

IAIA<sup>®</sup>

INSTITUTE of  
AMERICAN INDIAN ARTS

Change Lives,  
Shape Futures





*Osiyo* Friends,

For almost four decades I have been blessed to serve as a tribal college president, including 15 rewarding years with the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA).

**Every day I draw strength from our students, faculty, advocates, and passionate donors—they inspire me as we work together to make IAIA stronger than ever.**

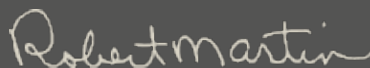
Across these pages we share the accomplishments IAIA has realized over the past 60 years. Our motivation is simple. We want to establish IAIA's unique credentials as more, much more, than an institute of higher learning, and we want to motivate you—individual donors or funding organizations—to support our very worthy cause.

Like smart financial investors who choose companies with strong fundamentals, wise donors want to know that their generosity supports visionary, mission-driven organizations that produce enduring, tangible results. IAIA is that type of philanthropic investment, one that helps students today and provides the education and inspiration for them to thrive in the future.

Your support nurtures not only our students, but also our Indigenous communities here and across continents. Giving to IAIA is about more than helping a student fulfill educational dreams. It is an investment in leadership, opportunity, and an abundance of much-needed hope for the almost 100 tribal nations these students represent.

Explore these materials, please, to learn more about how you can help us reinforce our traditions and empower the future of America's oldest communities. I believe your support will reward you as well as IAIA.

*Wado* (Thank You),



Dr. Robert Martin (Cherokee Nation)  
President, Institute of American Indian Arts



Opposite: Infrared view of the Dance Circle

Above: Dr. Robert Martin (Cherokee Nation)





Empowering  
Creativity and  
Leadership



“IAIA gave me the tools to further expand my artistry and talents and I give praise and appreciation to the Institute for all it has offered to me.”

— George Alexander (Muscogee Creek) '15

**Unique in higher education, the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA)** brings to its inspiring Santa Fe, NM campus talented, energetic students from across North America and beyond. Whether Indigenous (78%) or non-Indigenous (22%), students are drawn to IAIA’s mission “to empower creativity and leadership in Indigenous arts and cultures through higher education, lifelong learning, and outreach.” Students bring with them tribal histories and personal dreams of success, not only for themselves, but for their people and their communities. They come to create paintings and sculptures, poems and stories, performances and cinema, community and lifelong ties. They come for Museum Studies that will help expand perspectives for audiences everywhere, for Indigenous Liberal Studies that will help shape them into leaders for the future, and for a diverse, receptive community that affirms who they are and who they might become.

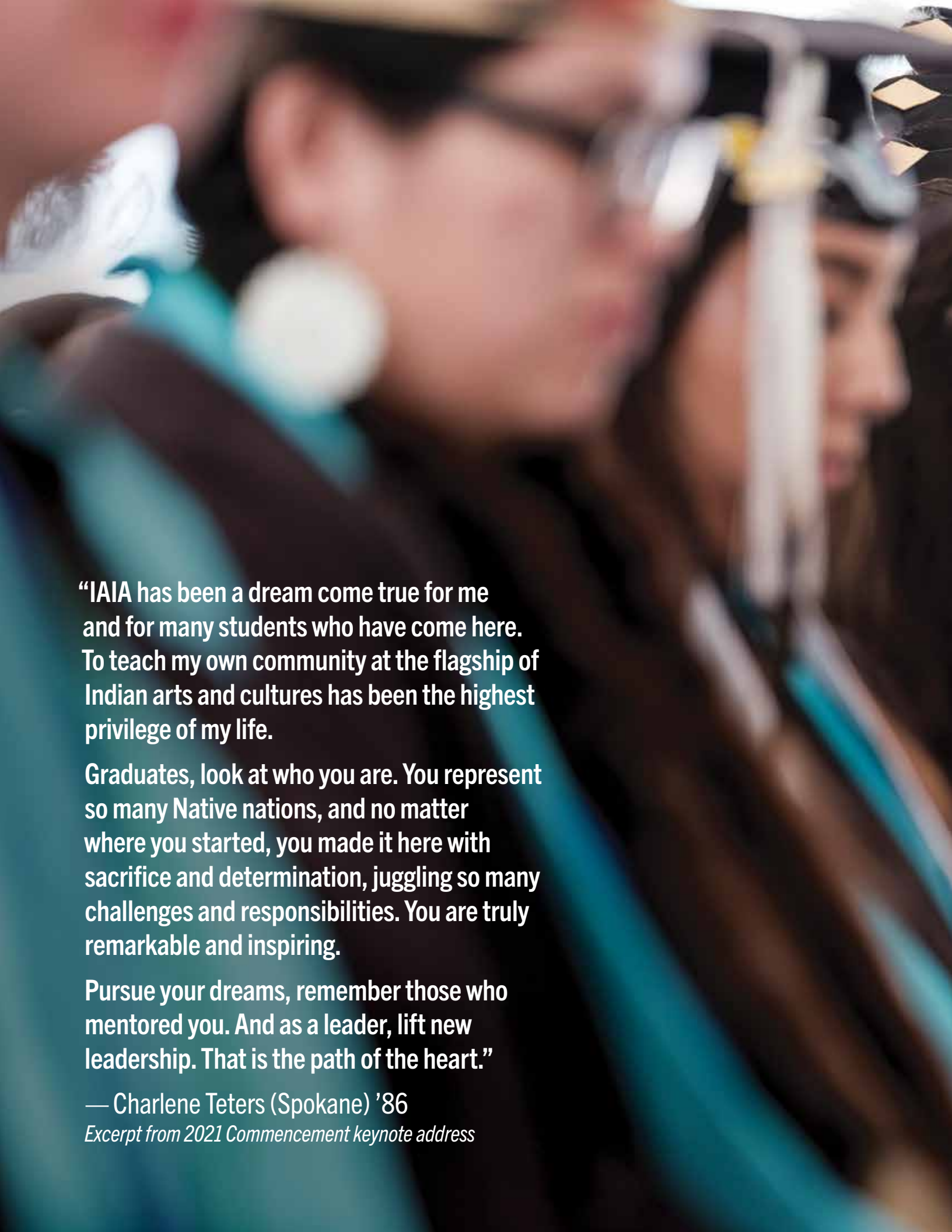
**There is no other place like IAIA, anywhere.**

From its creation, IAIA has stimulated achievement in the arts by students and alumni and by the faculty who encourage and instruct them. Since 1962, IAIA has attracted celebrated Indigenous artists and scholars to teach classes, serve as Artists-in-Residence, and mentor students who in turn make their own artistic and cultural discoveries and create their own paths. IAIA is, above all else, *an opportunity for excellence.*

Fortunately for the many students who could never attend IAIA without financial support, many private individuals and foundations provide funds for scholarships, and for innovative new academic programs, campus facilities, and other critical needs. These generous supporters recognize that IAIA opportunities also include *them*, and that IAIA success stories are also *their* stories. Just as we value the critical roles that IAIA faculty play, we appreciate all gifts of support that create opportunities for excellence.

Opposite: Chaz John  
(Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska/  
Mississippi Band Choctaw) '19





**“IAIA has been a dream come true for me and for many students who have come here. To teach my own community at the flagship of Indian arts and cultures has been the highest privilege of my life.**

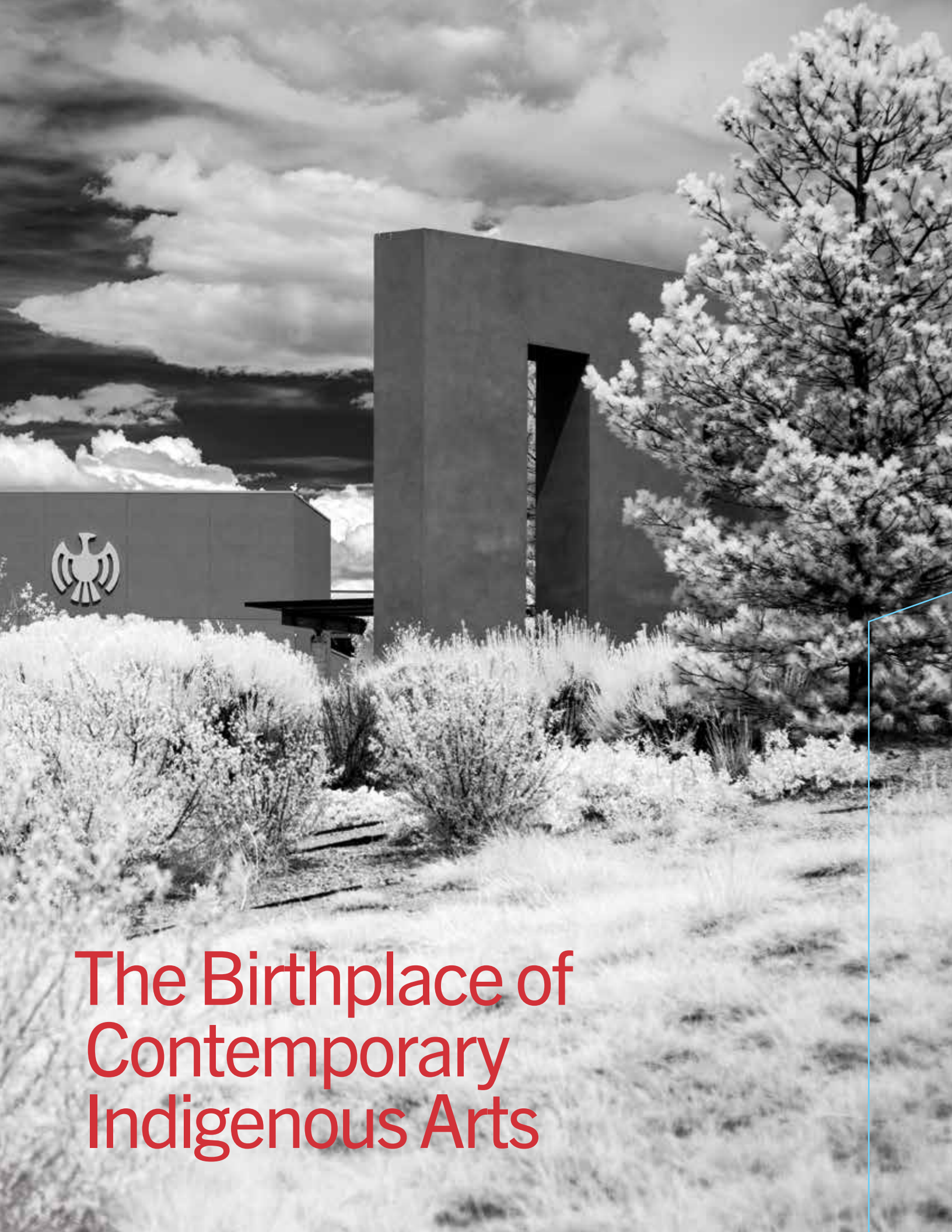
**Graduates, look at who you are. You represent so many Native nations, and no matter where you started, you made it here with sacrifice and determination, juggling so many challenges and responsibilities. You are truly remarkable and inspiring.**

**Pursue your dreams, remember those who mentored you. And as a leader, lift new leadership. That is the path of the heart.”**

**— Charlene Teters (Spokane) '86**  
*Excerpt from 2021 Commencement keynote address*







# The Birthplace of Contemporary Indigenous Arts





**The Institute of American Indian Arts is a beacon of success in American Indigenous education.** Established in 1962, IAIA was chartered by the United States Congress in 1986, with the governing board appointed by the President of the United States, as the only federal college charged with the responsibility for advancing scholarship and research in Indigenous arts and cultures. IAIA stresses the development of the whole individual through artistic training of traditional and contemporary expressions of Indigenous language, literature, and visual and performing arts, as well as leadership.

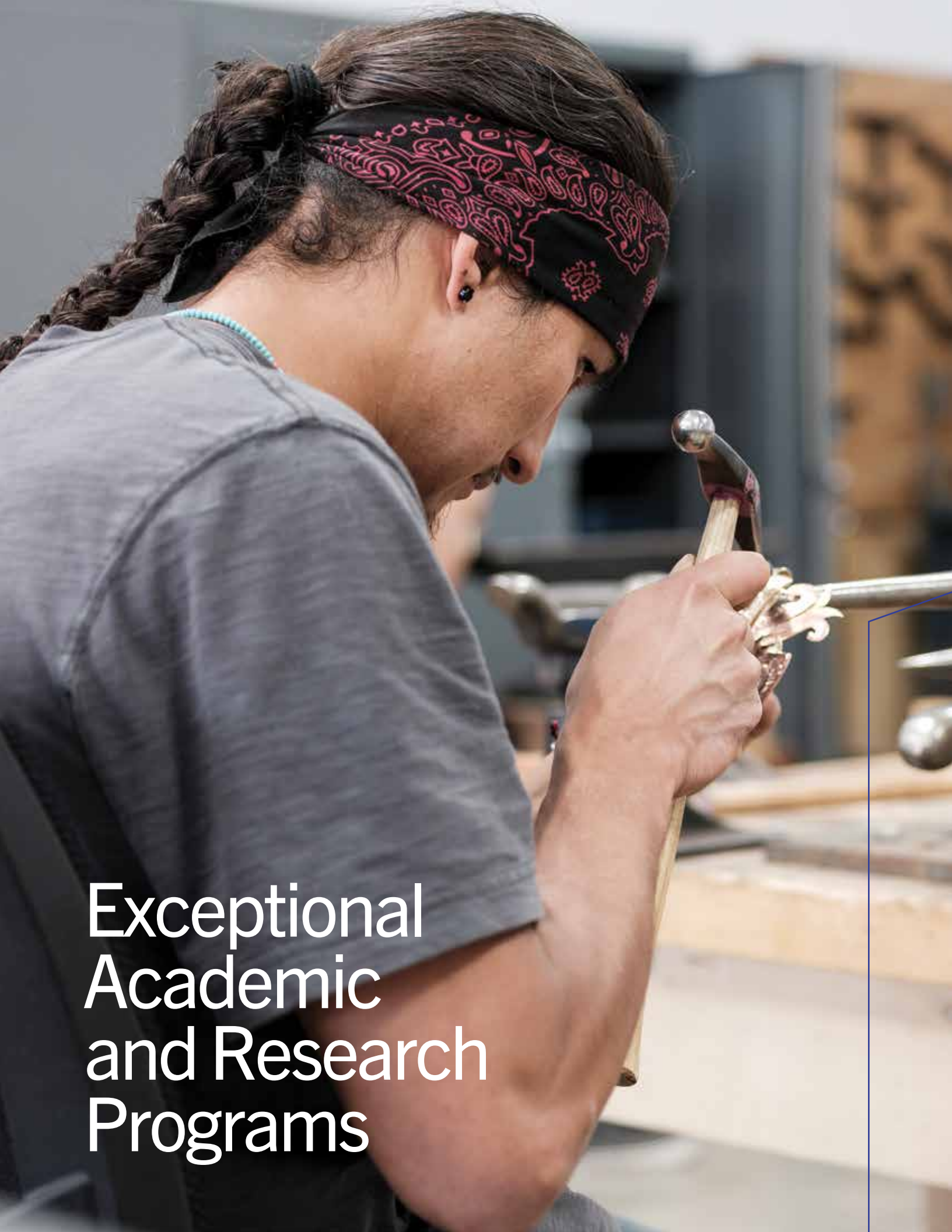
IAIA opened as a specialized high school for Indigenous students on the campus of the Santa Fe Indian School under the leadership of Lloyd Henri “Kiva” New (Cherokee) and

has grown exponentially over the past 60 years. Associate degrees were accredited in 1975, and by 2000 the academic program included undergraduate degrees, and IAIA moved to a permanent 140-acre campus south of Santa Fe. The leap from a high school to four-year college is an unmatched achievement and speaks volumes to the quality education provided to students.

IAIA continues to grow. By 2010, the college added 60,000 square feet of building space to its campus and in 2013 began offering graduate degrees, marking a new era in its journey. Low-residency masters programs in Creative Writing and Studio Arts set a new standard for IAIA and Tribal Colleges. Steady growth in academic programs and facilities, supported by private and public funds, demonstrates IAIA’s commitment to its students.


Previous pages: IAIA Students during Commencement Ceremony

Opposite: Infrared view of IAIA campus



Exceptional  
Academic  
and Research  
Programs





**“IAIA has helped me open doors to my creative and artistic abilities without boundaries. I want to give back to my community by sharing the knowledge I gained from IAIA.”**

**— Kristin Kaye (Diné) '16**

**IAIA offers six undergraduate degree programs in Studio Arts, Creative Writing, Cinematic Arts and Technology, Performing Arts, Museum Studies, and Indigenous Liberal Studies.** Masters degree programs are offered in Studio Arts and Creative Writing. Several Associate and Certificate offerings, such as the Business and Entrepreneurship program, provide additional opportunities for student achievement.

Each academic program is designed to not only serve the artistic and cultural interests of students but to also fill a need for leadership. IAIA students and graduates serve as leaders in their communities, as artists advancing the disciplines necessary to explore and present Indigenous thought and traditions, and as ambassadors for Indigenous arts and cultures all over the world. This range and depth of exceptional academic programs gives donors meaningful opportunities to have an impact.

**To complement academic programs, the IAIA Research Center for Contemporary Native Arts (RCCNA) will open in 2022, with a strategic goal of uniting art, artists, and archives.** The new center will streamline access to the art and archival collections stewarded by IAIA and its Museum of Contemporary Native Arts. The RCCNA merges theory and practice to support the work of scholars, artists, faculty, and students in crossing disciplinary divides. The Research Center will provide real-time developments in contemporary Indigenous art and bring Artists-in-Residence and scholars together on campus to advance thought leadership within a collaborative community. RCCNA offerings and resources will include curriculum development, workshops, internships, fellowships, exhibitions, and active acquisition of art and archival materials.

Opposite: Suni Sonqo Vizcarra  
Wood (Quechua Nation) '21



THE SPOON  
MAYAN-INDIAN  
1980  
BY [unreadable]

# IAIA Museum of Contemporary Native Arts (MoCNA)





**“Hands-on classes, supportive staff, internships, and gallery experiences were most beneficial to me. I plan to use my knowledge and experience within my community and career.”**

**— Tazbah Gaussoin  
(Picuris Pueblo, Navajo) '15**

**The IAIA Museum of Contemporary Native Arts (MoCNA) is the country’s only museum dedicated solely to exhibiting, collecting, and interpreting contemporary Indigenous arts.** Accredited by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM), MoCNA strives to advance scholarship and discourse of contemporary Indigenous art for regional, national, and international audiences.

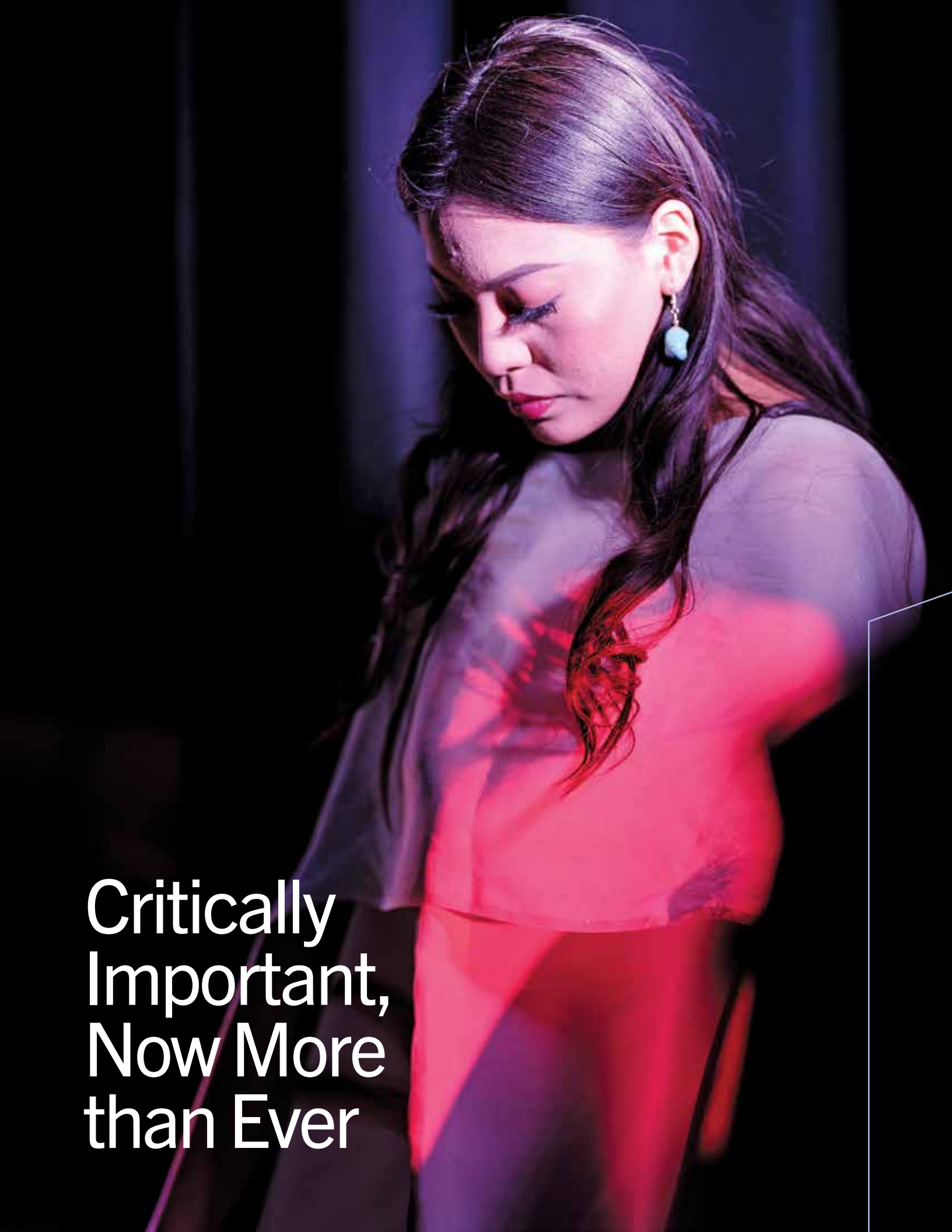
The museum began as a teaching museum in 1972, offering students the opportunity to learn curatorial and exhibition techniques. IAIA started collecting student artworks in 1962, the basis for the museum’s collection, supplemented by donations and purchases over the years. Formalized as the “IAIA Museum,” the museum moved into the Federal Building in downtown Santa Fe in 1990. The collection was moved to a state-of-the-art facility on the IAIA campus in 2010, increasing downtown gallery space and allowing the collection to grow to nearly 9,000 works. In 2013, the IAIA Museum formally changed its name to the IAIA Museum of Contemporary Native Arts.

MoCNA actively collects Indigenous art from the early 1960s to the present day and remains a hands-on training ground for IAIA students in Museum Studies. MoCNA’s Collections, Exhibitions, and Education Departments work with student interns and work-study students who gain art-handling skills and curatorial experience by creating and presenting exhibitions.

MoCNA contributes to the contemporary art narrative and demonstrates its commitment to communicate major issues for Indigenous Peoples to global audiences through its exhibitions and scholarly publications. In 2021 donors MacKenzie Scott and Dan Jewett recognized the museum as an important organization that “empowers voices the world needs to hear.” The Ford Foundation identified MoCNA in 2020 as one of “America’s Cultural Treasures.”

Working to lift Indigenous voices and advance the most progressive, contemporary, experimental arts and cultural expressions, MoCNA’s impact is far-reaching and vitally important for our world today.

Opposite: Exhibition at the IAIA Museum of Contemporary Native Arts (MoCNA)



Critically  
Important,  
Now More  
than Ever





**“IAIA is a community of artists and activists that understand the complexity of Indigenous knowledge systems and has helped me find my voice in that conversation.”**

**— Melissa Shaginoff  
(Chickaloon Village, Pyramid Lake) '15**

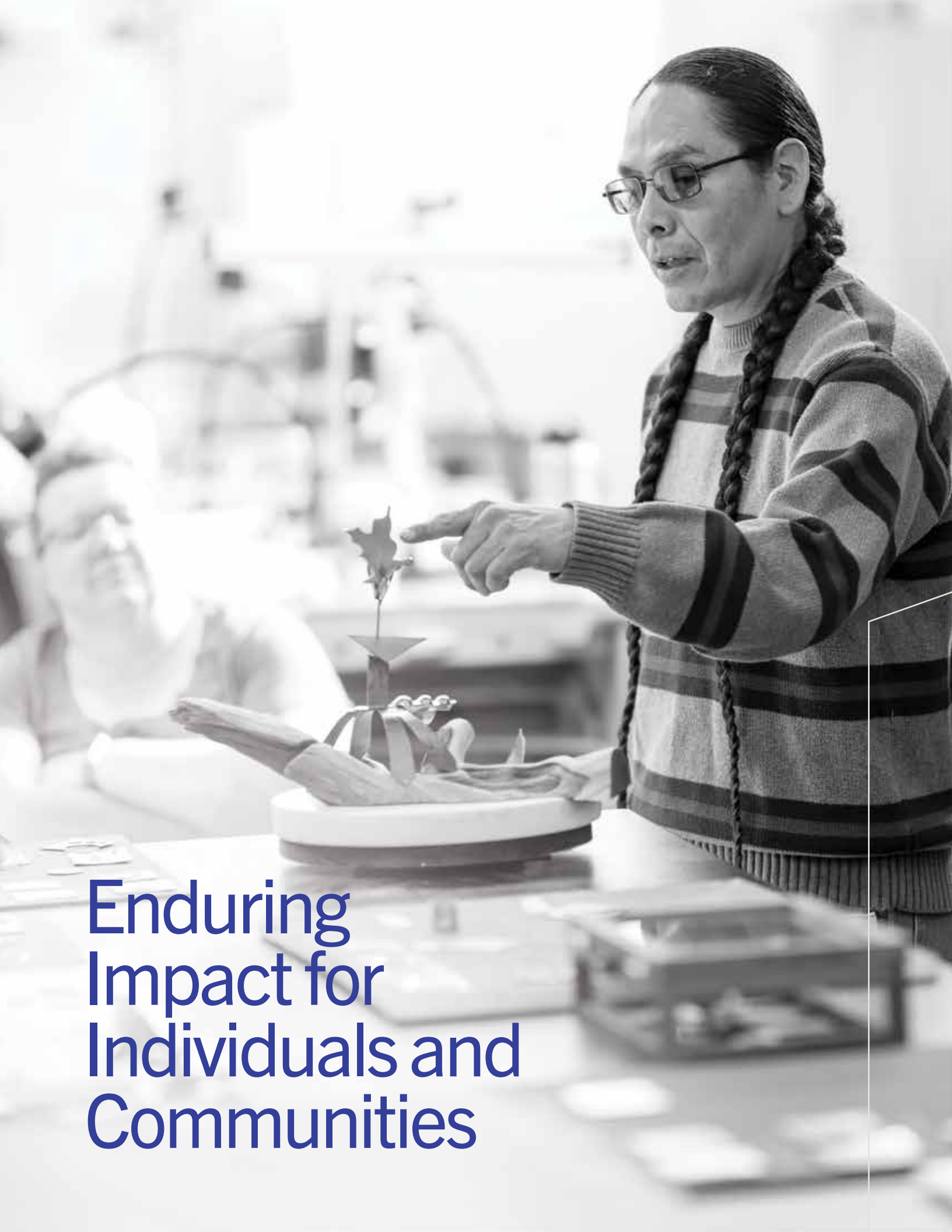
**Indigenous students as a group are the least represented in higher education in the United States.** Only 15% of Native Americans have college degrees and nationally, only 19% of today's Indigenous students will complete their college education. Over 90% of our applicants could not attend IAIA without financial support.

IAIA has a graduation rate of 33% and we are continually working to improve these results. To increase college access and success for Indigenous students, IAIA must respond to the cultural values of these individuals and the unique pressures they face. Many of these students are

disappointed with mainstream institutions and approaches that exclude, ignore, or erase Indigenous history. The students have often confronted bias, stereotypes, and demoralizing ignorance from peers and instructors. These specific challenges, added to the prevailing stresses of pursuing a higher education, result in completion rates that remain well below those of non-Indigenous students.

Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) such as IAIA are unique places where such challenges are confronted and managed in ways that allow students to flourish. Many socially-conscious donors have recognized the unique needs of Indigenous communities and colleges like IAIA, but **a critical need for broader financial support persists.**

Opposite: IAIA Artist-in-Residence (A-i-R) performance



**Enduring  
Impact for  
Individuals and  
Communities**



**The far-reaching impact of the Institute of American Indian Arts beats through the lives and legacies of its students and alumni into the world.** An IAIA education provides the foundation for students to reinforce their traditions and heritage, affirm their identities, and succeed in their communities and beyond for generations to come.

At IAIA, we understand that for Indigenous students to succeed we must recognize the unique values, needs, and perspectives each student brings to campus. Our students take pride in their heritages and are encouraged to explore and incorporate their cultures into their academic and artistic endeavors. As the only institution of higher learning dedicated to contemporary Indigenous arts and cultures, IAIA provides students a unique educational and artistic experience.

Enrollment has grown to more than 900 students, representing nearly 100 Indigenous nations from the United States, Canada, Mexico, and beyond. To address

issues that may prevent students from achieving academic success, IAIA has implemented a series of initiatives, from subsidized meals to a student emergency fund for those facing difficulties.

IAIA's impact is manifest in the 4,000 alumni who have achieved success as prominent artists and writers, filmmakers, museum professionals, attorneys and tribal leaders, scholars, and entrepreneurs. Alumni success is not limited to individuals, but includes their families, communities, and tribal nations.

To continue building on 60 years of success, IAIA and our students need the support donors provide. Federal appropriations only cover about 60–70 percent of the annual operating budget, and 91 percent of students require financial support to meet their tuition, housing, and food costs. These significant needs cannot be met without private funding and philanthropic contributions.

**Your *impact* will resonate for years to come.**

Opposite: Lx Lewis  
(Cheyenne River/Diné) '21

Above: Avis Charley  
(Dakota/Diné) '18



An aerial photograph showing a large, diverse group of people sitting in a circle on a paved plaza. The plaza is surrounded by a low concrete wall and a gravel border. The people are of various ethnicities and are dressed in casual attire. The background shows a paved area and some landscaping elements like small plants and light fixtures.

**“IAIA has paved a path for my education and for my future. The college has shown me a community with great diversity that makes all feel welcome. Each year the IAIA community continues to grow, and with new growth comes new opportunities for student success.”**

**— Mayann Etsitty (Ute Mountain Ute) '23**





A dramatic landscape photograph capturing a sunset or sunrise. The sky is filled with layers of clouds, ranging from dark, heavy clouds at the top to lighter, wispy clouds near the horizon. The sun is positioned just above the horizon, creating a bright, golden glow that illuminates the clouds and the landscape below. In the foreground, the silhouettes of a mountain range and a building are visible against the darkening sky. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

# Answering the Vision of IAIA





**“IAIA helped me explore artistic mediums that have changed the way I look at the world. Through constant guidance and exploration, I left IAIA with newfound passions that will ultimately shape my future.”**

**— Carmen Selam  
(Yakama, Comanche) '16**

**Our vision is to continue excelling as the premier educational institution for Indigenous arts and cultures.** As such, we dedicate ourselves through our curriculum, facilities, and energies to prepare students for success and leadership that reflects Indigenous cultures and values. We accomplish this through culturally-based programs that fulfill the physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual needs of our students.

Above all, we are a national institute of excellence, an example of all that can be accomplished to advance contemporary Indigenous arts through education, exhibitions, research, and Indigenous exchange. This is exemplified in our core values of collaboration, excellence, creativity, respect, and integrity.

*Where might young Indigenous people find possibilities for themselves as developing creative artists, or for the cultural progress of their Indigenous nations? Where could they imagine access and opportunity, diversity and inclusion? Where might a non-Indigenous student go to discover first-hand traditional and contemporary expressions of Indigenous cultures?*

**IAIA is the answer.**

*Where might an individual, foundation, or corporation find the opportunity to support excellence, to make an impact, to open doors to the future? Where can donors be assured their support is well-managed for specific purposes and for the benefit, both now and in the future, of communities long-neglected and under-resourced?*

**Higher education at IAIA is the answer.**

Previous pages: MFA Creative Writing students at IAIA

Opposite: The sun sets on IAIA's campus

**“I first began to support IAIA after interactions with alumni and students whose art I admired. As I came to know them personally, I was struck by their determination and talent as artists, but also their intelligence, insight, and concern for others. Surely IAIA had nurtured these qualities, as had their families and communities. Others I know support IAIA out of an interest in education, Indigenous cultures, or scholarship. And as I came to know IAIA better, I was struck by its excellent leadership and financial stewardship. Other current or potential donors should appreciate that their support will produce successful results, for individuals and their communities, both now and long into the future.”**

**— Michael Pettit,  
IAIA Foundation Board Member**





**“It was quite an incredible experiment in education . . . but, that school saved my life. Good teachers are part of that and now IAIA has turned into this wonderful college . . . and I am proud to be part of that.”**

**— Joy Harjo (Muscogee Creek Nation) '75  
23rd Poet Laureate of the United States**



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The IAIA Foundation was founded in 2010 to expand IAIA's capacity to raise critically needed funds to strengthen student success, enrich academic programs, support museum exhibitions, and keep IAIA at the forefront of educational offerings. The IAIA Foundation is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization, EIN #32-0377684.

**Your support will change lives and shape futures.**

Cover: LaShawn Medicine Horn  
(Yankton Sioux Tribe) '19

Photograph of Dr. Robert Martin by  
Andrew Collins

All other photographs by  
Jason S. Ordaz