

**Native American Policy Panel**

**Friday, November 6, 2015**

**1:00 pm – 2:30 pm**

**Many Nations Longhouse**

Join us for a panel discussion on Native American politics and policy. This is a great opportunity to hear from UO alumni who have experience working on Native American policy issues at the local, state, and national level. Discussion topics include Indian health, community engagement, and education.

**Panelists:**

**Geoffrey Roth B.S. –’98 Education Studies**

Geoffrey Roth, a descendent of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe of North and South Dakota, is the Senior Advisor to the Director of the Indian Health Service (IHS) in Washington, DC. The IHS, an agency within the Department of Health and Human Services, is the principal federal health care advocate and provider for American Indians and Alaska Natives. Mr. Roth has more than twelve years’ experience working with Tribes, tribal colleges and universities, tribal organizations, and urban Indian organizations.

Mr. Roth’s responsibilities include providing counsel to the Director on complex issues and administering special assignments that reflect the priorities, policies, interests, and initiatives of the Agency. He also advises the Director regarding implementation of IHS reform efforts while ensuring responsiveness to Tribal and stakeholder recommendations.

**Bryan Mercier B.S. – ’97 Business Administration**

Bryan is a Native Oregonian in the truest sense of the word, as an enrolled member of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon. Born and raised in western Oregon, his academic background includes an undergraduate degree in Business Administration from the University of Oregon (1997), a graduate certificate in Economics from the Universitaet Freiburg, Germany (2000), and a graduate degree in Human Rights and International Law from the Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, Spain (2003).

Bryan has spent more than 10 years working in public service, including a stint on the staff of Senator Gordon Smith of Oregon. His federal career started with the US Forest Service, followed by a few years as a program manager at the Department of Treasury’s CDFI Fund. Today, Bryan is the Manager of Business Operations for Bonneville Power Administration’s Environment, Fish and Wildlife Program, which is the largest environmental mitigation program in the United States.

**Dennis Worden B.A. – ’06 Geography**

Dennis is a member of the Coeur d' Alene tribe, and was raised in Pendleton. While at the university, he studied Political Geography, graduating in 2006. After graduation, Dennis moved to Washington, DC as the Mark O. Hatfield fellow-- a program of the Spirit Mountain Community Fund--where he would work for a member of Congress for several years.

Most recently Dennis spent five years as the Legislative Director for the Native American Contractors Association, a national trade association of businesses owned by tribes, Alaska Native Corporations, and Native Hawaiian Organizations. Dennis is also the host and creator of the NextGen Native podcast, which shares the journeys of some of the best and brightest Natives across the United States and Canada.

**Michelle Singer– B.S. ’95 General Science**

Michelle is a citizen of the Navajo Nation born in Salem but also has roots on the Navajo reservation in Arizona and New Mexico. She graduated from Sprague High School and while attending the university was a pre-med General Science major with a minor in Ethnic Studies graduating with a Bachelor of Science in 1995. While at the UO, she was a co-director of the Native American Student Union, recipient of various University Awards and assisted University Leadership in the area of multicultural & Indian affairs.

After graduation, she worked for the Bureau of Indian Affairs - Indian Education, Tribal college movement and served 10 years as a policy advisor on Capitol Hill for U.S. Senators Ron Wyden (D-OR), Ben Nighthorse Campbell (R-CO) and Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle (D-SD). She currently works as a Senior Research Assistant for the Center for Healthy Communities housed in the School of Public Health at Oregon Health & Science University in Portland. She continues to work in the fields of Indian health, education and community engagement through service learning and mentorship.

**Chris Mercier B.A. – ’98 Journalism**

Mercier graduated from the UO School of Journalism and Communication, using those writing skills post-graduation writing for the tribal newsletter of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. After graduating, Mercier spent two years working and saving money for potential travel. From there, Mercier found himself back with his tribe in Grand Ronde working at Spirit Mountain Casino. Mercier worked for the tribal newsletter before being elected the youngest tribal chair at the time to the Tribal Council.

For nine years, Mercier served on the council helping make decisions, write laws, introduce reform, and he strived to make a brighter future for future generations of the tribe. Mercier also had the opportunity to work with Oregon’s governor, and met President Barrack Obama before his election into office. Mercier is currently pursuing a law degree at Michigan State University.

