

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



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Caption: J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, the newly hired Professor of Indigenous Studies in Anthropology, will make her teaching debut this spring with ANT 435: Decolonizing Indigenous Genders and Sexualities. But despite not having yet taught a class at the University, her influence has begun to reshape Indigenous scholarship.

Her appointment — which belongs to a cluster hire of faculty that began in 2020 — has elevated several new initiatives for Indigenous studies scholarship, including the initial, informal planning stages of a minor program as well as opportunities for language and improving Native student life.

Tap the link in our bio for the full story. Reporting by Luke Grippo. Post design by @paige.walworth. Photo credit: Courtesy of J. Kehaulani Kauanui.

Alt Text: Image of a woman with text over top.

Top text, in orange: News

Bottom text, in white: "First Professor of Indigenous Studies steps into role, charts new initiatives"