May 2020

What we are doing now: Transformation and adaptation is key to a successful program like the Native American Research Internship (NARI) program. Given that the 2020 NARI program is cancelled due to the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, our challenge is to keep a fresh image of the program by providing unique opportunities for undergraduate students.

Part of our mission is to promote outstanding academic and professional development. Our innovative approach is to connect former NARI participants who have successfully completed an advance degree with another undergraduate students to encourage peer & near-peep mentoring through Instagram.

Since March 2020, we had four outstanding NARI participants who have participated in our “NARI Take-Over,” by sharing their academic and professional journeys. Kale Dale (NARI 2013), PhD Candidate kicked off our first NARI Take-Over followed by Greta Welch (NARI 2012), MPH, Jennifer Murillo (NARI 2015-16), MPH, and Kolenya Holly (NARI 2011-12), MPH. By sharing their stories with our social media followers which includes undergraduate students, former NARI participants, physicians, researchers, and indigenous organizations allows for the NARI program to strengthen our connection with prospective participants. These individual stories have reached others to inspire their curiosity into medicine and provided helpful academic resources on professional development. You can find their story by visiting our NARI Instagram page at nari_uofu.

What are we planning: It is a goal to provide academic and professional development sessions throughout the summer for our selected 2020 NARI participants. Although the program is cancelled, the NARI program will not stop any collaborations NARI has planned with the Office of Undergraduate Research, the Office of Health Equity and Inclusion, and the Genomics Summer Research for Minorities (GSRM) program.

Since 2018, NARI has led the planning of the inaugural Graduate Mini Expo which promotes recruitment of students at the graduate level and serves as a pipeline conference for our visiting scholars. Over 150 undergraduate students attended the mini expo which included sessions on graduate school admission, imposture syndrome, workshops on resume, personal statements, and interviewing skills. This years virtual 2020 Graduate Mini Expo will include similar sessions for our scholars.

Participant Recognition: It is our mission to increase the representation of American Indian and Alaska Native in biomedical and health sci-
ences. Most recently two NARI participants had received their medical diploma that acknowledges the completion of four years of medical education. **Clint Brayfield**, MD (Dine) and **Trey Begaye**, MD (Dine) both join the ranks of former NARI participants who are now in residency programs across the country. Dr. Brayfield says, “I Matched my number 1! This is so unreal to me right now. I am so grateful that I am going to be apart of The University of New Mexico’s Family Medicine Residency program.” The University of New Mexico is one of several medical schools with a focus on rural medicine. It has been Dr. Brayfield’s long awaited dream to provide healthcare to his community on the Navajo Nation.

Dr. Trey Begaye completed his medical education from the University of North Dakota. Dr. Begaye will return to his home state of Arizona to start his medical residency with the University of Arizona College of Medicine Phoenix Family Medicine program. Returning to Navajo land as a medical doctor is what our ancestors prayed for. “I have always dreamt of this day. Through many sacrifices and challenges, I have done what I set to accomplish for myself since high school,” says Begaye. To date, 26 NARI participants have been accepted into medical school. Of the 26, Drs. Brayfield and Begaye, along with 8 others have successfully completed their four years of medical school. The NARI program continues to aim on increasing the representation of American Indian/Alaska Na-

### Spotlight Mentor:

With growing concerns over the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Maija Holsti reached out to last year 2019 NARI participants to listen to their experiences with how they were dealing with the pandemic. The simple gesture of listening was healing for our NARI participants to know that the NARI program supports them during a global pandemic.

### Community Events:

**COVID-19 Donation Drive for the Navajo Nation.** The University of Utah School of Medicine Office of Health Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion is collecting essential supplies for Navajo Nation. Support is appreciated at the critical time to help health care professionals and community members address the high rate of positive COVID-19 cases. For more information contact Donna Eldridge at Donna.Elderidge@hsc.utah.edu

**The COVID-19 pandemic has deeply hit the Navajo Nation. Will you help us provide care?** The University of Utah’s Department of Pediatrics Global, Rural, and Underserved Child Health (GRUCH) fellows are currently on the front lines taking care of COVID-19 patients within the Navajo Nation. For more information contact Catherine Rainey at Catherine.Raney@utah.edu

### More Pictures from nari_uofu Instagram:

![NARI Participants on 2019 Match Day. Sam Hawkins (NARI2012), Leslie Eldridge (NARI2012), Craig Verdan (NARI2012), and Goldie Stands Over Bull (NARI2019).](image)

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*Contact Information:*

- **Facebook** - @NARI_UofU
- **Instagram** - nari_uofu
- **Twitter** - NARI_UofU

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*Dr. Holsti and 2019 NARI participants during a NARI Hangout zoom session in April.*