



For Immediate Release  
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### **FIRST NATIONS FUTURES PROGRAM – ALASKA SELECTS 2016 FELLOWS**

ANCHORAGE, Alaska – First Alaskans Institute is proud to announce the selection of the 5th cohort of First Nations Futures Program (FNFP) Fellows: Chandre Szafran (Inupiaq) of Council, Heather Powell (Tlingit / Anishnaabe) of Hoonah, Jason Gubatayao (Tlingit /Tsimshian), Joshua Vo (Yupit) of Andreafski, MaryAlyce Inuuraq Moss (Iñupiaq) of Barrow, Sharon Hildebrand (Koyukon) of Nulato. Bio sketches and photos are provided below. Congratulations to our Fellows and thank you so much to their communities and families for supporting their involvement and leadership!

FNFP is a unique alliance between Kamehameha Schools (Hawai'i), Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu (Māori peoples of the southern islands of Aotearoa - New Zealand), Stanford University, the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, and First Alaskans Institute. It is a transformative program that features a two week, on-site certificate program and gathering at the Woods Center for the Environment at Stanford University.

During this two-week institute, the Fellows have the opportunity to strengthen their leadership and be challenged in exciting ways on how to help our communities move strongly into the future as we enact our ancestral imperative to steward and care for our peoples, lands and cultures. They will participate in learning sessions and gatherings from the local tribal welcoming ceremony of the Muwekma Ohlone peoples, visit Google X, and hear from internationally known cultural, thought, and entrepreneurial leaders to indigenous law and policy issues and land, animal, and resource stewardship. They will build relationships with one another, indigenous leaders, and special guests from all three cohorts and develop a values proposition that crystalizes their ideas for being in service to their peoples, lands and cultures in ways that resonate deeply with their work, their passions, or the needs of their communities.

Cohort members are generally in their mid-community leadership or mid-career range (some may be younger or older by age but this aims to find and support leaders in mid-flow) who exemplify commitment to their community. The 2016 First Nations Futures Institute will convene at Stanford University, October 23 – November 4, 2016 bringing together the Maori, Native Hawaiian and Alaska Native fellows into one cohort.



**Chandre Szafran (Inupiaq) of Council**

My name is Chandre and my Inupiaq name is likugan. I have a strong commitment to promote youth leadership development programs along the rolling tundra of my home region of Norton Sound as well as throughout Alaska, helping young Native leaders connect their rich cultural histories together with current efforts to adapt and thrive.

I'm looking forward to connecting with emerging leaders from indigenous communities outside Alaska who are taking ownership to advance indigenous leadership into the future. I pursued a BA degree in English at the University of Alaska, Anchorage, and look forward to exploring opportunities to design a holistic program for my graduate education goals.

**Heather Powell (Tlingit / Anishnaabe) of Hoonah**

Lgeik'i áyá ax saayí. Chookanshaa áyá. Xaay hít yéi duwasáakw haa naa kahídi. Ojibwe yadi áyá. Luk'nax.adi ax daakanóox'ux sitee. Xunaa Káawu áyá. I am Lgeik'i Lingít, a Chookanshaa from the Xaay Hít (Yellow Cedar House).

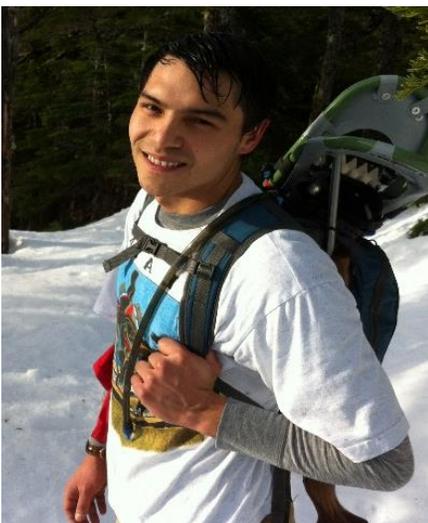
I am Xunaa Káawu, from Hoonah Alaska. I have worked for my tribe for the last 20 years in several different capacities, I have recently moved home to the community of Hoonah to teach the language and start a Lingít language nest within to continue learning from our Elders and language speakers, as well as immersing my children in the language. As a Tlingit language educator with Hoonah School District, I am centrally involved in planning a language nest as well as crafting other culturally relevant curriculum and programming.



**Jason Gubatayao (Tlingit /Tsimshian)**

I am a mix of Tlingit and Tsimshian. I've spent most of my life in Ketchikan where I developed a connection with my Alaska Native heritage. I am an ecologist based out of Sealaska Timber in Ketchikan. I work to promote sustainable timber harvests while balancing local use and harvest of wild game through hunting, trapping and foraging.

It's personally fulfilling to be a part of how our natural resources are managed. I'm excited to see a bright future with economic development of our natural resources for the benefit of shareholders and Native peoples in Alaskan communities.



**Joshua Vo (Yup'ik) of Andreafski**

I am Yup'ik and Vietnamese, an alumnus of FAI's Summer Internship Program, and have sought ways to expand my leadership capabilities throughout my education and early career in business operations.

The time I spent in St. Mary's with my mother's family provided an anchor for me throughout my upbringing across Alaska, and also spurred an interest in balancing the need to participate in the larger cash economy while still maintaining localized traditional ways of life. In my free time I enjoy doing typical Alaskan outdoor activities like fishing, hunting, hiking, 4-wheeling and camping. On any given weekend, you can find me on one of the many steams located in Southcentral Alaska with my fly fishing rod in hand.



**MaryAlyce Inuuraq Moss (Iñupiaq) of Barrow**

Paglagivsi! My name is MaryAlyce Moss although everyone calls me by my Iñupiaq name, Iñuuraq. I am Iñupiaq from Barrow, Alaska and was raised in a whaling family. We subsistence hunted year round, and my husband and I aim to raise our kids the same way. I want to make sure they have the same unyielding sense of self-identity that I was raised with. It is our responsibility to balance modern and traditional, to exemplify Inupiaq values and we apply them into everything we do. My grandparents taught us to look after everyone and my mission is to make them proud, and to light the way for our future generations.

Over the last ten years, I've found myself creating Iñupiaq based leadership development programs for various entities on the North Slope, from a high school leadership program for our local government, to internships, workforce development programs, and executive mentoring programs for our village corporation.

I am currently attending UAF studying Rural Development with an emphasis on Indigenous Organizations Management, via distance education, while running a construction business with my husband.

### **Sharon Hildebrand (Koyukon) of Nulato**

I have a wide array of interests including Tribal law and governance, international business alliances and research as well as strong community involvement in the Fairbanks area, while keeping deep connections to the lower central Yukon. My grandmother knew the importance of planning from season to season in preparation for camp and caring for the fish in the summer. These are no easy feats. These early lessons were engrained in me. I also learned early on that you must be able to contribute and help when help is needed and you must treat people good, no matter what.



These values of hard work and long term planning have prepared me for my current educational endeavors. I have a B.A. in Alaska Native Studies with a concentration in Law, Government and Politics from University of Alaska, Fairbanks and am currently pursuing a Masters in Public Administration with a concentration in rural development from the University of Alaska, Southeast. I am looking forward to this opportunity and I thank my higher power for all that I have been blessed with and I look forward to helping the next generation forward.

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### **About First Alaskans Institute**

*First Alaskans Institute works to advance Alaska Native peoples for the next 10,000 years...* True to identity, heritage, and values, Alaska Natives are informed and engaged in leading the decisions that shape the future. We do this through the initiative areas of Leadership Development, the Alaska Native Policy Center, Organizational Advancement, and Community Engagement. We utilize values of integrity, respect, Native knowledge, and responsibility to help guide our work and our relationships with our Native peoples and communities.

To learn more about First Alaskans Institute, visit [www.firstalaskans.org](http://www.firstalaskans.org).

To learn more about the First Nations Futures Program, visit [www.fnfp.org](http://www.fnfp.org).