



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
ARIZONA INSTITUTE FOR RESILIENCE

Indigenous
Resilience Center

CARRYING RESPONSIBILITY TOGETHER: *INDIGENOUS RESILIENCE CENTER STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2030*

Prepared By:





WITH GRATITUDE, WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING PARTICIPANTS:

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IRES STUDENT STAFF

IRES ADVISORY BOARD

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PROLOGUE

“If you are going to advocate for us, you have to know us. And to know us is to see us.”

- **San Carlos Apache Seven Mile District
Councilwoman Bernadette Goode**

“Indigenous staff are always a small staff and the intensity of it (*the work*) can be a lot but work is done out of the 4R’s”

-**University of Arizona Collaborator**

“A thriving world relies on knowledge exchange”

-**IRes Faculty**

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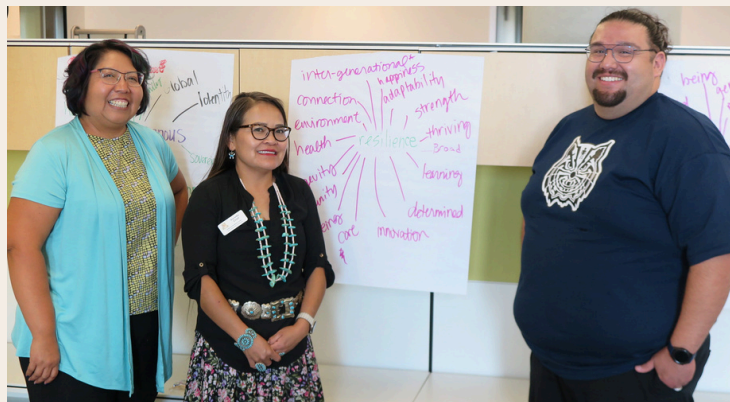
Funding Acknowledgements

INTRODUCTION

On August 5, 2015, the Animas River turned yellow with three million gallons of acid mine drainage. In total, six states, twelve Tribal Nations and eleven Navajo Nation Chapters were affected by the Gold King Mine spill. Several federal, state, and tribal agencies sought to understand what the long-term and short-term impacts of the old mine water on a major waterway. Dr. Karletta Chief, a Diné hydrologist received funding from the Agnese Nelms Haury Foundation and others to create a research and resilience model grounded in Indigenous inquiry, planning, and practice. Diné elders, students, political leaders and community members led a process of understanding this ecological disaster and find Diné centered ways of resilience.

These different methods of research and engagement led to the University of Arizona (UA) creating the Indigenous Resilience Center (IRes) under the leadership of Dr. Karletta Chief in 2021. At the core of IRes are the values of “4Rs” - Respect, Responsibility, Relationship and Reciprocity as discussed in Research is Ceremony by Shawn Wilson. These 4Rs are embedded into the faculty and staff interactions with internal and external partners. In 2022, IRES shared its strategic plan to the University of Arizona and their partners. The original mission was **“Centering Indigenous ways of knowing into co-designed environmental solutions & training the next generation of community leaders”** with a vision of **“We see the world in which Indigenous communities are thriving and adaptable to meet environmental and social challenges.”** The original four goals in the strategic plan were completed by 2024. The goals were as follows:

- Building trust with tribal partners and UArizona research network;
- Develop an IRes project that highlights faculty expertise;
- Establish an IRes network of trusted affiliates and allies; and
- Create an efficient, communicative and coordinated team to implement center operations.



2022 Strategic Planning Sessions

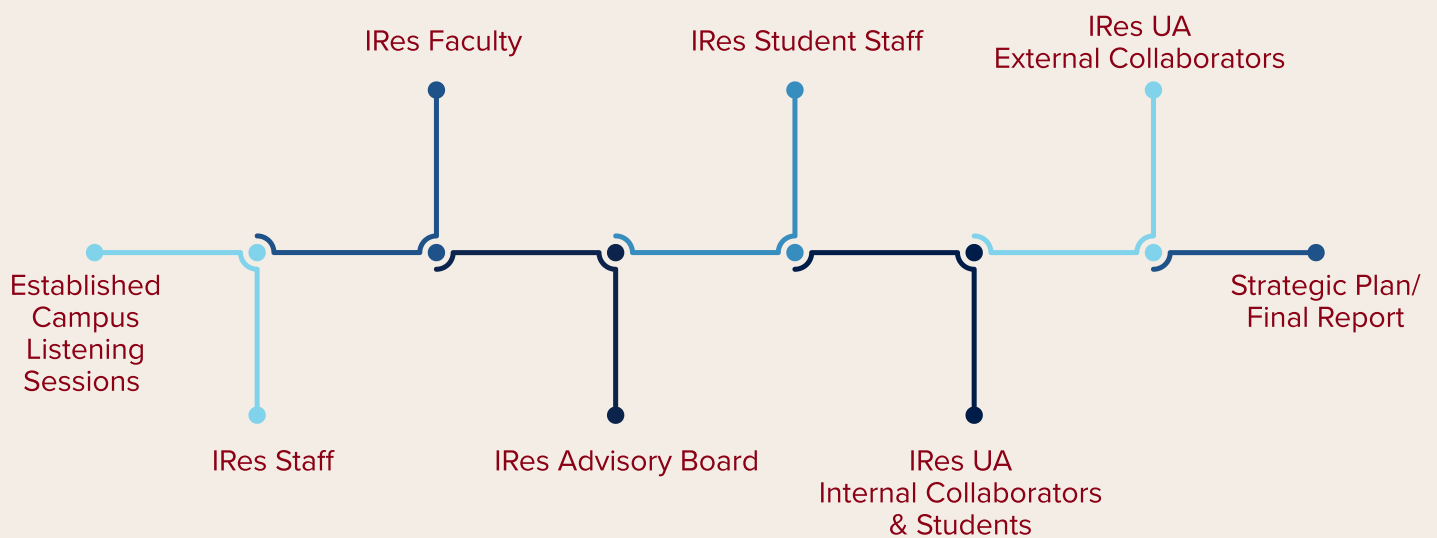
In late 2024, Indigenous Strategies (I.S.) was contracted to co-create a five-year strategic plan to guide the Center from 2025 to 2030. I.S. began with a re-examination the mission, vision, values, priority areas and goals of IRes now that it is fully staffed with four core faculty, affiliated faculty, post-doctoral researchers, professional staff and student staff. IRes requested that this strategic plan would have the input of internal UA collaborators and external community partners, thus over 100 individuals and 10 strategic planning sessions were held over several months. I.S. met with professional staff to create a document to assess collaboration requests to help IRes critically examine their partnerships. Lastly, I.S. met with the IRes Community Advisory Board to generate a position description.

The following report was created to inform the internal IRes faculty and staff about the process of strategic planning, and the outcomes and professional recommendations. While pieces of this report, such as the actual strategic plan, may be shared with external partners it was not written for that audience.

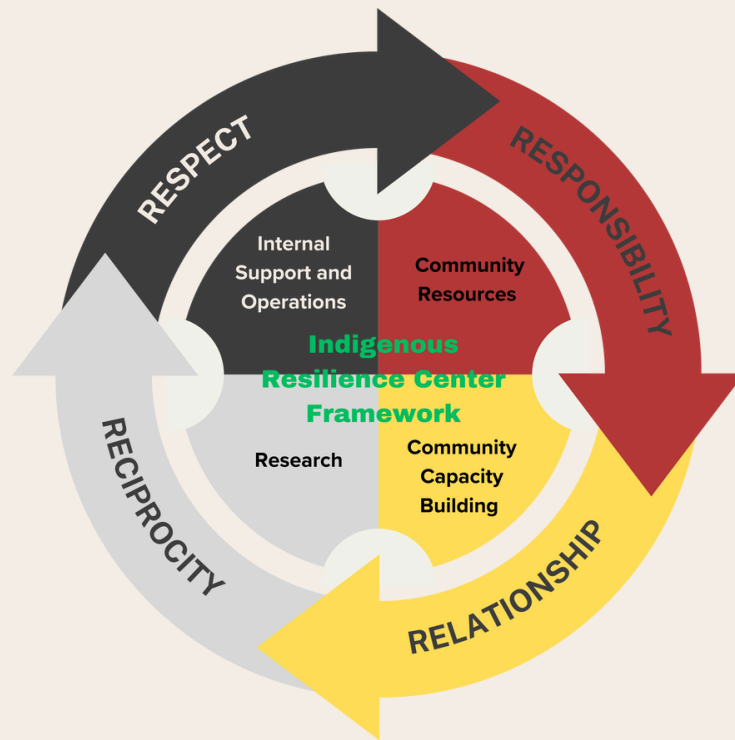
METHODOLOGY

Indigenous Strategies (I.S.) was requested to build a strategic plan utilizing Indigenous methods including the 7R's and Storywork. The 4Rs were first mentioned by Verna Kirkness (First Nations Cree) and Ray Barnhardt, who posited that best practices in educational programming engagement with Indigenous individuals and communities needed intentional expressions of Respect, Relevance, Reciprocity and Responsibility. Since then Indigenous researchers such as Shawn Wilson (Opaskwayak Cree) and Michelle Montgomery (Haliwa Saponi) have added onto the importance of R's. I.S. follows the Montgomery 7R's of Respect, Relevance, Reciprocity, Responsibility, Relatedness, Relationship and Redistribution while conducting strategic planning listening sessions.

Each listening session began with introductions, which included sharing one's name, pronouns, tribal affiliation and favorite book or author. As individuals began to share their personal & professional stories, the storywork began, not only with story-share but also story-listening. Listening session participants were provided with a graphic of the Indigenous methodology that would be utilized during these sessions and how their feedback would be incorporated in the story of IRes growth over time. Each session reviewed the mission, vision, values and were asked which words had the greatest impact and if any concept was missing. All sessions closed with the question of what does each collaborator need most from IRes to assist in determining priority areas. The PowerPoint and session notes are contained on an IRes Google Drive folder.



FINAL STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2030



Our framework emphasizes IRes' core values—Respect, Relationship, Responsibility, and Reciprocity—as strategic priorities that guide and propel our efforts toward fulfilling the goals and objectives of our 5-year plan.

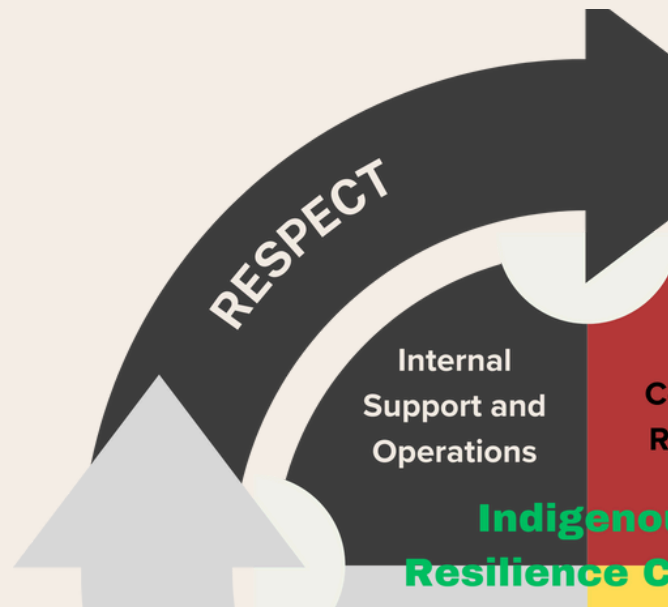
By centering these values, the framework serves not only as a visual representation of our commitments but also as a roadmap for action, ensuring that all initiatives are grounded in culturally-rooted principles and responsive to the needs of Indigenous communities.

Mission: Centering Indigenous Ways of knowing into co-designed environmental community solutions.

Vision: Thriving Native American communities leading sustainable environmental solutions.

Values: Respect, Responsibility, Relationship, Reciprocity

FINAL STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2030



Priority Area: Respect – *It is respectful to create intentional opportunities for IRes faculty and staff by offering growth and development over the next five years.*

Goal 1: Expand support for faculty and affiliated faculty.

- Objective: Core faculty will include staff support through (at least) an 0.25FTE.

Goal 2 : Develop a mechanism to support faculty and staff.

- Objective 1: Create a professional development training program for junior faculty which may include conferences, tenure track development and annual IRes faculty staff meetings.
- Objective 2: Developing a program for staff training which may include both soft skills of public speaking, independent working styles and how to take initiative as well as technical skills such as co-authoring publications, resume building, digital fluency and grant writing skills.

FINAL STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2030



Priority Area: Responsibility – IRes is responsible to share research and resources to co-create a thriving world.

Goal 1: Develop a living IRes Toolkit

- Objective 1: In 2025, create an area in the IRes website to provide knowledge, data, and information generated by faculty, staff and affiliated partners.
- Objective 2: Generate professional resources that integrate culturally sustaining protocols for tribal communities.

Goal 2: IRes is an intentional space to provide data-informed knowledge to inform decision-making processes, specifically around natural resources.

- Objective 1: Collaborate with non-tribal partners (such as the Natural Resources Uses Law and Policy Center to develop policy briefs).
- Objective 2: Assist and connect tribal decision-makers to gather up-to-date information and generate excellent resources.

FINAL STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2030



Priority Area: Relationship – *IRes will strengthen Arizona federally recognized tribes' continuous collaboration while supporting Native American communities throughout the nation.*

Goal 1: Develop trust-based relationships to serve as a foundation for community capacity building.

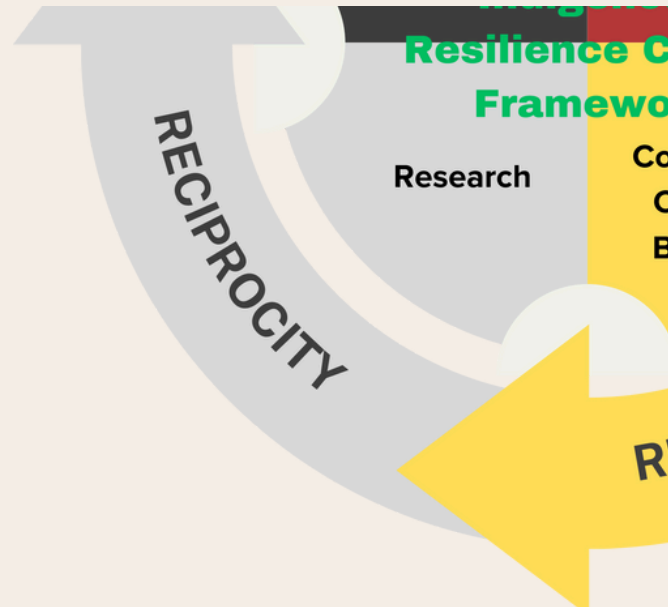
- Objective 1: Assist tribes in their grant-making processes.
- Objective 2: Generate Professional resources that assist in tribal decision-making processes which may include how to write an environmental report for a tribe.

Goal 2: Continue the discussion on being a land-grant university.

- Objective 1: Host more forums and symposiums to continue the dialogue.

Goal 3: IRes faculty & staff will be visible participants at local area tribal community events.

FINAL STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2030



Priority Area: Reciprocity – *IRes will be the center of community-led research and resilience that connects knowing systems to each other.*

Goal 1: IRes will lead research and respond to broad environmental concerns as identified by partners.

- Objective 1: Grants will reflect the intersections of many aspects of environmental solutions.
- Objective 2: IRes faculty will share broad environmental concerns when teaching in the classroom or educational outreach activities.

Goal 2: Facilitate a community of faculty, students, leadership, experts, elders and community members working in the areas of focus.

- Objective 1: In 2025 identify the leadership experts, elders and community members who are working in environmental spaces, with an emphasis on local reservation and urban areas.
- Objective 2: In 2026 create intentional networking spaces, including former interns, faculty and students and partners.
- Objective 3: By 2029, lead research and resilience efforts in the network.

Goal 3: Support the current local Indigenous environmental network of IRes collaborators

- Objective 1: Assist IRes grantees and community partners to develop their own network of peers, interns and leadership.
- Objective 2: Create space for IRes grantee executive director networking opportunities.

FUNDING ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

IRes is thankful for these sponsors for funding our
2025-2030 (5 Year) Strategic Plan.



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**Agnese Nelms Haury
Program**