Institute for Indigenous Studies

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Core Faculty and Staff
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8. Charley Lewis (Paiute/Navajo)  
9. Joseph Pacheco (Quechua/Cherokee)  
10. Luke Swimmer (Eastern Band of Cherokee)

Mission
The Institute for Indigenous Studies (IIS) partners and collaborates with Indigenous peoples, nations, communities, and organizations to improve the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being of Indigenous peoples throughout the Western Hemisphere. IIS researchers work with Indigenous peoples, nations, communities, and organizations to identify and address the current health and education needs of Indigenous peoples using a multi-level socio-ecological framework and partners with tribal and community organizations, colleges, universities, and other academic institutions to develop culturally appropriate research methodologies and frameworks that can be used to address the health and education needs of Indigenous peoples.

Research Activities
The IIS is actively involved in research and utilizes Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) where Indigenous peoples and communities are involved in all stages of our research, from ideas to implementation. We currently have regional and national research projects focused on Indigenous peoples and tobacco cessation, Indigenous people and COVID-19, contemporary Indigenous identity, grant writing and research training programs for Native community members, and undergraduate Indigenous-focused curriculum development for non-Native college professors.

Our current research is funded by the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute, the National Institutes of Health, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the American Cancer Society.

Educational Opportunities
The IIS is committed to educating Native and non-Native people about the current state of Indigenous affairs. The IIS accomplishes this through Indigenous-focused undergraduate and graduate curriculum development, independent studies, and internships. We host live and virtual film screenings, panel discussions, presentations, and events focused on Indigenous health, education, and culture. We also assist elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, other colleges and universities, community organizations, and governmental organizations with their Indigenous-focused research and educational programs.