

Project Title: California Native American Research Centers for Health – Student Development Program (CA-NARCH SDP)

Project Lead: Dr. Seth San Juan, PI

Performance Period: 1/1/2020-7/31/2025; Award Amount: \$77,792

Funding Source: National Institutes of Health (NIH) – Native American Research Centers for Health (NARCH XI)

Project Goal: Increase the participation and success of American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) students in biomedical and behavioral sciences.



Goals and Achievements

- Developed and implemented individualized student mentoring and support strategies to assist American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) students pursuing STEM fields.
- Performed outreach activities to resulting in multiple students being connected with NARCH supports; one student transferred to CSU San Marcos (2023) and another to UC San Diego (2025).
- Hosted 8 information sessions or class visits to introduce students to the NARCH program and STEM career pathways.
- Incorporated feedback from students to refine outreach methods or support services (e.g., shifting to hybrid office hours or revising promotional materials).



Student Impact

- Increased student capacity in navigating STEM academic pathways through personalized support, referrals to enrichment programs, and facilitated connections with the AI/AN science research community.
- Students gained access to weekly office hours, one-on-one guidance, and invitations to NARCH-sponsored events throughout San Diego County.
- Approximately 6 students per year engaged through outreach, advising, or mentoring over the 2022–2025 period.



Partnerships & Collaborations

- Deepened relationship with lead organization (Indian Health Council)
- Collaborated with NARCH faculty and staff at CSUSM, SDSU, and UCSD.
- Participated in Tribal College fairs to expand AI/AN representation in biomedical and behavioral sciences.
- Strengthened internal collaborations at Palomar College with departments such as [e.g., Counseling, STEM and American Indian Studies faculty].



Institutional and Community Impact

- Strengthened relationships across local institutions to support shared goals of AI/AN student success.
- Developed and maintained contact with tribal organizations and community-based groups that support AI/AN students; met monthly with the NARCH Student Program Coordinator to align outreach and support efforts.



What's Next?

As the grant concludes, efforts will continue to focus on recruiting and mentoring students, to the extent that resources allow. While future outreach activities may depend on available funding, the experience gained through NARCH XI provides a valuable foundation for continued collaboration. Over the past year, Palomar College hired a Student Program Coordinator, and partnering with this individual may help sustain efforts to engage Native students in STEM fields, building on lessons learned throughout the project.