American Indian and Alaska Native Concentration

The American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) concentration grounds students in the historical and contemporary issues facing Native populations from cultural, policy and practice perspectives.

**PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

Students will develop the knowledge and skills to serve Native communities and individuals: understanding the extent, effects and causes of issues facing Native Peoples; gaining awareness of tribal governance and institutions; and understanding best practices for evaluating and intervening with communities. A special emphasis is placed on cultural competencies and using strengths-based perspectives. The concentration has three tracks to choose from:

**Direct Practice: Trauma Informed:** for students who plan to work with AI/AN communities coping with trauma through a direct practice lens

**Direct Practice: Behavioral Health:** for students who plan to work with AI/AN communities experiencing mental health and substance abuse conditions through a direct practice lens

**Community Track:** for students who plan to work in community building, capacity development, leadership and asset building in AI/AN tribes and communities

**CONCENTRATION REQUIREMENTS: 21 CREDITS**

- Indigenous Knowledge, Values, and Cultures (3 credits)
- AI/AN Social Welfare Policies and Administrative Practices (3 credits)
- Indigenous Mental Health Practice (3 credits)
- Community Development with American Indian and Other Indigenous Communities (3 credits)
- Social Policy Analysis and Evaluation (3 credits) or Evaluation of Programs and Services (3 credits)
- Leadership and Management of Organizations (3 credits) or Human Service Organizations: Theories, Concepts, Issues (3 credits)
- One additional practice-focused course, to be determined based on your track of choice (3 credits)

You will also have 9 elective credits, which can be used to broaden your expertise through courses such as:

- Fundamentals of Community Organizing (1 credit)
- Differential Diagnosis (3 credits)
- Core Concepts in Trauma Treatment for Children and Adolescents (3 credits)
- Theoretical Approaches to Interpersonal Violence Across the Life Course (3 credits)

“I went into public health and social work because I wanted to connect practice and theory with my own lived experience in order to create positive social transformations within Native communities. With this training, I’m confident that I will be able to offer valuable solutions to tribal nations and communities with compassion and respect.”

MATTHEW R. FRANK
(NAVajo NATION), MSW/MPH ’16
Evaluation and Research Manager at Native American Rehabilitation Association of the Northwest

American Indian & Alaska Native Concentration
PAMELA L. BEGAY, PHD, LCSW, Concentration Chair

Dr. Begay (Diné Nation) chairs the American Indian and Alaska Native concentration, serves as Director of the Kathryn M. Buder Center for American Indian Studies and is an associate professor of practice. Her work focuses on curriculum for the AI/AN concentration, supporting the mission of the Buder Center and building collaborations with American Indian tribes. Her research interests include mentoring in academia, trauma/trauma treatment modalities with AI/AN populations and issues surrounding Native women. She teaches graduate-level social work courses and maintains a clinical private practice focusing on treating trauma while infusing psychodynamic therapy in a culturally appropriate way. Dr. Begay is an alumna of the Brown School’s MSW program. She received her PhD in clinical social work from Smith College-School for Social Work, and her BA from the University of New Mexico.

CONCENTRATION PRACTICUM

The MSW program requires 600 hours of concentration practicum (in addition to 360 hours of foundation practicum); 360 of the 600 hours must take place in an AI/AN-related setting.

Sample AI/AN practicum sites include:

- National Council for Urban Indian Health, Washington D.C.
- Denver Indian Family Resource Center, Denver, Colo.
- National Native Children’s Trauma Center, Missoula, Mont.
- Minnesota Indian Women’s Resource Center, Minneapolis, Minn
- Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation Social Services, Mayetta, Kan.
- Indian Health Services Behavioral Health, various locations

CAREER PATHS

Students earning an MSW with the American Indian and Alaska Native concentration are qualified for career paths with employers such as:

- Tribal governments
- Indian Health Service
- Community-based organizations serving AI/AN people
- Urban and rural health clinics
- Tribal schools and colleges

Washington University in St. Louis

To learn more about the MSW program, contact: Office of Admissions & Recruitment
314.935.6676
brownadmissions@wustl.edu
brownschool.wustl.edu

Revised 07/2021