

AIBL's National Business & Leadership Student Conference

IMPACT REPORT



2026

#SHINE YOUR LIGHT

CONFERENCE RECAP

The AIBL Business & Leadership Student Conference is crucial to fulfilling the mission of AIBL: to empower the Indigenous spirit through business leadership. At the conference, school-based AIBL Chapter members link their traditional school coursework with business and entrepreneurship education in a way that expands their skill set beyond traditional academic methods. Additionally, it serves as a valuable networking opportunity for emerging business leaders to network with like-minded peers and established professionals.

This year's conference was in partnership with the Reservation Economic Summit (RES). RES is a multifaceted event from the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development (NCAIED) featuring access to respected tribal leaders, members of Congress, federal agency representatives, state and local elected officials, and top CEOs. With over 4,000 attendees at RES, our students were able to meet, network, and hear inspiring words from top business leaders in Indian Country.

All activities, keynote presentations, and workshops were made possible through the generous donations of our sponsors and AIBL Board Members.



THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS



Mashantucket Pequot
Tribal Nation



WOND
R
NATION



CAESARS
ENTERTAINMENT®



JOHNSON SCHOLARSHIP
Foundation



Don & Elaine
Witmer
Paso Robles, CA



Sovereign
BANK



SHAKOPEE MDEWAKANTON
SIOUX COMMUNITY



CHRISTOPHER NEWPORT UNIVERSITY
LUTER SCHOOL OF BUSINESS



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NATIVE FORWARD
SCHOLARS FUND



NAVAJO
NATION
SHOPPING
CENTERS
INCORPORATED





THE NUMBERS

100%

**STUDENT ATTENDEES
IDENTIFIED AS NATIVE**



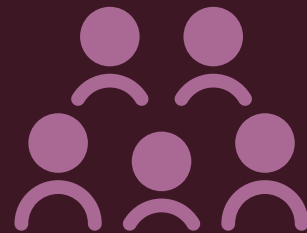
201

**BUSINESS LEADERS
IMPACTED**



22

**CHAPTERS IN
ATTENDANCE**



140

**AIBL STUDENTS
REGISTERED**



100%

**GAVE 10/10 HIGHLY
RECOMMEND RATING**



STUDENT LEADERS

AIBL incorporates student roles into the conference experience to gain and strengthen valuable leadership, presentation, and project management skills. Through sponsorship support, twelve students were paid \$500 each to help run the conference.



MASTER OF CEREMONY
BRIANNA



STAGE ASSISTANT
KENNEDY



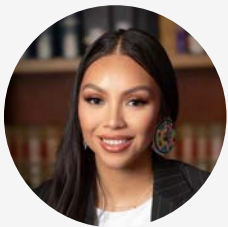
EVENT ASSISTANT
HANNAH



AV TECH
COLTON



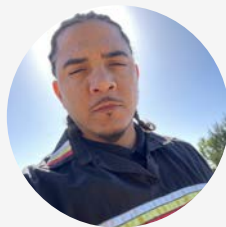
SOCIAL MEDIA
LORENZO



MASTER OF CEREMONY
STORMIE



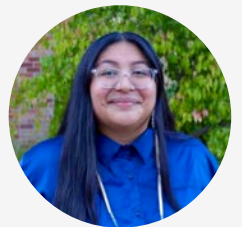
STAGE ASSISTANT
ZANE



EVENT ASSISTANT
JIAH



AV TECH
COLTON



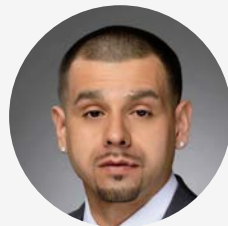
SOCIAL MEDIA
NANI



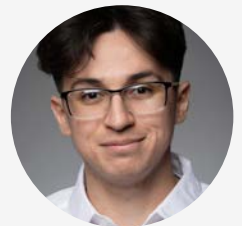
SETUP REGISTRATION
JUSTIN



SETUP REGISTRATION
ARLETE



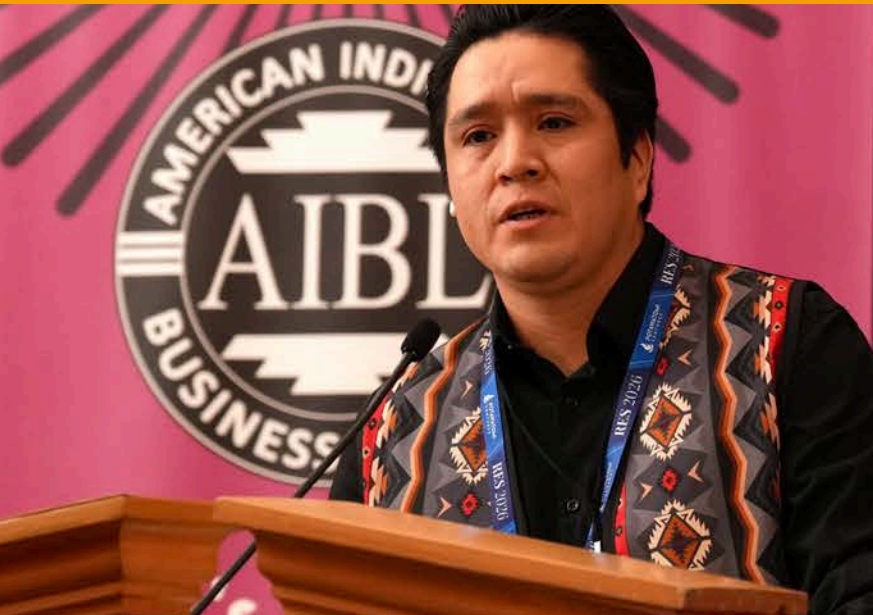
SETUP REGISTRATION
ADRIAN



SETUP REGISTRATION
PEJA



“Taking on the leadership role was a deeply influential experience. It provided a wonderful opportunity to network and connect with many inspiring people. Despite having different names for our creator, we all share a common Indigenous identity.”
-Adrian



I felt like Justin Bieber at Coachella, remembering who I am - healing past trauma through movement and authenticity. I am very proud to represent AIBL NAU chapter and am grateful for the opportunity to showcase my best.
-Zane

“I am grateful that I was given the opportunity to step into a student leadership role because I believe service is one of the most valuable ways to build community. Feeling like a 'part of' the conference in such a meaningful way allowed me to feel the greater impact of AIBL's mission and be a positive role model for my peers and future business professionals.”
-Kennedy





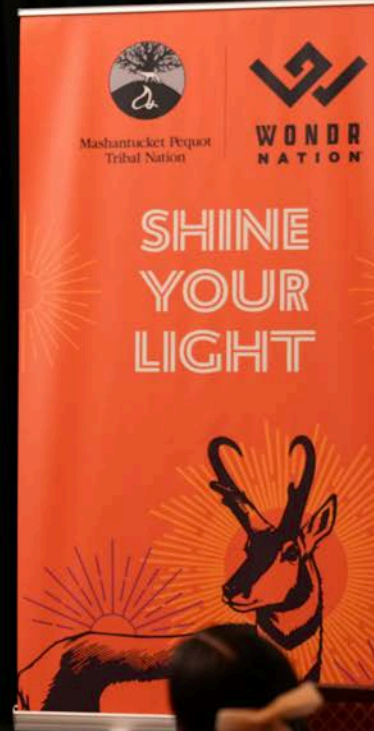
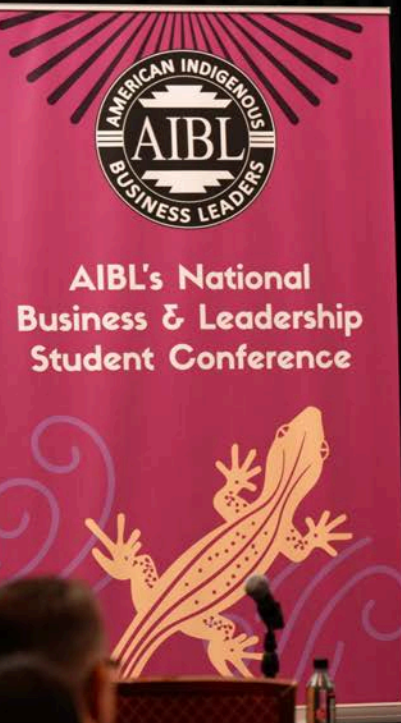
INFLUENTIAL SPEAKERS

AIBL is fortunate to feature top tier **business professional speakers** who share insights, wisdom, and motivational stories to inspire students to step outside their comfort zones and think big.



- The National Center: **Chris James**
- Seminole Tribe of Florida: **Holly Tiger**
- UNITY: **Mary Kim Titla**
- One Innertainment: **Marcus Anthony Guinn**
- REDW: **Taryn Reynolds**
- Sagebrush Hill Group: **Derrick Watchman**
- Sovereign Bank: **Caleb McDaniel**
- AIBL Board Treasurer: **Dr. Larry Gianchetta**
- AIBL Board Chairman: **Dave Archambault**
- AIBL Board Member: **Sam McCracken**
- AIBL Board Member: **Dr. Liz Ross**







AIBL ALUMNI SPEAKERS



Keona Leano

Navajo Nation Division of
Economic Development



Jillian Topsy

Synchrony



Kenyon Ponce

University of
Minnesota Morris



Talon Watchman

Stanford University





PROFESSIONAL JUDGES

25 business professionals volunteered their time to judge conference competitions.

ELEVATOR PITCH

- SunSinger Consulting | Dawn Houle
- Native Forward Scholars Fund | Sara LaBarge
- REDW | Taryn Reynolds

CHAPTER OF THE YEAR

- Synchrony Financial | Princess Drevet
- Synchrony Financial | Amber Eagleboy
- Wondr Nation | Jadyne Reels
- Caesars Entertainment | Greg Shinbur-Copley

ENTREPRENEUR PITCH

- Great Plains Housing Initiative | Desmond Bruguier
- Johnson Scholarship Foundation | Ian Record

CO-CHAPTER

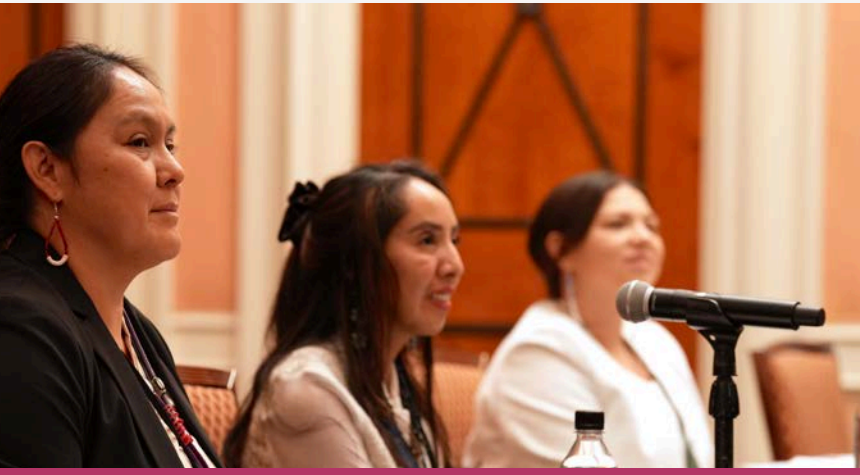
- Caesars Entertainment | Greg Shinbur-Copley
- Caesars Entertainment | Kiersten Flint
- SunSinger Consulting | Dawn Houle

BUSINESS PLAN

- Santa Clara Development Corporation & Pueblo Utility Authority | Mauricia Chavarria-Quam
- Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology | Brandon Dinsmore
- Caesars Entertainment | Erica Oliver
- Hilton | Lisa Tsosie
- US Bank | Nate Lee
- Morgan Stanley | Brianna Riofski
- Tallsalt Advisors | Delmar Blackhorse
- 1st Sovereign Capital | Nicole Johnny
- FUSD#1/ RJC | Rosanna Jumbo-Fitch
- Sagebrush Skies Consulting | Sheiyenne Baloo
- Sawyer Syndicate, LLC | Stepheca Sawyer

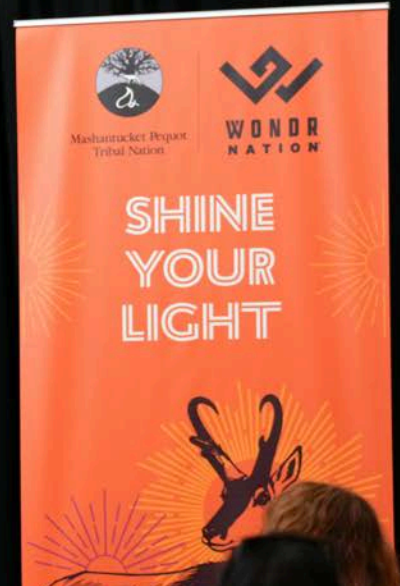




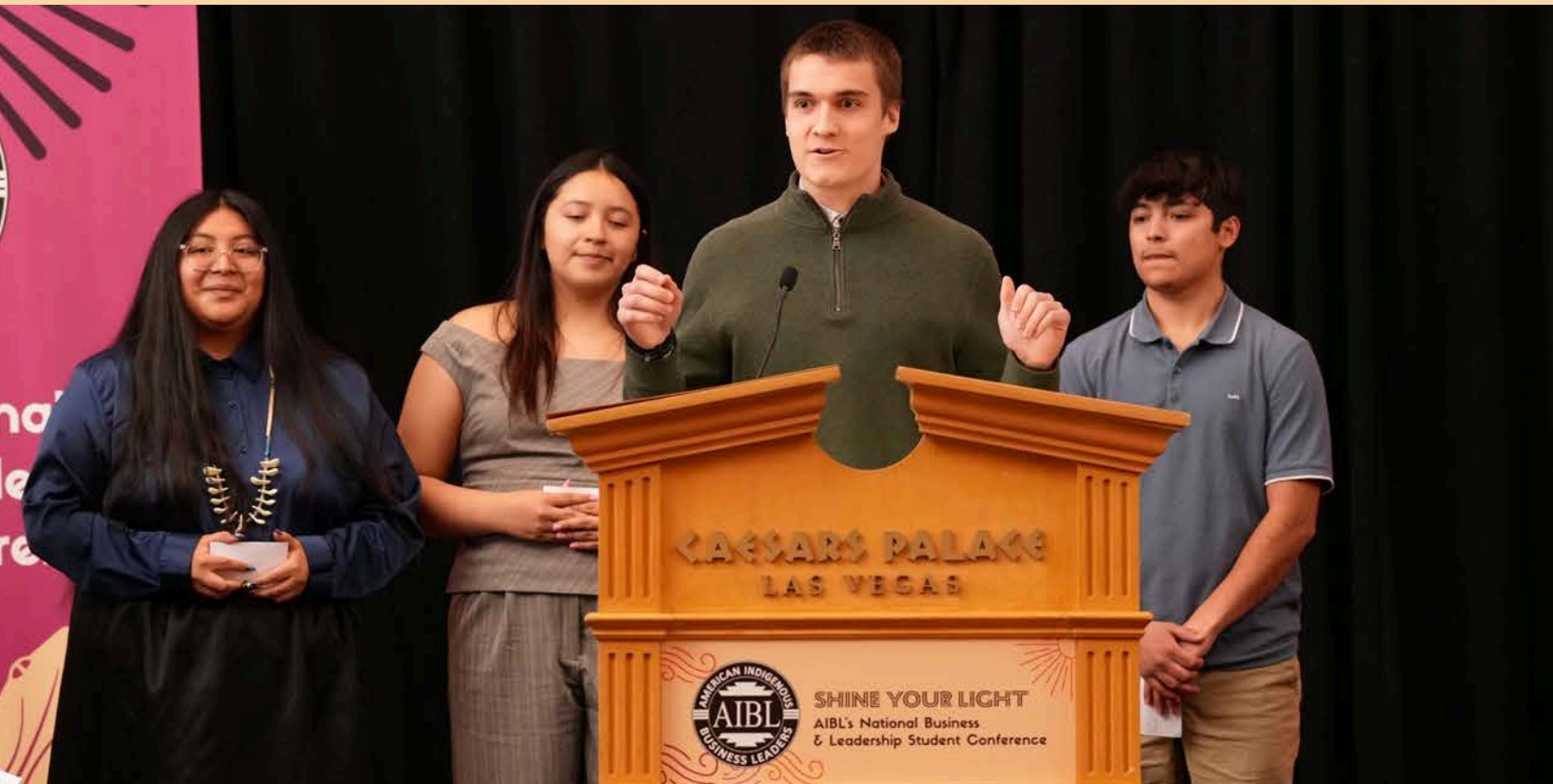




STUDENTS ON STAGE







TRIBAL LEADERSHIP AWARD

MASHANTUCKET PEQUOT TRIBAL NATION

The **AIBL Tribal Leadership Award** recognizes an outstanding tribal nation, organization, or community group that has demonstrated exceptional leadership in economic development, business innovation, education, or governance. This award honors collective efforts that strengthen Native sovereignty, empower Indigenous entrepreneurs, and create lasting opportunities for future generations.



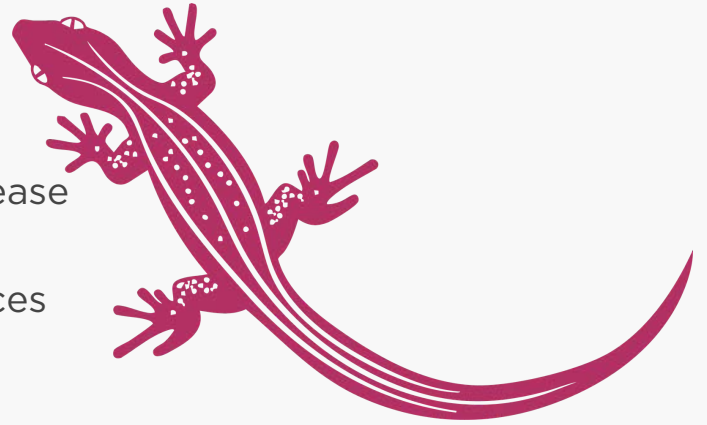
Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation



COMPETITION WINNERS

BUSINESS PLAN

The Business Plan Competition is an opportunity for student Chapters to increase their knowledge and enhance business, leadership, and entrepreneurial experiences through the process of creating and presenting a business plan.



UNIVERSITY



1 MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY



2 UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA MORRIS



3 BEMIDJI STATE UNIVERSITY

TRIBAL COLLEGE



1 SALISH KOOTENAI COLLEGE



2 NEBRASKA INDIAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE



3 SITTING BULL COLLEGE

COMPETITION WINNERS

CHAPTER OF THE YEAR

The Chapter of the Year Competition is an educational experience for students to learn the process of creating a stage presentation summarizing yearly Chapter leadership activities, including educational activities, community service projects, social activities, fundraising efforts, and integration of Indigenous culture.



UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY OF
MINNESOTA MORRIS



TRIBAL COLLEGE
HASKELL INDIAN
NATIONS



COMPETITION WINNERS

ELEVATOR PITCH

The Elevator Pitch Competition is an opportunity for individual students to give a 60-second speech about a business idea, plan, or project, what they would do, and why someone should hire, partner, invest, or collaborate with them.



AGE

14-20

**MASHANTUCKET PEQUOT
TRIBAL NATION**

AGE

21-25

**NORTHEASTERN
STATE UNIVERSITY**

AGE

26+

**RED LAKE
NATION COLLEGE**



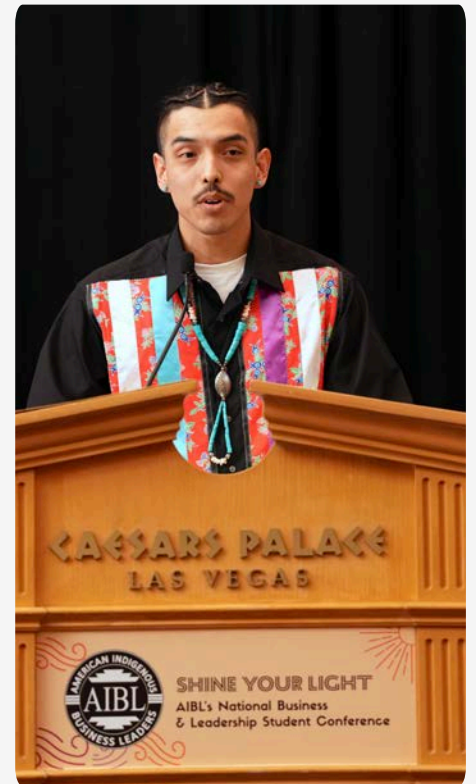
Alexiyah Hazard

Culturally inspired
non-alcoholic drink



Hannah Neugin

Native focused library kits



Adrian Olson

Vinyl wrap business

COMPETITION WINNERS

CO-CHAPTER

The Co-Chapter Competition is an opportunity for student Chapters to network with each other and strengthen problem-solving and presentation skills. Five students from different Chapters form a presentation group on conference day one. As a group, they identify a common problem or issue within Indian Country and offer solutions.



NEXT STEP

Haskell Indian Nations University | **Angelina Rojas**
Northwest Indian College | **Cora Phoenix-Price**
Northeastern State University | **Aiden Root**
Salish Kootenai College | **Chayla Russell**
University of Minnesota Morris | **Nani Mahkuk-Guaman**

COMPETITION WINNERS

ENTREPRENEUR PITCH

The Entrepreneurship Pitch Competition is an opportunity for single students to pitch their small business idea. Each student is paired with a business professional mentor to support pre-competition readiness related to presentation, selling, and influencing skills.



HANNAH NEUGIN

Native focused library kits



COMPETITION WINNERS

ADVISOR OF THE YEAR

Advisor of the Year honors one AIBL Chapter Advisor for their dedication, hard work, support, and community engagement efforts.



GLEN PHILBRICK

Sitting Bull College



WHAT DID YOU LEARN AT THE CONFERENCE?

“Networking opportunities and how to force myself far out of my comfort zone as a non-traditional student.”

“So many people had ideas and solutions that can widely impact our tribal communities.”

“Being a better presenter. It’s more about having a conversation with the audience than talking at them.”

“Gaining real-life experience to use after graduation. Networking is huge, and meeting like-minded entrepreneurs who help one another.”

“About several business strategies, public speaking tips, and so much more.”



SKILLS GAINED FROM AIBL

Incorporating my
culture into my
public presence.



Public speaking
and team planning.



Networking and
financial literacy.



Leadership, presenting,
delegation, teamwork,
& business planning.



Resume for jobs &
professional headshot.





**AIBL HAS
IMPACTED
MY LIFE BY...**

“Giving me another tool to help my business be successful and to help with my bachelor’s degree.”

“Giving me growth, confidence, and stability. I’m more engaged in my education and have the ability to put myself out there to network.”

“Being the greatest launching point into larger goals and opportunities.”

“Significantly expanded my reach to indigenous business professionals.”

“Connecting me with peers and potential mentors in the Indigenous Business community.”







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#SHINE YOUR LIGHT



I enjoyed being a student leader because it gave me the opportunity to support others and contribute to the success of the conference. Serving as an event assistant showed me that I can make a real impact, even in small ways, and be someone others could rely on. It was also a great experience meeting so many kind and interesting people while feeling like a valued part of the conference.

-Hannah

