

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
CLASS OF 2026

Native American Graduation Celebration & NASA Leadership Awards Ceremony

MAY 8, 2026



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
OFFICE OF THE PROVOST

**Native American
Initiatives**



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Welcome

To the graduating students, family members, loved ones, U of A faculty and staff, and community members: Welcome to the 2026 Native American Graduation Celebration & NASA Leadership Awards Ceremony! Today, we gather to honor the achievements, resilience, and dedication of our graduating students.

We are deeply honored to celebrate this milestone alongside you and your loved ones. While this moment marks the closing of one chapter, it also opens the door to new journeys and opportunities. Congratulations and Bear Down!

- NASA Team



Graduation Program

Pre-Ceremony: Opening

Valentina Andrew, Tohono O'odham, Podcaster and Radio Host

Master of Ceremonies

Gabriel Ayala, Pascua Yaqui, Musician

Procession of Graduates and Faculty

Opening

Miss Native UA Laylalanai Gocobachi, Pascua Yaqui Tribe

Mr. Native UA Kendrick Begay Jr., Diné

Welcome

Dr. Patricia A. Prelock, Provost & Chief Academic Officer

Student Speakers

Deatra Sinyella, Havasupai, BS in Veterinary Sciences Graduate

Audrey Ann Charley, Diné, MLS in Indigenous Peoples Law & Policy Graduate

Alumni Address

Chairman Buddy Rocha Jr., Yavapai Apache Nation

Class of 2020, Eller College of Management, MBA



Graduation Program (Cont'd)

Keynote Speaker

Dallas Goldtooth, Mdewakanton Dakota / Diné, Comedian, Actor, & Activist

Leadership Awards

Valentina Andrew, Tohono O'odham, Podcaster and Radio Host

Recognition of Sloan Graduates

Donna Treloar, Sicangu Lakota, Director, Graduate Center Initiatives

Dr. Frans Tax, Associate Dean of Student Success Graduate College

Recognition of Graduates

Donna Treloar, Sicangu Lakota, Director, Graduate Center Initiatives

Berlin Loa, Associate Professor of Practice and Knowledge River Scholars Program Manager

Recessional of Graduates and Faculty

Group Photograph of Graduates, Faculty, and Others in Recessional

Cookies and Photo Opportunities

Diamond Atrium, Grand Ballroom

Presentation of Colors: *Tohono O'odham Nation Veteran Affairs Color Guard*

Music by: *Starpoint Drum Group*



Graduation Speakers



Keynote Speaker **Dallas Goldtooth**

Dallas Goldtooth is a member of the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community, from the village of Cansayapi within the territory of the Oceti Sakowin people. He is the co-creator of the Indigenous comedy group, the 1691's and their play *Between Two Knees* is currently running off-Broadway at PAC NYC. He's built a dedicated following on TikTok and Instagram of over half a million followers where he educates and inspires his audience with daily musings of his life and activism in the Indigenous community. Goldtooth is also a climate change activist with his non-profit The Indigenous Environmental Network.



Master of Ceremonies **Gabriel Ayala**

A member of the Yaqui people of Southern Arizona, guitarist Gabriel Ayala is an accomplished classical musician. He is positioned at the forefront of a new generation of Native American musicians, breaking all native and non-native stereotypes with his trailblazing assortment of music genres and accolades. Gabriel earned a Master's Degree in Music Performance from the University of Arizona in 1997, has taught at all educational levels from elementary through college, and serves as a competition adjudicator. Although he truly enjoys being a teacher, his busy touring schedule only allows him to teach in Master Class settings.



Graduation Speakers



Opening and Presenter of Leadership Awards Valentina Andrew

Valentina Andrew is a member of the Tohono O'odham Nation and is currently involved in storytelling via podcasting. Also known as Tina, she has a background in Life Science and for many years enjoyed

enjoyed working in the STEM field, before shifting careers into podcasting and broadcasting, where she now works in the radio industry. Tina is the Production Coordinator at KXCI Community Radio, and is the host of Cultivating Indigenous Voices, as well as an on-air DJ known as Lady T host of The Dinner Party playing funk and soul. Outside of KXCI, Tina is the Executive Producer of Tohono O'odham Young Voices, a podcast that has been running since 2016 as platform to share cultural and contemporary versions of the O'odham narrative.



Alumni Address Yavapai Apache Nation Chairman Buddy Rocha Jr.

Chairman Rocha is from the Clarkdale Reservation of the Yavapai-Apache Nation. He holds an MBA with a concentration in marketing and management and a B.S. in business management. Chairman Rocha has a diverse background of professional experiences: he previously served as the senior project manager at Wenaha Group Inc., where he led multiple high-profile projects, driving efficiency and innovation for Native American tribes. From 2010-2020, Chairman Rocha was the Economic Development Director for the Yavapai-Apache Nation in Camp Verde, AZ. Supplemental to his professional roles, he served on various boards, including president of White Hills Inc., the Economic Development Board, and the Election Committee.



Graduation Speakers



Student Speaker

Deatra Sinyella

Deatra Sinyella is a graduating Veterinary Science student at the University of Arizona and a member of the Havasupai Tribe. As a first-generation student, she is dedicated to improving animal welfare in Indigenous communities and aspires to pursue research and open a practice centered on culturally grounded care.



Student Speaker

Audrey Ann Charley

Audrey Charley (Diné) is a Master of Legal Studies candidate in Indigenous Peoples Law & Policy, at the James E. Rogers College of Law. She serves as a Policy Analyst with the Navajo Nation. Following graduation, she plans to pursue advanced study to continue shaping Indigenous governance and policy at the tribal and federal levels.

Graduates

Doctoral and Professional Degrees

Jacquelyn Francisco	Juris Doctor (JD)	Diné / Jicarilla Apache
Majerle Lister	Doctorate in Geography (PhD)	Diné
Angela Monetathchi	Internal Medicine (MD)	Comanche Nation

Masters Degrees

Kevin Begay	Epidemiology (MPH)	Diné
Kristina Lynne Belinte	Health Law & Policy (MLS)	Diné
Audrey Ann Charley	Indigenous Peoples Law & Policy (MLS)	Diné
Dana Lenette Chavis	Indigenous Peoples Law & Policy (LLM)	Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina
Gina Chimerica	Management Information Systems (MS)	Hopi
Joanna K. Cooley	Graduate Certificate in Public Health	United Houma Nation
Amy Esplain	Statistics & Data Science (MS)	Diné
Tonya Foster	Family and Civil Law (MLS)	Muscogee (Creek) Nation
Jessica Frappier	Indigenous Peoples Law & Policy (LLM)	Anishinaabe
Massai Gonzalez	Mexican American Studies (MS)	Mexica
Zahlanii Henderson	Health Behavior / Health Promotion (MPH)	Diné
Vernita James	Linguistics (MA)	Diné
Jennifer Reyes Morgan	Native American Languages & Linguistics (MA)	Diné / Santo Domingo Pueblo
Harold Notah	Electrical & Computer Engineering (MS)	Diné
Kristy Pavatea	Teaching & Learning (MA)	Hopi / Tewa
Mathis Quintana	Native American Languages & Linguistics (MA)	Jicarilla Apache
Chairman Buddy Rocha Jr.	Marketing & Management (MBA), 2020	Yavapai-Apache Nation
Vetasha Smith	Management Information Systems (MS)	Diné
Karina Todechine	Library & Information Science (M.L.I.S)	Diné
Dana Wilcox-Frago	Higher Education (MA)	Diné / Ohkay Owningeh Pueblo

Bachelors Degrees

David J. Aberle	Film & Television (BFA)	Diné
Dominick Anthony Acosta	Psychology (BA)	Rarámuri
Julianna Mireya Acuña	Ecology & Evolutionary Biology (BS)	Pascua Yaqui Tribe
Andre Alfredo Alvarez	Accounting (BSBA) & Management Information Systems (BSBA)	Pascua Yaqui Tribe
Iliana Semalulucut Amador	Journalism (BA)	Pascua Yaqui Tribe
Ariana Michaela Attson	Public Health (BS)	Diné
Kirsten Ariel-Litson Begay	Pre-Veterinary Sciences (BS)	Diné
Shauna Elizabeth Belone	Business Administration (BSBA)	Diné
Erin Blackwater	American Indian Studies (BA) & Criminal Justice Studies (BS)	Gila River Indian Community

Graduates

Bachelors Degrees

Kylo Blanco-Soto	Environmental Science (BS)	Pascua Yaqui Tribe / Chamoru
Kalieyah Zhonnie Boyd	Nutrition & Human Performance (BS)	Diné
Summer Rose Burbank	Medicine (BS)	Tohono O'odham
Lisa Burnette-Lomatuway'ma	Psychology (BA)	Hopi / White Mountain Apache Tribe
Shaniqua Campus	Public Health (BS)	Hopi / Tohono O'odham
Demetria Dean Clark	Business Administration (BSBA)	Diné
Maxwell Crow	Live & Screened Performance (BA)	Tohono O'odham
Ronita Dazen	Public Affairs (BS) & American Indian Studies (BA)	White Mountain Apache Tribe
Salvador De Luca	Law (BA)	Gila River Indian Community
Alex Sonny Dan Goseyun	Public Health (BS)	White Mountain Apache Tribe
Aureliana Foster	Information Science (BS)	Diné / Sac and Fox
Eron Sorrelman Guy	American Indian Studies (BA)	Diné
Adara Autumn Harrison	Early Childhood Education (BAE)	Diné
Mato Henderson	Microbiology (BS)	Diné
Malika Kyla Hogan	Public Health (BS)	Tohono O'odham
Joseph Ian Honahnie	Communication (BA)	Diné/ Hopi
Parker Hubbell	Neuroscience and Cognitive Science (BS)	Diné
Kaleigh Huma	Psychology (BA)	Hopi
Hailee Holly Hunter	Pharmaceutical Sciences (B.S)	Diné
Ian Irving	Medicine (BS)	Diné
Emery Jackson	Physiology & Medical Sciences (BS)	Diné
Arianna Karisse Jenkins	Biology (BS)	Diné
Tommey Jodie	Nutrition & Food Systems (BS), Food Studies (BA), & Creative Writing (BA)	Diné
Sasha Larenzza Joe	Psychology (BA)	Diné
Kayla Jean Johnson	Health Promotion (BS)	Hopi/ San Carlos Apache
Christopher Juan	Studio Arts (BFA)	Tohono O'odham
Tiyana Kaulaity	Psychological Science (BS)	Diné / Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma
Shauntel Maya Lee	Medicine (BS)	White Mountain Apache Tribe
Damaris Carolane Lent	Public Health (BS)	Mescalero Apache
Jasmine D. Lopez	Management Information Systems (BSBA)	Tohono O'odham
Nuve Maldonado	Public Affairs in Environmental Policy (BS)	Pascua Yaqui Tribe
Taylor Massey	Physiology & Medical Sciences (BS)	Muscogee (Creek) Nation

Graduates

Bachelors Degrees

Amber Medina	Business Administration (BSBA)	Hopi
Brianna Marie Medrano	Business Management (BSBA)	Hopi
Kylie Aniese Meeden	Chemical Engineering (BS)	Tohono O'odham
Valentin Mesa	Sustainable Built Environments (BS)	Tohono O'odham
Adrian Morris	Leadership & Learning Innovation (BS)	Diné
Isabel Faith Mull	Biology Biomedical Sciences (BS)	San Carlos Apache Tribe
Josiah Napuunoo	Illustration, Design, & Animation (BA)	
Noah Nelson	Fashion Industry's Science and Technology (BA)	Diné
Mikayla Annette Paul	Elementary Education (BA)	Hopi / Tewa
Johnny Perez IV	Public Health (BS)	Pascua Yaqui Tribe
Anfirnee Sid Ramon	Criminal Justice (BA)	Tohono O'odham
Raashaun Rae Ramon	Anthropology (BA)	Tohono O'odham, Hopi / Tewa, & San Carlos Apache
Alison Rimolde	Aerospace Engineering (BS)	Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa
Bernice Rodriguez	Public Health (BS)	Pascua Yaqui Tribe
Deizha Saenz	Spanish (BA)	Mescalero Apache / Diné
Valerie Serrano	Psychology (BA)	Diné
Kaylee Alberta Shot With Arrow	Biology (BS)	Hopi / Oglala Sioux / Cherokee
Joshua Joseph Shriber	Biology & Biomedical Sciences (BS)	Diné
Deatra Sinyella	Veterinary Science (BS)	Havasupai
Jamie Siquieros	Care, Health, and Society (BS)	Tohono O'odham
Jadan Sixkiller	Elementary Education (BA)	Diné
Shannon Ruth Taylor	Geographic Information Systems Technology (BS)	White Mountain Apache Tribe / Diné
Ashaunti Thompson	Psychology (BA)	Diné
Christina Tootsie	Law (BA)	Hopi
Aiden Lee Tsingine	Electrical Engineering (BS)	Diné
Ollie Tso	Veterinary Sciences (BS)	Diné
Trevin Ashton Tsosie	Veterinary Sciences (BS)	Diné
Aleisha Velasquez	Law (BA)	White Mountain Apache Tribe / Diné
Felicity Monet Villegas	Early Childhood Education (BAE)	Tohono O'odham & Pascua Yaqui Tribe
Nikayla Nizhoni Wagner	Psychology (BA)	Diné
Jaymz Wallen	Software Engineering (BS)	Diné
Shannon Nadine Wolf Black	Public Management & Policy (BS)	Tohono O'odham / Northern Cheyenne / Diné
Alyssa Lynn Yazzie	Animal Science (BS)	Diné
Emma Yazzie	Elementary Education (BA)	Diné



Leadership Awards

Presented by Valentina Andrew, Tohono O'odham

Outstanding First Year Student

Kaylyn Indian, White Mountain Apache Tribe

Outstanding First Year Student

Cody Tsinnijinnie, Diné

Outstanding Undergraduate Student

Hayle Bobbie Trujillo, Nambé Pueblo

Outstanding Graduating Senior

*Jasmine Lopez, Tohono O'odham
Management Information Systems (BSBA)*

Outstanding Graduate Student Academic Award

Angela Monetatchi, Comanche

Outstanding Graduate Student Service Award

Kierstyn Tsosie, Diné



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Special Thanks to

Kaitlyn Haskie, Connie Greenberg, Donna Treloar, M. Talia White,
Martha Lee, Dani Kouyoumdjian, Kharen Morgan, Professor Tessa Dysart,
Dr. Alberta Arviso, Niko Sanchez, Byron Tsabetsaye, N. Levi Esquerra,
Nicolette Gomez, Nickolis Joe, Alejandro Higuera, Odette Vargas, Starpoint
Drums, UA Catering

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Family & Friends of Our Graduates

Our Tribal Elders & Ancestors



*Thank you for attending the
2026 Native American
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Stay Connected

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