



ADVANCING INDIGENOUS SCIENCE
AND ENGINEERING SOCIETY

WEAVING INNOVATION



2025 ANNUAL REPORT

To address our mission, the AISES family community amplifies Indigenous STEM knowledge and practitioners, supporting them on their educational and career journey. The AISES family is open to all who genuinely commit to this mission.

AISES serves Indigenous peoples based on their unique legal and political status as citizens of sovereign tribal nations—not as a racial or ethnic diversity effort. This work is protected by the Constitution, treaties, federal case law, and federal trust responsibilities relative to tribes. There currently are 576 federally recognized tribal governments.

Helping address a national shortage of 3.5 million unfilled STEM jobs, AISES develops critically needed talent from an underrepresented pool of people whose ancestors were the first scientists. Indigenous knowledge and value systems also address critical challenges in climate resilience, energy security, and technological innovation.

Those values emphasize “we before me,” increasing the quality of collective thinking that can produce innovation. Together, we can weave innovation!

It is because of you and other members of our community the AISES mission is made possible. Thank you for being a part of the AISES family!

Ta'Tura Tsiksu (With Much Respect),

Sarah Echo Hawk

Sarah EchoHawk (Pawnee)



WEAVING INNOVATION

Founded in 1977, the mission of AISES is to substantially increase the representation of Indigenous peoples of North America and the Pacific Islands in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) studies and careers.

The AISES community consists of chapters for colleges, professionals, and tribes. In addition to PK-12 school affiliates, there are individual members, partners, and allies of all backgrounds. The AISES family is open to all.

AISES Programmatic Focus Areas

Focus 1: PK-12 & College Student Success

Engaging youth in STEM through culturally relevant, place-based learning experiences that center Indigenous knowledge within STEM education.

Supporting college students pursuing STEM degrees and careers through scholarships, mentorship, leadership development, and AISES campus chapters.

Focus 2: Career Support

Advancing STEM professionals through networking, professional development, and reciprocal opportunities to give back to their communities and youth.

Focus 3: Informing STEM

Engaging in partnerships and conducting research to develop evidence-based practices for supporting Indigenous participation and success in STEM fields.

Oliver Yazzie

Oliver Yazzie

Made with a 3D printer, a blue bowl connects to two powered motors, electronics, and a clock that triggers food delivery. Called "CatBot," it became an award-winning entry in the **National Advancing Indigenous Science and Engineering Fair (NAISEF)**. AISES premier PK-12 event featuring STEM research projects from students in grades 5-12.

"Their creativity can really flow and they'll find out for themselves what they're interested in and be inspired for themselves," Allison Johnson says. "Having the space, the materials, and the supportive (positive) environment...is a huge factor."



Oliver Yazzie and his mom

Jay Penn

Students

Jay Penn

A young boy with glasses and a blue t-shirt is focused on assembling a robot. He is using his hands to place a component onto a metal frame that holds various electronic parts like a breadboard and sensors. The background shows a classroom setting with a whiteboard. The name "Nolen Roybal" is printed in large white letters at the bottom right of the image.

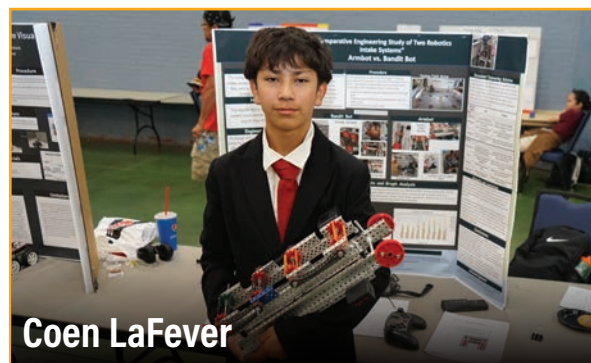
Nolen Roybal

Baca wonders at the growth of her seventh-grade son, Coen LaFever, a two-time NAISEF awardee who champions—of all things—planning.

His mom calls Coen “hooked,” which aptly describes a teammate across the room engaged in intense robot troubleshooting.

"I have currently worked hours upon probably days, or maybe weeks on this one," says Nolen Roybal. "I've been taking it home almost every night."

"When he's focused on something and has a goal in mind," says Nolen's mom, Rigual Roybal, "he gets tunnel vision."



Coen LaFever

"I'm just so excited to see what he's going to do in the future!"

That's a science fair parent reflecting on her student's innovation and promise. Held virtually and in-person, NAISEF weaves all four strands of AISES impact: 1) STEM interest, 2) engagement & belonging, 3) competencies & confidence, and 4) future intentions.

Teachers and parent-caregivers make it happen, encouraging students in grades 5-12 to give NAISEF a try and consider a topic or problem of interest, before moving through a research or engineering design process. Students collect and analyze data, before translating it into a visual and verbal presentation. Once hooked, some students return to NAISEF year after year.



In 2025, costs of partner schools' participation were funded by Northrop Grumman and General Motors. Other sponsors included Chevron, Berkshire Hathaway Energy, and Broadcom Foundation.



"Whenever I'm in a bad time, I always just think that there's always something good about where you are, because there's something to learn from it."





For more than a decade, Mescalero has taken advantage of AISES conferences, travel scholarships, and science fair and research showcases. More broadly,

Cody Rice

Cody Rice

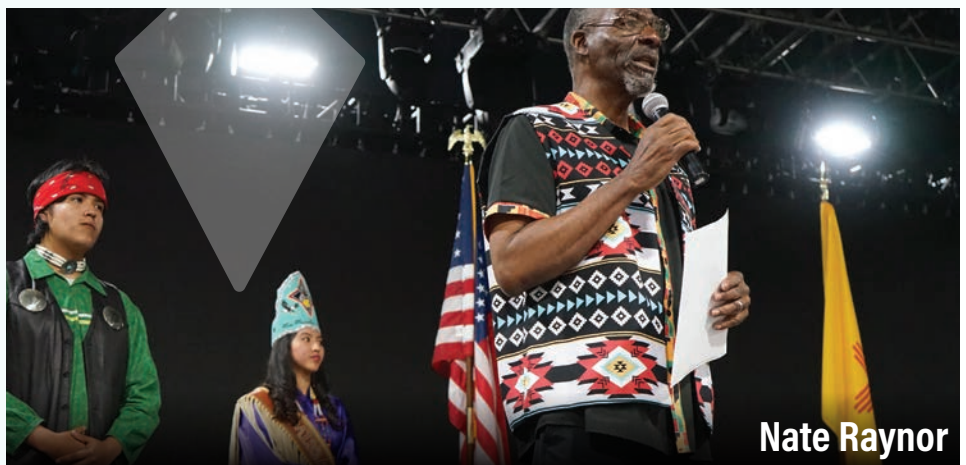


and resources over 30 weeks during a school year. Sparking curiosity as well as building strong identity and leadership skills for students, the hands-on STEAM curriculum includes arts.

For high school students and others, **STEM Day** is a free, popular pre-conference event prior to the AISES National Conference featuring hands-on STEM activities presented by AISES partners and sponsors.



A young woman, Audrina Reynolds, is holding a custom-built robot. The robot is constructed from metal plates and has a red tag with the number '6467A' attached to it. The robot is mounted on wheels and has various electronic components visible. The background shows a room with tables and chairs, suggesting a competition or exhibition setting.



In 2025, a new AISES student leadership development program opened doors for Kimberly Long, who saw long-term benefits of enhancing her leadership and technical skills.

"The information that we have been able to learn through Adobe and what they offer, you can use it infinitely, not just for your collegiate career, but...once you get out working full-time," says the Texas A&M doctoral student in hospitality, management, and tourism.

Funded by Adobe Foundation, Cultivating Leadership Opportunities and Uplifting Digital Skills (CLOUDS) included 75 AISES college students in 2025. They earned Adobe Learn certificates that complement Adobe Express applications. There was a summertime in-person gathering near Duke University as well as virtual leadership sessions every quarter.

"I've never had a chance to get formal hands-on training and certificates," says Kyle James, University of Manitoba (Canada) graduate. "I proudly put them on my resume. It's a very good skill set."

For AISES, a key goal in supporting student leaders is to strengthen their colleges' AISES chapters, which provide reciprocal support and a sense of community. James and peers teamed to create a project, "Flow Forward with AISES"—a catalog of ideas to help AISES college chapters develop programming.

"Being able to...create a meaningful solution to give more Indigenous students a better time in college, it was super fulfilling work," says the Metis graduate.

Kimberly Long's goal is to give back to her tribe, the Poarch Creek Indians of Alabama, by helping its hospitality program grow beyond casino operations. Her CLOUDS experience was so positive that she signed up to be a 2026 mentor in a second cohort, of AISES college studentss, that is set to meet at Adobe's California headquarters.

"If you can depend upon those around you to help you strengthen your weaknesses and vice versa, that is growth across the board," Long says. "The peer mentorship piece is very vital."



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2025 Professional of the Year Dr. Karina Walters is nationally recognized for behavioral health research, has mentored countless students over her career, and directs the Tribal Health Research Office at the National Institutes of Health.

AISES continued to engage advisory partners in 2025, through eight councils: AISES Council of Elders, Academic Advisory Council, Academic Institution Advisory Council, Canadian Indigenous Advisory Council, Corporate Advisory Council, Council of Elders, Professional Chapter Council, and Tribal Nations Advisory Council.





In 2015, one student credited AISES members for urging his return after dropping out. Then and now, struggles with finances, health, and circumstances are real.



Shaina Colombe graduated with a bachelor's degree in applied science and computational mathematics.

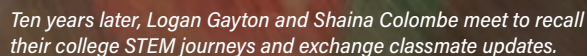
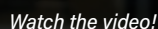


IHS mechanical engineer Lance Hanson supervised hospital renovations on the Rosebud Sioux Reservation.



Logan Gayton is a general engineer for the Indian Health Service, serving sites on multiple reservations within South Dakota.

"I failed twice, but I made it through," Colombe says. "I celebrate every inch of progress."



Audited | Year Ended December 31, 2025

Contributions, Grants & Sponsorships	\$10,030,028
In-Kind Contributions	\$1,967,410
Conference Registration and Events	\$739,283
Advertising Income	\$176,885
Membership Fees	\$134,080
Net Investment Income	\$320,368
Other	\$18,650
Total Revenue	\$14,247,145

Programs & Services	\$11,117,013
Management & General	\$1,886,392
Fundraising & Development	\$1,440,202
Total Expenses & Losses	\$14,443,607

EXPENSE BREAKDOWN

Programs & Services	77%	\$11,117,013
Management & General	13%	\$1,886,392
Fundraising & Development	10%	\$1,440,202

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