



**WINHEC**

World Indigenous Nations  
Higher Education Consortium

PRELIMINARY AGM REPORT  
FAIRBANKS, ALASKA  
July 16-20, 2023

**Newsletter**  
Issue 2023

# Greetings from the WINHEC Co-Chairs

Greetings to our wonderful WINHEC family.

Ya'ateeh, Tabe Imumi, Aloha, Tansi, Aniin, Kia Ora, Boozhoo, Burris, Burris, Etlante, Hau Mikoda.

This is just a small sample of the beautiful languages we hear amongst our midst. We invite you to share your languages with us so that the resonance of our voices will be heard around the world.

We send our heartfelt wishes to you and your loved ones, and we sincerely hope that you are all in good health and staying safe. As we navigate through these challenging times, it is important to recognize that while the end of the pandemic is in sight, we acknowledge the significant advancements made in combating the disease through the development of vaccines and effective treatments, as recognized by the World Health Organization.

However, we must also acknowledge the unfortunate reality that certain low and middle-income nations continue to face limited access to necessary health support.

During these times, we implore all of you to offer support and solidarity to one another, with a particular emphasis on uplifting and assisting our Indigenous community members who have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.

Their voices and concerns deserve our utmost attention and care.

In our collective efforts to overcome these challenges, we must strive for inclusivity and ensure that the experiences and perspectives of Indigenous peoples are given the space they deserve.

By fostering an environment of understanding and support, we can work towards a brighter and more equitable future for all.

Our collective hope is that we will emerge from this challenging period with resilience and strength. We continue to keep in our thoughts the smooth progress of the academic year, and we sincerely pray for the well-being and health of both students and our faculties.

We are delighted to announce that our AGM 2023 will be held in a hybrid format, accommodating attendees who can join us in person as well as those who can participate virtually from around the world.

We express deep gratitude to our host, Dr. Sean Asikluk Topkok, the Director of the Center for Cross-Cultural Studies at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

While many sessions will be conducted virtually, allowing remote participation for those unable to travel, we eagerly anticipate the meaningful connections and knowledge sharing that will take place during this event.

**Dr. Jolan Hsieh and Dr. Elmer J. Guy**

# WINHEC Executive Committee

As Co-Chairs, we would like to acknowledge and gratefully appreciate the work of our Executive Committee members and our Country and Region representatives for their leadership, dedication, courage, hard work and support for carrying out the WINHEC mission and goals. Here are our Executive Committee members:

MEMBER	ROLE	INDIGENOUS NATIONS AFFILIATION	INSTITUTION
<b>Elmer Guy</b>	WINHEC Co-Chair	Navajo (USA Mainland)	Navajo Technical University
<b>Jolan Hsieh</b>	WINHEC Co-Chair	Siraya (Taiwan)	National Dong Hwa University
<b>Leanne Holt</b>	Deputy Co-Chair	Worimi   Biripai (Australia)	Macquarie University
<b>D.K. Bubba Martin</b>	Deputy Co-Chair	Oneida (Canada)	Six Nations Polytechnic
<b>Berice Anning</b>	Secretary	Keinjan   Bidjara   Goomeroi (Australia)	University of Technology Sydney
<b>Sean Asiktuk Topkok</b>	Treasurer	Iñupiaq, Sámi, Kven, Irish, and Norwegian (Alaska)	University of Alaska Fairbanks
<b>Rongo Wetere</b>	World Indigenous Nations University (WINU)   Chair	Maniapoto   Tainui (Aotearoa, New Zealand)	World Indigenous Nations University
<b>Keiki Kawaiaea Walter Kahumoku III</b>	Board of Accreditation   Co-Chairs	Hawaii	University of Hawaii Hilo University of Hawaii West O'ahu
<b>Jolan Hsieh Boni Robertson Berice Anning</b>	World Indigenous Research Alliance (WIRA) and WINHEC Journal   Acting Co-Chairs	Siraya (Taiwan) Kabi (Australia) Keinjan   Bidjara   Goomeroi (Australia)	National Dong Hwa University Macquarie University University of Technology Sydney
<b>Vicki-Ann Speechley-Golden</b>	Global Indigenous Elder Alliance (GIEA)   Chair	Wandandian   Yuin (Australia)	Griffith University and Natshihec, Australia
<b>Oddbjørg Heatta Sara</b>	Board member	Sámi	Sámi High School and Reindeer Husbandry School
<b>Eddie Walker</b>	Website   Chair	Ngāti Kahu   Te Rarawa (Aotearoa, New Zealand)	Te Wānanga o Aotearoa
<b>Umi Jensen</b>	WINHEC   Membership Representative	Hawaii	Hualani Foundation
<b>Erika Guttorm Johansen</b>	World Indigenous Nations Youth Alliance	Sámi	Sámi High School Karasjohka

# WINHEC Journal and WIRA

We are pleased to announce that the positions of Chair for the World Indigenous Research Alliance (WIRA) and the WINHEC Journal are currently open, and we warmly welcome applications from interested individuals.

During this transitional period, we would like to express our gratitude to Pia Russell, Education Librarian at the University of Victoria, who has provided valuable assistance to WINHEC.

Pia is currently on research leave and will be traveling for the next few months, making her temporarily unavailable.

However, Pia has kindly offered the support of her organization in Victoria to help during this interim period. We wish her productive research work and safe travels.

During the 2020 AGM, after six years of remarkable leadership, Dr. Paul Whitinui and Dr. Onowa Mclvor officially announced their decision to step down from their roles from WIRA and the Journal.

Since the positions became vacant, we have posted vacancy announcements twice and approached several potential candidates, unfortunately without further success.

Again, we would also like to extend our sincere appreciation to Paul and Onowa, along with their team members, for their exceptional contributions in establishing WIRA and the Journal. Their dedication and hard work have been instrumental in bringing these initiatives to fruition.

During the 2021 AGM, our Co-Chair, Dr. Jolan Hsieh, stepped into the role of acting chair to ensure the seamless continuation of essential functions.

As a result of her leadership, a special edition was published, showcasing the collective storytelling voices from Aotearoa, Hawai'i, and Taiwan, which celebrated Indigenous Knowledge and Transdisciplinary Research.

Furthermore, at the 2022 AGM, our board made the decision to transfer the governance of WIRA and the Journal to WINU.

Currently, Professor Boni Robertson and Dr. Berice Anning have joined the WIRA/Journal team as Co-Chairs.

These remarkable women warriors have taken on the responsibilities with unwavering dedication, ensuring that the needs of the organization are met whenever required. Their commitment and passion drive the continued success of WIRA and the Journal.

To sustain the ongoing growth and development of the Journal and WIRA, a formal proposal will be submitted to the WINHEC Executive Committee for consideration and endorsement.

We are grateful to many dedicated volunteers from WINHEC / WINU who are working diligently on a transition plan and determining the next steps in the WIRA journey. Now is the time for you to join us!

We are actively seeking applications for the position of Chair for the WIRA and the WINEHC Journal. If you are passionate about Indigenous research and would like to contribute to this important field, we invite you to apply and be part of our dynamic team.

# WINHEC Website

Eddie Walker has done an outstanding job in making our website lively and useful. The WINHEC website is very beneficial for haring to the world the activities of WINHEC. We will continue to work with Eddie in strengthen our website. Keep checking for any updates.

Eddie brings outstanding skills and has greatly improved our WINHEC homepage.

THANK YOU Eddie!!.

## WINHEC Finance, Treasurer & Membership

The Finance Committee, led by Treasurer Sean A. Topkok, has been holding regular meetings to discuss important financial matters.

Umi Jensen serves as the representative from the membership team.

The committee has conducted a thorough review of the membership and has proactively disseminated membership information, actively encouraging Indigenous institutions, non-Indigenous supporting groups, and individuals to become part of our WINHEC community.

Our primary objective is to cultivate stronger financial resources and forge strategic partnerships.

By doing so, we aim to safeguard and nurture Indigenous spirituality, cultures, languages, homelands, social systems,

economic systems, and self-determination.

It is our profound aspiration to create opportunities for Indigenous peoples to pursue holistic well-being encompassing the body, mind, soul, and spirit through higher education.

If you are interested in contributing to our cause, we provide detailed information on making donations through our website.

We genuinely appreciate your support in advance, as your contributions hold tremendous value and enable us to make a meaningful impact in the lives of Indigenous peoples.

Thank you for your consideration and generosity.

# WINHEC Presentation at World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education

The organizers of the World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education (WIPCE) extended a formal invitation to Dr. Elmer J. Guy to serve as a distinguished Keynote presenter on September 27, 2022, at the Lands of the Kurna People in Adelaide, Australia.

WIPCE demonstrated an outstanding level of success, attracting a substantial number of attendees, and effectively highlighting the presence of the WINHEC.

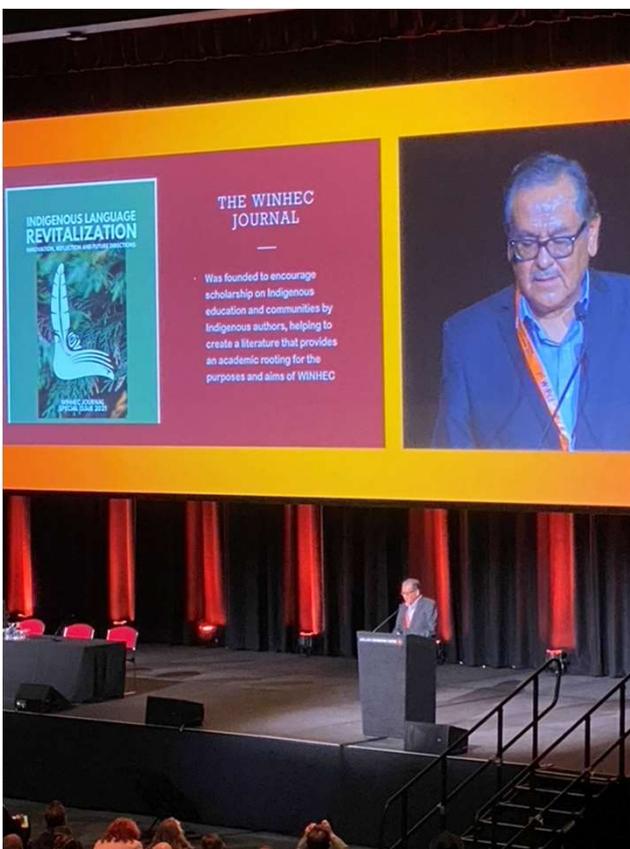
In recognition of the significance of WINHEC's contributions, the organizers generously allocated a dedicated time slot for our Executive Committee to deliver a presentation that focused on WINHEC, resulting in substantial audience engagement.

Moreover, several of our members and working committees actively participated and delivered compelling presentations during WIPCE.

On behalf of WINHEC, we wish to extend our deepest appreciation to WIPCE 2022 President, Uncle Peter Buckshin, for his gracious invitation to Dr. Guy as a Keynote Presenter.

We would also like to express our gratitude to all our dedicated members who skilfully presented the mission and goals of WINHEC, further enhancing our organization's visibility and impact.

The WIPCE conference proved to be an exceptional platform, leaving a profound and enduring impression on all participants.



# WINHEC Board of Accreditation

We would like to take a moment to express our deepest admiration and heartfelt appreciation for the exceptional work carried out by the Board of Accreditation (BoA) team, with a special acknowledgment to both Keiki and Walter as co-chairs.

The unwavering dedication, professionalism, and expertise demonstrated by the team have made an immense contribution to the success and growth of our organization.

The Board of Accreditation team consistently upholds the highest standards of quality and excellence, leaving no room for compromise.

Their meticulous attention to detail ensures that the WINHEC accreditation professional services not only meet but also exceed the expectations of our Indigenous education self-determination. It is through their relentless commitment that our organization has been able to provide exemplary services to our members.

The team's thoroughness and objectivity in evaluating and accrediting the processes and procedures of our member institutions have proven to be invaluable.

Their comprehensive assessments have shed light on areas of improvement, providing us with invaluable insights and recommendations.

Thanks to the efforts of the BoA team, our collective ability to support one another and enhance our Indigenous educational performance has been greatly strengthened, leading us closer to achieving our strategic objectives.

We would like to express our sincerest gratitude to the entire Board of Accreditation team for their exceptional work and unwavering commitment.

Their dedication has not only elevated the standing of our organization but has also fostered a culture of continuous growth and improvement.

The WINHEC Board of Accreditation has met twice this year and will meet at this year's AGM.

The Board has reviewed 14 accreditation policies and has begun creating a BoA Guidebook that will articulate policies, eligibility, relationship with the Accreditation Agency and Executive Committee and several others.

The BoA is concerned that we do not have representation from Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand; representation is key to the success of the BoA in creating policies that will ensure that WINHEC's Accreditation process works for all.

Once again, we extend our deepest appreciation to the Board of Accreditation team, and particularly to Keiki and Walter, for their outstanding contributions.



# WINHEC World Indigenous Nations University

The governance body of WINU works closely with the leadership team of WINHEC to encourage and support research initiatives that tackle the pressing issues confronting Indigenous communities.

These efforts aim to foster sustainable development, cultural preservation, and the revitalization of Indigenous knowledge systems.

By fostering partnerships with WINHEC members around the world, WINU seeks to establish a global Indigenous network that facilitates knowledge exchange and promotes Indigenous education self-determination.

WINU Executive Committee is calling for expressions of interest for the following positions, priority will be given to WINHEC members:

- Pro-Vice Chancellor – Hawaii
- Pro Vice- Chancellor – Aotearoa
- WINU Secretary/Treasurer
- Academic Elder Representative/s
- Editor in Chief of the WIRA Journal of Indigenous Education Scholarship
- Chair of World Indigenous Research Alliance (WIRA)

# WINHEC World Indigenous Nations Youth Alliance (WINYA)

During the AGM of 2022, a remarkable milestone was achieved with the official establishment of a youth group dedicated to nurturing young leadership – World Indigenous Nations Youth Alliance (WINYA).

This achievement owes much to the commendable efforts of deputy Co-Chair Dr. Leanne Holt, who has actively collaborated with the youth group and inspired Indigenous youth to come together, embrace their unique cultures, and cultivate their leadership skills.

The seeds of this youth group were sown during the 2018 AGM in Sammiland, Norway, where the urgent need for fostering global unity became apparent. This initial gathering served as a catalyst, igniting a sense of purpose and determination among the youth.

Subsequently, during the 2019 AGM in Taiwan, the youth group further expanded its horizons. They embarked on transformative visits to Indigenous communities, organizing cultural exchanges and enriching experiences during their local community learning camping tour.

With each successive event, the profound significance of WINHEC's investment in our future generation and its unwavering support for their leadership journey, deeply rooted in Indigenous values, becomes increasingly evident.

The youth group now lead by Erika Guttorm Johansen (Sàmi) who stands as a testament to the working committee's commitment to empowering young minds and fostering their growth.

It is through initiatives like these that we pave the way for a brighter future, as these emerging leaders embody the spirit of resilience, cultural pride, and forward-thinking that will shape our communities for generations to come.



## WINHEC Co-Chair Dr. Elmer J. Guy

A personal message from Dr. Elmer J. Guy:

One of the greatest honors of my life has been the opportunity to serve as the co-Chair of the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC).

During my years as Co-Chair I have visited so many places that I would otherwise never visited and learned so much about other indigenous peoples and their approach to education that, when I reflect back, it seems that one of our Navajo rug weavers has woven a special rug that allows me to be safely a part of my culture while still experiencing the richness and wonder of all WINHEC's many indigenous cultures.

I want to thank not only the Board for this wonderful experience but also the many institutions and their people who have participated in WINHEC during by time as Co-Chair.

WINHEC is still a young organization and still has a long way to go before it meets the promise of the dreamers who originally founded it.

Our founders believed that by weaving an organization like WINHEC together, the learning that would occur combined to the example provided by the members combined with the dreams and imaginations of those who would become involved could help bring about scholarship, WINHEC university, and political knowhow that would strengthen the cause of language, culture, and the lives of Indigenous peoples throughout the world.

During my time as Co-Chair I hope we have tried to further those dreams. We have worked with various parts of the United Nations and encouraged the formation of indigenous control of education institutions and pushed both scholarship and WINHEC University forward.

I realize that our accomplishments are only a small start on what will be a long journey of accomplishment that is possible for WINHEC, and I pledge to continue to support this organization as long as I am the President of Navajo Technical University.

So, this letter is a thank you letter, not a goodbye letter. My time is up, but I hope to continue to stay involved for as long as I am able.

Sincerely yours,

**Elmer Guy, Ph.D**  
**Co-Chair**



## WINHEC Co-Chair Dr. Jolan Hsieh

Esteemed WINHEC Executive Board and members,

I am profoundly grateful for the privilege and honor bestowed upon me as the Co-Chair of WINHEC from 2019 to 2023. This remarkable journey has provided me with invaluable opportunities to connect with extraordinary Indigenous scholars and activists, immersing myself in the diverse approaches to education sovereignty and self-determination within Indigenous communities worldwide.

I wish to express my deepest gratitude to the Board for granting me this extraordinary experience, as well as to all the members, both institutions and individuals, whose active participation has been instrumental in shaping WINHEC during my tenure.

A special acknowledgment goes to my esteemed Co-Chair, Elmer, whose Navajo leadership, humor, love, and wisdom have been a constant source of inspiration.

I am also profoundly grateful to Deputy Co-Chairs Leanne and Bubba, whose unwavering support has been instrumental in organizing the esteemed WINHEC Circles of Honor Awards and stepping in whenever needed.

Berice and Sean, I extend my heartfelt thanks for your dedicated work as Secretary and Treasurer, respectively, bearing the weighty responsibilities of these roles. And to Eddie Walker, whose exceptional expertise and support as WINHEC website chair have been invaluable, I am truly appreciative.

As we embark on the enduring journey to fulfil the visionary dreams of WINHEC's founders, I am reminded of their unwavering belief that through unity as an Indigenous organization, we can pave the way for scholarship and political empowerment, safeguarding Indigenous languages, cultures, and overall well-being worldwide.

Throughout my tenure as co-chair, I have endeavored to contribute to the realization of these dreams. However, I am acutely aware that our accomplishments thus far are merely the initial steps in a more expansive and rewarding journey for WINHEC.

This letter serves not as a farewell, but as a profound expression of gratitude. I will remain actively involved with WINHEC family to the fullest extent possible, as circumstances permit.

With utmost sincerity,

**Jolan Hsieh, Ph.D**  
**Co-Chair**

# WINHEC 2023 AGM Fairbanks, Alaska

Register for WINHEC 2023 AGM + World Indigenous Research Conference.

We encourage everyone to attend.

Safe travels!

