

Troth Yeddha' Indigenous Studies Center



A CHANCE TO MAKE HISTORY

America's first public college dedicated to Indigenous studies was just created. Now, it needs a home. Join us to help make history and transform education here — and everywhere.





Charlene Stern, Ph.D.

Vice Chancellor for Rural,
Community & Native Education
University of Alaska Fairbanks

THE SPARKS TO LIGHT A MOVEMENT

Historically in America's university system, Indigenous and Native studies have been smaller areas of focus housed within larger departments. They are often overlooked and vastly under-resourced.

That's why, in spring 2024, the University of Alaska Fairbanks created the College of Indigenous Studies, the first such college in America within a public system of higher education. The creation of this college is a huge step forward and advances the position of Indigenous education within academia at large.

Now, it's time to build a physical home for that college. The new Troth Yeddha' Indigenous Studies Center is the critical missing piece that brings together the full vision of transforming Indigenous higher education. It's more than just a building; it's critical to student success. It will be a Native and Indigenous gathering place with classes, services and activities, and a breathtaking tribute that affirms Alaska Native culture and contributions.

Troth Yeddha' is about giving Native and Indigenous students not just a college but a physical place where they feel at home, right down to the food that's served. It's about students hearing their own languages, feeling safe and inspired, and graduating on time so they can go out and change the world. It's about creating sparks that light a movement.

Hopefully, we're just the first such college in America. We can't do it without you and your generous support. Join us, and help light the way here and everywhere.

Mahsi' Choo





WHY TROTH YEDDHA'

When students first walk in the door of an education building, they should feel immediately at home – among peers, sharing values, and inspired to achieve their dreams by staff who understand them and what it takes to help them succeed.

For too long, that hasn't been the reality in America's university system. Troth Yeddha' is designed to change that.

Troth Yeddha' is a reflection of the importance the Alaska university system places on recruiting, retaining, graduating and supporting Alaska Native and Indigenous students. It's about revolutionizing and celebrating education via both the physical space and a historic College of Indigenous Studies academic experience.

No longer will services, classes, tutoring and the support needed by Indigenous students be unequally resourced and hard to reach. With Troth Yeddha', they will be centrally resourced and coordinated via a building designed to honor Indigenous values and cultures, all while providing opportunities for students to engage with Native history, literature, languages and people.

When complete, Troth Yeddha' will serve as a hub, allowing growth in existing academic and research programs while fostering new ones. It will also make room to expand services that support Indigenous student success. Services in the new building, ranging from pre- to post-college programs, will include:

- Alaska Native Language Center and bookstore
- Alaska Native Language Archive office
- Center for Cross-Cultural Studies
- Center for One Health Research
- Department of Tribal Governance
- Rural Alaska Honors Institute
- Rural Student Services
- State-of-the-art research, learning and cultural activities facility with conference rooms, offices, classrooms, art space, archive kiosk, kitchen for game processing and an outdoor interpretive park honoring Alaska Native people.



"UAF now has the opportunity to build upon a successful legacy of uplifting tribal citizens and rural Alaskans with Troth Yeddha'. Not long ago, we called our learning center and community gathering place a *qaygiq*, and building a bigger *qaygiq* lets us as Indigenous students know from the university: 'You matter, we want you here, and we want you to succeed.'"

Nalugalria Usugan-Weddington

Undergraduate, UAF



**Troth Yeddha' champions a path forward.
We hope you will join us on that path.**



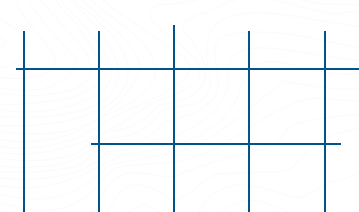


THE DESIGN

The Troth Yeddha' Indigenous Studies Center is nearing the 65 percent design benchmark, the point at which contractors can be engaged for bids to start construction planning. The building will be located on the west ridge of the UAF campus known as Troth Yeddha' (sometimes spelled Troth Yetth) by the Lower Tanana Dene (or Athabascans). To date, \$5.5 million has been raised; construction will ideally begin in spring 2025, thus allowing the exterior shell closed by winter (when interior work would begin).

The goal for the Troth Yeddha' Indigenous Studies Center is to create an exterior/interior environment that celebrates and honors Alaska Native people, culture and language. The finish materials are regionally inspired, with an emphasis on ecologically sustainable materials.

Over a decade in the planning and making, work on the building is guided by teams and committees of Alaska Native leaders, community members, and designers, among others. Each floor is guided by a theme: Honor (first floor), Celebrate (second floor) and Share (third floor).



BUILDING COMMUNITY

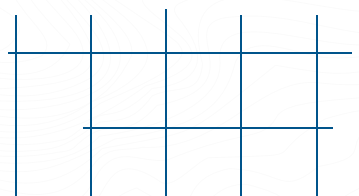
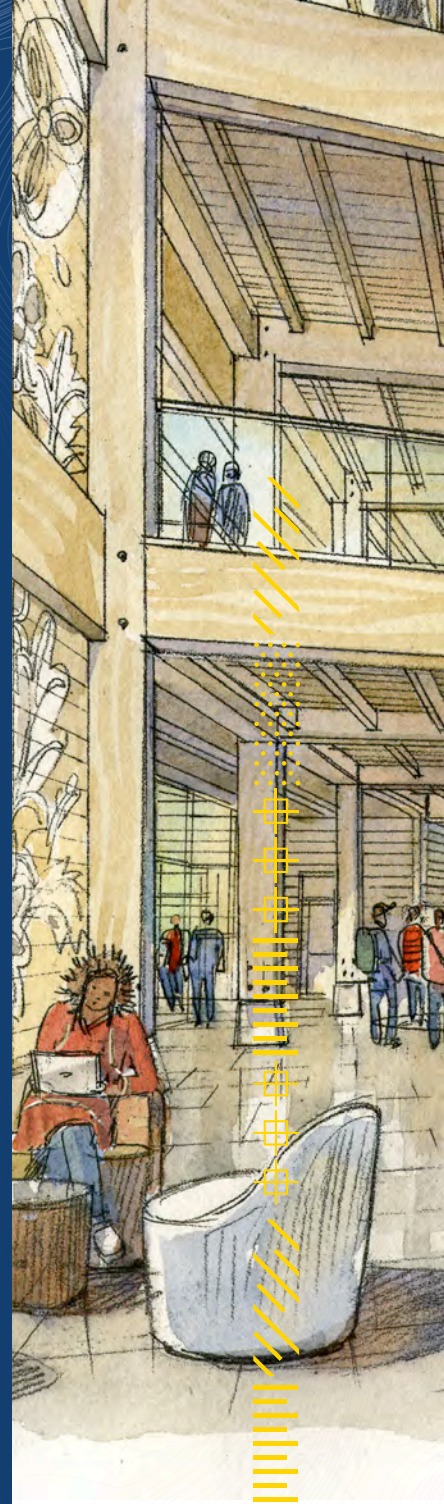
With input from the stakeholders, the following key design features have been developed:

- The facility will honor the diversity of all the Alaska Native cultures throughout the state.
- Cultural art, recognizable Indigenous patterns and objects will be integrated throughout the building and site.
- An Honoring Circle on the site is a place to celebrate and honor the Alaska Native heritage of the campus.
- The building will be a prominent and recognizable presence at the top of campus on the Troth Yeddha' ridge.
- The concept of a bridge, representing the bridging between Indigenous knowledge and science, is the organizing building scheme. A literal bridge within the facility spans the multistory commons, provides "pause" space and connects the faculty and administration spaces to the teaching and learning spaces.
- The main facility approach, entry and commons will represent a door to knowledge and honor the firekeepers of traditional knowledge who keep that flame burning through ongoing work and research.
- Student spaces have priority for year-round access to sunlight and long-distance views out into the land.
- Classrooms will prioritize Indigenous ways of learning, including circle and horseshoe seating arrangements, entry/exit doors positioned near the front of the classroom to allow greeting and sendoff of students, views out into the land, and the integration of a river in the floor patterning for language studies.
- All offices will have access to daylight and views, as well as flexibility and integration to allow cross-pollination, collaboration, and support between disciplines and groups.

OVERALL DESIGN

The overall design reflects Alaska Native and Indigenous history and their understanding of the natural world. They are the bearers of the traditions, culture, beliefs and practices that will be engaged here. Their complex relationships, over millennia, embody the archetypes of land / habitat / plants / animals / water/ ice / air / sky / seasons that inspire the overall design.

Further, a "Walk through the Past" Indigenous design will inform the present while conveying the voices of chiefs, tribal leaders, Native scholars, role models and trailblazers in responding to the multidimensions and interconnections of deep history. A living architectural/cultural design will reflect this approach, to help with the teaching of Indigenous culture, language and understanding.



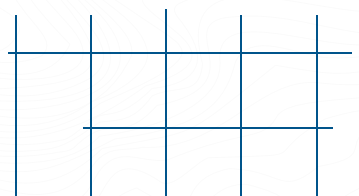


A CAMPAIGN FOR ALL ALASKA, AND BEYOND

At the direction of UA President Pat Pitney, Troth Yeddha' is the University of Alaska system's top fundraising priority. The goal is to reach the \$53 million funding goal for the Troth Yeddha' Indigenous Studies Center as soon as possible.

CAMPAIGN SNAPSHOT:

- \$5.5 million: Raised to date (~10 percent)
- \$25 million / Major gift phase (current phase)
 - *These funds/commitments, which we now seek, are needed to start construction.*
- \$22.5 million: This final amount, which will be raised after the start of construction, will be part of the final (and more public-facing) phase of the campaign.
- **\$53 million:** Campaign total / goal



THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW

Major gifts, committed now, help the Troth Yeddha' project advance to the construction phase, and time is of the essence. Alaska's construction weather windows are limited; raising an additional \$25 million now toward our goal allows construction crews to begin planning their work for spring 2025.

We are honored to work with you to customize your gift. Your gift can be in one lump sum, or across multiple years. In addition, naming rights for a portion of the building are available if you wish to explore it.

The important work to build resilient Native and Indigenous communities everywhere is made possible by you, our generous advocates and donors. We hope to hear from you soon and look forward to with you.

Note: UA Foundation, UAF Advancement and UAF College of Indigenous Studies staff are leading the fundraising effort, with support of various committees, and they are available at any time to answer your questions or schedule a site visit.





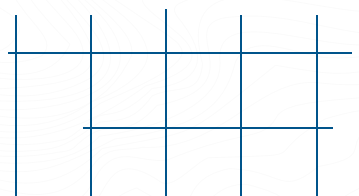
TROTH YEDDHA', KHWTS'EN'NWKHDATL'

(You have come to Troth Yeddha')

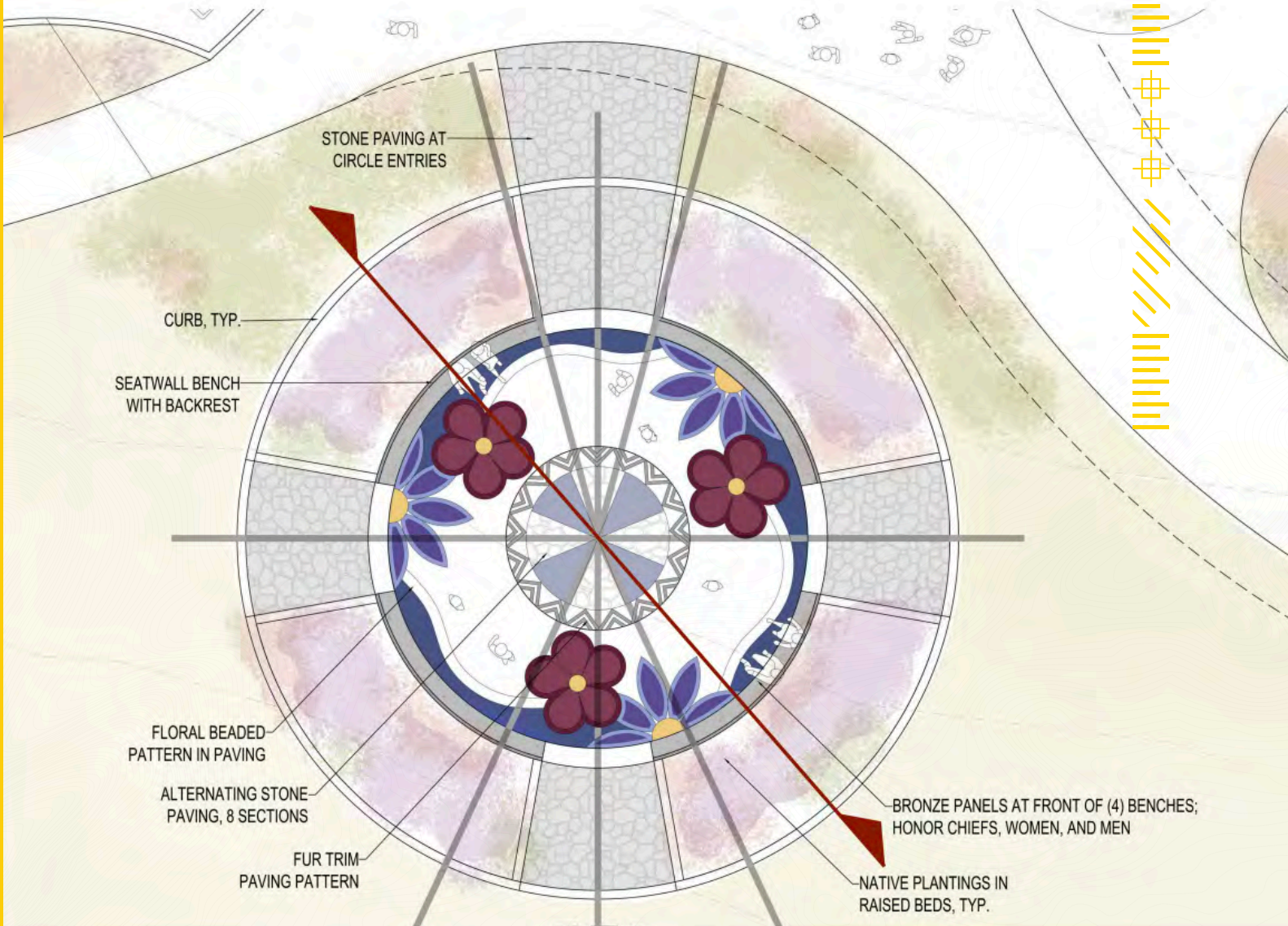
PROJECT GOALS

The following project goals developed by various stakeholder groups have directed that the Troth Yeddha' Indigenous Studies Center will:

- Create a living, lasting and functional space for Alaska Native and Indigenous cultures and languages to thrive.
- Enhance the educational experience of all students with a focus on Alaska Native students.
- Honor the traditional uses of the ridge as a place of gathering and sharing knowledge and wisdom.
- Renormalize Alaska Native languages into the identity of the college environment.
- Open doors to our house: one thought, one creator, one student.



- Foster a place where good thinking and work happens.
- Support two fundamental strategies: expand and deepen UAF's current capacity and expertise in serving Alaska Native and Indigenous peoples, and better integrate Indigenous knowledge into UAF's academic, research, and outreach programs.
- Improve recruitment, retention, and outcomes of Alaska Native and rural students by transforming the university to be a more inclusive and culturally relevant experience.
- Invite high levels of utilization through innovative flexible space; a building where we can teach contemporary tribal governance and traditional birch bark basket-making in the same enriching space.
- Co-locate and increase synergy of many functions into one community.
- Demonstrate the principles of sustainability, sharing, stewardship, and relationship of peoples to the natural world.
- Invite experiential learning, allowing students to feel it and experience it.





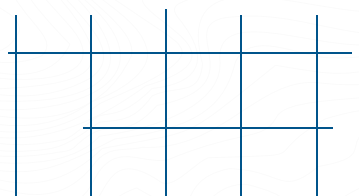
THE UAF COLLEGE OF INDIGENOUS STUDIES

Today, there are just over 140 known Alaska Natives with Ph.Ds. Just 143. With the creation of the new UAF College of Indigenous Studies, however, we now have 68 Ph.D. students in the pipeline for our Indigenous studies Ph.D. program. That's how transformative this program is, and will be.

And that's just the Ph.Ds.

Alaska Native and Indigenous enrollment comprises 24 percent of the UAF student population, and it's on the rise here and across the UA system. Word is out: The Alaska system is taking the right approach to getting more Native students to college, having them feel at home and assisting them in finding great jobs, all while protecting Native rights, cultures, customs and languages. We offer over two dozen academic programs designed to serve Indigenous communities.

IT'S A TRULY TRANSFORMATIVE ENVIRONMENT.



At the college, intersectional work is underway by Alaska Native communities in climate, conservation, energy, language, culture, education and community development, from B.A. to Ph.D. programs. Professional training programs are also available. We hope this work can serve as a model for higher education everywhere.

Preparing new leaders and researchers who think differently about the world is critical to solving state and global issues. As a leading research university in the Arctic, UAF is committed to integrating Indigenous and Western knowledge to address global challenges.

The forthcoming Troth Yeddha' Indigenous Studies Center is the critical missing piece that brings together our vision for transforming Indigenous higher education. Troth Yeddha' provides a physical and tangible opportunity to correct systemic inequalities in the higher education system that severely undermine Native culture nationally. Buildings aren't just walls and floors. They are where we live, socialize, learn and grow. The best ones bring out the best of us and our communities.

Troth Yeddha' brings everything under one roof and builds community. When people feel alone or need support, Troth Yeddha' will be their home away from home, helping people stay in school.

The ultimate goal: Build a better today and tomorrow for current generations and those to come.





JOIN US

Troth Yeddha' provides a physical and tangible opportunity to transform the Alaska higher education system and lead the way nationally in support of Alaska Native and Indigenous education. It's a chance to make history. Becoming the first College of Indigenous Studies in the nation within a public university, with a new physical home in Troth Yeddha', is a huge step forward. Join us.



To learn more or support this critically important opportunity, please contact Charlene Stern, Ph.D., Vice Chancellor for Rural, Community & Native Education, University of Alaska Fairbanks:

> cbstern@alaska.edu or 907-474-1865

Alternatively, you may contact:

Megan Riebe, VP, University of Alaska Foundation

> mriebe@alaska.edu or 907-786-7746

Tom Hough, Executive Director for University Advancement, UAF

> though2@alaska.edu or 907-474-5526

We acknowledge the Alaska Native nations upon whose ancestral lands our campuses reside. In Fairbanks, our Troth Yeddha' Campus is located on the ancestral lands of the Dena people of the lower Tanana River.

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