



TEK Talks



Shifting Perspectives on Working with Indigenous Peoples



Background

Alaska is home to 229 federally recognized tribes and with about 21% of Alaska's general population being American Indian or Alaska Native. For geoscientists, Alaska is an exciting place to work: Alaska contains the largest ice mass outside of Antarctica and Greenland, the aurora borealis can be observed for several months of the year, it is home to 54 historically active volcanoes, forest fires are a common natural phenomenon, and dinosaur fossils can be found at the foothills of the highest mountain in North America. Yet, as recent letters addressed to the NSF Navigating the New Arctic NSF office have shown, there are still barriers that prevent Indigenous participation within Arctic research.

<https://kawerak.org/knowledge-sovereignty-and-the-indigenization-of-knowledge-2/>

About TEK Talks

"TEK Talks: Working with Indigenous Peoples" was a successful virtual lecture series on B A JEDI and research ethics. It was hosted at the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) by two graduate students, Margaret, who is Alaska Native, and Anika, an international student from Germany. The inception of the lecture series was based on meetings by the Geophysical Institute Graduate Student Association (GIGSA), which convened to talk about increasing JEDI at UAF. TEK Talks had a Zoom audience of 80-165 attendees for each lecture, several hundred views on YouTube, and has since been incorporated in class lectures and other seminars.

We developed the lecture series to foster understanding among scientists with regard to working with Indigenous Peoples. Our learning goals were:

- to increase respect and understanding of Indigenous People, their culture, and their knowledges;
- to understand the terminology and be able to apply the principles such as appropriate research ethics when working with Indigenous People (including intellectual property, self-determination, equitable partnership, and transformative principles);
- to know where to find appropriate resources and to be able to reach out to others to make meaningful connections and to collaborate across the university.

TEK, an acronym for *Traditional Ecological Knowledge*, was chosen to attract a scientific audience to talk about exclusionary and inequitable practices in academia and research. The meaning of TEK and how it is misrepresentative of Indigenous Knowledges was shared in the first lecture.



Margaret Anamaq Rudolf
Ph.D. Student & Anika Pinzner
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Lessons-learned on creating a JEDI lecture series

- 1) Create learning goals to focus lectures within the series
- 2) Be purposefully progressive on the topics
- 3) Seek those who are pushing the field forward rather than simply highlighting local examples
- 4) Get keynote speakers and funding early
- 5) Balance representation to not overburden People of Color on issues of creating equity, inclusive spaces, and allyship
- 6) Ask People of Color to talk about their own work as leaders in research
- 7) Include students as future leaders in research
- 8) Zoom record to make YouTube series for a broader reach
- 9) Have resource links ready to share for further learning and keep a running list on the website
- 10) Fund graduate students as it takes considerable time to plan and manage
- 11) Create a space for discussion and dialogue

Lectures - Available on YouTube

Margaret Rudolf (UAF) - Introduction and Cross-Cultural Miscommunication

Andy Mahoney (UAF) - Sea Ice Research and the Meaning of Ice

Kaare Erickson (UIC Science) - A Sharing Culture

Eva Dawn Burk, Elizabeth Mik'aq Lindley, Kim Kivvaq Pikok, Jacob Pratt, Roberta Tuurraq Glenn, & Margaret Anamaq Rudolf (UAF) - Indigenous Student Panel

Jessica Black, Courtney Carothers, & Janessa Esquible (UAF) - Decolonizing and Indigenizing Fisheries and Marine Sciences in Alaska

Roberto Delgado (NSF) - Strengthening Collaborations between Arctic Researchers and Arctic Residents

Darryl Reano (Florida International University) - Using Indigenous Research Frameworks in Multiple Contexts

Kelly Kealy (Goldstream Group) - Project Evaluation in Indigenous Contexts

Judith Ramos, Evon Peter, & Jessica Black (UAF) - Indigenous Researcher Panel

Phil Wight (UAF) - Knowledge, Nature, and the Infrastructures of Colonialism in Alaska

Courtney Carothers, Mike Koskey, Anika Pinzner, Carrie Stevens (UAF) & Henry Huntington - Allyship in Research

Acknowledgments

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<https://sites.google.com/view/tektalks>

A lecture series for scientists to foster understanding