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**For immediate release:**

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**2018 Cobell Summer Graduate Research Fellowship Recipients Announced**

Indigenous Education, Inc. is pleased to announce the 2018 recipients of the distinguished Cobell Graduate Summer Research Fellowship administered on behalf of the Cobell Board of Trustees. Each year, Indigenous Education, Inc. will solicit applications for highly competitive research projects to be conducted during the summer at institutions across the country. The aim of the program is to select American Indian and Alaska Native student researchers who might not otherwise have access to funds to conduct research and related activities during the summer months. Each of the five researchers will receive a cash stipend to defray costs associated with summer research, a faculty mentor on their campus, unparalleled academic attention from the Director of Research and Student Success at Indigenous Education, Inc. and opportunities to network with the other Cobell Summer Graduate Research Fellows. We are excited to work with this diverse group of Native scholars researching across the country at high profile research institutions, representing a variety of tribes while working to indigenize higher education in their respective fields of interest.

## Shining Examples of American Indian/Alaska Native Graduate Student Success:

### Announcing the 2018 Cobell Graduate Summer Research Fellows

The overarching mission and vision of Indigenous Education, Inc. is to support American Indian and Alaska Native student success. The Cobell Graduate Summer Research Fellowship was developed to help support graduate students during the summer months – a critical yet often overlooked period of a graduate student researcher’s academic year. The organization highlights the five outstanding Summer Research Fellows and their incredible research projects. Their stories will help to inspire other Native students to research their passion. The 2019 Cobell Summer Graduate Research Fellowship application opens September 1, 2018 with a deadline of January 10, 2019; someone you know may be interested in this unique opportunity to shine!



#### **Bridget Groat**

Naknek Native Village – Alaska

Arizona State University Tempe

Doctoral Student - History

Bridget’s research focuses on “a region in southwest Alaska known as Bristol Bay, which has supported Indigenous groups for thousands of years. Bristol Bay produces half of the world’s wild sockeye salmon, supports a world-class sport fishery, and is home to more brown bears than people. Although many people enjoy wild sockeye salmon, the story behind this sustainable food source exists far from the point of consumption. The project examines the Bristol Bay fishery from its beginnings to the present. As the canneries arrived in Bristol Bay, the region’s Indigenous people faced extractive colonialism as canning interests sought out new salmon resources amidst the declining salmon fisheries in the Pacific Northwest. The project looks at the fishery from an insider perspective, using oral history interviews to show how Bristol Bay Natives weathered the changes as Euro-American canneries invaded their Indigenous fishery forever altering the human/salmon relationship. Bridget’s project shows how the fishery changed over time as Natives fought to remain relevant in the commercial fishery. For Bristol Bay Natives, the subsistence use of salmon remains a constant connection to the past and persists as a way for Bristol Bay’s Native people to practice cultural continuance.”

Bridget says that receiving the Fellowship allows her to “visit several archives in Alaska and in Washington. While in Anchorage, Alaska, I will visit the state archives and the University of Alaska archives where I hope to find information on the Bristol Bay Fishery. I will also travel to Naknek, Alaska where I will visit the Bristol Bay Historical Society’s museum, a local museum dedicated to the salmon fishery. I will visit the archives in Washington where I hope to spend at least a week in Washington with my time divided between Seattle and Bellingham. In Seattle, I will visit the University of Washington special collections which houses an extensive collection of archival material related to salmon fishing in Alaska. I will also visit the National Archives in Seattle, which houses Alaska’s state records. I will also travel to Western Washington University in Bellingham where I will visit the Center for Pacific Northwest Studies. The archive houses the Alaska Packers Association records. The Alaska Packers Association was the most influential cannery in Bristol Bay in the 20th century. I am looking for information on their relationship with Alaska Natives and their hiring practices as well as information on the fisheries.”

During my time in Alaska, I will conduct oral history interviews. I plan to interview Alaska Natives involved in the Bristol Bay fishery. Interviews will be conducted in Anchorage and in Naknek. My target is twenty interviews. I have identified interview subjects, dividing equally between men and women. I have already conducted seven interviews, four women and three men. I have a set of questions that will act as a guide for the interviews but I will also allow the interviewees to speak about their personal experiences. I will use these interviews as a way to include Indigenous voices in my dissertation. My goal is to tell the history of Bristol Bay’s salmon fishery using Indigenous voices sharing their personal experiences.”

**Blythe George**

Yurok

Harvard University

Doctoral Student - Sociology

Blythe’s research focuses on “the job search experience of tribal fathers with criminal records looking for work post-incarceration, using the Yurok and Hoopa Valley tribal reservations of California as a study area. While long-term unemployment and joblessness draw much scholarly attention, including the effects of criminal records on the hiring process, these studies have been restricted to the urban core and have not included rural areas, or more particularly reservations. I add a new lens to studies of concentrated disadvantage, drawing on the existing urban literature and applying it to the rural tribal case. Preliminary findings suggest a shared feature between the urban and rural: high unemployment rates are associated with crime and drug use, such that unemployed men in these rural areas are much more likely to have criminal records than those who are employed. Furthermore, like their urban counterparts, tribal job seekers may face discrimination in the hiring process post- incarceration by virtue of their criminal history and their race.”

Blythe says, “My work provides a blueprint for data collection on tribal offenders, using qualitative and quantitative means to help tribal nations track and support their members who interact with the criminal justice system. With my dissertation project and larger database, the Far North Tribal Offender Registry, I am helping build the data sovereignty of tribes in the Humboldt and Del Norte counties of California, providing a template for other nations to adapt in meeting their own community’s data needs. Ultimately, I envision designing publicly available written materials and training modules for tribes to use in training their own data scientists, a long-term data initiative that will promote the self-sufficiency and sovereignty of tribal nations through culturally-sensitive data collection by tribal nations, for tribal nations.”

**Scott LaBrie**

Cherokee

University of Kansas

Doctoral Student - Microbiology

Scott's research will highlight key elements necessary for Chlamydia to invade the host cells, switch between its two forms, and cause disease. "In order to carry this project out, my lab has developed a novel method (novel for Chlamydia, though common in other bacteria and organisms) called transposon mutagenesis to disrupt and inactivate mechanisms within Chlamydia one-by-one in order to hone in on what is required for each mechanism."

Think of Chlamydia as a military Humvee. If the headlight mechanism was inactivated on the Humvee, one might notice that the vehicle can operate in the day, but not at night. Similarly, if the turret mounted on top of the Humvee was inactivated, the vehicle would no longer be able to shoot bullets at targets, and would render the Humvee relatively non-harmful; again, one might infer the turret's purpose. Going back to Chlamydia, the same approach is to be applied. If a mechanism is disrupted, and there is a loss of ability for Chlamydia to infect as many cells as non-disrupted Chlamydia, then we can hypothesize this mechanism may be involved in the bacteria's ability to invade cells.

In order to make these observations, Chlamydia containing a single disruption in its genetic code will be used to infect host cells grown in incubated culture dishes and compared to host cells infected with Chlamydia that do not contain disruptions (called wild-type). Observations will then be made on differences between wild-type Chlamydia and disrupted Chlamydia in their rate of growth, size of the organisms, amount of infectious progeny produced, and ability to enter host cells. Observations from these methods can then offer insights as to how the disrupted mechanisms may be involved in the bacteria's biology or ability to cause disease.

The short-term goal for the research project is to develop a collection of Chlamydia with disruptions and identify those that render the organism less capable of infection. This will lead to a long-term goal of identifying the role that these instruments play within the life-cycle and infectivity of Chlamydia, and from this, learn how to target and disrupt the elements critical for the organism to cause disease through novel antimicrobial compounds."

Scott says that receiving the Fellowship will allow him to use his “growing expertise and a strong focus for the field of microbiology, as well as a passion for seeing strengthening and positive growth for native people. As Elouise Cobell saw a need for financial justice in native communities, I see a major need for greater public health efforts to combat infectious diseases in native populations. Particularly, my goal is to ultimately work in the native hospitals or the Centers for Disease Control in Alaska, where sexually transmitted diseases such as chlamydia or pathogenic diseases such as tuberculosis are highest in the nation, especially in native peoples.”

**John Little**

Standing Rock Sioux

University of Minnesota Twin Cities

Doctoral Student – American History

John says that “Investing in and empowering Native youth is central to my future career goals. As an aspiring college professor, I want to ensure that Native American students have opportunities to exist, succeed, and feel safe in higher education spaces. My personal research will center Indigenous storytelling, survival, and resistance, thus preserving Lakota and Dakota songs, languages, and traditions for future generations. By foregrounding Native stories, traditions, and language, I hope to inspire generations of Native youth to challenge the ways non-Native people have (often inaccurately) written and documented Native peoples. Like Elouise Cobell, I hope to challenge these systems, which limit how Native people are seen in the present, to promote and inspire change. In addition, I believe that highlighting Indigenous voices and histories will create new collaborations between Native and non-Native communities.”

John says the Fellowship award will allow him “to begin additional research and conduct interviews with Lakota and Dakota Vietnam veterans. My dissertation examines Native American military service during the Vietnam War. More specifically, I analyze Lakota and Dakota motivations for military service as well as their experiences during and after Vietnam. I also examine how Native veterans confronted, challenged, and sometimes embraced ideas about race, masculinity, warrior culture, and stereotypical assumptions about Indian-ness.”

**Sarah Whitt**

Choctaw Nation

University of California Berkeley

Doctoral Student – Indian/Indigenous/Native American Studies

Speaking about her research, Sarah “envisio[n]s a dissertation entitled “Of their Own Volition: Adult Indians at Carlisle and Technologies of Resistance in the Assimilation Era (1879-1934),” in which she will contribute to boarding school literature by accounting for a large demographic of adult Indian people who were subjected to rules and conditions created for Indian children, but who exercised resistance to their infantilization. In so doing, she examines key aspects of Carlisle from the perspective of the adults who asserted resistance against the regimentation of their lives, and who received punishment for various, and diverse, behaviors. Drawing on James C. Scott’s theorizations (1985) that marginalized populations employ forms of “everyday resistance” that are often not legible as systematic, full-scale revolution, Sarah examines how adult Indian people similarly employed everyday forms of resistance to strategically navigate Carlisle’s assimilationist regime. In so doing, she examines letters of correspondence, student files, and Carlisle’s physical space to ask how older Indian students were subjected to school rules that criminalized expressions of agency and adulthood. In what ways did adult Indian people experience Carlisle’s disciplinary structure differently from Indian children? How were women’s experiences different from men’s, and how did discipline occur along gendered axes of oppression? In answering these questions, Sarah also examines Carlisle’s Outing program, a system of labor exploitation envisioned as a way to indoctrinate Indian people into white “civilization” by placing them in the homes of prosperous American families to perform menial labor, putting adult Indian women at risk for potential sexual violence. Further, she investigates Carlisle ledgers of student “runaways,” Buffalo Bill Cody’s Wild West ephemera, and US military files to explore the circuits adult Indian people traveled in a repertoire of resistance. While many adult Indian people left Carlisle for home, others joined the Wild West or participated in the US Military as “Code Talkers” in WWI, performing multiple, contradictory versions of Indian identity. Together, this work adds to extant literature by identifying adult Indian students as a major demographic at Carlisle, and examines spaces in which indigenous bodies are thrown into stark relief both as objects of colonial discipline and loci of indigenous agency and resistance.

“As I pursue my PhD in UC Berkeley’s Ethnic Studies department, I strengthen the methodological tools necessary to undertake this project, which necessitates rigorous archival research. In Summer 2018, I

anticipate conducting formal dissertation research, which will necessitate traveling to the disparate archives which house documents relating to Carlisle students, the Wild West, the US military, and the Office of Indian Affairs. Historical archives of interest include: The National Archives and Records Administration in Washington, D.C.; the Oklahoma Historical Society in Oklahoma City, OK; the McCracken Research Library located in the Buffalo Bill Center of the West in Cody, WY; and the National Archives at Kansas City, MO. Each of these institutions house documents relating directly to my current project, in which I examine the interconnections of indigenous criminalization, white American deputization, technologies of indigenous resistance, and the legacies of American colonization. Receiving a Cobell Fellowship would enable me to conduct research in a timely manner, and facilitate access to archives located far from my immediate vicinity. Thank you very much in advance for your consideration of my application.”

Sarah says that “as a Choctaw scholar and instructor, my pedagogy is informed by the decolonizing methodologies and resistance efforts of the many indigenous intellectuals and warriors who have gone before me. I believe that in sharing indigenous worldviews and privileging the aural, visual, kinesthetic and emotional forms of knowledge imparted to me by my elders, that my students receive a more nuanced and accurate understanding of Native American thought, US History, and the ongoing decolonizing efforts of indigenous peoples across the world. Additionally, I mentor indigenous students through the Native American Student Development program on campus, and as co-chair of the American Indian Graduate Student Association I strive to facilitate a space for Native students to build community and share cutting-edge research. My scholarship, activism, and teaching objectives aim to privilege the indigenous perspectives that have historically been silenced, to stake out space for indigenous voices, and to disrupt the hegemony of false American mythologies informed by the manipulation of indigenous peoples. These are old, old stories; it is time for new narratives.”

To apply for a 2019 Summer Cobell Graduate Research Fellowship watch for the application to be available September 1, 2018. For all other Indigenous Education, Inc. opportunities, watch for applications to open in December of 2018.

**About Indigenous Education, Inc.**

Created in 2016 for the express purpose to administer the Cobell Scholarship Program, Indigenous Education, Inc. provides elevated opportunities for Native college students through empowering them with an impactful scholarship experience designed to support their success in higher education. Since the program's beginning, Indigenous Education, Inc. has support over 1600 students with over \$7.5 Million dollars in scholarships. The most up to date information is always available at [cobellscholar.org](http://cobellscholar.org).

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