

Impact Report

2024-25





A Message from the Director



Greetings! Osiyo! Jii-la! Dagotee! Oki! Chokma!

In 2024-2025, the American Indian Law Program focused on making a difference.

As one of the only law schools to offer courses in tribal, federal, and international Indigenous Peoples' law, we are proud of our ability to prepare students to address the full panoply of issues that may come their way in practice. This year, our AILP professors introduced new classes and also updated key texts in Federal Indian Law and Indigenous Peoples in International Law.

Just as importantly, AILP faculty, students, and staff were out in the community, lending their efforts to the most pressing issues of our day. Two professors recently served in high-level posts at the Department of the Interior, while students and faculty worked on voting rights protection on the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations and Maya land rights in Belize. Through The Implementation Project, we are helping make the United Nations more accessible for tribal leaders, while also leading in research on human rights.

We invite you to read on about our signature collaborations with the Native American Rights Fund and other innovations in teaching, research, and engagement that make the University of Colorado Law School the nation's leading institution for the study of American Indian and Indigenous Peoples Law.

We appreciate your support and hope you will contact us at ailp@colorado.edu.

With gratitude,

Kristen Carpenter

Council Tree Professor of Law Director of the American Indian Law Program

Introduction

ABOUT US

At Colorado Law, we are committed to education and advocacy in Indigenous Peoples' Law. Accordingly, our American Indian Law Program offers a full slate of doctrinal and clinical classes to prepare students for tribal. federal. international law practice. Drawing from the legacy of our earliest alumni, including Vine Deloria '70 and Thomas W. Fredericks '72, and our relationship with the Native American Rights Fund, our approach to American Indian Law is deeply grounded in Indian Country and in Indigenous communities throughout the world. Our students, faculty, and staff work closely with tribal governments in the United States, and at the United Nations, especially on issues of treaty natural resources. cultural rights, property, reliaious freedoms. and economic development.

OUR HISTORY

We Professor recognize Emeritus Richard Collins for his many years of teaching, scholarship, and continuing engagement at Colorado Law, as well as past American Indian Law Clinic faculty members Bob Golten, Jerilyn Decoteau, Carla Fredericks, Jill Tompkins, and Chase Velasquez. Finally, we honor the late Dean David H. Getches and Professor Charles Wilkinson, giants in the field and dear friends to Indian Country. For highlights of this history, including alumni accomplishments, see archives of The Amicus.



FACULTY & STAFF

<u>Hannah Ahders '25</u>, American Indian Law Program Fellow

<u>S. James Anaya</u>, University Distinguished Professor and Nicholas Doman Professor of International Law

Kristen Carpenter, Council Tree Professor of Law and Director of the American Indian Law Program

<u>Sarah Krakoff</u>, Moses Lasky Professor of Law

<u>Joan Policastri</u>, Collection Services, Research Librarian and Teaching Professor

Vanessa Racehorse, Associate Professor of Law

<u>Emiliano Salazar '23</u>, Legal Advisor to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

<u>Christina Stanton '15</u>, American Indian Law Clinic Associate Professor of Clinical I aw

By the Numbers



Students taking American Indian Law I in 2025



Voters assisted through *Native* Access to Vote



Alumni now practicing American Indian Law



Tribal leaders who attended an AILP event this year

Courses and Certificate



The Colorado Law AILP is one of few programs anywhere to offer coursework in all three branches of the field: tribal, federal, and international law. Students may take individual classes or pursue the AILP Certificate attesting to a concentration in the issues affecting American Indian and Indigenous Peoples.

Our Curriculum

- American Indian Law I and II
- American Indian Law Clinic
- Comparative Law and Indigenous Peoples *NEW*
- Cultural Property
- Externships
- Human Rights
- Indian Law Seminar
- Indigenous Peoples in International Law
- National NALSA Moot Court Competition
- Tribal Law *NEW*



"American Indian Law I & II changed my perspective by teaching me to closely examine the cultural context behind the law. We studied reserved water rights and met with a NARF attorney who works on protecting these rights. The living relationship between people and water is at the crux of my own research interests. Everyone can stand to benefit from the knowledge and relationships fostered between Indigenous Peoples and water for much longer than American law has existed."

Daniel Anderson '25, GWC Water Law Fellow

New Courses in 2024-25



- Comparative Law and Indigenous Peoples: Professor Anaya's new course engages in comparative study of several countries' treatment of Indigenous legal issues, both introducing students to those systems and providing an opportunity to compare domestic approaches in the U.S. with counterparts from elsewhere in the world. In the course's first offering, guest lecturers from Australia, Belize, Chile, New Zealand, and Norway spoke in class and students had the opportunity to write research papers relating to UN Special Rapporteur engagements in Botswana, Brazil, Mexico, New Zealand, and Tanzania.
- **Tribal Law:** This course provides an overview of the internal laws of Tribal nations. In the course's first offering, Professor Racehorse incorporated the work of Indigenous scholars who offer different frameworks for understanding topics such as custom and tradition, treaty-making, and Native peacemaking to familiarize students with the traditional and continuously evolving aspects of Tribal law. Students worked directly with Tribal governments in the U.S. to draft and analyze tribal codes and agreements, among other projects.



"I know AILP classes will make me a better natural resources attorney. Through Tribal Law, I had the opportunities to do election protection work and to work for a tribe. These experiences deepened my understanding of Indigenous histories, cultures, and legal challenges in the U.S. They also strengthened my legal skills and deepened my commitment to be an informed, useful, and dedicated partner to tribes throughout my career."

Mariah Bowman '25 Fellow, Colorado Attorney General

Tribal Practice

Native Access to Vote

Professor Stanton and the American Indian Law Clinic developed an initiative called Native Access to Vote to encourage Native participation in the November 2024 election. Over 50 students worked together to compile and disseminate voting rights information through pop-up clinics at Native-centered events such as the 2024 CU Boulder Fall Powwow. Professor Stanton and students also led voting rights presentations at Fort Lewis College, the Boulder County Library, and CU Boulder undergraduate classes.

The Clinic partnered with Professor Racehorse's Tribal Law class to provide voting assistance to residents of the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations in South Dakota. The Clinic and the Tribal Law class worked in partnership with Four Directions, a Native-led national voting rights organization dedicated to advancing equality at the ballot box across Indian Country. 18 students, two faculty, and one staff provided voting rights information and helped voters find their precinct and registration information. The students worked at eight precincts where 2,607 people voted In total. Students provided voting information and voting assistance to over 3,500 people during the 2024 election season.



Educating Tribal Advocates

After discussions with the Southern Ute Indian Tribe's Education and Legal Departments, the AILP offered lay advocates working in the Tribe's court system the opportunity to audit Professor Carpenter's American Indian Law I class. The AILP is working to consider additional modalities for reservation residents to access legal studies at Colorado Law.

Inter-Tribal Policy

AILP at NCAI

In October 2024, the AILP and NARF co-hosted a standing room only session at the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) 81st Annual Convention in Las Vegas titled "Indigenous Diplomacy: The Indigenous Peoples' Guide to the United Nations and WIPO's New Treaty on Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge." The session featured Tribal leaders' perspectives on international work, including cross border natural resources protection and intellectual property protection, as well as information for Tribal lawyers and staff regarding international law and policy practice.

"My time as a student attorney in the American Indian Law Clinic was my meaningful law most experience because I was able to work on engaging and timely legal issues impacting Indigenous Peoples around the world. My work with Clinic clients and support of Tribal leaders at UNPFII helped me understand the difference between success in the courtroom and success on the ground, which makes me feel more committed than ever to utilizing my legal career to protect human rights."

> -Sierra Meggitt '25 Clerk, Alaska District Court



NCAI Convention Breakout Session Panel, October 29, 2024. On screen: Keone Nakoa, Kristen Carpenter. In-person from left to right: Whitney Gravelle, Jennifer Weddle, Linda Benally, Cory Frankie Dayish, Larry Wright Jr., Aaron Jones

AILP Professors Serve the Federal Government

Professor Krakoff, Deputy Solicitor for the U.S. Department of the Interior for Parks and Wildlife, 2021-2025

Former Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland appointed Professor Krakoff to serve as Deputy Solicitor for Parks and Wildlife, a key role on the U.S. DOI leadership team. Professor Krakoff joined DOI Solicitor Robert Anderson and a team of solicitors with expertise in American Indian Law to represent the National Parks Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service. Professor Krakoff's work helped to strengthen the relationship between the Tribes and the federal government through important land settlements and other matters.



Professor Carpenter, Senior Advisor to the Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior, 2023-2025

Professor Carpenter served as Senior Advisor to Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland from 2023-2025. Focusing on international Indigenous affairs, Carpenter worked on adoption of the <u>Treaty on Intellectual Property</u>, <u>Genetic Resources</u>, and <u>Associated Traditional Knowledge (2024)</u>, attended the Trilateral Working Group on Violence Against Indigenous Women (2024), and developed a comprehensive <u>Statement on Advancing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2025)</u>.

The Implementation Project

The Implementation Project (TIP) is a joint initiative of the Native American Rights Fund and University of Colorado Law School, founded in 2018, that advances education and advocacy on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.



AILP at the UN Expert Mechanism

In July 2024, Professor Carpenter, Milo Salazar '23, and Hannah Ahders '25, supported Tribal leaders at the 17th Session of the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) in Geneva, Switzerland. EMRIP, a subsidiary body of the UN Human Rights Council, advances the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (the Declaration). Together with TIP, the AILP assisted tribal leaders with drafting and delivering interventions, reflected in EMRIP's recommendations to the Human Rights Council. The AILP co-hosted a side event entitled "Intergenerational Impacts of Indian Boarding Schools in the United States: In Search of Answers and Healing."

AILP at The UN Permanent Forum

In April 2025, Dean Inniss led the University of Colorado delegation to UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, an advisory body to the UN Economic and Social Council, based in New York. Concerns of Tribal leaders support by TIP were reflected in at least 10 UNPFII recommendations. Student attorneys, working under Professor Stanton's supervision, had the opportunity to put their studies into practice with Clinic clients attending. The AILP, TIP, and NARF co-hosted a side event examining the meaning of and highlighting measures to implement Free, Prior, and Informed Consent in international, domestic, and tribal policy.

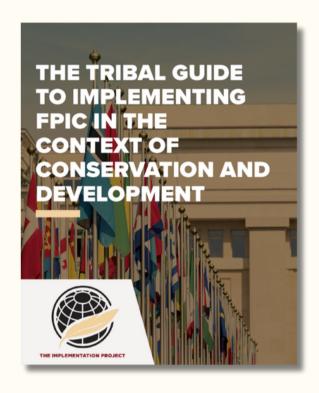


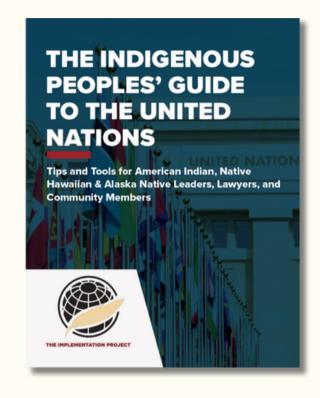
TIP Publications

Forthcoming:

- Native Hawaiian Rights and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: A Toolkit for Advocacy and Diplomacy
- The Law Students' Guide to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples











Maya Land Rights and Development Project

In 2015, the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ), the highest appellate court for Belize, handed down a landmark decision affirming that Maya communities in the Toledo region hold customary title to the lands they collectively use and occupy. The CCJ ordered the Belizean government to identify and protect Maya lands in accordance with customary tenure, and to abstain from interfering or allowing third party interference with Maya land rights. The government, however, has not yet fully complied with the order.

Professor Anaya, with the AILP and Doman Society of International Law students, established the <u>Maya Land Rights and Development Project</u> in 2018. The Project collaborates with the Julian Cho Society and the Maya Leaders Alliance to advocate for implementation of Maya land rights, strengthen local governance, and build economic resilience in Maya communities.





In 2025 the Project team...

- developed a training for Maya leaders and resource persons with the objective of enhancing the effectiveness of their work related to strengthening of Maya governance and efforts to secure Maya land and resource rights;
- assisted Maya communities with developing community by-laws;
- provided research on the nature of Indigenous land tenure and and strategized with local counsel in anticipation of compliance hearings before the CCJ;
- conducted extensive research in preparation for a possible application to the CCJ to clarify the consent order, especially in regard to the nature of Maya customary land tenure; and
- Represented the Maya people in proceedings before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights

Culture, Language, & Religion

Language Rights

Professor Carpenter, together Linguistics Professors Andy Cowell and Alexis Palmer, led a multi-year interdisciplinary research project, funded by a University of Colorado Seed Grant. to support governments in developing law and policies for language revitalization. Bringing together tribal leaders with linguistics scholars, the project called for the United States to join the world community in supporting the International Decade of Indigenous Languages. In 2024, the White House announced a 10-year National Plan on Native Language Revitalization, "Visions for the International Decade Indigenous Languages," a volume of research assembled by the project, including statements by Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin, Jr., and Shawnee Tribe Chief Ben Barnes.





Apache Religious Freedom

The AILP has been deeply engaged in the San Carlos Apache Tribe's efforts to protect their sacred site, Chi'chil Biłdagoteel, also commonly known as Oak Flat, from transfer to a multinational mining company whose plans for a copper mine will destroy the site and prevent girls' coming of age ceremonies there. In 2023, The Implementation Project supported Tribal Chairman Terry Rambler in making a powerful statement to the UN Permanent Forum regarding U.S. obligations to protect the human right to religion, and in 2024, Professor Anaya submitted a petition on behalf of the Tribe to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. AILP Fellow Emiliano Salazar '23 provided research and drafting assistance. In 2025, the Committee responded, expressing concern about the adverse impacts of the mining initiative and asking the U.S. to provide information about its plans to protect the site and religious freedoms there. The U.S. Supreme Court recently declined to hear a related case, which makes the international processes all the more important to saving Oak Flat.

Human Rights in Practice

Legislative Reform in Mexico; International Mining Standards

Professor Anaya was part of a team of experts appointed by the Office of the Legal Counsel of the Federal Executive of Mexico to draft a new "General Law on Indigenous Peoples and Communities," likely to be adopted by the Mexican Congress Later this year. Additionally, he advised the International Council on Mining and Metals, an association of the world's largest mining companies, on the development of its new Position Statement on Indigenous Peoples. The new position statement is centered on a commitment to respect Indigenous Peoples' rights as recognized in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.



The UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples at Colorado Law

Dr. Albert K. Barume was appointed as <u>United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples</u>, and announced Colorado Law as his academic home and Emiliano Salazar '23, as his legal advisor, with opportunities for AILP students to work on the front lines of human rights. The UN Human Rights Council mandates the Special Rapporteur to collect information on human rights violations affecting Indigenous Peoples around the world and to provide recommendations for remedies and prevention going forward. Dr. Barume plans to collaborate with the AILP to bring more awareness and education about international issues to Indigenous leaders and legal experts.

Faculty Publications

S. James Anaya



- The Right of Self-Determination, the Sami Indigenous Peoples, and the Finnmark Act, 16 Arctic Rev. on L. & Poli. 167 (2025) (with Mattias Åhren)
- Mining Association Position Statement on Indigenous Peoples: Respect for Their Rights Advanced, with Some Shortcomings, 36 Colo. Env't L. J. 197 (2025)
- The Significance of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 118 Am. J. Int'l L. Unbound 134 (2024)
- The Role of International Law, in Cohen's Handbook of Federal Indian Law (Nell Jessup Newton, et al. eds., 2024 ed. 2024)

Kristen A. Carpenter



- Indigenous Peoples in International Treaty Diplomacy, 71 UCLA L. Rev. 1622 (2025)
- Indigenous Peoples and Religious Freedoms: A Global Perspective, in <u>The Oxford Handbook of Indigenous Peoples</u> and International Law (M. Åhrén et al., eds.) (forthcoming 2025)
- Human Rights Paradigms in the Decolonization of Indigenous Migration, in <u>The Oxford Handbook of Economic and Social</u> <u>Rights</u> (M. Langford et al., eds.) (forthcoming 2025) (with A. Riley)
- Cases and Materials on Federal Indian Law (7th ed. West 2017) (8th ed. forthcoming 2025) (With D. Getches, C. Wilkinson, R. Williams, M. Fletcher, and W. Singel)

Vanessa Racehorse



 Tribal Health Self-Determination: The Role of Tribal Health Systems in Actualizing the Highest Attainable Standard of Health for American Indians and Alaska Natives, 55 Colum. Hum. Rts. L. Rv. 183 (2025)

Past AILP Fellows Changing the World

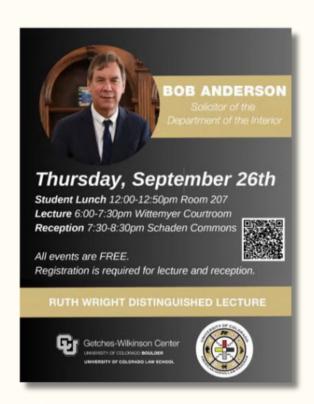
With generous support from Dean Inniss, AILP Fellows play a vital role in supporting the AILP by drafting academic publications, fostering connections with Indigenous leaders, mentoring AILP students, and participating in conferences and tribal, government, and UN meetings. The Fellowship offers incomparable training for rewarding careers in American Indian Law.



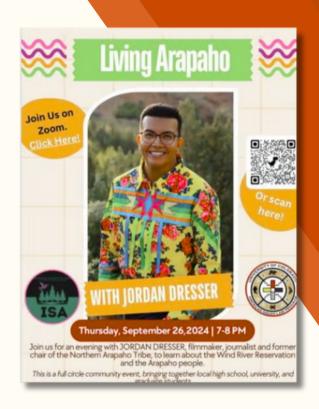
Emiliano Salazar '23

- Daniel Cordalis '11 founded and leads the Tribal Water Institute at the Native American Rights Fund. The Tribal Water Institute provides legal support to tribes on water issues, trains water attorneys on tribal issues, develops tribal water policy, and educates federal and state decision-makers. Mr. Cordalis also served on the Getches-Wilkinson Center Advisory Council from 2018-2021.
- **Dr. Jacquelyn Jampolsky '14** is the founding partner of AIM Law, a firm that assists tribal governments with generating wealth and assists businesses with financing tribal projects.
- Danielle Lazore-Thompson is an Associate Attorney at Big Fire Law & Policy Group, a firm that represents tribal governments, businesses, and organizations. Ms. Lazore-Thompson practices in the areas of gaming and non-gaming economic development, communications and infrastructure development, government contracting, and legislative and policy development.
- Edyael Casaperalta '18 serves as Legal Advisor to Commissioner Gomez at the Federal Communications Commission. Ms. Casaperalta provides policy analysis on wireless, space, and consumer issues by drawing on her experience working for the Department of Agriculture to increase broadband access on tribal lands.
- **Kevin Harlow-Miller '20** is an Associate Attorney at K. Scott Hamerslough P.C., a boutique family law office in Boulder.
- Ellie Thurston '22 is an Attorney-Advisor in the Cross-Cutting Issues Law Office within the Office of General Counsel at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Ms. Thurston focuses primarily on federal Indian law issues, transboundary pollution, and compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, National Historic Preservation Act, and Endangered Species Act.
- Emiliano Salazar '23 is Legal Advisor to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, providing legal and technical support to mandate-holder Dr. Albert K. Barume.

Events

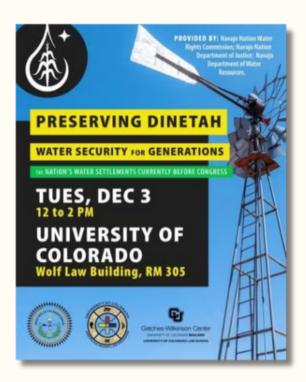








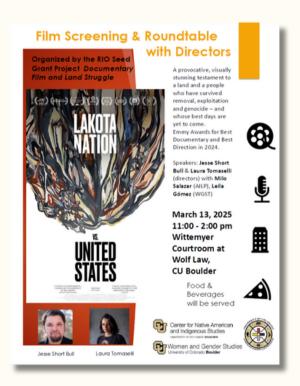
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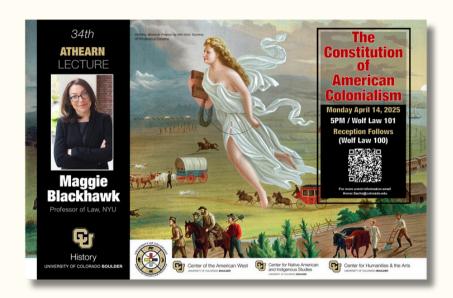








Events















The AILP's commitment to train the next generation of lawyers in American Indian and Indigenous Peoples Law could not happen without the generous support of our donors. We thank the Henry Luce Foundation, Nia Tero, the Christensen Fund, Silicon Valley Foundation, University of Colorado Research and Innovation Office, Steve Hillard '76 and Sharmaine Hillard, and Dean Lolita Buckner Inniss for supporting our most recent activities. We invite other potential supporters to contact us at ailp@colorado.edu or click here to learn about the program and opportunities to donate.

Wado, Mvto, K'waa, Yakoke, thank you!

