 year mark of committee.

What worked well?

1. Phonecons, emails, good communications via committee email list.
2. Diversifying committee membership to allow for more collaborative interest in some common philosophical projects.

What could have worked better?

1. Our committee and its membership are very small compared to other committees, and thus sometimes members are stretched across doing several tasks.
2. This committee and its members have not been able to have a face to face meeting at any of the APA conferences. This could go better.

Any other comments, recommendations, or suggestions?

1. Continue to build leadership within the committee and among APA members interested in Native American and Indigenous Philosophy within the APA.
2. Continue to recruit senior faculty with interest, experience, and time to mentor and share their well honed talents with the committee.