

A portrait of a smiling woman with short grey hair, wearing a black top. She is standing outdoors in front of a stone building with greenery in the background.

NEWS

# First Professor of Indigenous Studies steps into role, charts new initiatives



“She has a wealth of experience about what it means to build native community.”

“It’s one thing to bring in Native faculty. It’s a whole other to bring in full professors who are at the place in their career where they can actually invest in community building, and it does not take away from their own career.”

*Jean Dennison*

*Director for Indigenous Studies at the University of Washington and colleague of Kauanui*



Kuanui shared that one of her goals is to develop a minor for Native American and Indigenous Studies, calling the current landscape of efforts “really fertile ground.”

This “fertile ground” refers to a handful of informal groups of faculty. One, led by Associate Dean for Curriculum and Assessment Rebekah Peeples, is discussing opportunities for Native language study at the University. Another, led by Associate Provost for Institutional Diversity and Inclusion Shawn Maxam, oversees how Native and Indigenous students experience their time at Princeton.



“I’ve been meeting people and really getting a lay of the land of the institution. I’ve been meeting not just with faculty and students, but also with librarians ... with community members.”

“It’s been really exciting, and part of that has to do with people who have wanted to see this hire for so long.”

*J. Kēhaulani Kauanui*

*On her excitement about building community on campus*

