

Committee on Native American and Indigenous Philosophers

2016–2017 Membership

Anne S. Waters, interim chair (2017), member (2019), newsletter editor

Lori Underwood, associate chair (2017)

Zayin L. Cabot (2017)

Jacob M. Held (2017)

Scott L. Pratt (2018)

Andrew F. Smith (2018)

Brian Y. Burkhart (2019)

Agnes B. Curry, newsletter editor

Andrea Sullivan-Clarke, newsletter editor

Shay Welch, newsletter editor

From: Anne Waters <docwaters@me.com>
Subject: Interim Chair Report: Committee on Native American and Indigenous Philosophy
Date: October 10, 2017 at 6:44 PM
To: Linda Nuoffer <lnuoffer@udel.edu>, Amy Ferrer <aferrer@udel.edu>
Cc: Elizabeth Anderson <eandersn@umich.edu>, Lori Underwood <underwoo@cnu.edu>
Bcc: Anne Waters <docwaters@me.com>



Good Morning Linda,

Below is my report to the Board on behalf of my tenure as Interim Chair for the Committee on Native American and Indigenous Philosophy. I hope it will be timely. I am still cleaning up after hurricane IRMA, and appreciate the extra time to submit this report! Have a great day, warm smile,
anne :-)

From: Anne Waters <docwaters@me.com>
Date: July 13, 2017 at 6:44:58 PM EDT
To: Anne Waters <docwaters@me.com>
Subject: APA Draft Report 2

American Philosophical Association Report
Interim Chair, APA Committee on Native American and Indigenous Philosophy and Philosophers
Anne Waters, J.D., Ph.D.

Report from Committee Chair to Solicited Queries From Board

PART I. What were the major projects/activities accomplished by your committee in the 2016–2017 membership year (July 1, 2016–June 30, 2017)?

Improving membership and activities with inclusive diversity. Only 2 Native Americans were on Committee.

1. Find knowledgeable seasoned scholars with experience in Native American and Indigenous Philosophy.
2. Get representation from south of American borders and to include women, disabled, and recent Ph.D.
3. Buffer and mentor a number of editors and improve publications of quality in the newsletter.
4. Add name 'Native American' or 'American Indian' to committee and newsletter so we did not disappear from membership and to increase visibility of inclusion and difference.
5. Acknowledge in committee name the "hosting" and "home" of the Indigenous Philosophers of America--that we are in our (Native American) indigenous home, and as such graciously "host" the experiences of all Indigenous Philosophers in the APA.
6. Achieve visibility with committee name addition that would preclude Native Americans from feeling insulted or left behind in our own committee.
7. Include senior members to help mentor and jump-start programming.
8. Work with Associate Chair to provide knowledge base for smooth transition.
9. Establish a managing editor of newsletter to make quick decisions, get and organize submissions for review, and provide committee newsletter editorial experience.
10. Mentor new newsletter editors in aspects of APA organization and protocol, to re-invigorate and integrate conference presentations with newsletter work, and establish interest of members.

11. Establish framework for providing APA members an understanding of how they might go about including the Indigenous Philosophy of the Americas (Native American) in their curriculum, thereby exposing students to the Indigenous Philosophies of the Americas as part of their own American history (herstory) to be proud and knowledgeable about, and to understand why that knowing matters to their lives.

12. Make APA conference arrangements for celebrating the 20th year of our committee and newsletter, including participation on "main" program.

PART II. How did you go about getting them done?

Researched people and their work online. Used online resources and made numerous phone calls to get to know folks, their interests and work, and to talk with folks about their interests.

What were the relevant results for your projects?

All accomplished excepting: (1) newsletter name change (brining to Board at next meeting); (2) do not have African Canadian, nor Australian Indigenous Philosopher on Committee, but path is walked; and (3) unable to have resources to arrange celebration of 20th year of committee and program.

PART III. Are any 2016-2017 projects ongoing?

Proposed name addition for newsletter provided for Board approval.

More work needs to be done to establish groundwork for incorporating America's Indigenous Philosophy into American Philosophy courses and agenda, and into Native American Studies curriculum; and incorporating global indigenous philosophy into American and global philosophy curricula about and including American Philosophy.

PART IV. Ongoing programs/newsletters/committee member nominations.

Ongoing efforts to acknowledge the history of this committee and why it is important and what role it plays within the APA and philosophy curricula generally--keeping the history, voices, and work of Native American and Indigenous philosophers alive and heard during the 20th year celebration of our committee within the APA.

PART V. What worked well?

Personal emails, phone conversations, research on nominated members. Allowing for committee silence to speak and to listen, mentoring with senior APA members.

PART VI. What could have worked better?

Finding \$ for APA conference attendance--most of us have never met one another, and funds are pivotal for travel as most of our members are generally at the bottom of food chain.

PART VII. Any other comments, recommendations, or suggestions?

The APA Board set up an ad hoc committee with funds to create an opportunity for APA members to participate in celebrating the 20th anniversary of this committee, and to reflect upon how the work of this committee has brought about greater diversity and inclusion of both people and curricula within the organization. *a greater sense of veracity as to our own indigenous philosophical heritage in the organization, a greater sense of veracity as to our own indigenous philosophical heritage in the*

organization, a greater sense of urgency as to our own indigenous philosophical heritage in the Americas, and how this might reflect future projects of this committee.

Sent from my iPhone
Dr. Anne Waters, J.D., Ph.D.

BELOW IS A COPY OF AN EARLIER COMMITTEE REPORT BEFORE THE BOARD SENT OUT RESPONSE QUESTIONS. I ORIGINALLY INTENDED TO USE THE BELOW AS THE CHAIR REPORT, BUT MERELY INCORPORATE IT HERE BELOW. IT WILL BE PUBLISHED IN OUR NEXT NEWSLETTER.

I. Published Newsletter Committee Report

Part A. A Committee of Change.

Some twenty years ago (about 1996) the American Philosophical Association (APA) asked me if I might create an APA committee for Native Americans. At that time only two self-identified American Indians held a Ph.D. in Philosophy: Viola Cordova and myself. We named this committee 'Committee on the Status of American Indian Philosophers'. Our newsletter was similarly named, and it announced this naming included those of the Americas and Indigenous to the Americas, as our traditional Native nations and families stretched across colonial settler boundaries.

About ten years later (about 2006) some Canadian APA members informed the APA Board they felt excluded and insulted by the name of this committee, as Canadians were not "Americans." Thus this committee name changed to 'Committee on Indigenous Philosophers'. The newsletter was similarly re-named. Although one might think this naming held global inclusion, Indigenous philosophers beyond North America have not been in participation until very recently.

The re-naming of the committee, to be effective in this Association, was too broad, unyielding and confusing. Canadian First Nations members had participated in the committee since its inception, both as members, and as the second in line chair. And problematically the re-naming was not effective to bring in Indigenous philosophers from other regions (or diversity committees) e.g. "American" or other nationality Latin American philosophers from Mexico, further South, or elsewhere-- much less from Africa, Australia, Europe, Asia, or other global regions.

Thus over several years this committee fell into decline, with no articulated guiding light of mutual interest among its members. Worse, most United States American Indians were still not getting hired nor published, and were thus unable to have the wherewithal including mentors, to build the field of American Indian Philosophy, much less any global Indigenous Philosophy.

Then a dozen years later (about 2016) some Native Americans complained that they felt excluded and insulted by the name of this committee, as they did not identify as "Indigenous." Subsequently the committee name changed again to "Committee on Native American and Indigenous Philosophers." And just as before our newsletter may likely be named "Newsletter on Native American and Indigenous Philosophers and Philosophies."

What is the import of this re-naming? First, because we are an "American" philosophical association (APA), this naming brings Native Americans into consonance with those who are at this American APA table. It brings Native Americans into a role as creators, caretakers, and protectors of "American Indigenous Philosophers and Philosophies," alongside global Indigenous philosophers and philosophies. Native Americans are no longer made invisible by the amorphous naming of "indigenous." It says we are here, in the Americas, and we deserve a place setting at the table of the APA. It makes us visible.

This committee, alongside the many Indigenous philosophers who will eventually come to this "American" association, will include those global members who identify as "Indigenous" and those who may not so identify, but believe they work in the fields of Indigenous Philosophy. (And malleable belief, not static knowledge, might be our guiding light of inclusion here.) As Indigenous to the Americas, Native Americans in this "American" association thus have a crucial and important role to make extra efforts to continue to diversify and include all Indigenous philosophers and philosophies as our colleagues in this American association.

May we never forget that we Native Americans, we, Native to the Americas, whether tribal or nation enrolled, or not, are, as Native Americans, "Of the Americas." More, as well as "Native" or Indigenous to our American or America's roots, We are, as Geronimo told us so many years ago in a famous speech, "You are the Red, the White, and the Blue." And as such we need to keep the Indigenous fires burning for all.

Many say where there are "Indians" there are "politics" and I agree. Anticipations of some are that the inclusion of all indigenous persons of the globe in this committee (remembering that we are all indigenous to somewhere!) will bring forth a new global "philosophy of indigeneity." Such philosophy might be inclusive of different knowledge bases, experience oriented with elder participation, and continue the passing along of Indigenous community thought through generations, ever expanding our understanding of humanity and our human place in the galaxy.

The American Philosophical Association plays the role of facilitator to develop intergenerational and global philosophical thought. Many years ago, in a Michelangelo moment, President Kennedy announced a new NASA program, proclaiming that humanity would go to space and touch the face of God. Today some philosophers will reach, as Mike Pence says, to "touch the heavens." Yet others, including Indigenous philosophers, will step into both an old and new world of learning more about how to understand our human place on earth in the context of our outer spatial regions of the galaxy.

In the near future this committee will connect traditional philosophies of indigenous technological knowledge bases with those of Western scientific enterprises. This work has already begun by some members now associating with this committee. If the APA ever intended to be an "American" Philosophical Association in philosophical reach, beholden only to the USA and Canada, and excluding Central and South America, and other earthly regions, our current committee work challenges this thought! After almost 40 years in this Association, and knowing the originating history, I am still not clear whether 'American' in the context of "The APA" might mean nation, region, a school of thought, or a political cadre of in-house philosophers with institutional money and power, or all of the above! Yet I am still here, a member, and perhaps there is reason to be creatively encouraged about this! But I do know that we come to this room because we are philosophers! And to have this space is important to me.

Our committee might perhaps now be more closely aligned with the Committee on Global Cooperation, and their interests (hopefully) in Indigenous Philosophy, than any other committee or group at this time. For this reason it may be important to continue to include Native America as a guiding light and care taker of this "American" association. For as we expand our human associations, a vast expanse of differing philosophical ontologies, epistemologies, metaphysics, and value theories presented by global Indigenous thought may propel the APA forward intellectually in a way our association has not yet been challenged to think.

The notion that Western thought can anymore be taught as a representative of human philosophy in an introductory philosophy (or any other) course has been put to rest by many. In this context Indigenous Philosophy seeks to search for human understanding rather than dogmatic truth, and relegate some unchanging static truth assertions to a misguided notion of global colonial settler history books. Some have contemplated that Native American Philosophy ought to be taught as introductory philosophy to American students. I see no reason why this suggestion is not a good one. At any rate as I face an oncoming new septuagenarian chapter of my own life, I hope to look back one day at how this APA committee has played a role in the development of ideas of both Indigenous and what was once known as "Western" colonial settler ideas.

In the same spirit that my father invented the "Black Box" that became and remains the *sin qua non* of American war time communication, and later developed the theory of inertial guidance for NASA to return our spaceships using gravitational forces, I have thought to articulate my and others worldview, as an Indigenous philosopher, within the ambiance of this committee, this philosophical association, and current global and galactic consciousness. As such I have drawn heavily upon my mother's American Indian guidance.

I believe that in the United States there is currently no other Association than the APA to work with to develop a cadre of intergenerational and diverse Indigenous philosophers devoted to inclusive cooperative understanding of multifarious global indigenous philosophy. It is for this reason that I have continued to work within the APA for forty years. As originator of this committee so many years ago, and political activist on behalf of America's Indigenous Philosophy within the APA, I view this committee as making great strides to envelop diverse thought that has and will continue to lead to substantial interaction with global and Indigenous Philosophy and philosophers. I predict that inter-galactic philosophy will also find an important place within Indigenous Philosophy.

It is in this spirit that I recently accepted the task and honor, once again, to assist this committee, this time to act as interim chair in the middle of the 2015-2016 academic year. At the time I was a mere newsletter consultant at the request of the Chair. However during my recent tenure our committee has changed from a committee with only one Native American, to a committee of several Native American philosophers working alongside Indigenous philosophers of differing global traditions. As earlier mentioned, all philosophers, Native to the Americas, have a special role to play within the APA.

The recent changes undergone by this committee lead the way not toward "touching the heavens," or "the face of God," in a traditional Western religious philosophical standpoint, but allow us to go forward in the pursuit of kneading the traditional historical flow of global Indigenous thought as it touches the lives of humanity. It is now the task of Indigenous philosophers of this Association to lead where our hearts may take us. It may take time throughout the global Indigenous philosophical world to bring forth an offering of communicative interaction of ideas about ourselves and the world as we have known it, whereby humanity itself will have a more accurate assessment of our place.

Thus many Indigenous philosophers, by calling, do not see our place as folks who are leaders or followers of Western religious thought, but as developers of global Indigenous thought that will upturn current human paradigmatic scientific theories of our universe. Philosophers can now, through this Association, and this committee work, better touch the face of humanity. As we approach the contemplations of many of our traditional Western assumptions about the world, whether in areas of metaphysics, epistemology, value theory, science, or social and political thought, we are being and will continue to be challenged.

My comments here for this Association this year are not about changing this committee to keep with the times. There will always be a Chair and members to assist us in this way. Rather my comments of my tenure in this Association are about how the APA has changed us, through this committee, to more fully explicate who we are, as American Indians, and

Indigenous Philosophers, in the APA. When first I walked into the APA I was an Indian, and a red, white, and blue American of color. Today I am that same person, but my life and others' lives, have changed and been enriched by the APA committees, conferences, newsletters, and ongoing collegial mentoring and support through interactions of many global Indigenous philosophers. For this I thank the APA. And my vision is that the APA and our members through this committee, will experience more of this kneaded interaction.

I have spent much time this past year and a half thinking about this committee, our members of the committee, and members of the APA, as well as the Institution of the APA itself! I have hashed and rehashed Indigenous issues, including the naming of ourselves and others. I do not expect all of the things I have set in motion since originally working with this committee in the 1990's, or even in the past year and a half, to come to fruition, but only to have placed a few drops in the bucket of issues this committee will face over the next millennium. I hope my contributions have assisted in the development of human justice through philosophy, and most especially Indigenous Philosophy, and that such development will move us closer to inter-galactic philosophies.

Part B. Committee of Members: Native American Philosophers

I could be equally, but not be more proud of any committee I have chaired in the past, than I am now of the excellent ongoing work of our renaissance philosophy members of this committee. I continue to be honored to work with our committee members. I have learned much working with our astutely philosophical members. I take a moment to share in this report to the Board and APA members the ways these committee members contribute to this committee and Global Philosophy herself.

Agnes B. Curry, Indigenous to North and Central America, and whom I have known and worked alongside with for over 20 years, and with whom I edit a SUNY series devoted to Living Indigenous Philosophies. Agnes gifts this committee with her heart, her perspicuous philosophical and writing skills, her expansive committee experience, and invaluable energy to committee success, by filling the all important role of Managing Editor of our Newsletter. Since she has taken on this role the committee has been able to diversify our perspectives and move toward our goal of inclusivity of global Indigenous Philosophy. My hope is that Agnes will continue to provide the all important inter-personal and philosophical skills, acumen, and passion she exercises all year long on behalf of this committee, its communicative newsletter, and the future of global Indigenous Philosophies.

Shay Welch, Indigenous to North America, and well published feminist philosopher, is a guiding light of how far our committee needs to reach to conjoin our sisters and brothers of Indigenous Philosophy. She proves with enthusiasm, that we can accomplish our goals, and concretely bring Indigenous philosophers together at the APA. Shay has worked tenacity, in her own creative ways, to take our inclusive Indigenous committee message to the Feminist Social and Political conferences. More, she then returns to our committee to create conference and newsletter space for mutual dialogue interaction that inspires and propels this committee forward toward knowing how to touch our shared humanity on earth. I envision more leadership roles for Shay in the future, and hope they will happen in the APA.

Brian Y. Burkhart, Indigenous to North America, whom I have known and worked with for over twenty years, since he began graduate school, offers this committee a constant in producing scholarship that propels us to step outside habitual philosophical frameworks, to envision an indigenous American Indian ontological worldview. Ever on the cusp of understanding and integrating the thought of Indigenous and all philosophers, with that of settler colonialist thought, Brian sits upon this committee to provide that cutting edge knowledge, research, and method. My hope is that we will soon see Brian's Manuscript (Indigenizing Philosophy through the Land: the Geographical Locality of American Indian Thought) alongside that of Thomas Norton Smith and Chike Jeffers, in the State University of New York (SUNY) Indigenous Philosophies series edited by myself and Agnes Curry. Until then I hope also Brian will continue to share his fresh ideas about Indigenous Philosophy with this committee within the APA.

Andrea Sullivan-Clark, Indigenous to North America, is an astute poet, outstanding scholar, and recent Philosophy Ph.D., specializing in philosophy of science (value theory) and social epistemology). She brings to our committee well honed grant writing success! This year she received a \$10K diversity grant from the APA to engage in what I believe to be one of the most inclusive summer programs the APA has ever supported financially. This success, and more important, Andrea's understanding of the role and nature of "diversity in philosophy" supports the overarching goals of the APA to increase inclusion and diversity within our profession. The strong insight and leadership of Andrea synthesizes with those same skills of our committee members. My hope is that Andrea will remain in philosophy and continue to encourage her students to pursue philosophy of a diverse bent with the support of the APA.

James Maffie, an Indigenous, Latin American, and Comparative Philosopher, is well published and is the gifter of "Aztec Philosophy: A World in Motion" (see IEP "Aztec Philosophy"). He has successfully challenged some of the internalized settler colonial Platonic metaphysics of our most important Latin American philosopher, Leon Portillo. He is also one of the recent originators and editors (with Monika Kirloskar-Steinbach) of "Confluence: Online Journal of World Philosophies." James joins our committee this year to bring perspicuous detail to our sometimes muddled thoughts about science and global Indigenous Philosophy. Jim has been a quiet supporter of several members of this committee (publishing several of us), and of the committee itself, for almost 20 years. It is exciting to have him work with us alongside environmental philosophers this coming year. His philosophical understanding of the seams of North, Central, and South America in the context of settler colonial philosophy will serve this committee well.

Robert M. Figueroa, Indigenous to Central America, whom I have come to know only recently, promises to continue to

contribute to this committee his expertise in environmental philosophy and justice studies. (E.g. "Indigenous Populations and Cultural Justice" Oxford Handbook of Climate Change). Hopefully Robert will take the lead within the APA, along with Brian, Lori, Andrea, James, Andrew and others, to bring an Indigenous philosophical perspective of environmental justice as it affects Indigenous people and cultures, especially in the Americas, to the APA. I hope our members can look forward to hearing about new paradigmatic shifts toward understanding our environmental value issues in the next few years, articulating differences of Indigenous philosophy from Western thought, and seeing some cognitive changes in core areas of philosophy, most especially metaphysics, ontology, epistemology, and science, and that Robert will help guide these efforts.

Scott L. Pratt, an Indigenous Philosopher since his graduate school, supports this committee as a senior scholar as he has since its inception. Scott has been pivotal in his commitment to care taking some of the Indigenous conceptual glue that has brought "Canadian" and "American" Indigenous Philosophy to the APA. His lengthy history with this committee, and his experience as a Dean, has enabled him to mentor and assist in our committee development over the years. I know he will continue to support this committee.

Andrew F. Smith has only recently joined this committee, though his interests are in environmental ethics and political philosophy. Andrew brings new energy and commitment to our committee. Andrew assisted in developing programming this year, and I hope he will be active next year assisting in programming and bringing together the thought of our diverse Indigenous environmentalists on the committee. We thank Andrew for his interest and commitment to Native American and Indigenous Philosophy!

Lori J. Underwood, Indigenous to North America, is our new chair of this committee. Her fields include Kant, Philosophy of Law and Political Philosophy, and she has interest in Kant's Cosmopolitanism and Global Terrorism. She is editor of Peter Lang's Terrorism Studies Series. New to this committee, as both Dean and Philosophy faculty, Lori brings honed administrative skills to our committee. Her interest in environmental Native justice complements committee member's interests, and will serve her well over the next three years working with such a diverse group of Indigenous philosophers who are, each in their own unique manner, outstanding scholars. Lori tells me she is honored and excited to work with our committee members, and looks forward to celebrating and increasing our diversity, while directing our attention to environmental philosophy and Indigenous populations. We are honored to have her guide and facilitate the work of this committee.

In Closing.

The best way I know of to close this report is to say thank you, on behalf of the Committee on Native American and Indigenous Philosophers, thank you to members of this committee, to members of the APA who continue to support this committee over the years, to the Board for letting it happen, and to Amy, Erin, and Linda, who also help us make things happen!

Sent from my iPhone
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