

UCLA

UCLA Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

Reaching Out: Native American Student Recruiters at the University of California, Los Angeles

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7df2k8zt>

Author

Morales, Denise

Publication Date

2019

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Reaching Out: Native American Student Recruiters at the University of California, Los Angeles

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
in American Indian Studies

by

Denise Morales

2019

© Copyright by

Denise Morales

2019

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

Reaching Out: Native American Student Recruiters at the University of California, Los Angeles

by

Denise Morales

Master of Arts in American Indian Studies

University of California, Los Angeles, 2019

Professor Ananda Maria Marin, Chair

American Indian Recruitment (AIR) is a student initiated, student run project sponsored by the American Indian Student Association at the University of California, Los Angeles that focuses on outreaching to Native students in Los Angeles and its surrounding areas. Founded in the 1990's, AIR is the culmination of decades of work by former students done on their own time and with their own resources. Since its establishment AIR has employed Native American undergraduate students at UCLA as recruiters on behalf of a university. This research examines the experiences of former Native American student recruiters, their understanding of the history of AIR in relation to their work, and how their work shaped their outlook as a student.

The thesis of Denise Morales is approved.

Kyle Travis-Corrington Mays

Teresa L. McCarty

Ananda Maria Marin, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2019

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|------|
| Abstract..... | ii |
| List of Figures | vi |
| List of Tables | vii |
| Acknowledgements..... | viii |
| Chapter 1: Introduction..... | 1 |
| American Indian Recruitment at UCLA | 2 |
| Research Topic and Purpose..... | 7 |
| Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework..... | 9 |
| The Role of Native American Student Service Units in Outreach and Recruitment | 9 |
| Methodological Orientation and Methods..... | 14 |
| Chapter 3: The College Going Experience..... | 28 |
| The Role of Family in the College Application Process..... | 28 |
| Building Relationships and Mentorship with Students..... | 33 |
| Relationships with Native Peers on Campus..... | 39 |
| Chapter 4: Experiences as Native Student Staff..... | 45 |
| Learning to Outreach and Engage with Prospective Students..... | 45 |
| Relationships with Peers..... | 52 |
| Participants Talking to Their Younger Selves..... | 57 |
| Chapter 5: Reflecting on the Experiences as Student Recruiters..... | 63 |
| What is Native Recruitment? | 63 |
| Perceptions of Self..... | 68 |
| Final Reflections..... | 75 |

| | |
|------------------------------------|----|
| Chapter 6: Conclusion | 80 |
| Appendix: Interview Questions..... | 80 |
| References..... | 81 |

List of Figures

| | |
|---|---|
| Figure 1. American Indian programs and student services at UCLA. | 5 |
| Figure 2. American Indian Recruitment (AIR) internal organization. | 7 |

List of Tables

| | |
|---|----|
| Table 1. Participants' pathways to and through college and their timeline with AIR. ... | 24 |
|---|----|

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the numerous people who helped me put this together and for helping me get through this process. Thank you to the Tongva people for sharing the land with me throughout my life. To those who participated in this research project, thank you for taking the time to share your stories with me. I value the countless times I have turned to you for advice and thoughts and hope that I have represented you well.

A huge thank you goes to my friends and mentors, Renee and Clementine. You two are the biggest, kindest, and most caring Native nerds that I have met. You reminded me to work hard and stay focused but to also to enjoy the journey. Another thank you goes to Shalene, for being there my first year and for teaching me how an open heart can lead to healing. Thank you to the three of you, my 222 Crew.

To my committee, Dr. Teresa McCarty and Dr. Kyle Mays, thank you for your feedback, your willingness to allow me to develop my own voice, and for your collaborative effort to assist me produce the research that I envisioned. Showing true patience and care toward my personal and academic development is Dr. Ananda Marin. Throughout these two years we have worked together you have prepared and challenged me to reach my full potential. There are no words to fully express how grateful I am that you have been my advisor. Simply thank you.

Finally, a big thank you and I love you goes to my family. Y'all are my rock and you taught me common sense, kept me laughing, and showed me what the meaning of hard work is.

Chapter 1: Introduction¹

The Los Angeles Basin is the ancestral home of the Tongva people. Over time the Los Angeles Basin has been transformed and it has also become the home of tribal members from across the United States. As of 2018, 1.6% of the estimated 39.5 million people living in the state of California identified as Native American/Alaska Native (US Census, 2010). Of the 39.5 million people living in California, 10.1 million people live in LA County and of that population, 137,460 identified as American Indian/Alaska Native (US Census, 2010). Due to California's large population its post-secondary public education system in California is comprised of a three level system including the University of California, the California State University, and California Community Colleges (www.calcareercenter.org). In Los Angeles County there are a total of six public universities, five of those universities are in the California State University system and one is in the University of California system (US Census Bureau). As of 2004, within the entire University of California system there was a reported 1,699 American Indian/Alaska Native undergraduate students (Proudfit and Gregor, 2016). Within California, the highest number of AI/AN enrollment is found within the California Community College system. In the 2014-15 academic year 10,356 AI/AN students were enrolled in California Community College system (Proudfit & Gregor, 2016). In the fall of 2015, 1,054 AI/AN students were enrolled at the undergraduate level in the California State University system (Proudfit & Gregor, 2016). In the fall of 2014, the University of California system enrolled 1250 AI/AN undergraduates (Proudfit & Gregor, 2016). At the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) the American Indian undergraduate students make up less than one percent of total undergraduate population (UCLA 2017-2018 Undergraduate Profile). While there has been an increase in AI/AN student

¹ Throughout this thesis, "American Indian," "Native American," and "Indigenous" are used interchangeably to represent the first peoples of the Americas.

enrollment in California universities, ongoing work is necessary to increase the number of Native students across higher education. With increasing Native student enrollment on campuses it is the responsibility of universities to create adequate and culturally aware services for current and potential students in future recruitment and retention programming. Universities are responsible for ensuring that Native students have access to support services to ensure their success on their campuses. Before Native students can become members of the campus community recruitment efforts have to also be aware of the needs of Native students in order to properly support students in the application process.

College recruitment is complex and often involves targeting specific demographic groups. College recruitment procedures may increase access to the university or promote gatekeeping and limit access to institutions (Adelman et al., 2018). The most successful forms of recruitment methods are shown to be in-person events in conjunction with easy to visit, apply, and enroll practices of universities (Adelman et al., 2018). Recruitment offices have increasingly utilized technological practices such as webinars, email, and virtual meetings to maintain student contact (Adelman et al., 2018). For Native American students early stage recruitment along with the incorporation of culturally relevant academic and social activities is shown to improve recruitment responses (Thomason & Thurber, 1999). Student-based university organizations play a vital role in creating Native spaces. Many of these organizations, like American Indian Recruiting at UCLA, work to increase the number of Native students and simultaneously reclaim Native space on campus through their recruitment efforts.

American Indian Recruitment at UCLA

UCLA offers numerous Native American resources that are unique and the first of its kind. The American Indian Student Association (AISA) was founded in 1969 amidst declining

Native student enrollment and widespread campus unrest. The campus unrest joined the nationwide student protests in response to the US involvement in the Vietnam War. In the years following its founding, members of AISA created two student initiated and student run projects – American Indian Recruitment (AIR) and Retention for American Indians Now! (RAIN!). AIR and RAIN! are sister projects however in this thesis I focus solely on the experiences of AIR student employees.

AIR was formed in 1997 out of concern among American Indian students at UCLA that the University was not doing enough to outreach to Native students. AIR is the first student-run, student-initiated and student-funded outreach program in the nation, with the goal of increasing admissions of American Indian students in higher education and at UCLA.² Today, the American Indian Recruitment (AIR) Project at UCLA is one of two formal recruitment branches at UCLA, the other is the Native American/Alaskan Native Recruiter who works within the Undergraduate Admission Office.

The mission of American Indian Recruitment (AIR) is to encourage American Indian and Alaska Native students to attain higher education “while strengthening cultural ties and creat[ing] a cycle of learning so that students aspire to return to their communities and meaningfully contribute to this process” (<https://www.cpo.ucla.edu/sioc/american-indian-recruitment/>). The goals and objectives of AIR are to provide holistic support and development through activities such as tutoring, peer advising (college mentoring), and providing workshops and field trips all while implementing the four wellness components of the medicine wheel (physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing). Additionally, AIR works on consistent outreach for our community college, parent involvement and Higher Education Awareness

² <http://www.cpo.ucla.edu/sioc/american-indian-recruitment/>

components by attending community events, parent meetings, pow wows, and community college fairs throughout the year.

Since its founding AIR, like RAIN! has been housed within UCLA's Community Programs Office (CPO), which serves as UCLA's multicultural center and is officially supervised by the professional staff in the CPO. A number of other outreach and retention projects, also sponsored by student organizations are also housed within the CPO. Most of the projects retain one full-time Project Director and several part-time student employees including a part-time Outreach Coordinator employed by the CPO. The American Indian Student Association (AISA), AISA created the Outreach Coordinator position in which an elected student oversees AIR's goals and mission statement every year. The Outreach Coordinator works in conjunction with the Project Director to ensure that AIR is functioning effectively on behalf of AISA. The Outreach Coordinator sits on the Student Initiated Outreach Committee that is comprised of Outreach Coordinators from other student organizations that advocate, evaluate, and allocate yearly project funding.

Although AIR is organizationally located within the CPO, collaboration occurs between campus offices to ensure that outreach and recruitment is occurring on behalf of UCLA to Native students. For example, AIR staff collaborate with the Native American/Alaskan Native Recruiter who works within the Undergraduate Admission Office. When students visit UCLA's campus AIR has routinely collaborated with the Native American Recruiter in order to provide effective resources for both offices. AIR also collaborates with the American Indian Studies Center and the American Indian Studies Interdepartmental Program on campus so that both offices are represented at student visits, college fairs, and site workshops. The collaboration that occurs with the various American Indian programs and centers across campus is to again, ensure

that prospective students are given the opportunity to explore all resources that are available to them at UCLA. The various programs and resources available to students are depicted in Figure

1.

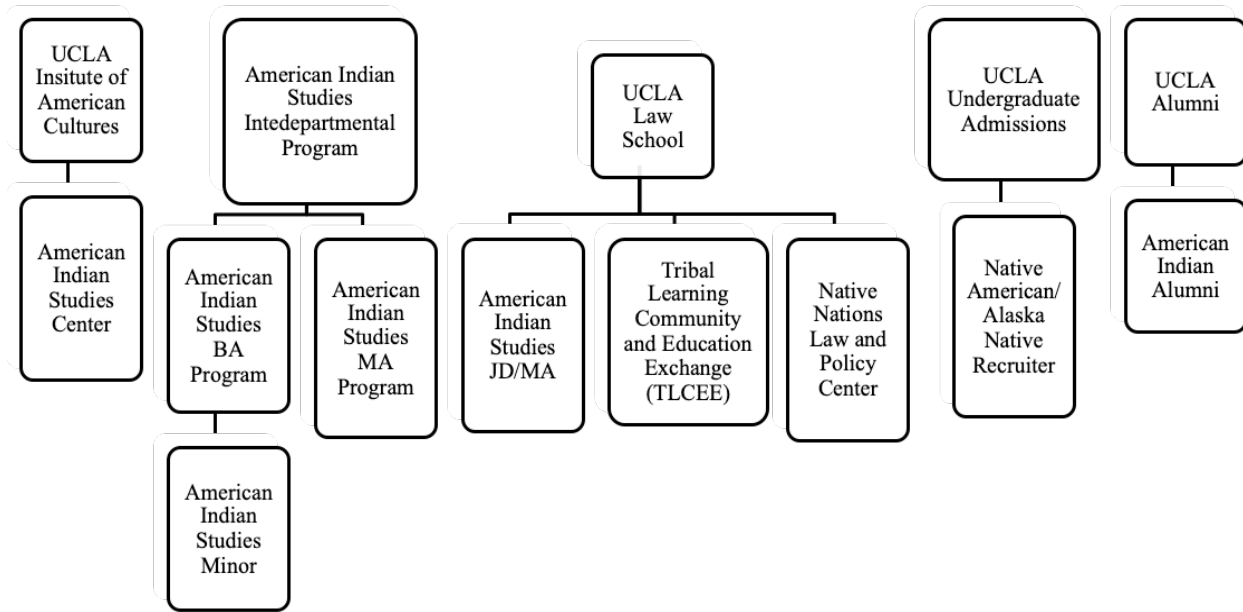


Figure 1. American Indian programs and student services at UCLA.

AIR's outreach and recruitment process. There are three major components to the work of AIR: Weekly Sites, Higher Education Awareness, and Community College. The Weekly Sites are regularly scheduled and located in the boundaries of LA. They focus on tutoring and peer advising services. The Higher Education Awareness component focuses on outreaching to Native students located outside of LA. Visitation to these sites occur less frequently and focus on college applications, personal statements, and financial aid workshops. HEA has two primary sites, Sherman Indian High School that is located in Riverside, California and Noli Indian School located in San Jacinto, California. Additionally, HEA is responsible for coordinating recruitment activities with any visiting students to UCLA's campus and for visiting additional visits to reservation communities. The final component is Community College in which selected sites are visited frequently throughout the academic year to check in with community college students who are interested in transferring to UCLA. The Community College component works closely with the Center for Community College Partnerships office that has a broader aim to all community college students. AIR's three program components are staffed by site coordinators, including the HEA Coordinator, Community College Coordinator, Assistant Project Coordinator, and Project Coordinator. The organizational structure is depicted in Figure 2.

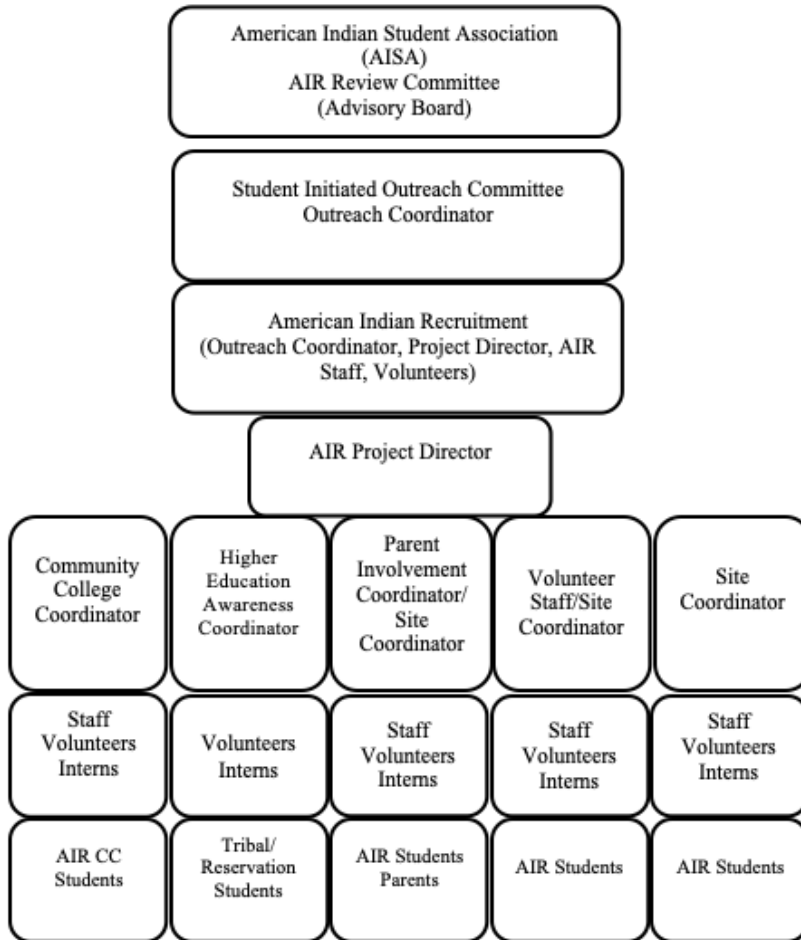


Figure 2. American Indian Recruitment (AIR) internal organization.

Research Topic and Purpose

I understand firsthand the important role that student recruiters play in creating and fostering spaces to recruit potential Native students. During my time as an undergraduate student at UCLA, I worked as a student recruiter through AIR. I became interested in how I and my fellow Native student recruiters with AIR navigated conversations and relationships with our peers and the students we were recruiting. I began to see how I and other Native student recruiters drew on our own experiences in tribal communities to engage with high school and community college students in the outreaching and recruitment process. These interactions and experiences have shaped my research journey. In this thesis, I explore the community building efforts of American

Indian students who worked for AIR as undergraduates. The following research questions that have guided this research:

1. How did the women in this research navigate their UCLA undergraduate experience as Native students?
2. How did being a part of AIR shape the outlook of the participants in their ongoing and future work in higher education?

With this research I aim to better understand how Native student recruiters' undergraduate experiences have been shaped by their time in AIR as they develop their perception of themselves, their peers, and their environment at UCLA.

Thesis Organization

The remainder of this thesis is organized into five chapters. Chapter 2 is the conceptual framework which includes the methodologies used in this research, the recruitment process, the data analysis process, and a literature review. Chapters 3, 4, and 5, are chapters based on the findings of the research. Chapter 3 outlines the personal history of the participants prior to joining AIR. Chapter 4 analyzes the experiences of the participants while they were a part of AIR. Chapter 5 describes and analyzes how the participants have made meaning of their experiences. Chapter 6 concludes this research in tying the experiences of the participants together with final thoughts.

Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework

Given my own experience as a student recruiter with American Indian Recruiting (AIR) I am interested in how Native American student recruiters draw on their own experiences and knowledge to create and foster spaces for potential Native students. While this research focuses on the experiences of three Native women who served as staff with AIR, it is also a story about AIR. AIR serves as a space for students to work with their peers, talk to Native youth, be in relationships with local tribal communities, and develop leadership skills in the outreaching process. I draw upon research in the field of American Indian higher education to further contextualize my research. Native American scholars of higher education have focused on the continuum of experiences and practices of American Indian/Alaska Native students, staff and faculty (Tachine et al., 2016; Carter et al., 2018; Lowe, 2005; Waterman, 2012; Lundberg, 2007; Waterman and Lindley, 2013; Brayboy et al., 2015; Thomason and Thuber, 1999; Adelman et al., 2018). Across this body of work, scholars point to the important role that Native American Student Services Units (NASSU) play in fostering college students' experiences and sense of belonging. NASSU is a general term for departments and units that serve the needs of Native student and the role they play in supporting Native students (Springer, Davidson, & Waterman, 2018). In addition, scholars in this field have explored the role of familial support and a commitment to giving back as motivating factors for pursuing higher education. These dimensions (sense of belonging, place making, giving back, and familial support) are further discussed in this chapter.

The Role of Native American Student Service Units in Outreach and Recruitment

AIR is one of multiple offices at UCLA that serve as a NASSU. As Springer, Davidson, & Waterman (2018) explain NASSUs can serve as a space that supports student development

especially when they provide space for students that is culturally relevant and culturally inclusive. In addition, NASSUs can help to foster Native American students' sense of belonging by creating a place for cultural belonging. NASSUs also play an important role in the lives of Native American students by supporting their commitment to giving back to their communities and honoring the role of familial relations in the college process. Tachine et al. (2016), delve into the importance of NASSUs as a place for students to be themselves and thrive. Similarly in my research, I explore how AIR serves as a space for Native students to be a part of campus life in a space that allow them to be Native as well. I assert AIR serves as be an effective outreaching unit and an effective NASSU because it upholds the values of Native student staff by fostering a sense of belonging, supporting placemaking, honoring familial relations, and supporting students' commitment to giving back.

Sense of Belonging. Tachine, Cabrera, and Yellow Bird (2016) explore the first year of college as a foundational context for Native college students' journey to degree completion.

They find that,

relationships with peers that showed respect for their culture, having Native friends, and seeing friends as family on campus all contributed to the students' sense of belonging. Moreover, staff support (including Native American/Alaskan Native staff) enriched their sense of belonging (p.789).

For students, being in spaces and with students who were understanding of their cultural background is an important contributing factor to developing a sense of belonging on campus. In addition, integrating Native culture across spaces and activities is important to Native students' sense of belonging as well as their identity development (Oxendine, 2015). Mentoring relationships with Native faculty and staff is also important to Native students' sense of belonging (Lundberg & Lowe, 2016; Waterman, 2007). We can also think about sense of belonging in relation to peoplehood. The peoplehood model by Holm et al. (2003) is a

framework that focuses on language, sacred history, ceremonial cycle, and land with each factor demonstrating interconnected perspectives. How the components of the peoplehood model are lived can influence a Native student's sense of belonging (Tachine et al., 2016).

Placemaking. Students sense of belonging is facilitated by attachment to places on and off campus. Such places include campus offices, dining halls, and local community centers (Carter et al., 2018; Cox, Herrick, and Keating, 2012; Knez 2005). Staff and faculty play an important role in making Indigenous students feel a part of the campus community by bridging Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing in living and learning spaces between students and the institution (Carter, Hollinsworth, Raciti, and Gibey, 2018; Ecklund & Terrance, 2018). Living spaces that are designed for Native students can positively impact their experiences. In addition these spaces are important to recruitment and retention efforts. Researchers have found that students are more likely to apply to and attend the universities that have Native designated spaces (Ecklund and Terrance, 2018). In addition, such spaces have been linked to increased retention rates. For example, Ecklund and Terrance (2018) found that once students arrived in the Native residence halls they were inclined to stay with their dorm mates for the duration of their time on campus and had higher retention rates.

While AIR is a project functioning as part of UCLA's campus, students drive off campus to community space in Los Angeles and beyond. While students are not actively place-making as part of their living situation, having the ability to leave campus and cultivate relationships with Native high school students widens AIR staff's understanding of Native spaces. Carter et al. (2018), description of staff playing a role is later evident in the voices of the Native women who participated in my research. These Native women intentionally incorporated the ideas and

creativity of AIR staff members so that staff would become deeply invested in AIR's mission to outreach.

The Importance of Familial Relations. Waterman (2012) explores the role of family in Haudenosaunee students' success. In her scholarship Waterman draws on the work of Deyhle and Swisher (1997) to resist the kinds of deficit ideologies that are prevalent in research conducted by non-Native scholars. For example, Waterman (2012) explains that, by applying a non-deficit model to her research she was able to create a counter-story from the perspective of Haudenosaunee students enrolled in institutions of higher education. Non-deficit narratives of Native students is a departure from previous works written that ultimately misrepresented students, their families, and their cultures.

Similarly, Tachine (2017) utilizes Heavyrunner and Decelles' Family Education Model (FEM) to center the role that grandmothers have on Native student's higher education experiences. Tachine (2017) focuses on FEM strategies to, "directly relate to aspects of holism in which the whole (including cultural, racial, and spiritual) person is supported" (p. 156). Tachine (2017) found that although the students who participated in the study each had complex relationships with their families, all three participants referenced their grandmother's as essential in their higher educational journey, from motivating their journey, to sustaining their time in the institution. Through their relationships with their grandmothers' pedagogy students learned how to cultivate safe spaces.

The Native women who participated in my research extensively discussed their families and how their family supported their educational careers, emotionally and financially. Once in a student recruiter role, these women sought to replicate the emotional support they received from their families in their positions at UCLA by finding friendships with Native peers. Later on when

the women in this research pursued careers in recruitment, each one tried to serve as a support system for students to foster a safe space for students like their families had done for them. In many ways the support system that Native recruiters cultivated was similar to the grandmothers' pedagogy that Tachine (2017) describes in her work.

A Commitment to Giving Back. Waterman and Lindley (2013) find that Arapaho and Haudenosaunee women pursue higher education as a part of a larger effort to bring their academic work back to their community. Many of the women in this research explained that unlike other students, they could not walk away from their community responsibilities because they saw this as an indication of walking away from their identity as Native women. While Waterman and Lindley (2013) focus their work on Haudenosaunee women, the women in my research also spoke of their own responsibility to their families. The participants described the significant role that their families played in supporting them through their undergraduate careers. The women in my research saw outreaching as a way to give back to families like their own who were not given access to the tools necessary to reach the university. While it is not deeply explored in this research, this research gives an idea of the balancing act that women in higher education take on. The participants all reference other female peers who mentored them during their time as undergraduates and how this mentorship contributed to their development and direction toward giving back.

The themes discussed in this literature review, sense of belonging, placemaking, the importance of familial relations, and the commitment to giving back, all tie in with the experiences of participants in this research study, including myself. American Indian Recruitment (AIR) is the grounding space of this research and it is a project that each participant has been involved with for years. While AIR functions to outreach to Native students in Los

Angeles and its surrounding areas, it also functions as an important space for Native students at UCLA. Through its various components, AIR continues to function more than 25 years after it was founded.

Methodological Orientation and Methods

My own positionality as a Native American researcher who was previously a student recruiter for AIR as well as a former Project Director of AIR has given me an insider-outsider perspective. Brayboy and Deyhle (2000) discuss the balance of being a researcher (outsider) and a community participant (insider) and the political aspect both positionalities create in the research process. The understanding and the experiences I have as a former undergraduate student and Project Director have given me an idea of which questions to ask, an easier understanding of the functioning of AIR, and has shaped my relationships with the participants.

Indigenous researchers have written extensively about the importance of respectful and reciprocal relationships for carrying out research (Archibald, 2014; Davidson, Shotton, Minthorn, & Waterman 2018; Deloria and Wildcat, 2001; Minthorn and Shotton, 2018; Wilson; 2008; Tachine, 2017) The focus on relationships is one way Indigenous scholars have moved to indigenize the research processes. For example, Wilson (2008) focuses on the relationships of researchers and participants. Wilson (2008) explains that research is much more than a short-term endeavor but rather a long-term investment with the participant and the community that holds the researcher accountable to their work. Wilson's (2008) work provides a framework for relationship building and sustainability for my own research while also reminding me of the responsibility I have to those who participated in this research project and the organizations I write about.

Davidson, Shotton, Minthorn, and Waterman (2018) stress the significance of Indigenous research that is produced by Indigenous scholars in order to decolonize research and methodologies and invest in future generations of researchers. Similarly Keene (2018) discusses how her relationships with Native American college students motivated her research regarding Native students' college experiences. Keene (2018) like Native scholars before her focuses relationships as the foundation for quality and respectful research in the work that Indigenous peoples do with their own communities. In my own work I have found that my relationships with participants drove many aspects of my research. It is my relationships with the women that participated in this study that have allowed me to conduct in-depth and rich interviews. I hope that as a Native female researcher, this thesis will contribute to a larger body of scholarship that focuses on how Indigenous women navigate their identity on university campuses.

In addition, from a theoretical perspective there is numerous scholarship that foregrounds the role of Indigenous stories in learning and theory building that is relevant to this research. For example, Brayboy (2005) introduced Tribal Critical Race Theory as a way to “make connections between different forms of knowledge and their application through a community-oriented theoretical lens” (p. 427). Tribal Crit theoretically focuses on sovereignty, self-determination, and self-education through the knowledge that is within Native communities. Brayboy (2005) positions stories as a theories as they are critical to Native people's understandings of themselves and society. Similarly, Indigenous storywork, a method developed by Jo-Ann Archibald values and respects the stories shared while recognizing the relationship between the storyteller and the listener. Throughout her work Archibald (2008) discusses Coyote the Trickster as outlining her storywork principals. Coyote understands the world through interrelationships and represents the ability to change. These ideas guided Archibald's (2008) own approach. There are seven

theoretical principles that structure storywork: respect, responsibility, reciprocity, reverence, holism, interrelatedness, and synergy. Archibald (2008) contends that these principals allow Indigenous knowledge to develop through relationally oriented conversations that center stories. Reading about Archibald's (2008) navigation of her role as an insider and outsider as well as her relationships with her participants in a personal and professional manner helped me to navigate my interviews with my participants. I have known the participants in my research project and as a friend and colleague. As a researcher I was approaching participants in a new way and I wanted to respect our previous relationship while also delving into our shared and individual experiences through a conversation.

Methods. Seidman's three-part phenomenological interview was my primary methods for data collection. I relied on this method because it is designed to help researchers better understand peoples' lived experiences. Seidman's (2013) three-part phenomenological interview allows for "both the interviewer and participant to explore the participant's experience, place it in context, and reflect on its meaning (p. 20)." This approach was important for me as a researcher because it provided me a context to actively explore and analyze participants alongside them. Through the interview process I strove to understand how former recruiters beliefs, values, and attitudes towards recruiting, was influences by their own cultural background. I explored how participants' own identities shaped their role in AIR and more specifically their interactions with potential students in the field and their efforts to build community on and off campus. To do so, I invited two former AIR employees, Eve and Claudia, to be interviewed.

Participants. I intentionally invited two former student recruiters (Eve and Claudia) who were also still active in the Los Angeles Native community to participate in this research project.

In addition, I asked a friend and colleague to interview me. In this way, I am included as a third participant in this study. I have known the Native American women who participated in this project for three or more years and felt that our relationships would help ease the participants and myself into the interview process. Currently all three participants, myself included, are at UCLA either as an employee or a student. Having three participants as part of this research is to gather three different perspectives and to put each one in conversation with one another either with their shared or unique time at AIR.

Each participant was interviewed a total of three times. In the first interview I asked questions about the application process. This interview included brief introductions of their family life and their time as high school students. The participants also shared their trajectory specific to UCLA and the support their high school or community college provided in bridge and honors programs. In the second interview I focused on their time at UCLA as students and as staff members of AIR. The second interview was concerned with their interactions with staff and students on campus as well as the relationships the women in this research developed with the students they outreached to. In the third interview I focused in on reflecting on how the three participants felt after sharing their stories and what these experiences meant to them. While the last two interview were specific to their time to UCLA, this interview focused in on their entire experiences as Native women who worked in higher education.

As previously mentioned, I was also interviewed. I asked a close friend who was familiar with AIR and my work to interview me. The process of interviewing myself required me to get comfortable with seeing myself as a researcher and a participant. I also had to be willing to share openly in my interviews, just as I had asked Eve and Claudia to openly share. I had not intended to be a participant in this research project however, over time I realized that my experience as a

student recruiter of AIR, Project Director of AIR, and now as a graduate student it gave me insight to look at AIR in a critical and productive manner. Since I was deeply invested in AIR and knew how it functioned as a Native space on campus and on an administrative level, I felt that interviewing myself was important for the work I was undertaking.

Eve. Eve is Navajo her mother is originally from New Mexico while her father is German. She grew up in the San Fernando Valley in Los Angeles County and grew up attending UCLA's Pow Wow with her family. Her mother attended Sherman Indian High School, a boarding school located in Riverside, California and due to her experiences as a young adult Eve's mother was averse to sharing her Navajo traditions with her children Eve is the youngest of 11 children. It was not until her mother had her last few children that she (the mother) began to develop relationships with the LA Native community and pass down Navajo traditions. During her high school days, Eve was a part of a program that assisted her trajectory to college that allowed her to speak to college counselors. Eve also began to take community college courses so that when she entered UCLA in 2000, she was able to graduate in three years. During her time as an undergraduate, Eve majored in psychology and worked for AIR, RAIN! and became the Director of the annual Pow Wow. Following her time as an undergraduate, Eve briefly moved around California before returning to UCLA to become the Project Director of AIR, then moving on to the University of Redlands. At the University of Redlands she received a master's degree. After being in her administrative role at Redlands for several years, Eve returned to UCLA to take up an administrative position that she still currently holds.

Denise. I am Tohono O'odham from Long Beach, California and I am the youngest of six children. My family ended up in Southern California when my grandfather joined the Marines during the Korean War. My grandmother soon followed from Arizona where they

ultimately settled in Lennox, California where my mother, two aunts and uncle were born and raised. I was raised by a single mother with the assistance of my older sister who is three years older than me and is the third oldest of my family. Upon graduating high school in 2010, I enrolled in the local community college, unsure of my own direction. During my third year in community college I was a part of UCLA's Center for Community College Partnerships summer bridge program which influenced my decision to apply and attend UCLA as a history major. During my time as an undergraduate at UCLA, I also worked for RAIN! and AIR before graduating in 2016 following my graduation I took over as the AIR Project Director for one year. Following my time as Project Director, I returned to UCLA to earn my master's in American Indian Studies.

Claudia. Claudia is Huichol and Filipino from West Hollywood, California and is the middle of three children. Claudia attended a newly opened high school in her neighborhood that was built to deal with the overflow of students. She reflected that her time in high school she was given college preparation advice and techniques that were not offered to her friends and when applying to college she kept quiet on the subject. As an undergraduate, Claudia worked various jobs before landing at AIR in her final year and became the HEA coordinator and becoming one of the Native Youth Conference coordinator. She graduated high school in 2013 and entered into UCLA as a business economics major but graduate in 2017 with a degree in American Indian Studies and took over AIR as the Project Director. She will soon be leaving her position to enter a Masters in Social Work program after being AIR Project Director for two years.

As stated previously, one of the goals of this research is to understand how the former student recruiters understood the history of AIR but it is also important to know that they are a part of that history as well. The three participants provide contextual information regarding the

campus climate and the focus of AIR goals during their time as students. The first participant was a student in the early 2000s, while myself and participant 3 were student recruiters in the mid-2010's.

Table 1. Participants' pathways to and through college and their timeline with AIR.

| | Pathways to and through College | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|------|--------------------------|------|--------------------------------|------|--|------|--------------------------|------|--------------------------|
| Participants | 2000 | 2003 | 2005 | 2009 | 2010 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2016 | 2017 | 2019 |
| P1: Eve (born 1982) | P1: Graduated High School and attended and graduated from UCLA with BA in Sociology -AIR Volunteer | | P1: AIR Project Director | | | | -P1: Supporting the Educational Journey Coordinator, Native Student Programs at University of Redlands -P1 graduated from Redlands with MA in Higher Ed | | | | |
| P2: Denise (born 1992) | | | | | P2: graduated from High School | | -P2 graduates from CC and transfers to UCLA -P2 attends and graduates from UCLA with BA in History -AIR Student Staff | | P2: AIR Project Director | | |
| P3: Claudia (born 1994) | | | | | | | -Participant 3: Graduated High School and attended and graduated from UCLA with BA in American Indian Studies -AIR Student Staff | | | | P3: AIR Project Director |

Data Collection. Each participant was interviewed three times. Participant 1 and 3 were interviewed by myself, and I was interviewed by a colleague who had an understanding of the research methods and goals. Each of the interviews lasted one hour. Participants were interviewed in their respective offices on campus in three meetings with the researcher. During the interview process I drew upon the conversational approach that Shawn Wilson describes in *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*. I found this approach especially relevant because I wanted to be active in the meaning making and reflection process along with participants. Following the interviews, I engaged in a memo writing process in order to reflect upon the interviews as well as my own experience with being interviewed. Interviews were also transcribed and reviewed. Interview excerpts included in this manuscript are referenced by their storage code and the line numbers of the transcript. Throughout the data collection process I made sure to inform my participants of why and how I was using their stories.

Important to the data collection process was a clear understanding of my own accountability in the research process. In *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods* Shawn Wilson calls for relational accountability particularly with regard to stories. Part of the relational accountability described by Wilson (2008) is to the three different styles of storytelling. In this research I will be focusing on the third style of storytelling, which relates to the personal experiences and or the experiences of other people that occur in conversation.

As a Native woman and researcher, I have decided to focus my scholarship on the experiences of Native women. I explored the knowledge that Native women used in their role as student recruiters to create a dialogue between themselves and other Native students. In order to do this, I also needed to create a dialogue with participants that included a mutual sharing of stories. For example, during both Eve's and Claudia's interviews I shared my own experiences,

worries, and struggles that I had as AIR staff. This approach was influenced by Archibald as she was willing to be a community member and a researcher during her fieldwork. I wanted to create a dialogue with participants that upheld their knowledge and experiences while also discussing with Eve and Claudia our shared experiences.

The Analysis Process. In my work it is important to me to utilize an indigenous framework to properly engage and analyze the experiences of Native women. Understanding these experiences through an Indigenous lens allows for me approach my work in a critical and appropriate manner that takes indigenous voices into account. My analysis process consisted of reviewing the full set of interview transcripts to see similarities and differences between each participant. Interview transcripts were organized according to Seidman's three part interview format. I created three electronic files, one for participant's life histories, a second for their particular experiences with recruiting, and a third for the meaning they made of those experiences. For each electronic file, I added meaningful or telling quotes that helped me to illustrate and compare the perspectives of each participant in a chronological order. Within each electronic file, I organized interview excerpts by participant. I then used these excerpts to create sandwich vignettes or interpretive commentaries (Emerson et al., 2011). Organizing and analyzing the excerpts in vignettes allowed for me to frame and interpret in a consistent manner throughout this research. In order to organize these experience I have continued to orient my work in relation to Indigenous methodologies (Archibald, 2008; Wilson, 2008). As a part of this process, I aimed to respect the experiences of participants while also including my own voice as a participant and a researcher. After writing interpretive commentaries, I engaged in a synthesizing process where I made thematic connections across participants' experiences.

I organized the thesis chapters by Seidman's three part interview sequence. Each chapter is organized by analytical themes and includes vignettes and interpretive commentaries. Each theme includes excerpts from each participants' interviews along with researcher interpretations. I also place the participants in conversation with one another by comparing and contrasting how participants express and interpret their stories.

Chapter 3: The College Going Experience

In this chapter I focus on a particular time in participants' life histories, namely their academic histories, including their journey to UCLA and their experiences as students at UCLA. More specifically, I describe participants' experiences with the application process, the relationships they built once on campus, and how their relationships with peers enabled the creation of a Native space on campus. During the first interview I asked participants how they perceived themselves, college representatives, and most importantly, their families throughout the college application process and when they initially arrived at UCLA.

The Role of Family and School Representatives in the College Application Process

The application process to any four year university requires long term investment that begins before submitting the actual application. The participants had various interactions with representatives from UCLA who encouraged them to apply. As a high school student Eve was a part of college preparation program through her high school that targeted her because she was in an honors program. I was in a UCLA college bridge program that regularly checked in on my academic progress as a transfer student. Claudia had to seek out help from her college counselors at her high school and occasionally met with a UCLA representative who would visit campus. Participants' experiences with the application process influenced their experiences once they attended the university. For example, who participants turned to as resources and how their own family played a part in the application process influenced how they presented themselves to other prospective students during the recruitment process. Moreover, understanding each participants own application process to UCLA is important for understanding how they would later outreach to students.

Eve. Eve attended public schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) throughout her life. It was when she was in middle school that she became a part of LAUSD's Indian Education Program (IEP). In eleventh grade she eventually became the first student president of the IEP advisory board. The IEP, which began in 1974, is a federally funded program that focuses on the needs and experiences of American Indian and Alaska Native students who are attending school in the Los Angeles Unified School District.³ Eve attended a magnet high school in which she was enrolled in their math, science, and technology honors program. Since she was a part of the honors program she was selected to be in a pilot program in which students were enrolled in courses at their local community college.

In addition to receiving support from representatives at her high school, Eve was also academically challenged at home. Eve's mother graduated from Sherman Indian High School and her father received his college degree in the 1980's when Eve was young. Both of Eve's parents shared their own educational experiences with her as a source of encouragement and support. For example, Eve explained that

[S]he [her mother] wasn't able to really help me navigate anything and it was just kinda like, you're doing good. Keep doing good. Um, my dad on the other hand, I'm trying to remember, he, he got his bachelor's degree when I was in elementary school. Um, and it took him a really long time because he was busy raising a family and so while he knew a little bit more, his experience with going into higher ed was just way different from what I was experiencing. And even his high school experience was like vastly different from what my high school experience was. So even then, it wasn't- he wasn't able to provide too much help in terms of really how am I supposed to navigate this as a student who is going to be full time. And like just pushing through straight through from high school through my undergraduate, um, time. Um, but he was still very encouraging. (NP03_306; 133-147)

The educational journey of each of Eve's parents influenced the kind of advice they were able to provide. Eve's mother who has a high school degree provided words of encouragement. Eve's father was a non-traditional student who had eleven children by the time he graduated. Eve on

³ <http://www.indianedla.net/>.

the other hand directly entered college from high school. Although her father received a bachelor's degree, the gap in years between the time her father applied to college and from when Eve applied influenced the kind of advice he was able to provide.

Eve remembers college recruiters visiting her high school to assist her applications. In particular, she recalled a meeting with Brett, a recruiter from UCLA:

I remember his name, his name was Brett, and he came from UCLA. And um, he works really closely with us on our applications and he helps me a little bit, but when it came down to it, I was too shy to actually share any of my personal information. So I didn't really talk to him much about what I was doing in terms of extra curriculums. I think he did see my, my transcript, but I would never share my personal statements or anything with them, um, because I was just too shy to do that. But in terms of just kind of, I guess he helped me a lot and that he was someone I knew that was at UCLA and it made that a little less scary because he wasn't scary. Um, and he was accessible. So that helps, I think, just giving me the confidence to apply. (NP01_130; 75-86)

Eve did not share her personal statements with Brett however, she found his presence as a UCLA representative helpful in personalizing the university. Brett also did not push for Eve to share her personal statements with him and assisted Eve where she allowed him to. Brett represented accessibility, and reliability on behalf of UCLA due to his assistance, consistent engagement and his friendly demeanor with Eve. While Eve's honors program provided Eve with the crucial tools to aid in the college application process, the role her family played in the process was different but just as crucial. In comparison to Eve's relationship with her parents, her relationship with Brett, a UCLA representative, was oriented around building an understanding of the technical aspects of the college application process.

Denise. I am the youngest of six children and my twin sister and I pursued college degrees however, we both navigated our higher education experiences differently. My four siblings all entered into community college after high school but stopped out after a few semesters. My mother finished her junior high and joined the work force while my father

completed high school. I entered into UCLA after 4 years at the community college level at which time I explored what it was I wanted to study. While I attended community college my sister, Diana attended a four year college right out of high school. While in high school I did not receive assistance in the college application process and was encourage to attend community college by my older siblings. After my initial three years at the community college I attended a summer transfer bridge program at UCLA that lasted six weeks. During those six weeks I was enrolled in a summer session class entitled “Mexican Americans in Education” and attended additional academic and financial aid workshops. I visited counselors at my community college who encouraged me to only apply to California State Universities but I also had a peer advisor from my summer program who would visit me at my community college on a monthly basis. The mentorship and relationships that I had developed impacted my educational route. For example, during my first interview, I discussed the influence of community college programs.

I think a lot of my own interest is like my time at CCCP [Center for Community College Partnerships] I mean I wasn’t recruited or anything like that but I do think that type of intervention that happened was really impactful and even when I was doing it I didn’t realize like how it changing, how I thought about myself, and what I could do. And so, and that program wasn’t targeting me because I was Native or anything, it was targeting me because I was a community college student but I do see how that helped me see the importance of talking to students and breaking down those barriers that the institution has up as being UCLA when in reality it's much more than its name, it's much more than what it appears to be, there’s people on campus and there’s people that can care about you when, you know you can really grow as a person through the opportunities here and so I always wanted, after that experience I wanted to offer that to other students and I just chose to and wanted to work for Native students and that was really a passion of mine, is a passion of mine. (DM01_118; 86-100)

I refer to CCCP as “impactful” and in terms of my time with counselors at my community college I was receiving support that was changing how I perceived myself. I stated “I didn’t realize how it [was] changing how I thought about myself and what I could do.” Having a peer counselor from UCLA provided me with the encouragement needed that I needed to apply. The

peer counselor broke down barriers that I had with seeing myself apply to a four year institution by making UCLA accessible. Having a relationship with UCLA through CCCP and having relationships with student staff members on campus contributed to having a history and connections that pushed me to pursue UCLA. The experience I had with the CCCP program and peer counselor directly influenced my college decisions, now knowing that I had a space at UCLA that had been fostered and validated through my experience there. Like my peer counselor did for me, I wanted students to see themselves at institutions at UCLA even if they were being told not to apply.

Claudia. Claudia is the youngest of three sisters. She saw her sisters pursue higher education and decided that it was not a fit for them. Her parents both graduated from high school and her mother received an associate's degree. She attended a newly opened high school in West Hollywood to curve the overpopulation of another high school in the area. While in high school Claudia was driven to seek additional help from counselors, after sharing that counselors normally would only provide extra support to honors students. She initially kept her pursuit of UCLA quiet because her friends were not receiving the same support she was because counselor did not give the same attention to students. Similar to Eve and myself, Claudia's family provided her with the emotional and social support to pursue and apply higher education.

My family is very supportive. Even. Yeah. A lot of times when I was like, okay, I just want to like, I'm tired of school, I want to give up my mom and my dad would say to me, like, you're like, okay. But supportive and like financially my dad definitely, cause I didn't have my dad and um, yeah, my mom too. Yeah. I don't know how I would survive the end goal. They didn't care what I majored in. They just wanted me to graduate. So I'd be the first graduate and my friends, um, even with all of them are going to like different paths. They were still, when I first met them too, they always wanted to go to college. And even until now they'll still talk about like, oh, it's really clear. I still want to transfer so I want to go to community, go back and get this degree in this. So no matter like what interests they had, they always supporting me. (VM02_402; 185-197)

Claudia refers to her family's emotional support and encouragement through positive reinforcements and reminded her of the end goal of graduation. Claudia expressed that during her initial pursuit of higher education she reserved discussing it with her friends, she would later serve as inspiration. Claudia's friends saw her as motivations in their own educational trajectory, and they were supporting her while also following her lead. While she discusses how her friends and her family were supportive of her own goals, Claudia was supporting her friends by reminding them of their educational goals. Her family made Claudia well aware that they wanted her to be the first to graduate college and consistently provided her with encouragement in their own way as Claudia needed. While at school, Claudia later expressed how she would go back home every weekend because of her deep friendships that provided her with social relief her first two years at UCLA before joining AIR.

In this section the emergence of family as the core source support for all three participants is in addition to the various academic support they were receiving. All three participants come from families in which they would be the first in their family to graduate from a four year institution. It is their families that would continuously encourage the participants before and throughout the higher education process.

Building Relationships and Mentorships with Student

As the participants entered UCLA they either immediately made connections with their peers or with campus employees while others took time to find out what they wanted to devote their time to. Relationships built during the first year on campus for participants influenced how they saw the university and how they create place on campus.

Eve. Her parents, while they had limited understanding of their daughters experience, was able to provide Eve with a familiar knowing of UCLA. While her mother was initially

hesitant to reach out to the Native American community in LA due to her experience at Sherman Indian High School, when Eve was born her mother began to reach out. Eve's mother was a part of Sherman's domestic program and Eve explained that her mother,

came out of Sherman feeling dirty and feeling like less than and less valuable and that the knowledge that she was taught like over generations and generations and generations of Navajo people that were passed down to her was not valued. And so when it came time for her to raise her children, like she didn't want to teach us Navajo when we were growing up. (NP01_130; 722-727)

When deciding what college she wanted to attend, Eve's experience at the Pow Wows made UCLA her first choice. Since she was young, Eve has attended every UCLA Pow Wow, which is organized by the American Indian Student Association. Eve early participation in events on UCLA campus provided opportunities for her to develop knowledge about Native events at UCLA, the Native undergraduate organization, and Native students. This knowledge eventually helped Eve to find a place at UCLA however, the transition from high school to college was not entirely easy.

When she graduated from high school in 2000, she entered UCLA with junior standing and she wanted to join the same organization that she had heard about while growing up. At the beginning of her first year, Eve attended a big student organization fair in which she specifically sought out AISA in the hopes of joining.

[T]hey have like this big fair for student organizations where you kind of like walked down a row of booths. And I went to look for Isa and I found them and I was really excited. Um, I remember it was Alex Red Eagle and who else was there? Oh, Robin Bueno. Alex Red Eagle and Robin Bueno. We're good. I'm sitting at the table and I was like, hi, I want to join AISA. And they just kind of looked at me like, okay, and then sign my name on this piece of paper. Um, um, I think they didn't quite know what to make of me because I had like bright pink hair and I probably didn't look like what they were looking for in terms of a native student. Um, so I think there was a little bit of confusion and like their reaction, I remember just walking away feeling a little bit bummed out that I was so excited to find them and then they didn't, they weren't equally excited to find me. Um, but yeah, I, you know, once they started having other kinds of summer outreach events and fall outreach events, I was attending them regularly. (NP01_130; 99-114)

Eve was excited to join AISA and went to look for the student organization during the student fair. While initially excited, she was surprised by AISA students' reactions to her presence on campus. As she explained, the Native student representatives "didn't quite know what to make of me." This exchanged led to a dramatic shift in her excitement and as she was "bummed" following her interaction the two AISA students. Since she had been attending almost every UCLA Pow Wow since she was born, Eve's sense of belonging at UCLA with Native students was tested due to this interaction. Despite this interaction, Eve mentions how she continued to attend outreaching events hosted by AISA. Although Eve's first interactions with her Native peers on campus were disheartening she continued to participate in AISA activities and was willing to change the perceptions of her physical appearance to her Native peers in order to continue to be a part of the Native community at UCLA. To Eve, being accepted into AISA with her Native peers was more important than being accepted amongst the larger UCLA community. Her sense of belonging was rooted with her Native peers and the organizations she grew up getting to know.

As part of her time with AISA Eve learned of the projects that AISA oversaw, RAIN! (Retention of American Indians Now!) and AIR (American Indian Recruitment).

So I was, I'm really excited to find out that they have these projects and you know, it's just as student, I think I was, I was still only 17 at that point. And seeing, you know, my peers were organizing all these things and overseeing, um, like full time professional staff and to me I was like, oh, these are like real grown up things that they're doing. Um, so I was really impressed with that. And um, I didn't really volunteer with AIR at first. I'm not sure why, but eventually I started feeling kind of just connected while I was a student and, um, I started to volunteer with AIR because it gave me basically a van ride to the communities that I was familiar with. So I'd go to the Southern California Indian Center. And while I was volunteering, I also got to see like the other kids that I grew up with. And I'd like the parents that I knew from attending Southern California Indian Center's uh, parent community committee meetings and they're in a trouble student alliance program. So that kind of was how I got my foot in the door with that. (NP01_130; 124-140)

Interestingly, Eve was impressed and motivated by her peers that served in “full time professional staff” roles. She saw them as adults and aspired to become like them. Her initial steps toward following in the steps of her peers was to join AIR as a volunteer. AIR also was a tool for her to going back to the Southern California Indian Center because it provided a ride for her to see her friends. She was able to join the peers she looked up to while also connecting with her friends she grew up with.

While Eve has having an outlet for from her studies by visiting the community centers she grew up visiting, she still was dealing with her experiences as a college student. She described herself as shy who was navigating UCLA by herself as a psychology major who was struggling,

I was really shy, so I was, uh, a little overwhelmed when I came to UCLA and I didn't want to go to offices and talk to, uh, like academic advisors or even like the person at the front desk. Um, I remember going to the psychology department and they would just have like all these different sheets that you could take so you didn't have to talk to anyone you could just go and grab the list of requirements for your major and just try to figure things out on your own. So that's basically how it was trying to make it through UCLA. And I was failing miserably at the beginning. So I think it was Robin Bueno who told me that I needed to go see a RAIN! Counselor. And she kind of said it with like this authority, like you have to go. And so I went and uh, that was my only academic advising that I received as an undergrad was through RAIN! (NP01_139; 141-154)

Eve saw her peer that she knew but also perceived as being an authority figure to be the proper support for her when she could not connect with her own departmental advisors. Students like Robin provided Eve with the tools she needed to get through UCLA and told her what she needed to do in order to succeed long term. It is her peers who she turned to during her time of need for Eve, when it came to her major she was adverse to reaching out to department representatives. Despite her initial interactions with her peers, she began to find help from peers who told her to seek out the Native resources on campus in order to help her navigate the

university. Like her relationship with Brett, Eve chose not to share personal details with university representatives because she was shy and because she found that her family and friends provided her with the help she wanted and needed.

Denise. I entered UCLA in the Summer of 2014 to start coursework early as part of another bridge program to help freshman and transfer students adjust to the campus prior to the start of the regular academic year. Like Eve, my family served as my original support system but while at UCLA I was beginning to realize that this system was growing and it was peers and Native staff on campus that helped me navigate the university.

Yeah there's multiple people, there obviously students who I didn't know, who I could see the support of students in your academic work but you obviously need to have something beyond your academic work but as far as people in staff positions uhm there's a couple, ah, all the staff, well it was, Sandi, Clementine, and Renee. So just knowing that the three of them were there and now it's weird for me, nevermind. Like I never thought that I could see staff members as like something more than staff, do you know what I mean? Cus I very much compare-with these type of relationships Im just, there are people behind that and I never experienced that before just from like high school and previous places that I've been in so seeing them joking, seeing you guys joking, and be friendly, joke with us, get on our backs, and not let things fly and call us out it was scary but it was really, it felt like okay it felt like it wasn't just like this really cold place these people cared about you to call you and that you could feel comfortable around and it helped me realize I could calm down because I get really nervous a lot so uhm, just being there and providing a place of having people to make this campus a comfortable place helped me through it and really made me want to stay here and continue my time here so yeah. (DM01_116; 108-126)

When discussing relationships I had with the Native staff on campus, I was not used to building personal relationships with staff where I saw there was investment. The staff that I interacted with took the time out to humanize the university experience created a space that was “something beyond your academic work.” In the creation of space on campus, the staff played a role as those who held myself and others accountable yet creating a caring and familial atmosphere. While Native staff members were in professional positions, they created a mentor relationships in which they would “call you out” but much in Eve's case when Robin advised her

to go to RAIN! when she found out she was struggling. Additionally since the staff also attended college, they can share their advice as a former Native student and a four year institution. As I was dealing with my own nerves from being a student at fast pace UCLA, it was with the staff and my peers that made me feel comfortable being on campus and it made the experience better.

Claudia. For Claudia their journey to UCLA was shorter but her arrival to AIR and the Native community on campus took some time. She attended a newly opened high school in her neighborhood that offered her resources and counselors that specifically sought her out. She remembered how counselors would pick which students to give more attention to and she had to go out of her way to get the resources she needed beyond the minimum to get to UCLA. She asked a UCLA representative, “What do I need to prepare to get in?” In which the representative told her to remain committed to student organizations in her high school and remaining academically consistent. Once she was accepted into UCLA she remained quiet on the topic with her friends and when she arrived at UCLA she struggled to find a place of her own. Her initial major was not a subject she was passionate about and it was not until Claudia began to volunteer for an incarcerated youth program on campus that she began to find a outlet.

I actually was, so I tried to get involved in the incarcerated tutorial project, which isn't CPO and I think it's under [inaudible]. And so I would go to Camp Miller. I think that's what it's called to tutor. Um, it was actually one youth that's important to you and for just for like the first quarter, I think. I don't, I'm not sure if I did or no, I think I'll need it for one quarter. And I wanted to do stuff like that, but I was, I felt like I was falling behind in that I was creating a lesson plan for my student, but then I was not taking care of myself in high- sorry, I should've just stuck with it because, um, I feel like it would be grounded me more to, um, prioritize things. But yeah. And then after that, I, I wasn't involved in any or I try to go to some meetings for clubs because some of the friends that you make to, they like, oh, you should join this or, um, but yeah, for I think like two years of just doubling up on, um, general education classes and seeing what I liked and in my head I thought I couldn't take on anything else. (VM02_402; 124-139)

Claudia was actively looking for a space on campus to call her own that she felt like she was contributing too. This appears to be her own desire to create a sense of place at UCLA that she

did not have before. Over time, Claudia wanted to develop a strong attachment to the place she had spent years at and developed relationships with people she identified culturally with (Knez, 2005; Carter et al., 2018). By joining the incarcerated youth project, she was devoting additional time to working with students which reminded her to prioritize her own work. Camp Miller, the site she was visiting is 50 miles away from UCLA's campus and this is important to pointing out the time that it takes for Claudia to get to and from her sites when working with the IY Project. This time does not include when she worked with the students and while she remains critical for not sticking with her lesson plans, she is reflecting on her ability as a tutor. While she does state that she struggled to maintain her lesson plans for her students, her relationships with her students are fostering positive force in her academic career.

Entering the campus and finding people and spaces that they could relate to was important for Eve, myself, and Claudia. While it took varying amounts of time and tries to feel accepted in their chosen spaces, each began to take on additional responsibilities that would develop themselves and grow relationships.

Relationships with Native Peers on Campus

While engaging with UCLA in a broad sense as students attending classes and being a part of the general UCLA population shaped their place-making experiences at UCLA, it is through peers that the participants created long term bonds and memories with. Carrying on throughout this thesis, relationships with peers provided participants shaped their memories as a students and pushed them to take on more responsibilities than they had thought they were capable of.

Eve. In a continuation of Eve's sense of belonging it was Eve's fellow students that helped her along the process of adjusting to UCLA and creating a sense of belonging. In

particular it was a pair of sisters that she grew up with who introduced her to her the Native community on campus.

[A]t the time, I think the Buenos, there's ah Robin and Kathy and her sisters, they're both, you know, Native students that grew up in the Los Angeles area. So they were also familiar with the community as I was familiar with, like we knew some of the same people and it was just kind of comforting and uh easier to talk to them about that stuff. (NP01_130; 162-167)

[E]ventually there was one other student that was also majoring in psychology, Crystal Roberts, who is a few years ahead of me. And, um, so she, she kind of took me under her wing and we took a few classes together and just having that one person in a lecture hall with like 200 people made the biggest difference because then suddenly I'd be able to sit through this class, whereas normally I wouldn't. Um, so yeah, I think it was really important to be able to have someone to connect with in the class. And she was also a member of AISA, so, oh, she was the Pow Wow director before me, so she actually really encouraged me to take on the leadership roles that I did and taught me how to ride the buses so they could get off campus, um, to go downtown and like, yeah, just get, get off campus and get away from the west side. (NP01_130; 275-289)

Again, Eve's long term ties to families that she met while growing up in Los Angeles and participating in various Native programs extended her network so that when she got to UCLA she had the Bueno sisters by her side. There were shared experiences because the Buenos and Eve had known the same people and it was Robin who had previously looked out for Eve when she needed an academic counselor. Likewise, Crystal and Eve formed a mentor-mentee friendship in which Crystal encouraged Eve to take on leadership roles. Crystal provided Eve with the academic support, leadership development, and practical knowledge throughout their friendship. Eve's relationships with her peers contributed to the direction of her time and experiences at UCLA.

Denise. It is that same community that helped shaped my own experiences as an undergrad at UCLA by creating space and community. It was during my interaction with staff on campus that I discovered AIR and took a chance to be a part of the staff. Initially I joined AIR as a way to get off of campus and to be with my friends. I was unsure about my abilities to interact

with students but with encouragement from the professional staff and my peers I continued the work. Becoming a part of AIR impacted my outlook on my experience as a student.

Yeah so the reason why I got involved with AIR was because I volunteered with a peer who encouraged me to go so, I didn't know what it was and I it was just something to do on an afternoon. And then I ended up loving it and kept doing it and I did it with the same peers and I had from AIR, I grew more friendships out of that and I felt it helped me as much as I, as much time as I devoted to AIR I felt like I got like a lot back as far as building friendships and building a community because I was committing myself to the project and in turn it made me seem more reliable and it also got me out of my apartment. So it was something to do, it socialized me...[w]hich I think that's why I liked it, why I have such fond thoughts of it because I don't think I was as fulfilled as a student like it was just one sided and like yeah and that impacts the way which I always talk about the university or the community on campus and I'm always like oh I like it because it helped me feel more fulfilled as a student. So it helped me when I would go talk to students I would be hey there's people here and they're great and they will be people when you get here. (DM02_123; 64-73, 80-87)

Similar to Eve, I was encouraged to join AIR by a peer who shared their positive experiences with AIR. Initially AIR just served as a space for me to spend time with my friends who worked there. I ended up joining the Project Director in many of her weekend visits to sites and became close friends with her over the years. While being a part of AIR did require that I spend a lot of time driving the socialization that I mention, balanced out the academic stress that I was experiencing. "I don't think I was fulfilled as a student like it was just one sided..." that lack of fulfillment was brought on by the amount of time I was investing into my studies without any immediate response. AIR provided a way to physically take me away from campus, connect with others, and connect with families at site. Building relationship with other indirectly influenced how I would describe my experiences with students at site because my friends were contributing to a positive experience (Waterman, 2012).

Claudia. While she had support, on campus she was struggling to find passion in her major, economics. On a whim, she took a course in American Indian Studies (AIS) and began to

explore more classes in the program which eventually caused her to switch her major to AIS. Her turn toward AIS eventually led her into AISA and AIR during the latter part of her third year.

I think I did paid it sometime during my third year and I remember it, I was like, I don't want to leave school because like I said, I wasn't involved in anything. I feel like I didn't do anything. And so I went to the last meeting of the year for, um, I think it was before Cesar was being voted into president. And I went to that meeting and hearing their speeches and what they were applying to do a little, okay, I want to be involved with this. And then I went to the American Indian Welcome during my senior year. And then from there I started going to meetings and then I met River and I met you and I talked to you about being a volunteer. (VM02_402; 223-236)

Like myself, Claudia felt like she “didn't do anything” yet she sought out opportunities on her own by attending a meeting on her own. Although it took time she found peers who encouraged her to stick around and join AIR, initially a volunteer. When recalling how the AISA meeting with student speeches convinced her to join, Eve had a similar sentiment when she discussed how students appeared to be “real adults.” Students who both Claudia and Eve perceived as being adults and what their goals were actually solidified their decision to stick around this particular group of students and try and emulate what they were doing. In turn by committing themselves to student engagement on and off campus, Claudia and Eve were contributing to their college success and eventually continue that work post-graduation (Lundberg, 2007). In discussing her goals once she became a volunteer for AIR, Claudia recalls,

I just wanted to volunteer cus I wanted to leave and graduate feeling like I tried to involve myself somehow but the more I became involved, the more I saw what was important and that I shouldn't just try and contribute on my free time, but it should be my job. And uhm...going to site and seeing students and seeing how helpful AIR was to them and interacting with fellow college Native students it was empowering and it made me feel good by being there so I wanted to see how I could contribute more and [pause] see how I could possibly make a career out of it or being involved or er stay involved through my career uh yeah. It's through the student org, and uh AISA, and uh volunteering I, I, I was asked- or the opportunity of being the Higher Education Awareness coordinator led me to have a job-an actual staff position and then the following year I applied to be the, I applied to be the Project Coordinator. (VM01_313; 18-28)

Before she became staff and was a volunteer, Claudia expresses how contributing should be *her job*. Proposing that it should be her job requires her to stay committed to students and provide accountability to AIR that is stricter than if she was just volunteer. Through this commitment she wanted to see long term effects of seeing, interacting, and empowering students that a volunteer may not see. Once she transitioned from being a volunteer to a staff member as the Higher Education Awareness Coordinator for AIR, Claudia focused on outreaching to students outside of LA including reservation communities that AIR could not reach on a weekly basis. In addition, she would volunteer for other sites to help her fellow staff with their students multiple times a week.

In this section, both Eve and myself discuss how we had built relationships with students and these relationships would be strengthened through our work together. Eve and myself both found AIR relatively quick from the time we arrived to campus while Claudia explored her volunteer options on campus. Claudia and myself discuss a sense of fulfillment as both of us were focusing most of our undergraduate time to our studies but we spoke of a need for a social outlet. Of the relationships formed within AISA and AIR they overlapped and the same peers that were in AISA would be there in AIR. There is a strong desire by all the participants that joining AISA and AIR in search for friends and experiences that were missing prior. Eve was looking forward to joining AISA when she was attending the yearly Pow Wows and wanted to join AIR in order to “be an adult” like her peers. I joined AIR as a means to be with friends and it turned into a stress relief for me as it gave me a break from my studies and allowed me to leave campus. Claudia for years was searching for a source where she could help others in hopes of involving herself in activities other than her studies. This chapter focused on the application process, the participants family role in the process, their experiences once they got to campus, and their initial

interactions with AISA which would lead them to AIR. In the next chapter it moves the participants forward as they involve themselves heavily in work for AIR. The experiences of outreaching and recruitment is discussed through the narratives of the participants as they navigate relationships and being in the field.

Chapter 4: Experiences as Native Student Staff

In this chapter, the experiences of the participants as students at UCLA, volunteers and employees of American Indian Recruitment (AIR), and members of the American Indian Student Association (AISA) is explored. As student staff member of AIR we were expected to attend a weekly site and tutor our students and track their academic progression. Occasionally as staff we were expected to host academic, student life, and financial aid workshops. Eve, myself, and Claudia work through our own hesitations of working with students and outreaching on behalf of UCLA, however we all find peers and mentors who help us gain a sense of self and direction. Emerging from this chapter is the development of various relationships and the affects these relationships have on all the participants' time as students.

Learning to Outreach and Engage with Prospective Students

When the participants first joined AIR, none of them knew how to approach students and discuss their college application experience or their experiences as students. Learning how to interact with potential students as a part of AIR came through different means for each participant, in some cases, it was our peers in AIR who were teaching us how to approach students.

Eve. When it came to how each of the women in this research engaged with students it varied on the existing relationships they had with the organizations they were attending. For Eve, since she grew up active in the LAUSD Native community and her family had ties to the social service organizations, being apart of AIR provided her with the opportunity to go back to her friends that she grew up with.

So when I was a student, I was only attending the site at the Southern California Indian Center. So I already knew most of the students and the families there. So it was pretty easy for me to step in to that situation. A lot of the times, you know, there's like teasing that happens and it shows a sense of familiarity with that person. So that was kind of the

relationship that I had with a lot of the students. They're like, I, I would come in and remind them through teasing, I guess, uh, initially that, hey, I know you and your family where you're from, you know me, you know, my mom. And that would kind of help break that initial barrier of like, it was a group of strangers from UCLA coming in to tutor me type of thing. Um, so yeah, it was pretty... it was very casual. But, um, that the ice was always broken in a way that was kind of like reflective, like Native culture, I guess, Native community and the way that we would interact. (NP01_130; 297-311)

Eve was able to position herself as an insider to the students she visited as part of her time growing up attending the same community events. The “casual” atmosphere that Eve refers to is created through years of time she spent with not only the students but also their families. Eve also positions AIR as potentially being “a group of strangers from UCLA coming in to tutor” but it was through the long-term relationships of the staff with the students and organizations that separates AIR from other outreach driven programs. While Eve was able to feel comfortable with the students, when she was on campus she initially struggled to find her place with other Native students. Although she admits that she is shy, she consistently attended AISA meetings. She describes her experiences at these meetings,

So aside from maybe a couple of people, I didn't really talk to them all that much. Um, but I just kept coming. Okay, go. Just sit quietly. Um, and same thing with AISA meetings. I'd go to the AISA meetings for the first year and AISA like I, I rarely spoke at all in the meetings. Um, it wasn't until like the very end where they're doing elections and Crystal actually it was like, so who's going to be Pow Wow next year cause I don't want to be a Pow Wow director again and no one wanted to do it. And, um, it's just like, well, who knows anything about Pow Wows? Nobody said anything. And so I just kinda like meekly raise my hand and I was like, I dance at Pow Wows, I'm a Pow Wow dancer. And then they're like, you're going to run for Pow Wow Director. So that's how I ended up with that. But in was the same way, like I guess kind of in the same way. That's how I got pulled into AIR because the AIR director at the time was, um, Jason Lewis and I think he was asking about a possible new site and I had suggested maybe we should have a say Southern California Indian Center. And he was like, you're going to go with me. to the Southern California Indian Center. I was like, okay. Um, so I would, you know, interact with him a little bit. Um, but at that point he was no longer a student. I think he had graduated just to hear before I came in. Um, yeah, I did like, get to have good moments, I guess memorable moments just on those van rides back and forth with some of the other students. Like I still keep in contact with a few of them every once in a while I'll hear from them. (NP01_130; 325-350)

Despite her shyness, Eve felt comfortable around the few friends she had in AISA to continue attending meetings. Crystal, once again served as Eve's mentor and was the one who pushed for Eve to participate and take on even more leadership roles. Once Eve shared her knowledge of Pow Wow organizing in the Southern California area, she automatically became the first choice for director without question. While it seems as if Eve had a little choice over the matter due to the need of a Pow Wow director, Crystal saw the potential of Eve and could see she could handle the additional responsibilities. Her responsibilities grew more when she was needed to develop relationships with the Southern California Indian Center. By taking on more responsibility, Eve was slowly becoming the adult figure that she had looked up to when she first entered UCLA. Slowly, Eve was learning how to build her voice and see herself as an active and important member of AISA and AIR.

Denise. I was relatively new to outreach and when I entered AIR I had to learn how to approach students on the spot. Part of my hesitation was that I did not see myself as an insider to the students I was outreaching to, rather I saw myself as an outsider because I was representing UCLA. My initial outreach was solely at a weekly site but I eventually began to outreach at college fairs in which I had a short period of time to grab the attention of students, provide basic information, and answer questions. I described the time the time that I was trying to find my way via outreach as,

I tried to, I tried as I was working to emulate that type of feeling because I just thought it was very helpful and if it didn't, it wasn't helpful then, then it wasn't helpful but uhm yeah it definitely helped the way I approached things. I can be friendly, especially when I was going out and talking to students uhm when I first did it it was so horrible it was like what am I doing how do I speak to these students, do I have to be professional, professional UCLA person, uhm can I talk to them as not only as peers but as someone that can help them, like how do I approach high school students who, like how do I do this? And it really made me think, hey like one, calm down, two, it's okay to talk to them they're people uhm just like I appreciate it these students will appreciate it too and you can joke around with them you can let them know hey this is what's going on this is my

experiences and tell them that it's not, like UCLA isn't what it appears to be all the time, there are people here, there's highs and lows anywhere you would go but just knowing that there are people here who want to help you and want to support you and I hoped that I could've been that for a student and just let them know that hey come here and I'll be here and I got you. (DM01_116; 132-149)

As a student and a recruiter, I felt like I was in an "in-between" role. I was a student but I was also attempting to recruit on behalf of UCLA. I had to navigate this position but soon realized that I was ultimately just a student who needed to talk about my real experiences, both good and bad, in order to be effective and helpful to students.

Similar to Eve, I was trying to breakdown any hesitations that students had toward UCLA in order to help students see themselves on campus.

So as a student recruiter, it was just since I didn't know a lot of stuff about recruiter and what that meant it was really just to form relationships with the students so that they saw a face and I could tell them about my own experiences since there were people there who could provide all the nitty gritty details, I was just like hey uhm these are the classes that I'm taking, these are experiences, these are the resources that I use, if you have any questions about student life that's what I'm here for and just looking, just breaking down that barrier. I didn't have any uhm really concrete goals as like recruiting and all that just sort of forming relationships and seeing if they could remember my face every time I would go I think that was my goal is that for them to remember me so that they knew there was consistency (DM02_123; 26-37)

As this excerpt demonstrates, I attempted to reassure students that I would be there to look out for students once they got to UCLA. In this way, I was actively trying to shape how UCLA was represented, and more specifically, how students saw Native student staff members (Lundberg, 2007).

Comparing how I previously was unsure of how to approach and talk to students in AIR, I had developed a semi-organized outline of what I wanted to initiate, develop, share, and sustain with students. By having a plan, I was ultimately trying to break down barriers that the I perceived UCLA upheld. The purpose of sharing my experiences was to humanize the experience and to create bonds with the students. It is through consistency that I wanted to assure

students that people are there to help attend to their well-being if they decided to UCLA. If I had shown that I was a reliable source of help to students before they considered attending UCLA, then students could feel confident that others will be here when they got here. I discussed this further,

When talking to students ask them about like how's school going for them right now. So like when I would tell them stuff I wanted to know it was about them and not UCLA so I'd be like oh how's what grade are in, what classes are you taking right now, what's your favorite class, why don't you like this class uhm and also it's a way to get to know them so like a lot of them would be I hate history so oh, what classes do you like and just from that going hey we have these programs here, redirecting the conversation. (DM02_123; 121-128)

Creating a conversation rather than lecturing a student about UCLA was important to creating relationships with students. I was able to get to know the students and ask them questions about their school and what their goals were for the future to guide my approach,

Focusing on themselves uhm just so they can hear themselves talk about and then we can talk it through and I give them the information based on what they need cus they can find all this information online and they can find this through pamphlets but the reason that a person is there so that we can talk about them and their and what they want so just pull out little things about them here and there and usually they start talking about some other things like basketball or something and I'm like I can't help you with that but uhm let's redirect this back to your academics I can't help you with basketball. Or I would tell them about Wooden, hey we have basketball courts in there, we have Pauley Pavilion, a really good sports team and they start asking more questions and I'm like uh no. So yeah, just focusing on them and reminding them that whether or not they go to UCLA or anyone, anywhere else that they would be fine because they already know what they want they just have to figure it out for themselves and they will. (DM02_123; 135-149)

By hearing themselves talk about their own life and their own goals students are able to verbalize and reinforce their future plans. No one knew what the students wanted better than the students.

While I did try to balance between the students' knowledge and my own, I did have limitations on what I could help with as I did not know about UCLA's sports and I tried to be clear on my unfamiliarity with these topics. I stated, "they just to figure it out for themselves and they will" I was stated how I saw potential in many of the students who were already attending site or a

college fair to think and decide about their future. It is clear to see the amount of work that I put into her work while outreaching and much like the other participants; I was doing this as a student. There was a methodological approach to the outreaching that could easily change based on the needs on the students that the participants were interacting with. When reflecting on how I learned to build my structure I refer to my own mentors that taught me how to outreach from and then tailored to meet her personality. When asked, who did I learn how to outreach from I stated,

Watching people. So watching how they approached it and creating my own, seeing what worked and didn't work too. Well, one from other people and seeing how they did it and how they put their own style on to it and whether they were in your face, a little more calm like what worked for them and so that and then error, trial and error for myself. So like seeing if people didn't respond, students didn't respond if they did I was like okay I should do that more often but really it was a lot of my own seeing it and also its very difficult because students they come in different, they approach you differently so you always gotta change up your style sometimes you have to be more extrovert sometimes you have to be more calm when talking to a students so yeah but I do appreciate being able to watch people do it and then them being patient with me because when I was doing it as a student I felt initially that I was doing it wrong, now I know there's no wrong way to do it and I felt, I wasn't pressured but I was putting pressure on myself because I thought I had to make some checkmarks, get some emails or something, but there was no, it was all my own pressure and I realized calm, calm down they can read if you're really nervous so I calmed down I was like nobody's putting pressure on you just have a conversation with them, they're people, they want to have that conversation that's why they're standing in front of you, so a lot of trial and error. (DM02_123; 155-175)

There is a reoccurring theme of mentorship from all the participants and this is a continuation of the previous excerpt regarding staff. I was looking to others as the way they presented themselves to students and how students were responding. Understanding how students respond to what you say is very important since students will not always verbalize what they needed or what they wanted. It was up to myself to read students in order to respond properly so that students were receiving the help they needed even if they did not vocalize it.

Claudia. While nervous at first, Claudia was welcomed by her peers and encouraged by her friends back home. Much like Eve who also came from the Valley, AIR provided Claudia a

means to go back home and give back to the Native community she came from by attending the weekly sites. She echoes the term “coming under the wing” that Eve stated as a reiteration of mentorship and creating community between students in an effort to grow the on campus Native community. She closes by stating, “If I didn’t have you guys...I don’t know where I’d be right now” as a means of the value of that mentorship and community bonds that occurred within the one year she was introduced and became a part of the on-campus community. When expressing how she would outreach to students she described it as,

It wasn't weekly but it was like would you did do when it did happen and went to site it was a big like it was like a whole day thing. Yeah, I think I was more excited to see how he uh, higher education awareness, how that worked and visiting different schools cause I get really nervous that even until now I still have anxiety before I speak to two. It could be anyone. Um, uh, so it wasn't so much I was worried about time commitment or how much has been taken away from work because I really enjoyed this work. I was more so just, it's anxiety that I was, that I had, but just my own, it wasn't anyone that was pushing it on me, but it was, uh, yeah. So then that's when I stopped. Um, actually I always still see my friends some weekends, but, um, I was really committed to AIR and then I was finishing up my last year, so I was taking a lot of time, like even the, like the social aspect too, you know, a few guys that that would take up, but I wouldn't think of it too much as a burden. (VM02_402; 267-282)

In this excerpt, Claudia explicitly shares her hesitation and anxiety that she was experiencing by having to do public speaking for AIR. Much of the work that AIR does requires a significant amount of public speaking from the students. Most of the students are asked to be comfortable with sharing their experiences in public manner. In addition to public speaking, Claudia expressed that she may have been committing too much time to AIR as she worked for the project but also spent a significant amount of time with her peers in AIR in a social manner. She was shifting her time to her peers on campus from her time with her friends from back home. Changing her time commitment to her job and pushing herself to speak publicly, Claudia began to develop her voice with the students she saw regularly,

And I can be at every site like that we can first started where you were just like, you know them so well. And we were like, no, you tell me what you're to do. Before I'd be like, I'm sorry, I can't tell you the answer. But then now I'm like, no, it's on my homework. So you have to do it some more stern and then in that set, because you've not oversold or cause the way you approach, it's different because they sorted for a while now. I think. Yeah, just that comfort or the relationship we built that they know that I'm not, it's not coming from me. Things was like, no, I know you could do this. So no more nice Claudia. (VM02_402; 377-389)

By stating “no more nice Claudia,” Claudia was definitively changing her approach to interacting with students and was convincing herself of the need for change. Students had got used to her telling them what to do but now she wanted them to her what they needed to get done so that they could do it. The is in correlation with her time she has spent with the students she tutored at weekly sites, the more time she got to know them, the more expectations of independence and active role Claudia expected from her students.

Claudia and I expressed our own hesitations with outreaching and approaching students, as we were not comfortable with the recruitment process. We had learned from our peers and mentors on how to engage with students before finding our own way in the recruitment process that fit our personalities and goals. On the other hand, Eve took on her responsibility easier because she had known the students at site because she was once one of them. It was due to her familiarity with these Native organizations and sites in LA that Eve took on additional roles to assist her Project Director at the time bridge AIR’s relationships to these organizations.

Relationships with Peers

The participant’s peers shaped the direction and responsibilities each participant took on. It is their peers that motivated each participant, pushed them to take on more leaderships roles, and who they surrounded themselves with even outside of AIR and AISA. Some of their peers they had known for a lot of their lives and others had just met but created change in each participant’s time as students.

Eve. While initially reserved at the AISA meetings, Eve began to become integrated with the student organization when she came under the wing of her peer, Crystal. Crystal was a few years older than Eve and was a fellow psychology major that Eve met as a freshman. It was Crystal that saw the potential in Eve and encouraged her to take on roles that she knew she was capable of fulfilling. The role of mentorship as a means to develop student leaders was an encouraged practice for AISA students as they needed help to put on their events despite their small population. It was the hope that the mentorship would foster commitment to the organization in response to the change in population. At the time that Eve came to UCLA it was on the heels of the passing of Prop 209 which she describes,

So I came in to UCLA in 2000 and it was kind of an interesting time because there is, um, there's like the older students that came in when prop 209 was still in place and then these new groups of students that came in after it post 209 or I guess even post SP one, SP two. Um, and so that era was still relatively new because it didn't become a project until after a prop 209 really kind of drastically affected the, the incoming number of Native American students. Um, so I, you know, I got to work with and talk to some of the students that were involved with laying the foundations for there were upper, you know, upper division class classmates. My or they were in the graduate programs by that point. Um, so that history was still kind of being passed down. It was still fairly fresh I think within AISA. Um, and then every once a while I would hear other things too, like ace, I used to have this other project that was like pre AIR and it was just kind of on their own, um, going out into the community and doing this because they just saw that as a need even before a proposition 209 came into play. And even before they decided to form a project, it was just something that they would do. So I don't know all the details of that, but I would always make sure that that was known, that it wasn't just AIR and there was nothing before that there were other things leading up to it and things that were kind of self motivated within the group, um, without really anyone to hold them accountable. It was just something that they chose to do. So yeah. (NP02_131; 39-64)

Prop 209, which banned affirmative action from the college application review process, provided the motivation for students to find funding for outreaching projects on UCLA's campus. Prior to the passing of Prop 209, students would do this work solely on a volunteer basis. AIR's work was motivated to get more Native students on campus in the hopes of creating a mentorship

atmosphere in order to grow AISA and to maintain AIR in order to create a trajectory for students. The trajectory was all student-run and it was students who were building these relationships. In her own experience, Eve engage critically with herself prior to approaching students, she used her own concerns that she had a student to shape her outreaching methods.

Yeah, yeah, I definitely like would share my own stories and experiences with students. Not so much with parents because I think parents have, um, most of the time I've interacted with parents, they are like, I want to know what my kids getting taken care of. Are they going to be safe? What classes they have, how are we gonna pay for this? And so for them it's just like, let me show them that I know what I'm talking about and that I'm a trustworthy adult. And then for the students, you know, you kind of have to switch gears and relate to them because most of the time when I run into students, there's a lot of students that are shy and probably where you feel things that I remember feeling like being kind of intimidated by professionals, you know, anything that was like an institution going into office. Like I'm having an email to someone and you know, feeling like maybe you could be in trouble for something. And so for, for when I was working with students, I usually try to relate to them and it was pretty easy because I have pretty vivid memories of the struggles that I faced when I was transitioning into UCLA. And even um, like when I was in high school and everything, like the decisions I was making and yeah. So I think it's always good to kind of relate to students on that level because it kind of in the same way that I talked to the even graduate students are like intimidated by faculty. And I'm like, you shouldn't be intimidated. Like they're just like adult, like they're grown up geeks like they're geeking out hardcore on something they're really interested in and there are people just like you there. You know, as I've gotten older I think I've learned to see people that way so not as freaked out by them. Um, even people in like really high up position and like, okay, they're just, you know, like my weird uncle or my cousin or something. So yeah. (NP02_131; 399-429)

Eve is discussing the different needs of students and parents, parents often focused on the well being of their child and support service available while students were focused on the social activities available for students. Eve still sees herself as a gateway to the professional aspect of UCLA and higher education institutions and the student spaces that she also occupies, as she navigates both worlds. By doing work with students, parents, and academic faculty and staff Eve has developed a way of approaching “professionals” as she encourages students to approach and talk to professors. There is a transition of skills that Eve expresses while she always maintains her approachability to facilitate these conversations.

Denise. Watching others was part of the learning process and I was constantly comparing themselves to the people I looked up to while outreaching to students. This created pressure for myself as I stated that I need to “make some check marks” which were of my own making. However, I soon learned that there actually was no one right way to approach students, as two of my mentors used their own unique personalities to outreach to students

So when I would go out with Sandi she would, she was uhm, how would I call her style? She was very in your face, she would call students out, she’s like what are you doing over there come over here, you want to come to UCLA, which wasn’t really my style but that was one of the really things that broke it down for me oh okay so I don’t have to be a robot I can be a person and that was her style she was just, she just, she had nothing to hide while me I was more laid back, do you need this, what’s going on and that’s when I realized no one was putting pressure on me because if I saw the Project Director then kind of going and calling students to come over then if she’s doing that then I can do, I can, I can do what I want to do too I don’t have to be a robot. Even with Viki I think my style, I mean I only saw Viki a couple of times but I think I had much more in common with the way Viki talked to students because she was a lot more calm and I was like oh okay so I saw myself a lot more in Viki. They were two extremes at the same table and so I was like okay I can see that they’re both working and different students would approach the two different personalities and I was like okay, so that helped me figure out oh there’s an in between these two personalities that I fit in and it’s fine like I don’t have to either or I just have to be myself and students will come and they’ll respond. Sometimes it will have to take me stepping out of my comfort zone but that’ll be fine as long as I’m still myself the students will respond and approach me with their questions. (DM02_123; 183-204)

When I shared how I saw Sandi and Viki interact with students this showed me the importance of individuality while trying to catch the attention of students. While I perceived Viki and Sandi on two different extremes personality wise, I could see myself fitting in to this work to continue develop my voice and how I approached students. After finding my own voice in outreaching I would tell students about my experiences, but unlike Eve, I only shared my experiences if the students asked me,

I don’t discuss my, well when I was doing AIR, I didn’t discuss unless the students needed to know that I was a transfer student because some of them felt when they did approach me they weren’t ready right now as seniors. So I’d be like hey, that’s when I would pull out the you know I was a transfer too I didn’t go to UCLA right out of high

school and that's an option and discussing that with them but most of the time I would talk to them as a student when telling them about me being a transfer student I saw fit cus yes. So yeah that's how I approached that, I, when needed I would talk about my transfer experience and how that happened but most of the time I just talked about my experiences as a student. (DM02_123; 212-222)

Reflecting on how I chose to not share my transfer experience in the beginning was because I was not sure if that is what the students want to hear about. I would later on talk to the AIR Project Director about this and she encouraged me to talk about my transfer experience because no one was really talking about community college as an option for students. Eventually I would ask students who were hesitant to talk about UCLA, what were their reservations and then I would share my own trajectory. Part of finding my own voice was being comfortable about talking about my experience and providing options for students that was not just UCLA but talk about it was that they wanted and in which way AIR and I could facilitate those goals.

Claudia. Prior to joining AIR Claudia was introduced to the American Indian undergraduate students on campus through her academic advisor. As stated previously, she switched from her first major, Economics, into American Indian Studies. Claudia had attended her first AISA meeting during the final quarter of her third year and attended the annual American Indian Welcome for the first time during her fourth year. As she attended the meeting and the Welcome, things starting clicking into place for Claudia as she soon was given many responsibilities and opportunities. She recalls that time:

And I was like, man, all these things are aligning and I need to, I used to go visit that site and see, um, to see how it is. It was just really interesting because like that was the first time he's already more other than like, um, their own research like being onsite. Um, in a sense here from the [inaudible] I really liked it but I was like, I like working with kids or working with people in general and you guys are really nice and welcoming. So a really easy, yeah. If I, if I didn't have you guys to like coming under your wing, I probably would have just went back to just focusing on school only, I don't know where I'd be right now. (VM02_402; 255-264)

Claudia had seen that “things [were] aligning” for her as she has continued to express how she wanted to contribute to a cause bigger than her. She was seeing her peers, like Eve and myself did and wanted to join. Once again, mentorships plays a role as she had come “under the wing” of her peers and began broadening her options and interests. She expressed how she was in her final year of her undergraduate career when she came to join AISA and AIR so it was the younger students that gave her a helping hand and example to follow,

Well just like seeing River and then Daniel, he's joined stuff too and they were first years, but they were taken on a lot of responsibilities that really inspirational to me because I'm like, I'm a, like, I was not as hardworking as him, but they just contribute ideas. They helped out where they were, they could, um, and just the support is being a friend. That was really helpful and actually thinking about it. (VM02_402; 309-325)

While she stated she was not as hard working as Daniel, Claudia saw her strength in her ideas. This sentiment mirrors my own experience when observing Sandi and Viki, when I saw my strength was in my own personality. Claudia saw her strength in her ideas and wanted to contribute to help her friends who were helping her along the way.

While Eve, Claudia, and myself were heavily influenced by our relationships with out peers, staff played an enormous role in our trajectory. Eve was able to connect with students she had known before reaching campus and developed mentorship relationships with her peers. I developed relationships with Native staff and was able to observe them extensively in order to address my previous hesitations that I had during outreaching. Claudia focused on her admiration with her younger peers who she found to be role models due to their earlier involvement in AISA and AIR.

Participants Talking to Their Younger Selves

As each participant reflected on their college application process, their friends as UCLA, their experiences at site, and their own academic trajectory they began to provide critical insight

to being a Native student. In this section each participant reflect on their immediate responses to outreaching and themes that emerged during their time they talked to students at site, workshops or college fairs. Interestingly, it seems that participants shared items and tools that they themselves would have liked to have heard when they were students applying.

Eve. Part of the approach that Eve took with students was rooted in her own hesitations of attending UCLA, the cost, safety, and having someone who will look after them. The points that Eve made reassuring students that *she* would be there to take of the student's echoes the mentorship that she received in her early days as an undergraduate. It is through thinking over her experiences and talking to a potential applicant, Eve is reminded that she was okay at UCLA. Eve constantly structures her outreaching methods as a family, she frames professors and staff as uncles and aunts and she positions herself as an older sibling who will look out for the student.

When further discussing how she sees the students she interacts with, Eve concludes:

And I think particularly, particularly with Native students, I would say even to a higher degree of students, Native students are coming from like a reservation areas or even more rural or the more traditional, a lot of times I'm seeing that like they're shy or they're, you know, they're coming from backgrounds or it's not good to be boastful, I'm going to assume that they deserve anything and it's hard, I think to get them to understand that they have to, even if it makes them uncomfortable, they have to play this game and in order to be successful and they're like, they have to not forget who they are and not forget like how to behave when they're at home and everything had to be respectful but like to learn how to switch things up when, when you're coming here and dealing with like this other cause like this is kind of like a foreign place. UCLA Higher Ed institutions, competitive job markets. It's very different. Um, and so it takes some practice. But yeah, it does take a while to convince them to get them to understand that they have something important to bring. Um, especially when you grow up in situations where they're, if not explicitly told by people, and a lot of them have stories of students that I've worked with, have stories where they've been told point blank from college counselors, from teachers like, Oh yeah, you don't need to worry about that because you're not going to do this. We're going to do x, y, z. you're not going to go there gonna find a vocational school or something. I'm just not hearing those sorts of messages directly, they, you know, it's communicated to them subtly and you over here, like I think they just kind of assumed that that's like they don't deserve it or that they aren't able to and does take some work and even once they get here, they have to be reminded and often that they belong here and that they're valuable. (NP02_131; 438-469)

Eve focuses on reservation and rural Native students as being reserved when discussing “playing the game” of college. Since Eve herself grew up in LA, her focus on reservation Native students may display the common and memorable interactions she has had with these particular students in order for her to advocate for them. As she herself, has stayed working with Native students in higher education institutions, she is likely inclined to devote more time to teaching students how to “play the game” of colleges and universities and feels as though reservation students are not as familiar with it rules as Native student from cities or towns where “playing the game” is much more common. In analyzing what “playing the game” Eve reiterates her earlier sentiments where she stated that universities do not take into account Native identity when recruiting students. Playing the game for Eve is switching between being a Native student and being a UCLA student and being made to feel like foreigners at universities. She wants to take into account a student’s life history when engaging and understanding students in order to assist them in their goals. In order to do this, Eve continually reminds Native students of their value to campuses whether or not the university does.

Denise. While my transfer experience was very much an important part of a potential students life as a possible option, it is interesting that I would not share that fact with the students immediately. Interestingly enough, I would be willing to share her experience growing up Native in a city that was not my homeland and the identity issues that students may be experiencing.

Oh yes so like with students who we would go and see within LA, I would tell them oh I’m from Long Beach because I think, a lot, well some students I felt that they weren’t because American Indian Recruitment had “American Indian” I think they were a little off put by the fact that we were targeting students because they were Native and they weren’t comfortable with their identity which it’s it was totally fine and I would let them know that hey I grew up in like I also am from a city, I’m from Long Beach, I didn’t grow up in Arizona and like we want you not just because you’re Native but because you have the ability to go to UCLA being Native is just one part of who you are and then I would tell them about them being at the program and you’re here for a reason at this

program which you don't have to be, you're doing this voluntarily because you want, you want more for yourself, whatever that means you're trying really hard and like that's why we're here, we're just trying to be here because we have this partnership but yes it does matter that you're Native but don't think you have to conform to being Native means. You may be from a city but its okay and you'll be okay and don't be shy, yeah and I would just be like hey I grew up in Long Beach, I'm Tohono O'odham, so we have that in common just sort of creating that ground when I saw fit cause I know that just always with the students that I always interacted with they just had trouble feeling like they were Native enough to be a part of the program and I'd be like no, no, you don't have to fit to something to be Native and just reassuring the students of that. (DM02_123; 228-250)

Similar to what Eve was discussing, I discuss how I shared with students that there is no definitive way of answering, "what does it mean to be American Indian?" The topic of Native identity on campuses is complex and each student navigates their identity as a student differently. With my own experience, as being Tohono O'odham and being from Long Beach when I entered UCLA, I was comfortable in my identity as a Native woman. In addition, being at UCLA and being involved in AIR and discussing my identity repeatedly with students who may or may not relate to me reaffirmed my identity. I had to be comfortable discussing my own background with Native high school students because I knew students were not familiar with what it meant to be Native at UCLA. For students who did not relate to my background and came from reservation communities these conversations were a chance for both myself and the student to get to know one another better. There is a thread of conforming to what a Native student and a college student should be by Eve and myself and rather we are both encouraging students to embrace their differences.

Claudia. In referencing her time as the HEA coordinator for AIR, Claudia expressed the changes she witnessed in students throughout the year she worked for AIR. She would visit Sherman Indian High School two times every academic quarter and host workshops with the same students every time. Students were selected to attend these workshops based on their grades. While Claudia was only required to host the academic workshops, she would stay after

her workshops in order to talk and hang out with the students about their times being away from home and going to a school that Eve's mother also went to,

[J]ust like working through it and then seeing them become interested in or be receptive to your patients and then finishing the word for changing their attitude for positively. Um, that's always a good experience. And then as Sherman as, even if we would only go there once every three months, I still, we, it was just good to talk to them and talk to them about their experience because I was just learning about the school myself and then being onsite for the first time. And it's hard to see what needs to be changed without talking to the students. But even then, like for the workshops, they would talk about how home was and why they came there. (VM02_402; 341-351)

Over time staying and interacting with the students she saw an increase in student participation in her workshops and their attitudes in attending academic workshops in addition to their regular classes. By talking to the students, she was able to understand the students better and understand how Sherman operated including what students were being taught and. With this information, she was able to determine how and what gaps she could fill as an outsider. The investment that Claudia was committing to student was done in order for Claudia to tailor her workshops to reflect the student's needs rather than UCLA's needs.

Reflecting on their experiences, it is evident that all three participants had a sense of growth. Eve is aware of the various needs of students and the need to encourage and embrace Native students and their identities. I began to understand how to talk about growing up in a city and what that meant for my identity and me and how it could help other students embrace who they are. Claudia saw a shift in how she interacted with students at site she began to understand how students worked and what she needed to do in order to help her students and hold them accountable.

From learning how to outreach, to managing their hesitations and developing relationships that formed on campus and in the field, and to looking back on the changes within themselves, each participant navigated their experiences in variety ways. These experiences

shaped their undergraduate career as students both personally and professionally. In the next chapter, all of the participant provide in depth perspectives on their work, the work that AIR does, and the change they have seen in themselves over time.

Chapter 5: Reflecting on the Experiences as Student Recruiters

In this chapter I explore how each participant engages with their memories as students now that they have stepped away and reflected on their experiences in this research process. I found that each participant has become critical of the institution and the amount of work that is placed on Native students on behalf of the university with little understanding of Native student life from the University. Despite AIR being student initiated and student ran it is important that the University engages in programming that represents the campus. Participants reflect on the recruitment of Native students, their own perceptions of their younger selves, and what they make of times as student recruiters.

What is Native Recruitment?

While recruitment happens on behalf of universities across the United States, Native recruitment by Native students as UCLA is a different experience and Eve, myself, and Claudia all reflect on what this type of recruitment is, how it has changed over time, and how it has affected how they see themselves.

Eve. When reflecting upon her experiences at a Native student recruiter, Eve made a clear distinction between recruitment and outreach by the university and that done by the on campus Native community.

I think general recruitment focuses on how, like finding students that fit the mold, you know, that the institution has for their, their ideal admit, um, or forcing them to like encouraging them to fit that mold as much as possible. Um, whereas we're here with Native students. I think if it's going to be maybe recruitment, then you have to take into account like Native community and you have to think about, um, the, the strengths and the unique, the unique strengths that native community Native students would bring as well as the community challenges that they face. And there's just more a strategy involved in like how are you going to, again, I guess going back to what I mentioned about like maintaining yourself. So in this case, maintaining the Native student as a Native student, um, and appreciating them as a native student instead of just taking a generic mold and saying like, this is what you need to fit into. Um, so we had to think about the challenges that, that students were facing that were unique or unique, but, um,

more prevalent for Native students. And then also how are we going to appreciate what they have to bring to the table? Um, and how are we going to get them to, it was a lot of advocacy, you know, encouraging students to understand that what they have is valuable and that it is, um, although it may not seem to fit the mold that a university is looking for precisely, it's not the typical thing that they think of. It's something that they should think of. And here's an opportunity for them to kind of bring that to the table and show them that, yeah, they have more than what the generic mold is, allowing them to really showcase. (NP01_130; 666-694)

The outlook that Eve has taken has also been influenced by her ongoing work with Native students on behalf of different universities and within different positions. Her reflections of a student who does not “fit into the mold” resemble her own initial reactions from students when she first arrived to UCLA with her pink hair as she was “not what they were expecting.” Furthermore questioning, “how are we going to appreciate what they have to bring to the table?” is similar to when she attended meetings but was quiet but soon she shared her relationships with community organizations that AIR utilized to foster relationships to expand the project. Within this environment, students consistently discussed a sense of social comfort coupled with cultural validation. Most of the students did experience some form of a “peoplehood sense of belonging” specifically related to their involvement in the Native student center and Native-specific programming. In these areas where Indigenous peoplehood was validated and affirmed, the students expressed the greatest amount of social comfort and cultural validation (Tachine et al., 2016). Advocacy and encouragement is another layer that underlies what Eve is getting across as she consistently puts herself in the shoes of a Native student and what their needs are because she was one.

Denise. In reflecting in my own time and the reward I received from engaging with students as a part of AIR, I concluded,

I really felt fulfilled in that position and I felt seeing students, and seeing kids, and seeing their families was really a great experience and it always reminded me and it always felt like I was with my own family and I love being with my family I don't know it was a

reflection of things that-opportunities that members of my family didn't have that I could give to other families or at least open the door to these things because I have an older sister and she does want to go back to school but she doesn't feel comfortable going until I'm finished just because she doesn't want me to worry about living and eating you know basic life needs and so I know there's lot of students like that where they but I just want to give these families these opportunities that I wish and I hope for these families that I wish would've happened for my older siblings who I owe a lot too. (DM01_116; 419-431)

Like Eve, I bring in my family as motivation for her work in AIR since I come from a family of six and only myself and my twin sister graduated from a four year institution and my mother stopped out after her junior high days. I also shared how I was partially financially supported by my family during my undergraduate years in order to focus primarily on my studies. By identifying my family as a motivating factor, I positioned my work as a family experience in which I see myself as an insider. I owe it to my siblings to go and outreach to other Native families because I wish my family had the same opportunities. This theme of family is prevalent across the Native student recruiters in this study.

When discussing how AIR impacted my experiences as a undergraduate student I expressed the following,

Yes, for the most part yeah. Which I think that's why I liked it, why I have such fond thoughts of it because I don't think I was as fulfilled as a student like it was just one sided and like yeah and that impacts the way which I always talk about the university or the community on campus and I'm always like oh I like it because it helped me feel more fulfilled as a student. So it helped me when I would go talk to students I would be hey there's people here and they're great and they will be people when you get here. (DM02_123; 80-87)

The "fulfillment" that I refer to is found within the students that reflect my own family and peers who provided me with a social aspect to my undergraduate days. It also prepared me to interact with people and how I saw myself as a representative for UCLA as well as AIR. I saw a lot of my actions were in response to the actions of students in order to be effective,

Well, I just get nervous meeting new people so that was never their fault or anybody's fault but in my handbag I would always try and throw out a joke to break the ice, usually they respond. If they respond, I'm like okay and the joke was more for me so I could break my ice, it's not for them but it's more for I need to do this for myself so I can break down that wall that I have but after, whether or not they laughed if I just laughed it was better. So like I would get nervous and then I would crack my own jokes so that I could laugh so I could break down my wall and then things I'd be like okay, whether or not, and then I could start reading them, like my own instincts would kick in so for me to read them so they didn't respond? Okay so you got to calm down, don't be throwing jokes out there like, if they do respond and then go from there. Usually after I would just start asking them so hey how old are you cus they would approach me and I can't tell whether you're a senior, you're in middle school like they were super tall, super small, like I can't tell, let's gauge this. So that I knew what I was going to tell them, what were they interested in their classes, how they were doing, what colleges they were applying to like it would help me build up the next questions so there was a game plan in my head. There, it was very loose but there was a plan based on how it was going to go. (DM02_123; 262-283)

I had a clear understanding of what I was comfortable with and what I was not comfortable with and what I needed to do in order to break down any hesitations I had with students. By sharing jokes with students it broke the ice and primarily allowed me to break down any barriers that I had with sparking and sustaining a conversation with students in order to get to know them. By getting to know the students more it tailored the information I wanted to share with the students. Since there was times that the students we would meet would be brief and only once a year, this leads to a gap in conversation and lack of long term commitment to students and their interest in AIR or UCLA. There is an importance in students having consistent interaction with either AIR or other university representatives to build familiarity like Eve, myself, and Claudia had received before entering UCLA.

Claudia. Although she shared that she was late to joining AIR, Claudia worked hard to understand the structure and goals for AIR through her position as the Higher Education Awareness Coordinator. In seeing what her peers were doing, it motivated her to think long term

in regards to Native students. In sharing her goals as part of AIR Claudia included her overall goals for AIR as a project

I want to get as much Native students into UCLA as possible. But I just want to make sure that we, when we're going to site were being as effective as possible to instill like values of higher education and uhm even at the very base just helping them improve their academic skills. So a lot of them of course they want to know about the college or workshops, but what they need in those two hours that we have is to get their homework done and go over tests and subjects that they're having trouble with because we need to uhm, prepare them correctly. [M]y goal, my short term goal is to build a strong sense of community between AIR and our sites and the Los Angeles area so we try to go to community events every other weekend and then AICRA- I mean the American Indian Counselor and Recruiters Association, ITEC, uhm and Tuesday I'm going to go to the Council at UAII, their Tuesday meetings I haven't been going because of site but luckily Daniel is going to take my place. I just really, as of now I just want to build connections and just show that were present and show that were here. (VM01_313; 104-115)

She sees AIR as making a commitment beyond the UCLA campus but to the urban LA Native Community that centralizes itself in the Downtown Los Angeles area and through intertribal educational organizations. Attending these additional meetings are not required for her but she sees it as important to her role within AIR. This is similar to how she would extend herself to her AIR peers socially and spend more of her time creating a community on campus and wants to grow it off campus as well. She began to reflect upon her time as the Project Director of AIR and her hopes for her staff in which she saw as her friends as well.

I really want my staff because I know this is a job and that they have other obligations and goals within college, but uh I just hope they leave this project knowing their impact on the students and how much even just going to site was influential for their, their kids there. Whatever they pursue, because all of them are in different fields and majors, I just want them to somehow, wherever they end up, they contribute to their communities and I know that they will but as a staff- I'm building myself to have more structure and for them to feel comfortable to being creative with their approach and they conduct site and their workshops so, just have them be more confident in themselves and realize that, they're really important, that they're necessary for this project to be successful. (VM01_313; 119-127)

Claudia is the only one out of participants who shared what she wanted out of her student staff when she was the AIR Project Director. Since she has an understanding of the expectations of a

student staff member and now as the Project Director she emphasizes the impact that students have at sites. Her expectations of her staff beyond AIR and into students professional life moving forward reflects the care and bond she had developed with her student staff. It is her student staff that she sees as being the backbone AIR as they put in time, labor, and creativitiy in order to relate to and impact Native students who wanted to attend UCLA.

Eve and myself began to reflect on our families who were the underlying motivation for us to continue our work in recruitment. Both of our families were not given the same access to higher education insitutions to sustain their academic had they wished to. For Claudia, began to reflect on her staff as a Project Director, she was the most recent Project Director out of all the participants and began to understand the amount of work students took on in additon to their recruitment work.

Perceptions of Self

As time has passed for each participant and as Eve, myself, and Claudia have completed time as student recruiters of AIR and as Project Directors of AIR. We reflect on how we see ourselves now and how we look back on our younger selves and how this has shaped our outreaching effort and continuing work with Native students.

Eve. These stories and experiences students have shared with Eve is moving in the fact that over time, she has seen how students, for decades have been told to not pursue education. She understands the work that it takes to change the mindset of students and sees it as a commitment. In continuing with her role in changing students' mindsets she continues to enforce a familial method to her outreaching and states even today she sees herself as the "crazy aunt,"

I felt like they're crazy aunt. That's really where they have all the students, especially the ones that I've worked most closely with and the people, the ones that like, you know, keep in contact with me even after I leave my positions, I really do feel like I'm the crazy aunt and not like crazy crazy but like, you know, like eccentric and someone is like kind

of parental, but in a way that's like um, know how to explain it kind of like when I think of like the relationship I have with my nieces and nephews. It's like that. Yeah. Yeah. I don't have the responsibility to where I'm going to punish them, but I'll take care of them, you know, and I'll do it. I need to do. Um, so I think that's kind of the way it always feels when I'm working with the students, especially the ones I like build close relationships with, I'm their crazy aunt. (NP02-131; 473-486)

The relationships that Eve has taken on in order to encourage students to consider, apply, and attend college throughout her undergraduate years and professional career is summed up in her role as an Aunt. Taking the role as an aunt provides accountability from her to ensure that students are being helped and that she is teaching them how to navigate a new system. In the end she reiterates the reciprocal nature of her work and how she wants the students she outreaches to join her against the weapon of education,

It goes back to being subversive. When I think about that, I really, you know, like even on days when I'm feeling bogged down by the bureaucracy of things and all that, like what will get me through is knowing that like I'm helping someone infiltrate the system, you know? And if I'm, the more people that are able to do that, the more of this institution will have to change. The more idea of like whose knowledge is valuable, will have to change. And like I said, I really do think of education like Western education we think of higher ed is something that's like a weapon that was used against us. I feel like when we infiltrate it we have an opportunity to like snatch that weapon and then use it in ways that help ourselves. So I think that's why. (NP02_131; 492-503)

As Eve has spent more time as a university employee in her numerous positions at different campuses she has learned how complex universities operate. Since it is complex, Eve takes and “subversive” approach in order to create change that benefits Native students. She sees herself as someone who has infiltrate the university system in order to get more Native staff and students on campuses to create even more change. Her desire to create change is due to her understanding of how education in the United States has negatively impacted Native students for hundreds of years, she wants to take the same approach to reclaim education for Native students,

I want to see more new people everywhere. You know, it's the drain. Yeah. Um, especially, you know, like this is, this is our homeland, this is our holy land, this is our, our birthplace. It seems like we should be in these places. If anything's going to be here

on, like in our home, then we should be there. We should, we should have full access. And so yeah, I want to see more Native students everywhere, not just Native students. I want to see Native people everywhere doing everything. Um, and so I do think that like it would take, it's, it's a huge task to think about like how I would want to change this system or an institution like UCLA, um, because it goes, it's so deeply rooted in these biases towards different groups of people and you know, that benefit certain groups and disadvantage us, um, like literally going all the way down to what is, what is valuable knowledge? What is it that you're teaching here? What is it your point of reference from, from where you're teaching, the understandings of how you relate to the world around you is not reflected in education, education it seems like a very sterile kind of segregated thing. You know, it's a science. It nothing like we all know that eventually all those things intertwine, but it's still, um, there's always hard lines drawn and I think that like within the Native community, especially those who are maintaining kind of traditional ways of understanding their relationship to the world around them, it's so much more intricate than the way it's presented to us in any sort of western formal education system. So that's lot of change that has to happen but in the meantime, you know, changes. I'm seeing more new students on campus seeing more Native faculty and making sure that any of those Native students or faculty or staff, um, that they're, they're doing everything they can in whatever space they're in to push the boundary because it's not enough just to have new students come here, her Native faculty come here and Native staff be here and just go with the flow. Go along with the status quo. They need to come into the space they like infiltrate the need to come in here and then push boundaries, you know, they need to push people so that the institution becomes uncomfortable. Like the institution has to deal with being uncomfortable for once and they just have to keep doing that and slowly things will change. I don't think it'll ever obviously never happened within my lifetime, but I think slowly things change and they have been. (NP02_131; 509-549)

Eve is demanding that Native students and Native people should be granted access to the land and spaces that we have been denied as it is a right. While she does she herself working toward gaining Native access to spaces and land, she admits that it is beyond her and that she needs others to create systematic changes. For Natives who are in colonial spaces already, she urges them to push for increased Native visibility in those spaces if they are not already. Even more importantly, Eve states that “the institution has to deal with being uncomfortable for once and they just have to keep doing that and slowly things will change” which places accountability on the institution to unravel the systematic change that it put in place to begin with.

Denise. As stated previously, all of the participants would end up being the Project Directors of AIR after their graduation and having years to reflect on my time as an undergraduate and Project Director I summarize the differences in my approaches to AIR,

As a student I was much optimistic because I like, because the decisions and the details that I didn't know about as an undergrad and then I found out as a Project Director were very, it was abrupt. Just knowing what goes as a Project Director and the decisions you have to make and then putting into perspective I thought about how, how many students, that whole the numbers weren't changing and so I felt as a Project Director that, was AIR working as whole? Because I felt that, and I think I was in a really bad place when I thought this as a Project Director a lot of number of things were happening and I thought, is AIR working towards its goal, are we doing something, or are we just doing this but were not creating change? Because we've been, AIR existed for since the nineties and like if there was change, if change was going to happen, was it going to happen in the numbers, or how was AIR going to effectively and tangibly, and practically, make anything change if we were going to. I just felt like at one point we weren't doing, for years we hadn't been doing what we were supposed to be doing like nothing was changing we were just doing this just to do it with no, with not impacting anybody and it was like hmm...but that's how it was as a staff towards the end which wasn't a good mindset to have but I just kept that to myself. But as a student I was much more optimistic, I did feel like we were making a change and that at least people, even if we weren't making changes with the numbers we were making changes with the way the community saw UCLA and like beyond AIR, I mean as like the Center, and like RAIN! And just knowing that these project existed so that if another university wanted to do it they could look to UCLA to help where students were heading toward. At other universities who had larger Native population they also weren't having AIR and they weren't having RAIN! But if they did they could look toward these projects and all the other offices on this campus. There was a big shift in my thinking, I'm back on the undergrad thought because I stepped away from being from the behind the scenes type of work. (DM02_123; 341-370)

Having spent time working at UCLA I had seen the systematic barriers for Native students and Native projects on campus and it changed how I saw my work and the work AIR did because there were limitations. While engaging with Eve's own thoughts on infiltrating university systems, it is possible, but for many, at what cost does this infiltration come at? I was having this conversation with myself when I was not seeing admission numbers of Native students increasing in my time as staff. Despite the changes in mindset that I had while engaging with AIR and her relationship with the project I remained optimistic in my work with Native students.

My work went beyond outreaching, it was important for her to ensure that the Native students on campus we looked after as well, even the AIR staff that she was once a part of,

Oh yes, so yeah as like a, yeah it kept me on track because I always knew and even when I was Project Director I always knew that it wasn't right for me to send, for students who were struggling including myself to be outreaching to students when they weren't doing well in their own studies. So, especially because when I went out there I wanted to make sure things were okay and not like I don't want to ever lie to students and tell them, yeah I'm doing great even when I'm not. So, it always motivated me to do my work and stay focused and so I could continue to do the work that I love on the side and do it in, in a, do it with integrity and as Project Director, same thing. I mean that's why I think I would take on more work just so that the staff would have time to do their own academic work because I didn't want them to sacrifice their academics for AIR because I mean if we, we as a community, lost a student then what's the point of AIR and RAIN! as well, but as far as having a student on campus who's struggling that was a no, no. So I just wanted them to focus more on their own work even if, and I know they really wanted to help with AIR but I just had to be like put my, again those were one of those decisions saying no, you need to focus on your work, that's what comes, that's what comes first, you're a student first more than anything. And it helped, that's when the other staff would come in handy because they were building a lot of relationships and they would come in and step in because they knew I couldn't do it by myself so they would help too...yeah. (DM02_123; 405-426)

While I tried to be a resource for students I did have limits on my knowledge of campus activities and I needed to share these limitations with them. As a students and even as a staff member I was never trained in the technical college admissions requirements to help students. All the knowledge that I had was either learned in workshops I attended in my spare time, through my peers, or online. There is a gap in training for students and staff who are working in outreaching that were not in the admissions office. Again, students are doing outreaching work but are not supported with training prior to interacting with students it is all learned on the spot. Despite these issues, we would learn a lot of our outreaching techniques from one another. Learning together with peers tuned in building a circle friends and community, I expressed,

It reminded me of community, yes, it reminded me of community just by being with them because, one it would also remind me that there are people who are out there, it reminded me of reality too because there's a whole other world out there that's not UCLA and it was just refreshing and the types of questions they would ask when I was just like, oh

yes. Like I love being around kids because they're just so honest but sometimes a little too honest and you're just like Jesus! And they would just like make you laugh because they wouldn't think about things the way I think it through because I'm just like, I'm stressed out so I'm like ho hum no time for laughs, they would just throw laughs at you and it's stress relieving. And it also reminded me of being around my family so it was just, it was a breath of fresh air and it was very different but it was also like home so I think that's another reason why I loved AIR and doing that so work but yes but it always reminded me of the community and this is where I need to be, this is like a lifetime commitment to this, to this community, to this life, to these kids. So uh yeah, I love it. (DM02_123; 433-448)

Making the connection between community and reality that operates separately from a university setting explored who Native communities, and all outside communities are not embraced on campus. For students to reconnect with communities it takes the physical removal of the self from the university. However, in response to this lack of Native community, a smaller community emerged on campus with students who are not always from the LA or from the same tribal communities but we were connected by our shared backgrounds and our shared work. Our shared experiences fostered a familial atmosphere that I see as a commitment that goes beyond my time with AIR and beyond my time on UCLA's campus.

Claudia. In reflecting upon her interactions with students and how she entered AIR with a desire to contribute, Claudia expresses how it affected her,

[It] empowered me because I was ready to just graduate and leave and, but they were like undergrads to talk to you. Like, Oh, I'm going to pursue this, I'm going to get into this field, or I'm going to go here. And then actual grad students in the MA, they, um, they're talking about your thesis all the time and just seeing them, what they're going to do with their degree. And it's all different, different fields, but with the same program. So that was like my reflecting as awesome as we're already starting to take take the position now to better her to different horizons, maybe better. (VM02_402; 550-559)

Since Claudia did have a positive experience working with AIR was coupled with surrounding herself around Native students who were focused on their own professional goals. The graduate students she was around discussed their research topics and their work toward change for Native

peoples. While she was ready to graduate, she wanted to continue to surround herself with these students who she was able to meet during her final year. She further expresses,

They're like displayed, they choose to talk to but they choose to talk to their peers in a way to get more students on campus because we need community and the responsibilities they have in school. It's not natural to be cooped up and forgetting the library room for eight hours because we want to do well in school but just to be human and to like it takes care of our spirit when we're working with other people and that's more fulfilling. That's why a lot of us we choose to or even at when I was a student or Daniel River, we were choosing to or to volunteer or to go to college fairs like early in the morning to get there like at 10 for those far like the Saturday mornings because we really like working with people and I think college can make you change your mind that you need or just in general, um, the values like mainstream values just to be independent, to be able to support yourself. You leave your house as soon as possible until they're like a like independently, but like those values don't really align with me or for lot of people that are in AIR. (VM02_402; 572-591)

Since Claudia was in her last year when she met Native students and engaged with the Native organizations on campus, she soon realized the unhealthy aspects of college expectations. She states, "It's not natural to be cooped up and forgetting the library room for eight hours because we want to do well in school but just to be human and to like it takes care of our spirit when we're working with other people and that's more fulfilling," she had expressed how she wanted more in previous excerpts and to contribute more before she graduated. She did her work in order to take care of her own self as a student and a Native person in order to find fulfillment.

In discussing their hopes, both Eve and Claudia share their desire to have more Native students on campus in hopes of changing the landscape of Native campus life. Since all three participants expressed how they felt it was important for Native staff and students to maintain themselves at the university level, Eve discussed the need for Natives on campus to undermine what the university expects of them. Claudia expressed a need of understanding of students and what they need to succeed over the needs of what the university expects of them. I expressed how students took on roles despite how it may have hurt their academic work. Despite the

struggles all of the participants felt a sense of empowerment through their work in which they wanted to use to help others.

Final Reflections

In the final reflections, participants discussed their time and their work with AIR and how can Native students move forward in outreaching students. While all participants expressed the desire to get more Native students to UCLA, their work has developed a critical stance toward UCLA's accountability to current Native students and potential Native students.

Eve. Her family encouraged her to break the mold and embrace her difference which is something her mother did not experience as she was encouraged to forget her Navajo roots. In taking a critical approach to the topic of education stemming from her mother's experiences and her own, Eve explains

[F]or Native students in particular, I felt like education, like western education had been used as a weapon. It had been weaponized against our community. I can see it with like the way my mom's experience was with education at Sherman. Um, you know, she came out of Sherman feeling dirty and feeling like less than and less valuable and that the knowledge that she was taught like over generations and generations and generations of Navajo people that were passed down to her was not valued. And so when it came time for her to raise her children, like she didn't want to teach us Navajo when we were growing up. Um, there's a lot of stuff that she's just like, ah, we don't need to talk about that because you're not going to need to know those things. And you know, I was, I think I was lucky because, because I was the youngest out of 11 children and I was born at a time, I think my mom was coming to the realization that, um, that she missed an opportunity to pass things down to her kids. So like my older siblings didn't really have the sort of, um, connection to Native community, not as strongly as I did when I was growing up. I was growing up, it was like an everyday type of thing. We were going somewhere. Um, so, you know, seeing how education was weaponized against us to like, as a tool of assimilation and, and really as a tool of genocide, um, I felt that it was important that someone was there who had made it through to like open the door and like, you know, reach out and like help the people that are coming through to make sure that there are, they're able to maintain themselves and that they're able to see that the knowledge that they're bringing and the unique perspectives that they're bringing is valuable and important. That they don't need to give those things up just to be quote, unquote successful. And that there's other ways of defining success. There's, um, things that are going to strengthen our communities that aren't going to be found by forcing themselves into a box and giving up pieces of themselves. So I think that was kind of a

motivating factor for me. And still I am working on education and because yeah, it's kind of like, kind of like subverting things. Um, because it does really, in a sense go against what institutions of education are for, I think as Native people were used to that sort of conflict and like we need to be reminded, remind each other that we don't have to give into it. (NP01_130; 717-756)

Again Eve sees herself as an insider and outsider to the situation as she is a product of her mother's Navajo teachings and being surrounded by her family and by other Native students in LA. Yet, she sees herself differently, because her mom began teaching her Navajo traditions that she did not teach her other children, she did not have the same experiences as her siblings while in school yet she has summarized all these experiences to conclude that the Education system is a weapon. Her mother and siblings were influential on her outlook as her mother's school encouraged assimilation and her siblings school's pushed them out. It is the weapon of education that motivates her to continue her work in education, to break down the same systems that she has seen affect her family and the students she continues to advocate for. She reminds others not to give in, and she also reminds herself not to give in. She begins to incorporate what she has seen in students throughout the years in the education system,

Denise. In understanding how AIR has shaped her as an undergraduate and as a staff member and the numerous relationships I had to reflect on the positive aspects of recruitment work. In concluding her time overall in AIR and her assessment of the project she stated,

Just that, there, I did, I do, did, appreciate my time at AIR I think it's a really great program I'm glad that my mind bounced back from that negative space that it was in before about change and I think the way that AIR is set up with the student staff, like I appreciate that a lot. Like I always think about, well I think about the Native Recruiter and I don't think I could ever do that because I couldn't do it on my own, it's a lot, it's a lot of work and it takes a lot out of you but like I appreciate the students I worked with as an undergrad and even as Project Director like and I think that's what motivated a lot of this research like I wouldn't have been able to do it alone, they can't do it alone and so it was like these group of people decided this is something we are going to do and we stayed committed to it so I owe a lot to those students and I will forever appreciate them for the work they did on behalf of, for students, we were that was just us a couple of years ago, so I truly appreciate that time. (DM02_123; 523-536)

While addressing my previous statements of feeling dejected from university spaces as a staff member. By shifting the focus on the experiences of the students who were on campus rather than those who were not drastically caused a shift in my outlook. Despite my focus on enrollment numbers it was important that I cherished the memories I made as it was instrumental to my time as an undergraduate. I enjoyed AIR enough that I stayed after I graduated to help run it with new students who experienced the same positive experiences I had as an undergraduate.

Claudia. She is placing the role of the AIR in the hands of the students and thinks that their understanding of their role is crucial in creating a successful project. She sees AIR as a possible means for creativity and more importantly a way to give back to the local Native community in a reciprocal manner. When it came to how she interacts with the students and planned for her sites she described it as The changes she sees in students she begins to describe how years of commitment to her students have yielded changes in the students in which she can see.

You see changes in the students, like the stuff they like to me. So you see him young and now he's probably like middle school like this and then maybe like fifth grade and now. Yeah. So like there's a big, there's a big jump there because we're not talking about the same things. Yeah. I feel like the only good thing was slightly more reserved, but other than the sisters. But when I do see is, um, yeah, I, I do remember that, um, it's just easier for when they do complain about condom going to do this and then they get back to their work more quickly throughout the years. And so they're coming more independent. I think it has sometimes too, they'll be like, okay, you tell me where to be on. Like, no, it's not my homework. And so I'll just wait with them until they do. (VM02_402; 364-376)

It's like when I was here, yes. I feel like, I feel like I was helpful in the sense that for that I was really, I had a really deep desire to like as much as to develop myself as leader but to connect with the students. So I think I would do, I would try to feel my job as much as possible. So I was making sure that would happen. So, but then again, I feel like everyone when when I needed help, they, no matter what was going on, they would come help me out. So it was really, it was still a community effort cause I was wearing myself too. (VM02_402; 455-463)

So that reminded me like I could, so I still have the same desires I had when I was for career wise or at least like a sense of like what I wanted to be since I was younger and I could still do it. So it gave me confidence within myself and because a lot of things happen when you're older, just life experiences and it can bring you down. So seeing them and so pure and so sure of themselves. That's what helped me and the students here. How to build these students, build your sense of community. So other than just being a friend and being a genuine person, um, it'd be like a comic relief, I guess with all this craziness of college, their goals and talking to them about their communities and what they want to do. (VM02_402; 537-549)

Claudia reflects on students she has seen throughout the years since she first joined AIR as an undergraduate and then as a staff member. Not only was she observing them grow up but she was seeing her students become independent and transition into young adults. Since her students have seen long term investment with AIR staff, Claudia sees them as being more prepared for future discussions about college as they have slowly been prepped through tutoring and advising services. Her own desire to develop as a leader who was there to be an effective helping hand to her students that she has received once she joined around that the staff provided for her.

In this chapter, all the participant critically engaged and addressed their time in AIR and what this meant for their future work beyond AIR. Eve began to critically engage with higher education and the need to understand how institutions of higher education have hurt and transformed Native communities. She is highly affected by what her mother experienced at her boarding school and works to offset the negative aspects that Native students face in university settings. I expressed the constant need of continuing work as a community, as this work is never ending and the focus should be on collaboration between students, staff, and universities in order to successfully provide Native students with access to four year universities. Claudia, remembers the students she worked with as it is the AIR students who are the reason why AIR exist. Claudia has been able to see her students grow over the years as she remains committed to creating genuine relationships for students.

Having the chance to process their experiences in engage in their memories of their peers, their students, staff members, student organizations, and AIR as a project it is important to understand the amount of commitment that student recruiters give to their work. While juggling their academic work, student recruiters continuously engage with potential students in order to share the same positive experiences that they have had as part of AISA and AIR. The work of AIR continues as different students continue the ongoing work that AIR sets out to do in hopes of providing access while providing themselves with a space to develop in as the participants have.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

It was the goal of this research to answer the following research questions: (1) How did the women in this research navigate their UCLA undergraduate experience as Native students? (2) How did being a part of AIR shape the outlook of the participants in their future and ongoing work in higher education? In analyzing the shared experiences of Eve, Claudia, and myself there is a clear understanding that AIR contributed to the creating space on and off campus with their friends on campus and with students at site and college fairs. Claudia discussed how she saw her peers and the work they did and it made her want to work harder and it made her felt like she had contributed her time in a positive manner as an undergraduate. Eve stated how she went to site with her peers and got to know AIR volunteers while also returning to her friends at site. I mentioned how I gained more friendships as part of AIR because we had similar interest in outreach. All three of us shared that while we were hesitant when we first were a part of the American Indian Student Association and AIR, it was our friends who pushed us to take formal roles and more responsibilities. Outreaching has help each of us to understand what we were capable of, in regards to public speaking, navigating conversations, managing time, and creating and organizing workshops. While each of us navigated being Native and being a student at UCLA, being a part of AIR staff helped us bridge both identities so that we could be Native UCLA students rather than keeping both identities separate. There is a sense of empowerment across all three participants who become more comfortable with their own histories and experiences through the process of sharing with prospective students in AIR.

By becoming comfortable with their own histories, all three participants drew on their experiences with their own families as source of motivation and an example for how to interact with students. For Eve, her mother's experience at boarding school encouraged her to seek out

students who she thought were underserved and created a auntie role for herself to connect with students. My own siblings pushed me to continue to provide access to other Native students in hopes of helping families like my own have the option to pursue higher education if that was what they wanted. Claudia saw her friends, her were not given the chance to seek out options for universities as her motivating factor to provide tools and help to potential students. While her friends did not attend college with her, they continuously encouraged her to pursue her dreams and join clubs and even reminded her that she was their motivating factor as they continued their educational journey.

It is not the goal of this thesis to provide recommendations or solutions, the goal of this work was to share the experiences of former student recruiters as a small representation of the high number of Native students who have worked for AIR. If I could further develop this research on a larger scale I would wish to explore the role of being an Indigenous woman in AIR had on the role of student recruiters. My knowledge of AIR's former Project Director's consist of overwhelmingly women. Exploring indigenous female identity on a larger scale would add to this research. Also having group interviews would provide a multifaceted level of interaction with the participants and could have lead to different shared ideas. However, in referencing Eve, it is important that Native students are provided access to college admission workshops and financial aid tools prior to reaching UCLA. Understanding the various different and complex nuances of the Native community is important in the recruitment and outreach process as the Native students are coming from a different background than other applicants. As student recruiters for AIR the participants were able to learn and bridge a gap to Native high school and community college students and UCLA however there is limited longevity in student recruiters. Having an institutional understanding of Native students on an recruitment and admission level provides

long term investment with potential Native students. The university can look to AIR as a starting point to understand how students do this work and adapt university level outreach and recruitment methods to better engage with Native students.

AIR has been around since the early 1990's when it was not receiving funding and students were doing recruitment work solely on a volunteer basis. Today it is still running with five staff members and a full time staff member. AIR itself does not function as a means to a solution of the Native population on campus, it works to provide an open door to students who may be interested in UCLA. Eve, Claudia, and myself shared how we tried to create genuine conversations so that students could figure out what worked best for them and it is not always UCLA. We worked to bridge the gap between Native students and the university in hopes of reducing barriers and building connections for our students.

Appendix
Interview Questions

| <i>Seidman's 3 Part Interview</i> | Interview One: Focused Life History | Interview Two: Experience | Interview Three: Meaning |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your interest in the recruitment of American Indian students? • What was your experience during the college application process? • Did you have any interactions with recruiters before your position? • Was finding a college with a Native population important to you? • What was your experience as a Native student on campus? Did you have a sense of community? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are your goals as a student recruiter? • Did you find support from peers? • Do you have any experiences with youth that stick out in your memory? • What do you try and focus on when talking to students? • Where did you learn how to “outreach” from? • Do you mention your own experiences while talking to students? Your own cultural background? • How do you feel when talking to students? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you see yourself as a student recruiter and as a part of AIR? • What do you think of the work that AIR does? • How did being a part of AIR shape your work as a student? • How did outreaching if at all, build your sense of community? • Reflecting, what do you think AIR provides for UCLA students that you didn't realize then? • How do you think students operated in maintaining community ties with the LA Native community on behalf of UCLA? |

References

- Adelman, H., Taylor, L., & Nelson, P. (2013). Native American Students Going to and Staying in Postsecondary Education: An Intervention Perspective. *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, 37(3), 29-56. doi:10.17953/aicr.37.3.01130638k210j380
- Archibald, J. (2014). *Indigenous Storywork: Educating the Heart, Mind, Body, and Spirit*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Benally, C. (2014) Creating and Negotiating Native Spaces in Public School Systems. (2014) *Journal of American Indian Education* (Special Issue). Volume 54, issue 3.
- Brayboy, B. M. J. (2005, December). Tribal Critical Race Theory. *The Urban Review*, 37(5), 425-446. doi:10.1007/s11256-005-0018-y.
- Carter, J., Hollinsworth, D., Raciti, M., & Gibey, K. (2018). Academic ‘Place-Making’: Fostering Attachment, Belonging and Identity for Indigenous Students in Australian Universities. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 23(2), 243-260. doi:10.1080/13562517.2017.1379485.
- Cox, A., T. Herrick, and P. Keating. (2012). Accommodations: Staff Identity and University Space. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 17(6): 697–709.
- Davidson, C., Shotton H.J., Minthorn, R.S., & Waterman, S. (2018). The Need for Indigenizing Research in Higher Education Scholarship. In R.S. Minthorn, & H.J Shotton (Eds.) *Reclaiming Indigenous Research in Higher Education* (pp. 7-17). New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Deloria, V., & Wildcat, D. R. (2001). *Power and Place: Indian Education in America*. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Pub.

- Ecklund, T. & Terrance, D. (2013). Extending the Rafters: Cultural Context for Native American Students. In H.J Shotton, S.C. Lowe, & S.J. Waterman (Eds.) *Beyond the Asterisk: Understanding Native Students in Higher Education* (pp. 53-66). VA: Stylus Publishing.
- Grande, S. (2015). *Red Pedagogy: Native American Social and Political Thought*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Guillory, R. M., & Wolverton, M. (2008). It's About Family: Native American Student Persistence in Higher Education. *Journal of Higher Education*, 79, 58–87.
- Hausmann, L. R. M., Schofield, J. W., & Woods, R. L. (2007). Sense of Belonging as a Predictor of Intentions to Persist Among African American and White First-Year College Students. *Research in Higher Education*, 48(7), 803–839.
- HeavyRunner, I., & DeCelles, R. (2002). Family Educational Model: Meeting the Student Retention Challenge. *Journal of American Indian Education*, 41(2), 29–37.
- Holm, T., Pearson, D., & Chavis, B. (2003). Peoplehood: A Model for the Extension of Sovereignty in American Indian Studies. *Wicazo Sa Review*, 18(1), 7–24.
- Hurtado, S., Chang, J. C., Sáenz, V. B., Espinosa, L. L., Cabrera, N. L., & Cerna, O. S. (2007). Predicting Transition and Adjustment to College: Minority Biomedical and Behavioral Science Students' First Year of College. *Research in Higher Education*, 48(7), 841–887.
- Jackson, A. P., Smith, S. A., & Hill, C. L. (2003). Academic Persistence Among Native American College Students. *Journal of College Student Development*, 44(4), 548–565.
- Keene, A. (2018). Understanding Relationships in the College Process: Indigenous Methodologies, Reciprocity, and College Horizon Students. In R.S. Minthorn, & H.J Shotton (Eds.) *Reclaiming Indigenous Research in Higher Education* (pp. 47-63). New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

- Kirkness, V. J. and R. Barnhardt (2001). First Nations and Higher Education: The Four R's - Respect, Relevance, Reciprocity, Responsibility. *Knowledge Across Cultures: A Contribution to Dialogue Among Civilizations*. In R. Hayoe and J. Pan. Hong Kong, eds., Comparative Education Research Centre, The University of Hong Kong.
- Knez, I. (2005). Attachment and Identity as Related to a Place and its Perceived Climate. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 25 (2): 207–218.
- Larimore, J. A., & McClellan, G. S. (2005). Native American Student Retention in US Postsecondary Education. In M. J. Tippeconnic Fox, S. C. Lowe, & G. S. McClellan (Eds.), *Serving Native American Students* (pp. 17–32). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Lowe, S. C. (2005), This Is Who I Am: Experiences of Native American Students. *New Directions for Student Services*, 2005: 33-40.
- Lundberg, C. A. (2007). Student Involvement and Institutional Commitment to Diversity as Predictors of Native American Student Learning. *Journal of College Student Development* 48(4), 405-416.
- Lundberg, C. A., & Lowe, S. C. (2016). Faculty as Contributors to Learning for Native American Students. *Journal of College Student Development*, 57(1), 3-17.
doi:10.1353/csd.2016.0003.
- Malpas, J. E. (1999). *Place and Experience: A Philosophical Topography*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation* (4th ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Minthorn, R. S., & Shotton, H. J. (2014). Native American Students in Higher Education. In P.A. Sasso & J. L. DeVitis (Eds.), *Today's College Students* (pp. 31–43). New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Minthorn, R. S., & Shotton, H. J. (Eds.). (2018). *Reclaiming Indigenous Research in Higher Education*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Oxendine, S. (2015). *Examining the Impact of Institutional Integration and Cultural Integrity on Sense of Belonging to Predict Intention to Persist for Native American Students at Non-Native Colleges and Universities* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. UMI No. 3708162.
- Patterson, M. E., and D. R. Williams. (2005). Maintaining Research Traditions on Place: Diversity of Thought and Scientific Progress. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 25 (4): 361–380.
- Relph, E. (1976). *Place and Placelessness*. London: Pion.
- Riessman, C. K. (2008). *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.
- Seidman, I. (2013). *Interviewing as Qualitative Research* (4th ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Shotton, H. J., Lowe, S. C., & Waterman, S. J. (2013). *Beyond the Asterisk: Understanding Native Students in Higher Education*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.
- Springer, M., Davidson, C.E. & Waterman, S.J. (2013). Academic and Student Affairs Partnerships: Native American Student Affairs Units. In H.J Shotton, S.C. Lowe, & S.J. Waterman (Eds.) *Beyond the Asterisk: Understanding Native Students in Higher Education* (pp. 109-124). VA: Stylus Publishing.

- Tachine, A. R. (2017). Grandmothers' Pedagogy: Lessons for Supporting Native Students' Attendance at Universities. *Indigenous Pathways, Transitions and Participation in Higher Education*, 151-167.
- Tachine, A. R., Cabrera, N. L., & Bird, E. Y. (2016). Home Away From Home: Native American Students' Sense of Belonging During Their First Year in College. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 88(5), 785-807.
- Tuan, Y. F. (1977). *Space and Place: the Perspective of Experience*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Walton, G., & Cohen, G. (2007). A Question of Belonging: Race, Social Fit, and Achievement. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 92(1), 82-96.
- Wilson, S. (2008). *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*. Black Point, N.S: Fernwood Pub.
- Waterman, S. J. (2012). Home-Going as a Strategy for Success Among Haudenosaunee College and University Students. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, 49(2).
doi:10.1515/1949-6605.6378.
- Waterman, S. J., & Lindley, L. S. (2013). Cultural Strengths to Persevere: Native American Women in Higher Education. *NASPA Journal About Women in Higher Education*, 6(2).
doi:10.1515/njawhe-2013-0011.
- Windchief, S. (2018). Stealing Horses: Indigenous Student Metaphors for Success in Graduate Education. In R.S. Minthorn, & H.J Shotton (Eds.) *Reclaiming Indigenous Research in Higher Education* (pp. 76-87). New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.