



Indigenous Leaders Empowerment and Development Program (ILEAD)

The Indigenous Leaders Empowerment and Development Program (ILEAD) is under the California Indian Culture and Sovereignty Center (CICSC), in collaboration with American Indian Studies (AIS) and the American Indian Student Alliance (AISA) at California State University San Marcos (CSUSM), and the Indigenous Climate and Environmental Collaborative (ICEC).

Mission

Empower American Indian students at CSUSM by fostering a culture of leadership, resilience, and professional development through practical, community-centered learning experiences in diverse fields.

Values of ILEAD

1. **Empowerment Leadership Through Education:** Equip students with the knowledge, skills, and opportunities to become leaders in their chosen fields and advocates for their communities' well-being and ability to thrive in the future.
2. **Collaborative Spirit and Relationship Building:** Embrace the collective knowledge and strength of our student, staff, and faculty community to work together and share knowledge in an inclusive and innovative learning environment.
3. **Cultural Integrity:** Uphold a steadfast commitment to American Indian knowledge, histories, traditions, and decolonization strategies, integrating them as the foundation to leadership development.
4. **Circle of Reciprocity:** Where generations learn from one another and pass American Indian knowledge on to future generations to ensure lasting sustainability and growth.

Goals of ILEAD

1. **Career Readiness:** Develop a comprehensive curriculum and experiential learning opportunities that prepare students for successful careers such as in the arts, marketing, public relations, research, law, business, tribal government, health, education, climate and environmental advocacy, event-planning, and museum studies.
2. **Community, Cultural Engagement & Network Building:** Establish and sustain initiatives that promote active engagement with local communities, foster cultural exchange, and enhance the visibility of American Indian issues, heritage, and values within and beyond the campus. Additionally, aim to establish a robust network of partnerships with local tribes, organizations, and professionals to provide students with meaningful community engagement, mentorship, and employment opportunities.
3. **Interdisciplinary Research and Advocacy:** Encourage interdisciplinary research and workshops that address the pressing needs of American Indian communities, such as health, legal advocacy, and climate resilience, thereby contributing to informed advocacy and policy development. To support student-led research and advocacy projects that contribute to the advancement of American Indian issues, particularly in areas such as climate resilience, health, education, and tribal governance, aiming to enhance policy and practice both within and beyond the CSUSM community. This includes a commitment to fostering critical thinking skills needed to respond to the complex problems presented by lingering historical legacies of colonialism.
4. **Youth Mentorship and Leadership Development:** Engage in ILEAD Jr. Program to empower CSUSM AIAN students to mentor middle and high school students, fostering early leadership, cultural pride, and academic interest in higher education. This goal aims to create a pipeline for younger students to envision and prepare for their future in higher education and beyond, with a focus on cultural heritage and community responsibility. Through mentorship, ILEAD participants will inspire the next generation, build lasting bonds, and provide guidance on navigating academic and professional paths.

These components are designed to align with the broader goals of CSUSM while providing a tailored, culturally relevant approach to American Indian student development and leadership. Through ILEAD, we are committed to providing American Indian students with a dynamic and supportive environment that fosters academic excellence, professional growth, and meaningful contributions to their communities.