

Native American Nations Flags Project

During the 2022-23 academic year, TCU's Native and Indigenous Student Association created the Native American Nations Flags Project to honor all Native Americans who have attended and worked at TCU and the diverse and distinct nations they represent. It is located in front of the Central Stairs on the second floor of the Mary Coats Burnett Library.

Native American tribes are nations that are in a government-to-government relationship with the United States government. This relationship has been articulated and affirmed by the U.S. constitution, treaties, statutes, and court decisions.

The foundation of relationships with Native American peoples, nations, and communities is tribal sovereignty. As sovereign nations, Native American nations have governments, make laws, determine citizenship qualifications, and carry out other governmental functions. While this sovereignty has been encroached upon by the United States, it still remains.

For thousands of years, Native American nations have resided here on what some Native peoples call Turtle Island, otherwise known as North America. Many of TCU's students and employees are citizens or descendants of citizens of these nations, who are the original sovereigns and caretakers of these lands.

The Wichita and Affiliated Tribes, or the Kirikir?i:s, are comprised today of four groups, the Wichita proper, Tawakoni, Waco, and Kichai (Keechi), with headquarters in Anadarko, OK. Their historical homelands, where they lived for centuries, ranged from what is now called Kansas to around Waco, TX before they were forcibly removed to Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma). See <https://wichitatribe.com/>.

Throughout its history, TCU has always been located on the ancestral homelands of the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes.

The Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma is headquartered in Pawnee, OK, after having been forcibly removed in the nineteenth century from their historical homelands in what is now called Nebraska. See <https://pawneenation.org/>.

While Native Americans were not forbidden from attending TCU, attitudes toward Native peoples often made their attendance difficult and rendered them invisible. Bert Peters is the first identifiable Native American student at TCU, having attended in 1929 for one year. He

was from Pawnee, OK, a citizen of the Tribe, and well-known for his singing ability, which helped support him financially while at TCU.

The Navajo Nation is located in parts of Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico, having lived in this region for centuries, and is headquartered in Window Rock, AZ. See <https://www.navajo-nsn.gov/>.

In 1991, TCU's first Native American Student Association began organizing with the help of four Navajo students, Julius Charlie, Michael Charlie, Robyn Mitchell, and Tabitha Tan. Native students wanted to educate the campus about "Native American culture, heritage and traditions, while increasing the existing bonds between the 14 Native American students currently enrolled." While it provided important support to Native students during its existence, it did not survive the decade. In 2016, the Native and Indigenous Student Association was established shortly after TCU's first Native and Indigenous Peoples Day Symposium.

In 2022-23, some of TCU's Native American students came from these nations:

The Blackfeet Nation, originally living in the upper Great Lakes region, is located on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation in what is now called northwest Montana, with headquarters in Browning, MT. See <https://blackfeetnation.com/>.

The Cherokee Nation is headquartered in Tahlequah, OK, after being forcibly removed from its homelands in what was re-identified as the southeastern United States and relocated to Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma). See <https://cherokee.org/>.

The Chickasaw Nation is headquartered in Ada, OK, after being forcibly removed from its homelands in what was re-identified as the southeastern United States and relocated to Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma). See <https://chickasaw.net/>.

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma is headquartered in Durant, OK, after being forcibly removed from its homelands in what was re-identified as the southeastern United States and relocated to Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma). See <https://www.choctawnation.com/>.

The Pueblo of Isleta, established in the 1300s, is located in the Rio Grande Valley, south of Albuquerque, NM, with headquarters in Isleta, NM. See <https://www.isletapueblo.com/>.

The Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, descended from the Anishinaabeg people living for millennia in the Great Lakes Basin, is headquartered in Sault Ste. Marie, MI on the St. Marys River between Lake Superior and Lake Huron. See <https://www.saulttribe.com/>.

We are honored at TCU to learn and work with students and employees from diverse Native American nations.