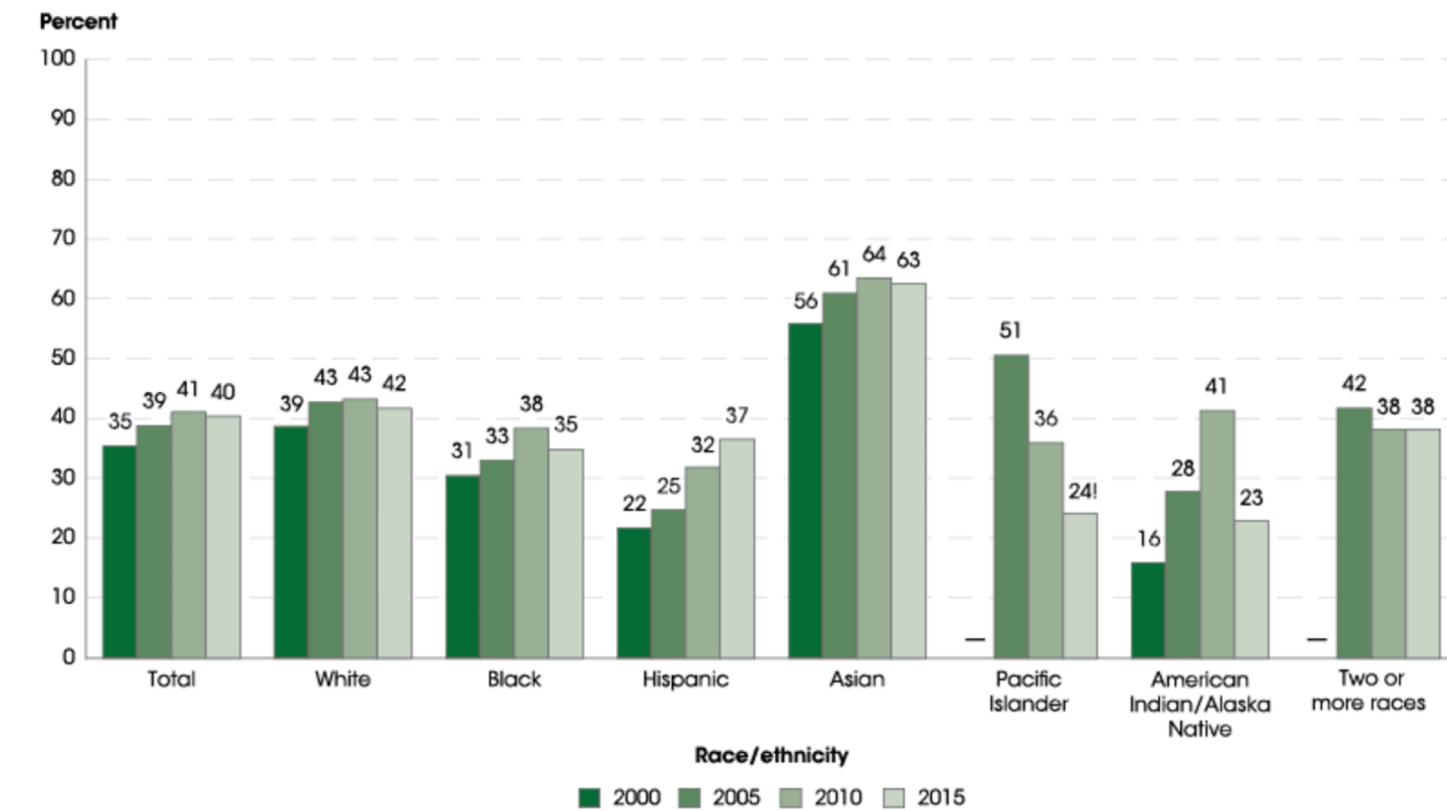


# **Why is mentoring critically important?**

Dr. Amanda R. Tachine  
Postdoctoral Scholar, ASU's Center for Indian Education

“telling our stories with **love**”  
(Malia Villegas, 2016)

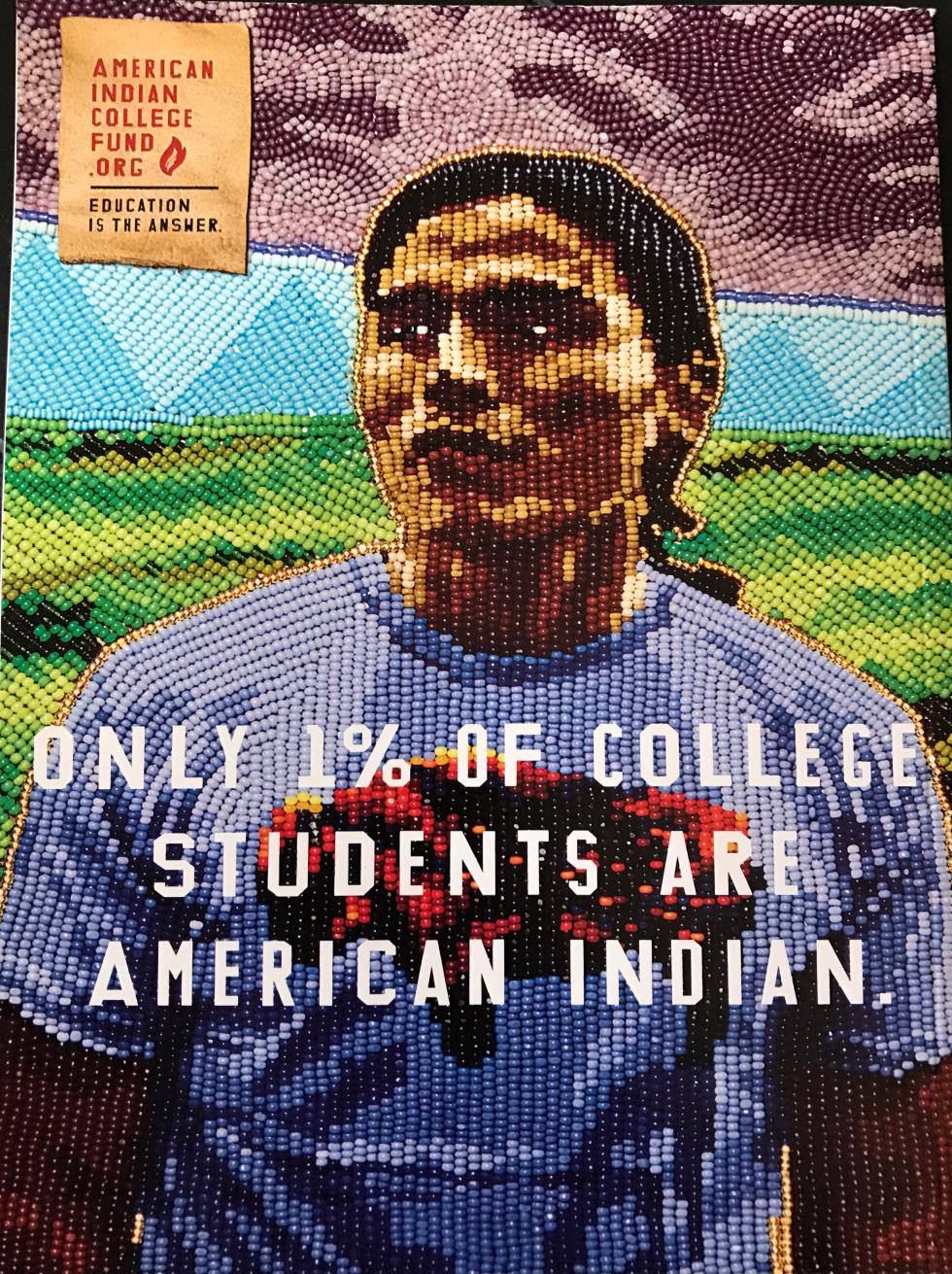
**Figure 2. Enrollment rates of 18- to 24-year-olds in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by race/ethnicity: 2000, 2005, 2010, and 2015**



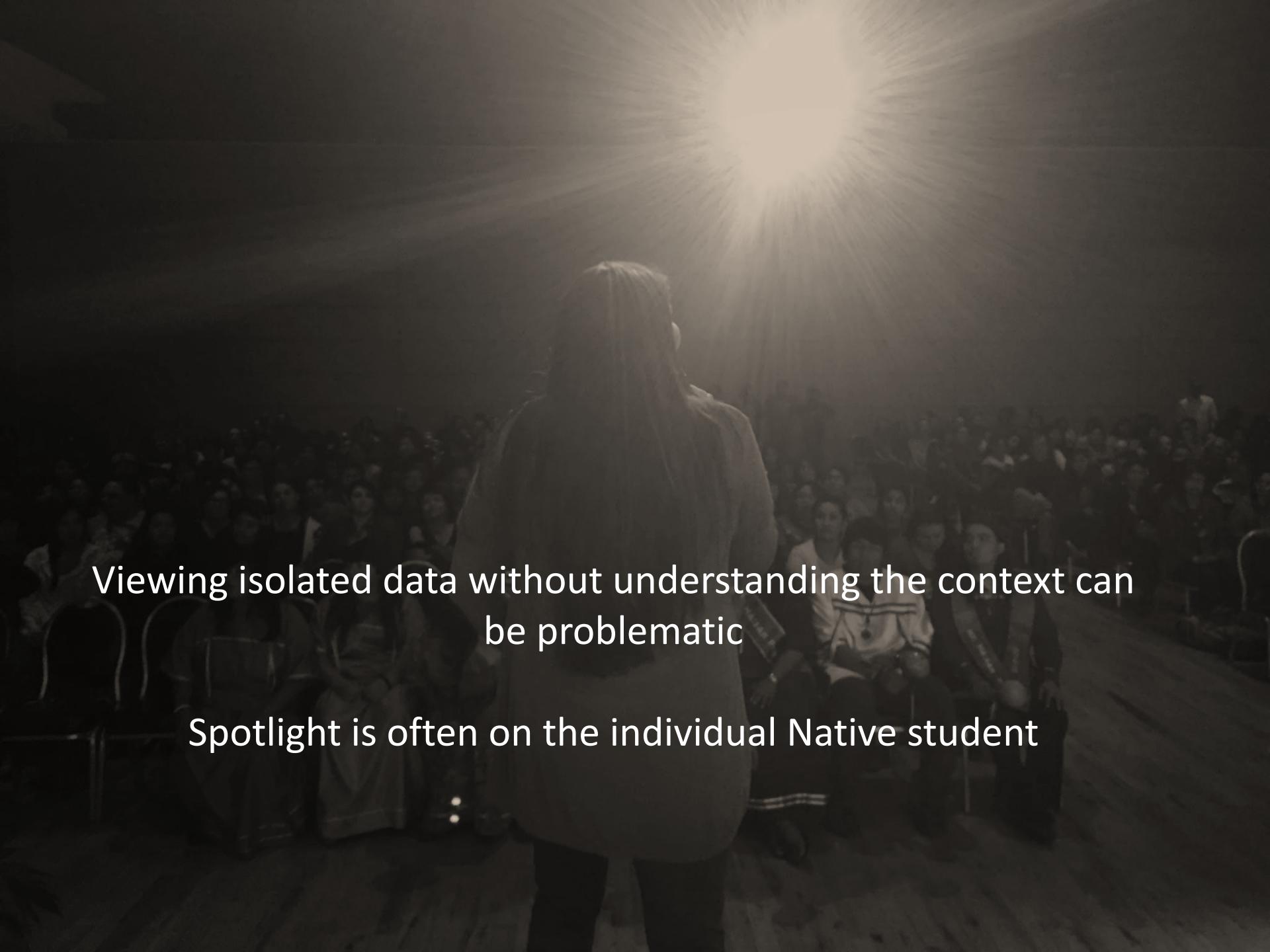
The immediate college enrollment rate for high school completers was at 69% in 2015. **For AI/AN that rate is closer to 20%** (Brayboy, Fann, Castagno, & Solyom, 2012).

AMERICAN  
INDIAN  
COLLEGE  
FUND  
.ORG

EDUCATION  
IS THE ANSWER.



ONLY 1% OF COLLEGE  
STUDENTS ARE  
AMERICAN INDIAN.

A black and white photograph of a person standing on a stage, viewed from behind. They are facing a large audience seated in rows. A bright, circular spotlight is positioned directly behind the speaker, creating a strong lens flare and casting their silhouette. The background is dark, making the speaker and the audience stand out.

Viewing isolated data without understanding the context can  
be problematic

Spotlight is often on the individual Native student



\*denotes the invisibility of Native representation in educational conversations because their numbers are so small that many argue they cannot be studied

**History and sociocultural context matters**

# Historical injustices

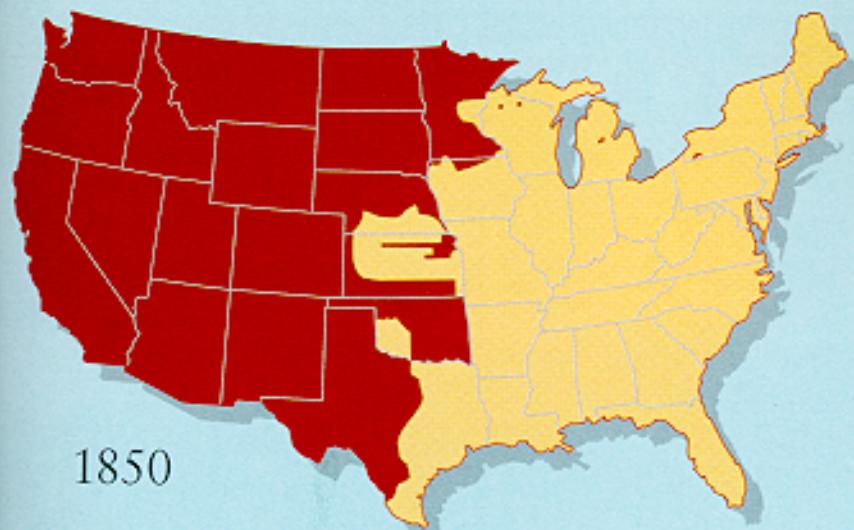


In the 50 years after “discovery,”  
**more than 12 MILLION Native peoples perished**

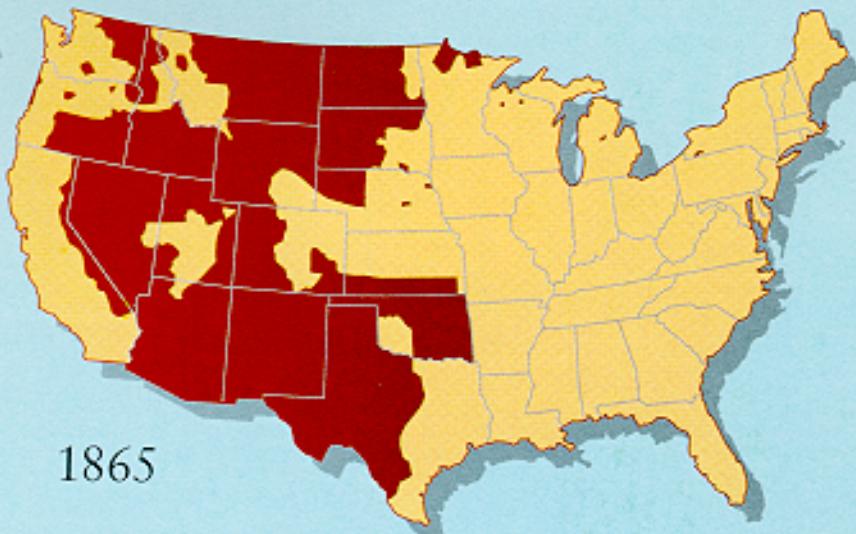
**“Indian life, it was argued, constituted a lower order of human society. In a word, Indians were savages because they lacked the very thing whites possessed – civilization”** (Adams, 1995, p. 6).



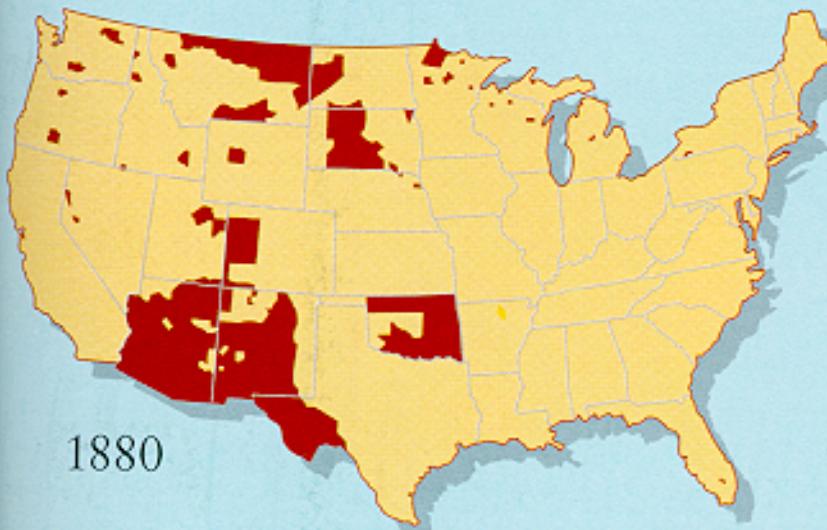
“Native reminiscences of boarding schools life are full of tears shed in private” (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006).



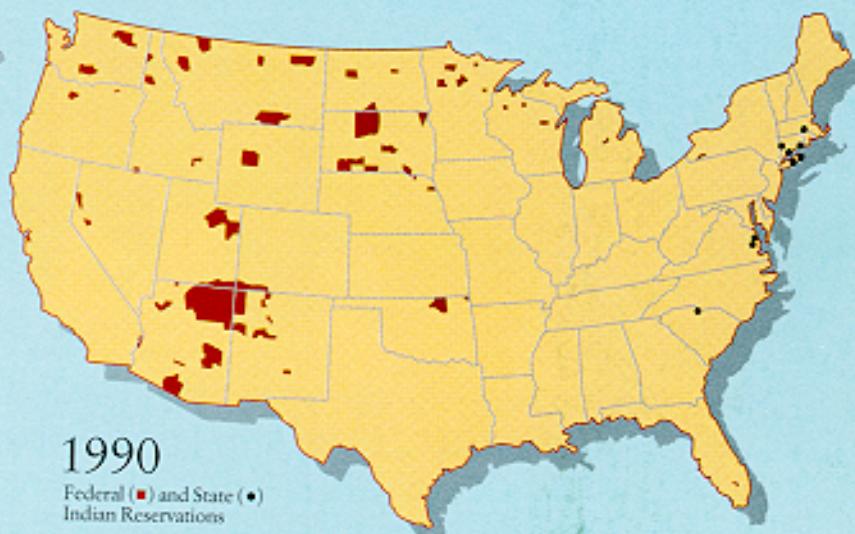
1850



1865



1880



1990

Federal (■) and State (●)  
Indian Reservations

# Injustices in Contemporary Context

# Poverty and Unemployment

- Nationally, the median household income for **Native populations was at \$39,715** compared to \$56,746 for the US.
- **Over 28.4% of Natives live below the poverty level**, double the national average of 15.3%.
- The unemployment rate among Native people is at 12.4%, double the national rate of 6.1%

# Health Concerns

- Among 10- to 19-years-olds, type-2 diabetes is nearly 3x the national average and 5x higher than among white youth
- Native youth are more likely to have used an illegal drug, smoked cigarettes, and participated in binge drinking in the past 30 days than any other race/ethnic group
- Native youth have the highest lifetime prevalence of major depressive episodes
- **Suicide is the second leading cause of death for Native male youth**

# Incarceration of Native peoples

- Native Americans are incarcerated at a rate **38% higher** than the national average
- Natives are **more likely** to be killed by police than any other racial group
- Native men are **incarcerated at 4x the rate of white men**; Native women are incarcerated at **6x the rate** of white women





# So why is mentoring critically important?

- When Native students have a positive relationship with faculty and staff, they are more likely to persist.
- When Native students have a familial like environment, their sense of belonging at college campus is more apparent.
  - Through understanding their histories and contemporary struggles

What is mentoring?

# Mentoring through *Indigenous Knowledge Systems*

- Indigenous Knowledge systems: knowing (epistemologies), being (ontologies), valuing (axiologies), doing, teaching, and learning (pedagogies)
- IKS are rooted in lived experiences
- IKS value context; local, “to be of a place”
- Ancestral knowledge guides practices and future possibilities
- Relational that is guided by respect, care, and mutuality
- Holistic in understanding of interconnected factors and contexts

# What could this look like?

- Underscores that we all have biases/worldviews that shape our perspectives and relationships with others
- Look beyond ourselves; act for the benefit of the mentee
- Open to learning about the whole mentee
  - Listening; Why is the student attending college (purpose)? What barriers (past and present) influence the student? What motivates the student?
- Story sharing of lived experiences; vulnerability and cultivating relationship
- Creating relationships at/in places that highlight local and ancestral knowledge
- Providing support and guidance that elevates a students' sense of belonging and positive futurities

*“To me, educating a child means equipping him or her with the capability to succeed in the world he or she will live in. ... **Education is more than book learning, it is also value-learning**” Leona Okakok (1989, p. 253-254).*

# Native SOAR Lessons Learned

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qd8hvm22vhE>

- Consistency & communication is key
- It takes time, patience, and work to develop meaningful relationships
- Your mentee is not like you
- The relationship creates a reciprocal learning experience