

Forever**Bufs**®

 University of Colorado **Boulder**



Buffalo in the Snow by John Nieto

Nii'itoonee

You all have done well

Congratulations!


**2026 Native
and Indigenous
Graduation**

Hosted by
Forever Bufs American Indian Alumni Association

Saturday, May 2, 2026
6–8 p.m.
Koenig Alumni Center



 Center for Cultural
Connections & Community
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **BOULDER**

 Center for Native American
and Indigenous Studies
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **BOULDER**

Program

Welcome & Land Acknowledgment

Benny Shendo Jr.

Associate Vice Chancellor for Native American Affairs

Marisa Benton

Oyate Undergraduate Student Organization

Invocation & Blessing

Standing Bear Drum

Keynote Speaker

Melanie Yazzie

Professor - Art & Art History

Presentation of the 2026 Native Graduates

James Andrew Cowell

Director, Center for Native American and Indigenous Studies

Welcoming New Alumni

Forever Buffs American Indian, Alumni Association

CNAIS Honors

Certificate Recipients

Retiring & Promoted Faculty

New Board Members

Closing

Honoring Song and Community Greeting Line



Dinner provided by Tocabe

CU Boulder Land Acknowledgment

The University of Colorado Boulder, Colorado's flagship university, honors and recognizes the many contributions of Indigenous peoples in our state. CU Boulder acknowledges that it is located on the traditional territories and ancestral homelands of the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Ute and many other Native American nations. Their forced removal from these territories has caused devastating and lasting impacts. While the University of Colorado Boulder can never undo or rectify the devastation wrought on Indigenous peoples, we commit to improving and enhancing engagement with Indigenous peoples and issues locally and globally.

Hahóo Ahéhee' HaHau Tog'oiak'

We'd like to offer a special thank you to the Center for Cultural Connections and Community and the Forever Buffs Alumni Association for their generous funding of this year's event. Last but not least, a heartfelt thank you to the families and friends of the 2026 Native Graduates and to the entire CU Native Community, particularly the staff, faculty, alumni, and everyone who works endlessly to support Native student success at CU.

Tah-ah Wado Nytra Thank you



Bachelor's Degree Recipients

Cheraye Arcoren, *Sicangu Lakota, Rosebud Sioux Tribe*

Degree: BA in Sociology
Minor: Leadership Studies

Alfredo Bitsoi, *Diné (Navajo Nation)*

Degree: BS in Applied Mathematics
Minor: Multicultural Leadership Studies

Tezcatlipoca Diaz, *Mexican Indigenous- Purepecha/Mexica*

Degree: BA in English & Creative Writing
Minor: Philosophy

Steven Grant, *Blackfoot and Cherokee*

Degree: BS in Integrative Physiology

Devin Renae Hernandez, *Chicana/ Mixed*

Degree: BA in Environmental Studies

Maya Christine Linsenmeyer, *Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma*

Degree: BS in Civil Engineering

Lauren Lopez, *Ysleta del Sur Pueblo*

Degree: BA in Communication
Minor: Sociology & Leadership Studies

Kaylan Madrid, *Yselta del Sur Pueblo*

Degree: BS in Aerospace Engineering and B.A. in Women & Gender Studies
Minor: Art and LGBTQ Studies

Julianna McDonald, *Southern Cheyenne*

Degree: BA in Ethnic Studies
Minor: Spanish

Alyssa Merrival, *Oglala Lakota*

Degree: BA in Sociology
Minor: Ethnic Studies & Philosophy

Bachelor's Degree Recipients

Shellene Redhorse, *Diné and Chickasaw*

Degree: BS in Aerospace Engineering
Minor: Engineering Management

Deelia Sherman, *Oglala Lakota & Santee Dakota*

Degree: BA in English
Minor: Biochemistry

Adin Williams, *Unangaġ (Aleut)*

Degree: BFA in Dance
Thesis: In My Grandmother's Garden, Who Are We Becoming?

Belva Young, *Oglala Sioux Tribe*

Degree: BSBA in Marketing

NAIS Certificate Recipients

Undergraduate

Tallulah Bates

Amelia Gandhi

Devin Renae Hernandez

Alyssa Merrival

Julianna McDonald

Rowan Osgood

Deelia Sherman

Graduate

John Pugh

Masters Degree Recipients

Blaise Harper, *Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria*

Degree: BA in Computer Science

Degree: MS in Certificate in Artificial Intelligence

Tyreis Hunte, *Macushi and Maroon*

Degree: MFA in Dance

Thesis: NEGRIA: The Sideshow

Shannon Peterson, *Diné (Navajo Nation)*

Degree: MBA in Business Administration

Arielle Platero, *Diné (Navajo Nation)*

Degree: MS in Mechanical Engineering

Doctoral Recipients

Selena Andrea Munoz Jones, *Little Lake Pomo (Round Valley Tribes)*

Degree: PhD in Sociology

Thesis: Between Reform and Resistance: Public Housing Access and the Persistence of Criminal Record Barriers

Shelby Lynn Ross, *Oglala Sioux Tribe*

Degree: PhD in Geography

Thesis: The Impacts of Extreme Weather Events on Indigenous Health in the Northern Great Plains, USA.

Promoted Faculty

Kristen Carpenter, Distinguished Professor

University of Colorado Law School, Council Tree Professor of Law and Director of the American Indian Law Program at Colorado Law

Keynote Speaker



Melanie Yazzie

Professor - Art and Art History

University of Colorado Boulder

Melanie Yazzie is Professor of Art Practices and Head of Printmaking at the University of Colorado Boulder. Her works belong to many collections such as: the Denver Art Museum, Anchorage Museum of History & Art, the Art Museum of Missoula, the Institute of American Indian Arts, the Kennedy Museum of Art and the Rhode Island School of Design Museum.

She has exhibited nationally and internationally and in countries such as, New Zealand, France, Russia, Canada, Estonia, Northern Ireland, Korea, China, United Kingdom, and Australia. She is known for organizing print exchange projects that connect communities across the world.

She makes prints, sculptures, paintings, does surface design and jewelry design. She has been represented by the Glenn Green Galleries in Santa Fe, New Mexico since 1994.