

Learning NAGPRA: Resources for Teaching and Training

Summer 2015 Newsletter

<http://learningnagpra.indiana.edu>

Project Director's Note

Dr. April Sievert

Learning NAGPRA is intended to address needs for improving ethics education for students and professionals working in fields that require understanding and compliance with the Native American

Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). Through basic research on the status of NAGPRA education at the college level and a comparison of approaches and pedagogy used in tribal and non-tribal colleges, the project seeks to understand where and how people learn about repatriation,



and to identify both successful approaches and impediments to learning. The research investigates the locus of learning—in coursework, through mentoring, in informal networks, at conferences, or through ethics statements and

principles articulated by professional organizations—to gauge the mechanisms through which people learn about NAGPRA. It then brings this data into a collaborative setting in which both tribal and non-tribal experts can evaluate and analyze how learning NAGPRA happens with an eye

toward improving resources for students, educators, and professionals. The project has two phases, beginning with an initial one-year planning and research phase. The second, implementation phase utilizes recommendations from the first year and will continue for three additional years during which learning resources are designed, aggregated, and communicated.

Central to the project is the creation of a collaborative space for interaction and discussion about ethics, repatriation education, and preparing future professionals for culturally engaged practice.

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Spring Project Activities

Dr. Teresa Nichols, Project Manager

After beginning in January, I have been working to design and launch two online surveys for educators and students, along with conducting in-person and phone-interviews. As of July, I have been fortunate to interview over 40 individuals about their views about NAGPRA education. Perspectives from current students, university educators, government archaeologists, repatriation coordinators, and others have greatly enriched the project's understanding of the different needs for and approaches to learning NAGPRA.

To conduct many of these interviews with professional colleagues and to hear about current research



trends, I travelled to the American Association of Physical Anthropologists (AAPA) Annual Meeting in St. Louis, MO and the Society for American Archaeology (SAA) Annual Meeting in San Francisco, CA.

After the SAAs, we launched the first of two email campaigns to encourage students and faculty affiliated with anthropology- and museum studies-re-

lated programs to answer our online surveys. The first round of educator and student surveys closed in early June, with responses from **458** students and **168** educators. *Continued on Page 2...*

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We will reopen the surveys in September and then present the final results in November at the American Anthropological Association (AAA) Annual Meeting in Denver, CO. I hope to see many of you there or through our public events, online in August and in person in November at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science. I welcome anyone with comments or questions to contact me at lrnagpra@indiana.edu and encourage you to consider ways you might get involved in the project, as detailed on **Page 4** of this newsletter.

The First Learning NAGPRA Collegium and Online Events in August for Public Discussion

On August 14th and 15th we will hold a collegium meeting at Indiana University where participants will engage in open conversation about the current state of NAGPRA training and needed improvements. A range of students, cultural specialists, and education professionals will discuss preliminary results from the “Learning NAGPRA” project data and brainstorm ways to improve education on repatriation, cultural sensitivity, and professional ethics.

During Friday afternoon, the collegium will have a group discussion about helpful examples of repatriation and ethics education. Because many individuals and organizations have given these issues a great deal of thought over decades, we would like to offer them the opportunity (using Adobe Connect) to watch the collegium discussion and submit their own comments to be recognized and acknowledged by the collegium participants.

Anyone who is interested may connect to the livestreamed discussion and send in comments, and we will hold an additional opportunity a week before for people to test their connection and ask project personnel any general questions they might have about the Learning NAGPRA project. Both discussions can be accessed using the following link:

<https://connect.iu.edu/learning-nagpra/>

For a quick start guide on using Adobe Connect, please find more details here:

http://www.adobe.com/content/dam/Adobe/en/products/adobeconnect/pdfs/VQS_Guide_for_Participants.pdf

Project Director’s Note, continued from Page 1

The project uses a collegium setting to gather tribal and non-tribal experts together to evaluate information gleaned from survey and interview data, and to help develop pedagogy and curriculum. (This type of setting was used successfully in the past at Indiana University in order to help graduate students from three very different departments use inquiry-based methods to assess and improve their own teaching.) The first collegium comprises twenty-four people (eleven of whom are Native American), each with experience and perspectives on some aspect of repatriation, cultural engagement, teaching, or learning. Two additional collegium meetings are planned for the implementation phase of the project, in which the participants and consultants continue to work collaboratively on curriculum that presents a wider range of ethical perspectives.

Success of this project depends on wide dissemination of the results from both the research findings and evaluation of the collegium model itself. At the end of four years there should be a set of materials and perspectives for educators that is accessible online. Roundtables and meetings that bring representatives from tribes and from institutions together will develop during the next phase. The collegium composition in future years is likely to be fluid, and graduate student participants will change annually. In future years, educators from the Institute of American Indian Arts will assume a larger participatory role, and the third and final collegium meeting will take place in Santa Fe. An additional goal for the implementation phase is to develop a collaborative approach to NAGPRA training to be submitted as a module for the continuing professional education program for the Register of Professional Archaeologists.

We look forward to working with a wide range of colleagues over the next few years on these important issues. More details about how interested individuals or organizations can get involved are available on **Page 4** of this newsletter. For those with more questions about the project, I hope you participate in the online Question & Answer session (for more details see **Page 3** of this newsletter) or contact me by email at asiever@indiana.edu. Together we can cultivate more engaged, ethical education and practice.

August 7th, 2015

Friday at 3 pm EST

**Online “Learning NAGPRA”
Project Question & Answer**

Ask project personnel any general questions you might have about the Learning NAGPRA project using Adobe Connect.

Connect with us using the following link:
<https://connect.iu.edu/learning-nagpra/>

For a quick start guide on using Adobe Connect, please find more details here:
http://www.adobe.com/content/dam/Adobe/en/products/adobeconnect/pdfs/VQS_Guide_for_Participants.pdf

Email us at lrnagpra@indiana.edu for more information.

August 14th, 2015

Friday at 4 pm EST

**Online Collegium Discussion
on NAGPRA Education**

Watch collegium participants discuss helpful examples of NAGPRA education and share your thoughts using Adobe Connect.

Connect with us using the following link:
<https://connect.iu.edu/learning-nagpra/>

For a quick start guide on using Adobe Connect, please find more details here:
http://www.adobe.com/content/dam/Adobe/en/products/adobeconnect/pdfs/VQS_Guide_for_Participants.pdf

Email us at lrnagpra@indiana.edu for more information.

November 18th, 2015

**Wednesday from 12 pm-1:45 pm at
the AAA Conference in Denver, CO**

**“Teaching Culturally-Engaged
Research: Lessons from
NAGPRA” Roundtable**

For those attending the American Anthropological Association’s annual meeting, we hope you will join us at our organized roundtable. It includes discussants with a wide range of research and teaching experiences to encourage a broader dialogue about the need for NAGPRA education and how it connects to the larger scope of engaged, ethical anthropology and restorative justice.



November 22nd, 2015

Sunday from 9 am- 12:30 pm

**Denver Museum of Nature &
Science, Ricketson Auditorium**

**“Learning NAGPRA” Public
Forum**

This event will be free and open to the public. We hope it will be an opportunity to extend conversations beyond the AAA meeting and bring in a wider range of perspectives.

Further details will be announced in our Fall newsletter in November.

How to Get Involved

There are many approaches and contexts for learning about the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. This year the law will celebrate the 25th anniversary of its passage on November 16th, 2015. Our project recognizes the many decades of work individuals and organizations around the United States have dedicated to improving consultation and collaboration with Native American communities.

While we plan to conduct more in-person interviews in Denver at the AAAs, phone interviews are an easy way to share your experiences and thoughts on how best to teach about NAGPRA. Interviews last between half an hour and an hour, depending your schedule, and you can access our IRB-approved study information sheet at our website here:

<http://learningnagpra.indiana.edu/project-information/Learning%20NAGPRA%20Study%20Information%20Sheet.pdf>

We are also asking for copies of course syllabi that discuss NAGPRA to understand the variety of contexts used to introduce NAGPRA and to see what assigned readings or films educators use with their students. Some of that information may then be used to update the “Suggested Viewing” and “Suggested Reading” section of our website (accessible at: <http://learningnagpra.indiana.edu/nagpra-education/Educational%20Resources.php>). The syllabus documents themselves will not be redistributed or directly quoted in any project publications. Please email Project Manager Teresa Nichols at lrnagpra@indiana.edu for more details.

Learning NAGPRA Project
Student Building 314
701 E. Kirkwood Avenue
Bloomington, IN 47405

Telephone: 812-856-5134

Email: lrnagpra@indiana.edu

Website: <http://learningnagpra.indiana.edu>

Twitter: [@LearningNAGPRA](https://twitter.com/LearningNAGPRA)

The screenshot shows the Learning NAGPRA website. The header includes the Indiana University logo and navigation links. The main content area is titled "Learning NAGPRA" and features a large image of a Native American artifact. Below the image, there is a "Project Information" sidebar with links to "NAGPRA Education", "Learning NAGPRA", "IU NAGPRA Program", "Glenn Black Lab of Archaeology NSF Program for Ethical STEM", and "NAGPRA on Twitter". The main text area is titled "Description of the Project" and contains the following text:

Working Project Title: Learning NAGPRA: Cultivating Ethical Practice to Implement the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act
Funding Agency: National Science Foundation
Home Institution: Indiana University (IU)
Project Personnel: April K. Slevert, Director, Glenn A. Black Laboratory of Archaeology; K. Anne Pyburn, Provost Professor, Department of Anthropology; Jayne-Leigh Thomas, IU NAGPRA Director

This grant provides funding for one year to research how students and professionals learn and teach about NAGPRA and to plan future work in which institutional and tribal scholars work collaboratively to aggregate, develop, and evaluate resources aimed at improving and facilitating NAGPRA education. The project was inspired by our perceptions that many institutions lag on equipping new researchers with the ethical grounding that NAGPRA requires. The project goal is to understand and improve ethical awareness and practice among scientists and researchers who work with Native American materials, and to improve implementation of and compliance with the law. As part of this research, we will be seeking information about curriculum and teaching to see where and how NAGPRA is encountered and introduced. We need also to understand how students and professionals who work for tribes or study at tribal colleges learn about NAGPRA. It is likely that students trained in museum studies and anthropology at universities learn about these issues as a curation issue with collections, while more culturally-engaged education helps students contextualize past peoples as ancestors. The perspectives of tribal institutions are a vital part of shaping better NAGPRA training in schools around the U.S. Comparing tribal

what is nagpra?
NAGPRA was passed in 1990 as federal legislation that requires institutions receiving federal funds to report Native American cultural items on a national registry. These cultural items include human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony. Tribal descendants and culturally affiliated tribal entities or organizations may then ask for the return of these items. Following NAGPRA, Indiana University is committed to ongoing efforts to return Native American remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony to local descendants and culturally affiliated Indian tribes, and to provide information about culturally unidentifiable Native American collections. To learn more about NAGPRA, visit the National NAGPRA website.