



JUNE 2021 - UCLA AISC NEWSLETTER



Dear AISC friends and family,

As we wind down a highly unusual academic year, we're pausing to reflect on all that we have accomplished despite the circumstances. I am truly proud of the AISC staff, who stepped up to run the center remotely and continued to provide all of our services, support, and programming. Our faculty taught remotely and forged ahead with research despite the barriers. And most importantly, our students persevered in getting their education, in spite of the challenging times. On behalf of the AISC, I want to extend our heartiest congratulations to the graduates of 2020 and 2021!!

My heart is truly warmed by the way that our staff, faculty and students have come together over the last year and a half to support each other and to lift each other up. It is my great honor to initiate a second five-year term as the AISC director, and I look forward to working with all of you—at least part of the time in person!—in the coming year.

Chinchokma nihookmano anhill,

Shannon Speed

Director, UCLA American Indian Studies Center

◆ Native Bruin Highlight: Past, Present & Emerging ◆



Stephen Andrew Pilcher (he/him) was raised in the San Francisco Bay Area and is of Oglala Lakota (Pine Ridge Reservation) and Mexican descent. In 2013, Stephen was a member of the inaugural Native and Pacific Islander Summer Intensive Transfer Experience (NPI SITE) program at UCLA. Organized by the Center for Community College Partnerships at UCLA, NPI SITE offers critical support to community college students, including Stephen, which aided him in his navigation of the community college system to transfer successfully to UCLA in 2014.

During his time at UCLA, he served in various student leader roles in Delta Lambda Phi, a social fraternity for gay, bisexual and transgender men, and earned his BA in American Indian Studies in 2017. Currently, he works as the Student Affairs Officer in the UCLA American Indian Studies Interdepartmental Program, where he has the privilege to serve and academically advise the American Indian and Indigenous graduate and undergraduate students in the program.

"As a Native Bruin at UCLA, I was able to connect to an immense network of Native and Indigenous staff, students, and faculty that were crucial in liberating me as a first-generation scholar and emerging leader. I now pay this very medicine forward with my own students at UCLA, and I am deeply rewarded in assisting them as an administrator as they contribute to the greater American Indian and Indigenous studies field, and redefine the landscape of Indian Country."

In the future, Stephen will pursue a doctor of physical therapy (PT) degree, and he plans to eventually own and operate his own PT business.

