

2023 Mid-Year Regional Report

“Entering a New Dawn of Healing with UNITY”

Prepared by Jonathan J. Arakawa, NUC Secretary & Northwest Representative

Members of the National UNITY Council,

The first half of my term on the 2022-2023 Executive Committee has been very meaningful. Continuing in a second term has enabled me to continue hit the ground running. Starting from July, 2022, you will be able to capture of snippet of my service to the Northwest Region and my involvements across Indian Country to advocate on your behalf as we yearn to find solutions.

JULY 2022

2022 National UNITY Conference and Regional Engagements



The 2022 National UNITY Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota was an incredible week with amazing people. 135+ Native youth from the Northwest Region were in attendance! Our regional caucus heard 15 reports from youth councils, youth groups, and individual members. All four states within our region were represented. A shout out to our Executive Committee, Council of Trustees, UNITY staff, partners,

and sponsors for all their hard and tireless work.

Upon returning from the conference, I traveled to Quileute Nation to take part in their Quileute Days Celebration. There, I attended their Quileute Days Royalty Pageantry and was able to congratulate their incoming leaders for a year of community leadership, regional engagement, representation of their nation, and an experience that will stick with them for a lifetime.

In the meantime, I made contact with the Klamath Tribes Youth Council, Siletz Tribal Youth Council, Tulalip Youth Council, Coeur d’Alene Youth Council, and Quileute Tribal School ASB to provide support for local planning efforts, projects, and more.

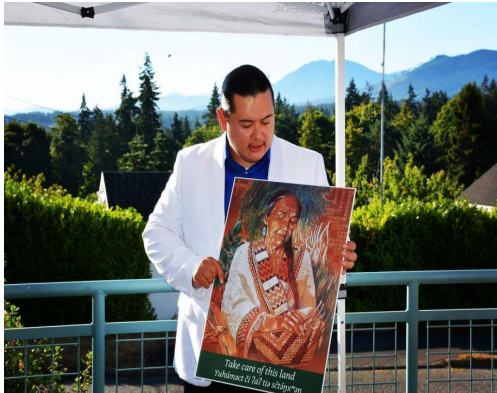


AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 2022

Government Relations, Regional Engagements, Curriculum Development and OKC Healing Circle

During the first week of August, I had the honor of representing UNITY at the Grand Opening of the New Quileute Tribal School. This in the Quileute Nation's plan to move to higher ground, out of the tsunami zone, and addressing the disparities of climate change. Advancing Native Education In Action!

The following week, I provided language and cultural lessons to our Elwha youth attending our Tribe's high school Elwha Science-Cultural Education Camp. Students engaged in river surveying, cultural education and weekly cultural arts and crafts.



As part of 25 Under 25 and Executive Committee platform, I continued to stay heavily involved in my platform, "Advocating for the requirement of Native American History and Languages to be taught in the United States public school system." Outside of my service at UNITY and NCAI, I am a Klallam Language & Culture Teacher for the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe. Prior to and after being recognized, I have focused on the implementation of the tribal history curriculum at the Port Angeles School District in accordance with Washington State law. I have been charged with the creation and implementation of a middle

school tribal history curriculum and we will pilot the project this fall. Our project with the district represents successful consultation and government-to-government relationships.

I had the honor to travel to the Southern Plains to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, the birthplace of UNITY. UNITY held a Healing Circle Training for Native Youth, which is part of the NUC Resolution, "Restoring the Spirit of Native Youth." This is one of the first of a few trainings to take place. Native youth and Youth Councils from across Oklahoma were in attendance and were heavily engaged. Following the training, our late Founder of UNITY, J.R. Cook, was honored in a Celebration of Life at the First Americans Museum yesterday. Co-Presidents Chenoa Scippio and Colby WhiteThunder, Southern Plains Representative Elwood McClellan, Great Plains Representative Justice Fox, and I attended both the Training and Celebration. We were also accompanied by my fellow Oklahoma 25 Under 25 recipients who helped guide Native youth through asset mapping and community needs assessments. Later that evening, J.R. was honored during a "Special" at the 2022 Indian Hills Powwow. Female Co-President, Chenoa Scippio, and I took part in the Special at the Powwow with UNITY staff.



I began helping the United National Indian Tribal Youth, Inc., and National Congress of American Indians Youth Commission to start working on developing a Memorandum of Agreement to strengthen and formally establish our longstanding relationship. UNITY was invited to attend

NCAI's 79th Annual Convention and Marketplace at the end of October, where I had been heavily involved in the planning and preparation for the Youth Agenda.

OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2022

Representing Abroad, Creating Relationships and First-Ever Northwest Healing Circle

On October 28th, I traveled to Sacramento, California, for the 79th Annual National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Convention. Our convention took place October 31st through November 4th. At NCAI, we said we would bring all of Indian Country together at this convention. Defending Sovereignty since 1944. Nevertheless, we succeeded in doing that. It was great to see so many Northwest tribal leaders, including my Chairwoman, Frances Charles.



I was proud to stand with our National UNITY Council Co-Presidents, Chenoa Scippio and Colby WhiteThunder, as they addressed tribal leaders and our peers. We told the General Assembly about UNITY and the services we greatly provide. Madam President Scippio challenged tribal leaders to send their youth to a UNITY Conference, an NCAI Conference, and establish a Youth Council.

In addition, I completed my two-year term as Vice President on the NCAI Youth Commission. The NCAI Youth Commission conducted our elections during the convention. Our elections are opposite years of the NCAI Executive Board. We were honored to elect 6 new officers and 2 ex-officio officers. I was proud to be elected the ex-officio officer. In this position, I will have the privilege to mentor and advise the newly-elected officers on decisions, drafting documents, handling inter-personal matters, and much more. We were all sworn in on November 3, 2022, during the 4th General Assembly at NCAI in Sacramento, CA.

Along with my fellow UNITY leaders, I had the great honor and privilege to travel to Washington, D.C. for the White House Tribal Youth Forum. While I was at NCAI, I received an invitation to attend the Forum, from our sister organization, the Center for Native American Youth (CNAY) at the Aspen Institute. The one-day summit, co-hosted by the White House, UNITY and CNAY, features an exciting all-day program with high-level administration officials, special guests, and Native youth from across



Indian Country to engage in key discussions including mental health, wellness, climate change, food sovereignty, Native language & education, and so much more.



At the Forum, I was asked to answer questions from administration and department of education officials regarding Native languages, including U.S. Education Deputy Secretary Cindy Marten and White House Native American Initiatives Executive Director, Jason Cummins. It was humbling to provide insightful remarks on how to protect and revitalize Native languages and the idea of requiring tribal history to be taught in ALL U.S. K-12 public schools.

The following day, we received an invitation to join First Lady, Dr. Jill Biden, for the first ever White House Native American Heritage Month Celebration. Native youth had the opportunity to witness and hear remarks from Dr. Biden and Interior Secretary, Deb Haaland. One quote stood out to me from the First Lady, “We honored to welcome you to the White House. Your House. The People’s House.” We will remember this historic event for a lifetime!



At the beginning of December, our UNITY northwest leadership delegation headed to Tulalip, Washington, for the first Northwest Healing Circle. Our team included President Chenoa Scippio, NW Peer Guides Angela Noah and Savanna Rilatos, and UNITY Staff LorenAshley Buford and William Mosley, and myself. We had a pre-meeting with the Tulalip Youth Council in their BEAUTIFUL Youth Council Chambers! The first I’ve ever heard of, or seen. The Northwest showed up Strong as always. Klamath, Siletz, Quinault, Nooksack, Lummi, Lower Elwha, Snoqualmie, Suquamish, and other Tribes were

represented.

During our first day of the Healing Circle trainings, we began our Perfect Rez exercise which led in to creating community service projects to present a Mock Tribal Council. Later that day, a beautiful and powerful Coastal Jam was hosted by the Youth Councils — a modern day traditional gather where Tribes in the area come to share fun songs for all to enjoy. The Tulalip Youth Council had it in their hearts to share a song and gifts to honor us. It was



a heartwarming experience. I'm immensely proud of our UNITY Leadership Team and our Youth Clan Groups for a great job well done!

JANUARY 2023

Executive Committee Annual Retreat, 2023 National UNITY Council Initiative, Government Relations, Webinars and Local Meetings

Going into January, your Executive Committee (EC) went right back into work after the holiday season. Kudos to the hard work of our UNITY staff, the EC was delighted to hear UNITY received funding from Walmart. With this funding, we were able to plan our EC leadership development training. The leadership training took place January 13-15, 2023, at the National UNITY Headquarters in Mesa, Arizona. Our esteemed UNITY trainer, Dr. Pearl Yellowman, led us throughout the weekend.



During our weekend at the UNITY Headquarters, we discussed some of the following topics.

- Principles of each UNITY Program
- Communications/Celebrate Outcomes
- Setting Norms for the New Year
- 2023 National UNITY Council (NUC) Proposed Initiative
- Midyear and National Conferences Preparation



The Executive Committee took a deep dive into creating and organized our new initiative for this year. We began organizing our working document in order to formalize the initiative. After hitting some brick walls and hearing feedback from each EC member, we agreed to go back to the 2022 NUC Initiative, "Restoring the Spirit of Native Youth." The reason for this important decision is to finish what the previous EC started. Specifically surrounding the true intentions between the Talking Circles idea from the EC, helping all UNITY Youth Councils get back up on their feet and engaging/supporting all UNITY programs so we can better support the NUC.

The EC is excited to introduce our new and improved initiative, "Healing the Spirit of Native Youth" Resolution, to the NUC during our Mid-Year Conference Business Meeting.

On Tuesday, January 17, 2023, I had the honor to join leaders, faculty and staff from the Washington State Board on Community and Technical Colleges, Peninsula College and 6 area Tribal Nations for a Government-to-Government Summit at the Peninsula College Longhouse.

During the summit, Peninsula College President Suzy Ames announced before the summit attendees, there are some changes being made in the faculty union agreements relating to Indigenous Language courses.



Initially, faculty who did not have a master's or doctorate degree needed a 'Teacher of Record' in order for students to receive college credits. In President Ames' announcement to the Tribal Leaders, this requirement is no longer needed. Under this changes in the faculty union agreements, tribal teaching certification are now recognized. A similar change in agreements occurred at the Wenatchee College through the leadership of WSBCTC Director of Tribal Affairs, Lynn Palmanteer-Holder, who also assisted Peninsula College with this important change.



Effective Spring 2023, Indigenous language teachers who don't have a master's or doctorate degree no longer a Teacher of Record. By having tribal teaching certifications finally acknowledged, the language teacher's names will be sufficient on the syllabus and Canvas, if they are tribally certified teachers. This is a good step in the right direction.

On January 18, 2023, I had a brief moment to attend the second RadX webinar series, where participants had an opportunity to learn about evaluation for Indigenous and LGBTQ+ communities, including data sovereignty, and discuss results from the Youth and Young Adults COVID-19 Study.

It was wonderful to see the collaboration between UNITY and Bowman Consulting while the EC and 25 Under 25 were readily engaged in the discussions.

List of other meetings I attended in January:

- NCAI Youth Commission Biweekly Meetings
- OSPI Tribal Language Educators Biweekly PLC
- OPSI Native American Educators Cultivation Research Advisory Board Monthly Meeting
- Tribally Governed Teacher Prep/Residency Workgroup Meeting

- Peninsula College Indigenous Language Programs Support Meeting

Thank you to my Region and all Native youth for allowing me to serve you. It is an honor of a lifetime to serve in these capacities at UNITY. From the Executive Committee, Council of Trustees, UNITY Staff and Trainers, UNITY Programs to the National UNITY Council, we have an amazing team! Madam and Mr. President, this is my report. Thank you.

In UNITY,

Jonathan J. Arakawa
Secretary & Northwest Representative
National UNITY Council Executive Committee