

**TCDEIR December Member Meeting NOTES**

**December 8, 2022**

**Understanding Native American Culture**

**A few key learnings, shares, and takeaways heard**

* Complexities, trauma related to Native history and current political environment (much that hasn’t been withheld) and current social environment including “otherism,” “invisibleness” dehumanization, and lack of societal awareness and understanding.
* Tribal nations are a government that predates the founding of the U.S..
* 55% high school grad rate for native people (and 85% here at local native school) This is because schools are doing what they were created to do: indoctrination, assimilation, and subjugation etc.
* Opportunity for organizations, corporations to better understand cultural needs, family needs. Examples shared – smudging, funeral leaves.
* Definition of wealth is different. Land revitalization (ability to cultivate land, fish in clean river) vs land acquisition.
* *Do not* rely on your native colleague to educate you, employer, etc. Reach out to tribal orgs, read books. (see more in resources)
* Invite broad knowledge keepers that share their stories.

**Resources**

* “This Land” – podcast (found on Spotify, Apple, Amazon, etc.)
* [Home - Understand Native Minnesota (understandnativemn.org)](https://www.understandnativemn.org/)
* [American Indian OIC - Education and Career Services in Minneapolis, MN (aioic.org)](https://www.aioic.org/)
* Book from authors: [Louise Erdrich](https://protection.greathorn.com/services/v2/lookupUrl/511329d0-0569-43db-94ea-93b5bba4b867/362/1b700d761d937fc79d00b4f5d9da9d041a23e0f5?domain=en.wikipedia.org&path=/wiki/Louise_Erdrich), Tommy Orange, David and Anton Treuer (both) and Joseph Marshall.

**Welcome,** Philomena Morrissey Satre, Co-Chair of TCDEIR

* Opened with land acknowledgment.
* ask: bring info back and learn how to better support our indigenous
* TCDEIR history. We cross all sectors (business, non-profit, education, etc). Started 27 years ago. Went from 46 members to 540+.
* Thank you to 2022 site hosts!!!
* Encourage you, this time of year take care of yourself to better take care of others.

**Overview of Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis & DEI Areas of Focus**

* Ron Feldman, First Vice President & Chief Operating Officer, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis
* Patience Ferguson, Senior Vice President Human Resources & Inclusion, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis

Welcome from Ron at Federal Reserve - thank you Luis and Jamica, Patience (Head of HR). Demographic have made us more effective. Very proud of that and engagement. Instead of focus on numbers, etc. would like to take about work we’re doing. Indian Country, helping to support them. Critical to Federal Reserve to them to support their mutual goals. Focus on a different way of advising. Change what we do, supervise banks. Now thinking about importance of diversifying banks. Beginning of that journey.

Patience Ferguson, SVP of HR and Inclusion was SVP off YWCA. What led her here, they were not just checking boxes.

Thanks to TCDEIR, she’s learned best practices. Shout out to Ken Charles, he shared his wisdom. She shared this work isn’t easy. It’s hard. Get over it. It’s about the employees that make the difference. This org not only supported with words, supported with action.

**Fireside Chat Panelist Discussion**: (see pages 4-5 for bios)

* **Moderator:**
	+ Alene Tchourumoff (AT), Senior Vice President, Community Development & Engagement, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis
* **Panelists:**
	+ Karen Diver (KD), President Native American Affairs, U of M-TC;
	+ Jessie Seim (JS), General Counsel Prairie Island Indian Community;
	+ Dr. Joe Hobot (JH), CEO & President of American Indian OIC

***Q*** *AT Opening question, high-level historical context of American Indian Tribes as sovereign Nations*

KD tribal nations are a government. This predates the founding of the US. They have agreements with those that invaded us. U.S. Government has a unique relationship because of the political relationship / treaties. Much of which hasn’t been upheld. Recently tribes have taken this back and are devoting tribal laws. They exercise jurisdictions homeland. Suffer from “otherism” and other items listed.

JS, thank you for dedicating a conversation to this topic. another callout is invisibleness. “getting rid of Indian problem” that the us government has been saying. Discussed her Grandma that was sent to boarding school to be brainwashed to not be native and teach that to her family. Trauma for government ultimately wanting to take their land and resources.

JH, this invisibleness, difficulty with changes and hope in federal government in 1950s. This was met with racism, culture and skill gap. 70% live off reservations, 72% in MN live in the urban area of Twin Cities. Time and time again government making changes that don’t have their best interests at heart.

AT shared Government continues to want to push / move native community into economic areas. She shared a native person getting a stipend from U.S. government said, don’t use an investment in your community to make a disinvestment in your community.

***Q*** *Can you share high-level historical context of American Indian Tribes as sovereign Nations, expanding on government oversight?*

KD duty of care: housing, education, etc. this is part of agreement. domestic partnership, (white father in DC takes care of their stepchildren) congress has total power over tribal nations.

JS how native are you. discussed about percent of native, she carries a card with her that identifies her blood percentage. The only other groups that is identified by blood percent are dogs and horses.

JH ward of state, dehumanizing. Absolution, taking land. When invaded, exploitation and ownership of land was completely foreign to them.

***Q*** *Relationship with state government?*

JS, I’m a good place then where we’ve been historically in MN. Her tribe are, still at odds with Oklahoma. Always issue over land and resources. Stars have a long way to go. 55% high school rate. Kids, with English as second language, graduated at a 10% higher rate.

JH, when we watched Latino kids ripped away from parents at the borders was triggering as they are only one generation away from the required border schools. Schools are working as they are designed in indoctrination, assimilation, and subjugation etc. They don’t want critical thinkers. Their local native schedule is at 85% grad rate. We need to disallow these systems.

KD only states that perform worse in education is SD and MN is right after. Cultural genocide practices. The focus is Eurocentric, family nuclear and natives have lost their families.

***Q*** *AT Different policies and practices. How do we think differently about the way we work. What practical strategies can employers use to attract, retain, and develop talent from American Indian communities?*

JH, work with a few orgs that have employee resources groups that work in the way they’d like to see that are supportive. Beyond that, they are still working through different protocols. example funeral leave. smudge. they smudge all the time to cleanse negatively. Often times that is misinterpreted and understand why they do it. it calls on sense memory and helps to being calm and better headspace. Maybe can’t do this inside, allowing someone to step outside and allow in workplace. Word travels when companies allow this.

KD, funeral leave. Who is kin and family may be different for them. Expansive looks at family. Knowledge is important. That said, spirituality and culture isn’t always done separate outside of work. There are not rigid based scheduled holidays. Asking about cultural and spiritual traditions. Know they don’t need to share. Having less specific holiday time and slow time off to be less prescriptive.

***Q*** *AT Creation of wealth. Often through home ownership. Difficult for banks to understand how this works to give a mortgage in tribal land. How can companies support in the areas that drive profit for them.*

JS, many natives have their own businesses outside of gaming have grown and partnering with them lol different. Need to educate on this. Be flexible on how to do things. It can be beneficial and fruitful for all. Invest is just learning more.

JH be open minded to how you define wealth. Land rehabilitation (ability to cultivate land, fish in clean river) may be more important that land acquisition. Allow native community to give their solutions.

***Q*** *AT What advice for people to learn more?*

JS Native orgs. Do not bleed other people for details. Each of the panelists want to help and support. Jessie mentioned after sharing these emotional details she walks out feeling sick.

JH, books! Local authors [Louise Erdrich](https://protection.greathorn.com/services/v2/lookupUrl/511329d0-0569-43db-94ea-93b5bba4b867/362/1b700d761d937fc79d00b4f5d9da9d041a23e0f5?domain=en.wikipedia.org&path=/wiki/Louise_Erdrich), Tommy Orange, David and Anton Treuer (both) and Joseph Marshall.. All expressive of the tribal experience. Come to events. Do not have native people unpack this for you.

KD, websites! Native communities are relational and hierarchical. You wouldn’t go to Gov Walz to talk, you’d go to a department. Go to the tribal switchboard if you don’t know who to ask.

**Q & A**

Fluent speakers are getting less and less. They are working on revitalization in preserving this.

Energy sector? Entrepreneurship is high. In MN high school rate low, there is a skills gap. Other shadow data points-folks not in workforce because they opted out (38%) much of which is possibly skills gap. Difficult to get capital gap. Jessie shared her tribe is making investments. Prairie Island has a nuclear plant next to them. Now classifying nuclear energy as “clean“ This means continued issues for the Prairie Island tribe for the foreseeable future.

American Indian OIC, talk with 200+ employers, happy to help and support employment needs.

Jolene Chestnut shared Know this is an invitation vs demand. When hearing details, please listen. Shared that some people see the land as a 3rd world country. Also highlighted is the sporting events is another opportunity to support native community.

Importance of lands and the language infused with this importance. can you go deeper into this? Foreign concept when settlers started to put up fences. Each tribe will have different meanings ab’s differences. Jessie mentioned for her, interconnectedness. Dr. Hobart concurs. In a relationship with mother earth. There’s also a physiological aspect- how they feel, are fed, and treat her, mother earth. Karen added they think about all that inhabit earth are their relatives. Jessie shared they need to share things in the colonized world.

How can we support schools in the indigenous space? Broad knowledge keepers that share their stories. In journey of community, land acknowledgments, Dakota, they were last people on this land.

**Close**-Dr. Tonya Hampton, Co-Chair of TCDEIR

Thank you to all those that attended and to our panelists. Personal reaction, been told she has some makeup if Indian descent. Family member adopted from orphanage. In north understanding came from a DNA test and there’s not enough data available able to trace. She now has closer. She’s sorry for the treatment. Hope that as a society she hopes we can get better. Thank you’s shared to host Fed Reserve, Panelists, TCDEIR executive team, Philomena, and leadership team, thank you attendees. Please forgive anything shared that didn’t fall right. Please don’t charge my heart, charge my mind.

* See next page for bios

**Panel Bios**

**Alene Tchourumoff, Senior Vice President, Community Development and the Center for Indian Country Development, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis**

Alene Tchourumoff leads the Bank’s engagement with communities throughout the Ninth District to promote economic opportunity for low- and moderate-income people and those living in Indian Country. Key focus areas include early childhood development and affordable housing.

Prior to joining the Bank in December 2018, Alene served as chair of Minnesota’s Metropolitan Council, where she built strong partnerships with local governments and community groups to advance transit, housing, and other critical infrastructure. Previously, she served as Minnesota’s first state rail director, led Hennepin County Public Works’ Planning Department, and worked extensively in China and Southeast Asia on public policy and public health initiatives—including combating HIV/AIDS in China and Vietnam.

Alene holds a bachelor’s degree in business administration from George Washington University School of Business and a master’s degree in public policy from Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government. Alene was named a 2020 Women in Business honoree by the Minneapolis-St. Paul Business Journal and is a 20220Fellow with the National Academy of Public Administration.

**Dr. Joe Hobot, President and CEO, American Indian OIC**

Dr. Hobot is a descendant of the Hunkpapa Band of the Lakota Nation from the Standing Rock Indian Reservation – where his grandfather and mother are both enrolled members.

Born and raised in the Twin Cities, Dr. Hobot earned a Bachelor’s degree from the University of Minnesota, a Master’s degree from the University of St. Thomas and a Doctorate of Education from Hamline University.

He joined American Indian OIC in 2006, serving as lead teacher and then director of education, responsible for the oversight and progress of the agency’s alternative high school, its Adult Basic Education/GED program and its career college. He stepped into his current role in 2014.

Dr. Hobot also serves as an adjunct faculty member of the Falmouth Institute – providing national onsite trainings throughout Indian Country for tribal leadership and tribal administrators – and as a consultant with the National Urban Indian Family Coalition (NUIFC). In 2017, he published “Resurgence: Restructuring Urban American Indian Education,” a report commissioned by NUIFC.

He has served on the Minnesota Jobs Skills Partnership’s Board of Directors since 2017 and on the national Native American Employment and Training Council since 2019.

In 2015, Dr. Hobot received the Minnesota American Indian Chamber of Commerce’s Bear Award for service to the American Indian community of Minnesota, and the following year was selected as a fellow at the Roy Wilkins Center for Human Relations and Social Justice at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota. He received an Ascend Fellowship from the Aspen Institute in 2018 and was recognized as a #MNCivicLeader by the Citizens League in 2020.

**Karen Diver, Senior Advisor to the President for Native American Affairs, University of Minnesota – Twin Cities**

Karen Diver is currently serving as the Senior Advisor to the President for Native American Affairs at the University of Minnesota.Her previous roles include: Director, Business Development, Native American Initiatives at the University of Arizona, and as the inaugural Faculty Fellow for Inclusive Excellence for Native American Affairs at the College of St. Scholastica in Duluth, Minnesota.

She was an appointee of President Obama as the Special Assistant to the President for Native American Affairs. As part of the Domestic Policy Council, Ms. Diver assisted with inter-agency efforts, policy and regulatory changes to benefit 567 Native American Tribes. Karen served in this position from November 2015 until the end of the Administration.

Karen served as Chairwoman of the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa from 2007 -2015. This position is elected and serves as chair of the tribal government and CEO of the reservation’s corporate boards. She served as Vice-President of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe (MCT), comprised of six members Bands, and chaired its Finance Corporation.

She has a Bachelors in Economics from the University of Minnesota, Duluth, and as a 2002 Bush Leadership Fellow, she received a Masters in Public Administration from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

**Jessie Stomski Seim, General Counsel, Prairie Island Indian Community**

Jessie Stomski Seim is an enrolled citizen of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. Since 2015, Jessie has served as General Counsel for the Prairie Island Indian Community. In that role, she oversees legal and government relations matters for the Tribe and its entities. Prior to that, Jessie represented various tribes and business clients throughout the nation in private practice.

Jessie is the 2022 Mitchell Hamline College of Law Distinguished Alumni award recipient. In 2019, Jessie was recognized by Minnesota Lawyer Magazine as In-House Attorney of the Year. In 2015, the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development named Jessie to its 40 under 40 award-recipient list. Minnesota Super Lawyers magazine named Jessie a Minnesota “Rising Star” for several consecutive years.

Jessie currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Minnesota Indian Women’s Resource Center, and she served three terms on the board of directors for the Minnesota American Indian Bar Association.

Jessie was a member of the University of Wisconsin-Madison’s women’s basketball team from 1998-2002, and she was a professional basketball player before she went to law school. The Charlotte Sting drafted Jessie into the WNBA, and she also completed seasons in France and Greece. She was inducted into the UW Badger Athletics Hall of Fame in 2020. In 2022, Jessie was a NCAA Legacy Award recipient.

Jessie is a member of the Indigenous Athletics Advancement Council, which focuses on increasing athletic opportunities for Native youth and communities.