

# Indigenous Research Conference

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## WSU Hosts Gathering on Indigenous Research

by Ken Lokensgard

On April 1<sup>st</sup>, Washington State University hosted their third annual Indigenous Research Conference. The conference was organized by the WSU Chapter of the Society of Indian Psychologists, led by Ph.D. candidate Greg Urquhart (Eastern Band of Cherokee descent). It was supported by WSU's Plateau Center for Native American Research & Collaboration, a branch of [Native American Programs](#), and the [Center for Mestizo and Indigenous Research](#).

Conference participants included undergraduates, graduate students, faculty, researchers, and community members. Among the institutions they represented were WSU, Eastern Washington University, Northwest Indian College, and the University of Idaho. The conference included thirteen presenters, addressing topics ranging from business development among Northwest tribes to Indigenous language revival in Libya.

WSU Tribal Liaison and Director of Native American Programs Barbara Aston (Wyandotte) opened the conference by welcoming attendees to WSU Pullman. She also acknowledged that the university is located on traditional Palus land and ceded Nez Perce territory. She emphasized that this fact should inspire attendees to engage in the most ethical, most effective research with tribes as possible. Undergraduates Shelby Leighton (Nez Perce) and John Reichel (Cowlitz), members of WSU's Tribal Nation Building and Leadership Program followed Aston with presentations of their senior projects.

During lunch, keynote speakers Dr. Zoe Higheagle Strong (Nez Perce) and Emma Elliot-Groves (Cowichan) delivered a presentation entitled "Indigenous Research Methodology, Ethics, and Academia." Dr. Strong, Plateau Center Research Fellow and Asst. Professor of Educational Psychology, summarized the key concerns and principles expressed in these methodologies. Then Dr. Elliot-Groves, Asst. Research Professor at WSU's [Partnerships for Native Health](#), offered a powerful example of how these methodologies can facilitate respectful, collaborative research by describing her own work with her community. Dr. Strong's father, Gordon Higheagle (Nez Perce), opened for the two presenters, welcoming attendees to Nez Perce territory.

This year, the conference was scheduled the day after the spring meeting of the Native American Advisory Board to the President. There, representatives from the twelve tribes with whom WSU has a [memorandum of understanding](#), had the opportunity to visit booths manned by various WSU researchers working in Native America, before meeting with President Kirk Schulz. That day, WSU also held its annual [Academic Showcase](#), during which all faculty, staff, and graduate students have the opportunity to display posters and discuss their research projects. The Indigenous Research Conference, the preceding Advisory Board Meeting, along with the WSU Academic Showcase offered the WSU community and visitors the opportunity to see a huge range of research pertaining to Indigenous peoples, over the course of two days.

The conference will be held again next spring, and will likely follow the Native American Advisory Board Meeting and Research Showcase once again. We urge interested parties to consider submitting proposals for presentations or posters. Next year, The Plateau Center plans to expand the conference significantly, accommodating many more researchers from institutions of higher education, regional tribes, and other Indigenous communities. The call for proposals is months away, but anyone with questions can contact [Ken Lokensgard, Ph.D.](#) in the meantime.



*Dr. Zoe Higheagle Strong (Nez Perce) speaks on "Indigenous Research Methodology, Ethics, and Academia."*

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