

American Indian Science and Engineering Society

By: Martina Dawley



2018 AISES Regional Conference
Photo by: Shivanna Moriarty

The American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) is an organization for American Indians throughout North America, including Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and First Nations students and professionals interested in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) studies and careers.

AISES Region 3 Southwestern Conference

The 2018 AISES Region 3 Conference was held on April 13, 2018 at The University of Arizona (UA) and had one hundred and fifty students, faculty, staff, and special guests in attendance.

The theme, *Indigenous Hidden Figures in STEM*, focused on the underrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in STEM. Individuals whose work either supports or encourages higher education in STEM were invited to be speakers. Each of the speakers served as role models to all of the students in attendance as they have all successfully maneuvered the higher education system and established themselves in their field of work.



Kiana Kaye

"The entire conference was amazing because of the number of attendees, speakers, and diverse workshops we had. We invited people outside of the AISES community and it was a great idea because we made our AISES family bigger and were able to expand our knowledge." - Kiana Kaye (Diné), UA AISES Chapter President

Having a heavy presence of female STEM leaders made a huge impact on the conference. Females in STEM are frequently underrepresented, but by having a large number of female STEM leaders present it showed the younger female students in attendance that they too can succeed in the STEM field. To highlight the female leaders in STEM, the conference featured a Female Panel Discussion.

The Female Panel Discussion session included:

- Genevieve Benally (Diné), a Quality Engineer who grew up in Page, Arizona.
- Sheila Alvarez (Hispanic) an IT Security Project Manager who grew up in Tucson, Arizona.
- Annie François, MD (Haitian) an Orthopedic Surgeon who grew up in Haiti and California.
- Rachel Yellowhair (Diné) an IT Site Services West Region Manager who grew up in Kayenta, Arizona on the Navajo Nation.

These professional women shared their stories about their career paths, specifically on how they overcame their struggles to reach their goals.



Casey Calderon

"The AISES Region 3 Conference was an excellent way to interact with fellow STEM professionals during the poster session, as well as get to further know other Indigenous scholars, mentors, and researchers." - Casey Calderon (Diné), UA student and AISES member

Dr. Karletta Chief (Diné), Associate Professor in the Department of Soil Water and Environmental Science at UA, was the featured keynote speaker of the event. Dr. Chief is also the faculty advisor for UA's AISES Chapter.



Dr. Karletta Chief

"The UA AISES Chapter hosted an excellent AISES Regional Conference in 2018! They were innovative in the selection of sessions and tours and involved the community across campus, Tucson, Arizona and the region! The UA AISES members are truly leaders of their generation sharing knowledge across professional disciplines while inspiring the youth!" -Dr. Karletta Chief (Diné), UA AISES Advisor



Genevieve Benally

"The University of Arizona American Indian Science and Engineering Society's officers worked diligently in ensuring the conference was run with professionalism. Their leadership provided students with highly informed sessions and opportunities to network with professionals. The Raytheon American Indian Network (RAIN) values our collaboration with the students and look forward to sustaining our relationship with them for the growth and benefit of all STEM students!" -Genevieve Benally (Diné), RAIN

One of the most memorable moments of the conference was the closing ceremony. A blessing ceremony was done by Jesse Navarro (Tohono O'odham), UA Government & Community Relations, for all the attendees safe travels home.

"It was great to see everyone from different universities and communities stand together. Those who have traveled far and near to be part of this conference all gained something new. The atmosphere was pure and you can feel the support from everyone." - Kiana Kaye (Diné), UA AISES Chapter President

When is the next conference?

The next conference will be at New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology on March 29-30, 2019. The purpose of the conferences is to widen the community at UA for Indigenous students in STEM.



AMERICAN INDIAN SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING SOCIETY

For more information visit:
<http://www.aises.org/>

Contact:
Kiana Kaye, UA AISES Chapter President
kianaashleekaye@email.arizona.edu



2018 AISES Regional Conference Attendees
Photo by: Shivanna Moriarty

For more information on the next AISES Regional Conference visit:
http://www.aises.org/news/events/regional-conferences#quicktabs-regional_conferences=2