

THE Next Generation

A photo celebration of recent Haskell Indian Nations University graduates and their thoughts on Kansas and community with other Native students

Story by Jared Nally (Myaamia/Miami) | Photography by Nick Krug

Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence is recognized as one of the nation's leading centers for Native-led education. Its existence as a flagship university in the tribal college/university system is a testament to its ability to survive past practices aimed at eliminating Native cultures. Founded in 1884, the school was one of many off-reservation boarding schools that removed children from their homes and tribal communities and forced a foreign religion and culture on them. The trauma inflicted by boarding schools has had generational impacts on survivors, both mentally and physically. Recent efforts to locate children's remains on federal boarding school sites confirm something Native families have known all along: family members were lost at these schools in great numbers.

In the past decades, beginning with student-led cultural revivals in the late 1960s—and particularly since Haskell's full accreditation as a four-year degree-granting university in 1993—the institution has focused on Native scholarship to serve Native communities. Haskell is the nation's only four-year college specifically for students from federally recognized tribes and boasts a student diversity of over 140 tribal nations and Alaska Native villages.

Dan Wildcat (yUdjEha/Yuchi member of the Muscogee Nation of Oklahoma), a professor at Haskell for almost thirty years who has also served as the university's interim president, has characterized Haskell as the "United Nations of Indigenous Education in North America."

"There is no educational institution like it in the world," Wildcat says. "For nine months every year, Haskell constitutes the most diverse Indigenous higher education learning community in the USA, a place where inevitably every student experiences the diversity and richness of the

First Peoples of this land and in the process acquires or strengthens pride in their own Indigenous heritage."

For the past years, more than 750 students from Kansas and across the nation arrive to study at Haskell, with approximately 70 students receiving bachelors' degrees and over 100 students receiving associates' degrees each year.

During the past pandemic year, enrollment and on-campus classes have decreased, but studies and immersion in an inter-tribal environment continue. In these next pages, we honor some of the university's December 2021 graduates and share some of their thoughts on being in Kansas with Native peers from across the United States. **KM**



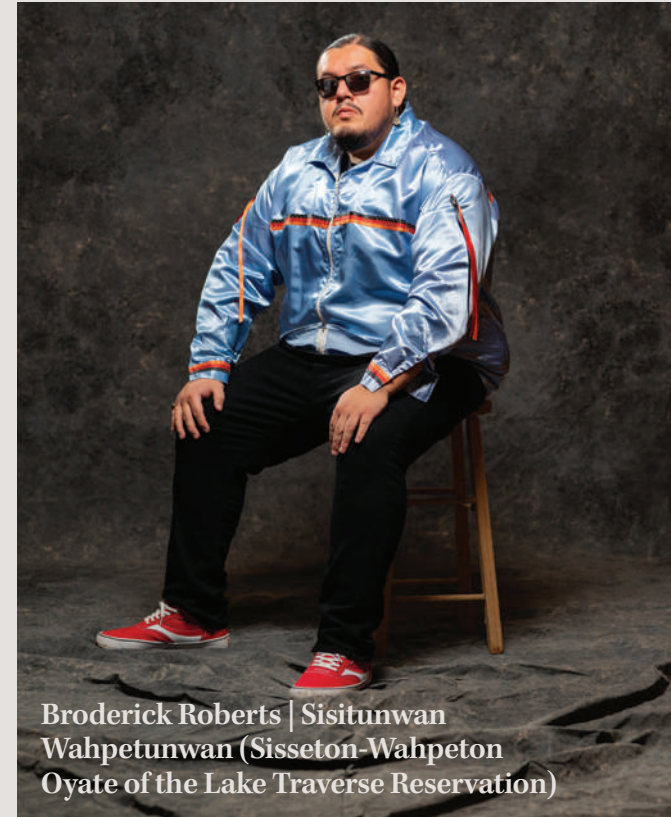
Skyla Bunch | GWY D-βP (Cherokee Nation)



Dominique Brown | Diné (Navajo Nation)

“I grew up on the Navajo Nation for most of my life before coming to Haskell. I have known about my tribal identity all my life, but I was told to hide it so that people wouldn’t judge me or be discriminatory. Coming to Haskell made me realize that this is a part of me. It’s who I am. Attending Haskell made it possible for me to be more appreciative of who I am. It also makes me more proud of my Indigenous side ... I’m no longer scared to show or share it with others.”

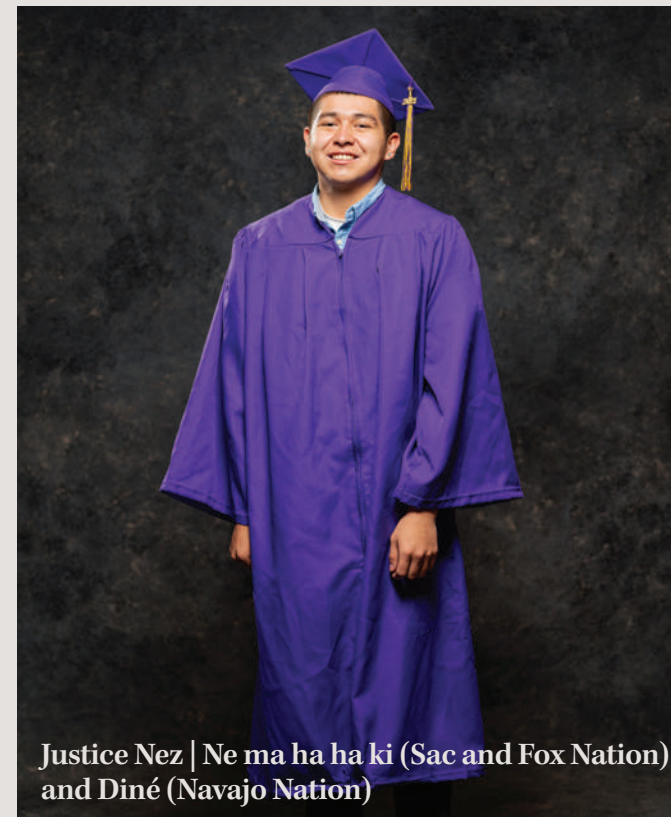
–Delilah Begay | Diné (Navajo Nation)



Broderick Roberts | Sisitunwan Wahpetunwan (Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate of the Lake Traverse Reservation)



Jacierra Liston | Semynole Etlwv (Seminole Nation of Oklahoma)



Justice Nez | Ne ma ha ha ki (Sac and Fox Nation) and Diné (Navajo Nation)



Teshawna Martinez | Diné (Navajo Nation)

“Different tribal nations coming together shows our resilience. From survivors of genocide to victims of generational trauma, we persevere. Boarding schools were institutions that were meant to strip us of our cultural identity, but in suffering we found friendship, often with members of other tribes and that foundation of friendship enabled us to grow stronger together, which ultimately helps us all remember our ancestry and enables us to rebuild our heritage.”

–Jerome Staab |
Oceti Šakowiŋ
(Santee Sioux Nation)



“I first came to Haskell in 1975 and received my associate’s degree. At that particular time, meeting students from other tribal nations was quite shocking, especially students from reservations. Being Cherokee from Oklahoma, we saw poverty and heard about how other nations had to live but did not experience it firsthand. I was shocked at some of the stories my friends would share. This taught me to appreciate my tribal heritage. I had the opportunities to be on different reservations and saw how the conditions are. Coming back to the university in 2020, I have lived in Lawrence, Kansas, participated among the Native community for over thirty years and I feel I have a wonderful understanding of my tribal identity. I am teaching my grandchildren as well.”

–Jeanetta Buzzard | GWY D-βP
(Cherokee Nation)

