



ASSOCIATION ON AMERICAN INDIAN AFFAIRS

11th Annual Repatriation Conference

SUMMARY AGENDA

Subject to change. All times listed in Eastern Time.

This is a fully virtual conference and registered attendees will be able to watch all sessions for 30 days after the Conference ends.

WEEK ONE | BUILDING KINSHIP

Tuesday, February 3

2:00-2:25 pm

Opening & Welcome

Association on American Indian Affairs

2:30-4:30 pm

Rooted Practices: Finding Repatriation and Restoration through Living Traditional Knowledges

Casandra Stouder, Seminole & Navajo, Indigenous Wellness Consultant & Community Empowerment Specialist; Kimber R. Olson, MSW, Ph.D., Chiricahua Apache Mimbres Band Nation, Founder & CEO, Juniper & Pine Consulting; Kim Mettler, Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation, Next Generations Director, Association on American Indian Affairs

In this interactive workshop, participants will reimagine repatriation as a living, relational and healing-centered process. Through story, reflection, and facilitated practices, participants will gain culturally rooted tools to hold grief, rage, and joy at the same time, and develop strategies for centering relationship, humility, and inclusion in repatriation work.

Wednesday, February 4

2:00-3:30 pm

C.A.R.E.: Caring About and Repatriating Everything - Sharing a Model for Solidarity and Mutual Support

Diana Terrazas, Bishop Paiute Tribe, Program Manager for Your Neighborhood Museum; Gabriel Kitchen, Mesa Grande Band of Mission Indians, Tribal Council Member and Chair, Cultural Committee & Department, Mesa Grande Band of Mission Indians; Lylliam Posadas, Co-Founder & Co-Director of Your Neighborhood Museum; Mandi Campbell, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, Timbisha Shoshone Tribe

CARE highlights the importance of working together across disciplines and experiences to develop creative and effective solutions to preservation and repatriation challenges. Fellows from Native Nations form a cohort of mutual support and together they guide the curriculum development that includes NAGPRA and conservation guidance.

3:45- 5:15 pm

Strength is Being in Good Relation: Strategies for Protecting Lands and Ancestors

Adam Lewis, Chairman of the Calaveras Band of Mi-Wuk Indians; Debra Grimes, Vice-Chairwoman of the Calaveras Band of Mi-Wuk Indians

The Mi-Wuk Nation has resided in the Sierra Nevada foothills since time immemorial. The session will share the Mi-Wuk Nations strategies for protecting sacred places, burial grounds, and homelands. The Calaveras Band, Tuolumne Band, and Chicken Ranch Rancheria Mi-Wuk Nations represent both recognized and non-recognized Mi-Wuk who work together to defend their homelands.



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Thursday, February 5

2:00- 3:30 pm

Ugheldze Hwle Cilaes (Sharing and Caring): Building a Tribal Community Digital Archive to Restore Knowledge and Connections

Heather McClain, Archivist, Anchorage Museum; Monica Shah, Deputy Director of Collections and Conservation, Anchorage Museum; Selena Ortega-Chiolero, Tarahumara, Chickaloon Native Village Museum Specialist

By centering Ahtna values of sharing, caring, and relational accountability, the session strengthens Native Nation capacity and sovereignty in cultural stewardship by charting practical, community-defined pathways for digital repatriation that restore connections, empower self-determination, and Indigenous control of heritage.

3:45-5:15 pm

The Many Ways Seeds Come Home

Dr. David Michener, Curator at the University of Michigan Matthaei Botanical Gardens; Shiloh Maples, Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, Ph.D. student at the University of Michigan; Veronica Pasfield, Ph.D., Bay Mills Indian Community, National Endowment for the Humanities/Oral History Association Fellow, Great Lakes Tribal Consulting, LLC, NAGPRA Officer, Bay Mills Indian Community

This is the first presentation on case-studies of Seed Rematriation from the University of Michigan's Museum of Anthropological Archaeology (UMMAA), which houses more than 4,000 seeds removed from at least 90 different Native Nations, primarily before the 1940s. This session will discuss the grounds and approach for returning seeds under NAGPRA.

5:30-6:30 pm

KEYNOTE

Michelle Schenandoah, JD, LL.M., & MS, is a writer, speaker, thought leader, and traditional member of the Oneida Nation Wolf Clan of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy.





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WEEK TWO | INTERNATIONAL REPATRIATION

Because many of these panels involve our partners in other countries, this week will be scheduled earlier in the day as compared to the other weeks of the Conference.

Tuesday, February 10

11:00-12:30 pm

Developing International Repatriation Success Stories - the Association's International Repatriation Strategy

Amy Shakespeare, International Repatriation Specialist, Association on American Indian Affairs; Carl Deußen, Ph.D. Curator for the Americas, Weltkulturen Museum Frankfurt, Germany; Ian Sergeant, Ph.D., Senior Curator, Global Majority Collections, Birmingham Museums Trust, England; Kay Kkendasot Mattena-Short, citizen of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, Program Associate, Association on American Indian Affairs; Peronel Craddock, Director of Content, Horniman Museum and Gardens, England

The Association's International Repatriation Strategy has been gaining momentum, and we have been engaging with institutions across Europe and Canada to gather information on the collections they hold and their repatriation policies. In this session, hear from some of our partner priority institutions about why they are working with the Association, the challenges they face in international repatriation, and the collections they hold. Find out about how to connect with these institutions and the Association's outreach process.

12:45-2:15 pm

The Blackfoot Confederacy's Global Repatriation Model and the Native American International Museum Exchange (NAIME) Program

Cara Steger, Ph.D., Project Manager, U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of International Affairs; Erin Leckey, Ph.D., Heritage Scientist, U.S. Department of State; Gheri Hall, Deputy Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, Blackfeet Nation; Lona Running Wolf, Executive Director of Projects, Blackfeet Eco Knowledge; Nick Bruscato, Project Manager, U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of International Affairs; Olivia Sierra, U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of International Affairs, Senior Project Manager

This session introduces the Blackfoot Confederacy's international repatriation model of collaboration demonstrates how cross-border Indigenous diplomacy and collective sovereignty creates a powerful model for reclaiming cultural heritage abroad. In addition, their international repatriation work was supported by the Native American International Museum Exchange (NAIME) program, a U.S. government initiative connecting Native Nations with international museums to support repatriation, knowledge exchange, and shared stewardship of cultural heritage. Attendees will learn about outcomes from the pilot phase that happened in 2022 to 2024 and receive guidance on applying for upcoming program cycles.



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Wednesday, February 11

11:00-12:30 pm

Mapping Pathways for International Repatriation: Challenges, Potentials, and Futures

Abeer Eladany, Ph.D., Curatorial Team, University of Aberdeen; Amy Shakespeare, International Repatriation Specialist, Association on American Indian Affairs; Francisco Nahoe, Ph.D., Rapa Nui, U.S. Delegate, Te Mau Hatu o Rapa Nui; Jayne-Leigh Thomas, Ph.D., Executive Director of the Office of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, Indiana University; Lucas da Costa Maciel, Ph.D., Post Doctoral Fellow, Leiden University; Maria Ruigomez, Ph.D., student, University of Cambridge; Patricia Ayala, Ph.D., Anthropologist, Universidad de Chile; Ruby Satele Asiata, Sāmoan, Ph.D. student, University of Vienna

In recent years, international repatriation and restitution have gained unprecedented visibility. From Indigenous initiatives to national institutions, the global movement for repatriation is challenging long-standing power structures and prompting new conversations about responsibility, collaboration, and justice. Yet, despite this momentum, the landscape remains shaped by uneven laws, limited resources, and deep historical inequities. Organized by the International Repatriation Network, this panel will examine the current landscape of international repatriation: its emerging potential, persistent difficulties, and pathways toward more effective and ethical futures. Practice-based, the discussion will explore how different practitioners can align efforts to advance the repatriation of Ancestors and cultural belongings. By connecting practitioners across borders, this panel seeks to strengthen collective capacity.

12:45-2:15 pm

US Customs & Border Protection, Transportation Security Administration, and the Department of State Discuss Their Role in Repatriation of Ancestors and Cultural Items from International Institutions

Arthur Florence, Supervisor Agricultural Specialist, Toronto Preclearance, Canada; Erin Leckey, Ph.D., Heritage Scientist, U.S. Department of State; Jaime J. Gray, Port Director, Area Port of St Louis, U.S. Customs and Border Protection; Supriya Raman, Ph.D., Acting Deputy Director, Traveler Engagement Division, Civil Rights & Liberties, Ombudsman and Traveler Engagement, Transportation Security Administration.

U.S. Customs & Border Protection, the Transportation Security Administration, and the Department of State will provide information about their role in the transportation of Native Ancestors and cultural heritage internationally and domestically to support repatriation efforts. These agencies are an important part of the overarching mission to enforce lawful travel and trade and to ensure a smooth experience for carriers and items entering the U.S.



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Wednesday, February 11

2:30-4:00 PM

A Hair's Breadth: Evidence Making and Repatriation

Aaron LaMaskin, Ph.D. student, University of British Columbia; Joyce Charleyboy, citizen of the T̓silhqot'in Nation, Nexwenen Coordinator, T̓silhqot'in Nation; Peyal Laceese, citizen of the T̓silhqot'in Nation, Cultural Ambassador, T̓silhqot'in Nation

Repatriation claims made to museums by Indigenous Peoples, who know their own heritage, do not always align with the museum's understanding. What institutions consider as "everyday use" items may be understood as sacred objects once consultation and deference to Native American Traditional Knowledge provides differently. This standard was used in a non-NAGPRA context to support return of T̓silhqot'in qat̓s'ay (spruce root baskets) by the T̓silhqot'in National Government (TNG) at Williams Lake, British Columbia. T̓silhqot'in have always understood their qat̓s'ay to contain both physical and spiritual parts of their weavers, including their prayers, intentions, hair, and saliva. They therefore also carry important aspects of T̓silhqot'in identity, spirituality, traditions, and knowledge. During the repatriation claims process, TNG found that many of these baskets contain human hair. The human hair found woven into these baskets allowed for a shift of their categorization from "everyday" use to the category of human remains.





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Thursday, February 12

11:00-12:30 pm

International Repatriation Challenges: Creating Efficiencies and Pushing Practice in the International Repatriation Process

Abigail Dairaghi, Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Assistant NAGPRA Coordinator for the Muscogee Nation; Amy Shakespeare, International Repatriation Specialist, Association on American Indian Affairs; Darius Enos, Gila River Indian Community, Cultural Resource Specialist for the Gila River Indian Community; Erik Stanfield, Anthropologist, Navajo Nation; Jennifer Staples, citizen of the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah, Repatriation Officer for Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah; John "Jim" Peters, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, Executive Director, Commission on Indian Affairs for the state of Massachusetts; Martha Martinez, Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, NAGPRA Coordinator for Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community; Raelynn Butler, Secretary of Culture and Humanities for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation; Reyllynne Williams, citizen of the Gila River Indian Community, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, Gila River Indian Community; Richard M. Begay, Navajo Nation, Department Manager, Navajo Heritage & Historic Preservation Department

In 2025, the University of Edinburgh in Scotland approved the return of several Ancestors to Native Nations, with support from the Association's International Repatriation Strategy. In this session, hear from those who worked with the Association about what they learned through the process, the challenges faced, and why they joined the coalition. Find out more about how the Association's strategy is pushing practice and hear updates on some of the upcoming challenges within international repatriation.

12:45-2:15 pm

Coalition for the Collective Stewardship of Philippine Ancestral Remains

Alpha Sadcopen, Ibontoc and Kankanaey, Director, Benguet, Ifugao, Bontoc, Baguio, Apayao, and Kalinga (BIBBAK) Illinois; Ashley Dequilla, Co-Curation Partner of the Philippine Heritage Collection at the Field Museum of Natural History; Channette Romero, Ph.D., Professor of English and Native American Studies, NAGPRA Committee Representative, University of Georgia; Dani Magbanua, President, Kababayan Filipino Student Association; Joy Sales, Ph.D, Assistant Professor of Asian American Studies, California State University, Los Angeles; Julian Ignacio, Assistant Director, Asian American Resource and Cultural Center

The Coalition for the Collective Stewardship of Philippine Ancestral Remains (C4CSPAR), formed in November 2025 and advocates for transparency and ethical returns. This session seeks to connect with NAGPRA expertise. As Filipinx American culture bearers, scholars and activists, we are reckoning with the ongoing history of thousands of Ancestors taken from the Philippines and unethically held in institutions within the U.S. and beyond. The CCSPAR's fight for the dignity of our Ancestors joins other Fire-Bearers, Indigenous and Native Nations who have forged the path we wish to learn from.



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WEEK THREE | NAGPRA TRAINING

Tuesday, February 17

2:00-4:00 pm

Foundations of NAGPRA: Sovereignty and Subpart A

Basil Stewart, NAGPRA Trainer at the Association on American Indian Affairs; Kay Kkendasot Mattena-Short, citizen of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, Program Associate & NAGPRA Trainer, Association on American Indian Affairs; Winter BearKing, Hunkpapa Lakota descendant, Cultural Sovereignty Curriculum Development Project Lead, Association on American Indian Affairs

In this training, you will learn about the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act and its regulations, including where to find them, how they work together, and the fundamental purpose of the law. We will also provide strategies for interpreting the Act and regulations, foundational understanding of Native sovereignty, and specific training covering the foundational concepts including free, prior and informed consent, right of possession, applicability, duty of care, and cultural affiliation.

4:15-5:45 pm

Free, Prior, and Informed Consent: Research and Access Requests

Elizabeth Ronald, Ph.D. student, NAGPRA Coordinator, Office of Repatriation, University of Tennessee, Knoxville; Miranda Panther, NAGPRA Officer, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Tribal Historic Preservation Office; Sarah O'Donnell, NAGPRA Coordinator for the Osage Nation

This panel will discuss how Native Nation representatives and institutional practitioners are applying the concept of free, prior, and informed consent, both broadly in terms of duty of care and more specifically regarding research and access requests. Ongoing consultation and honest dialogue are vital to developing institutional procedures and processes for research and access requests in line with Native Nations' free, prior, and informed consent.

Representatives from the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and the Osage Nation will share their experiences with duty of care and their consultation preferences. Additionally, this panel will explore when access requests are considered appropriate, and some examples of those request processes.





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Wednesday, February 18

2:00-3:30 pm

Updates from National NAGPRA

Melanie O'Brien, Manager, National NAGPRA Program, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior

The National NAGPRA Program will provide updates on all aspects of its work and detailed information about NAGPRA during the last two years under the revised regulations. The Program will also share tips and best practices on complying with the regulations.

3:45-4:30 pm

Facilitating Repatriation with the Split and Shared Collections Database

Amanda D. Roberts Thompson, Ph.D., Director, Laboratory of Archaeology & Georgia Archaeological Site File, University of Georgia; Miranda Panther, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, NAGPRA Officer for Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Tribal Historic Preservation Office; Nina M. Schreiner, Ph.D., Associate Director & NAGPRA Coordinator, South Carolina Institute of Archaeology & Anthropology

NAGPRA remains largely invisible to many institutional compliance programs and often isn't allocated appropriate authority and resources for its implementation. However, as NAGPRA continues to gain increased attention following the major updates to its regulations, it is time for institutions to uphold the promises of the law. This session aims to equip NAGPRA practitioners with actionable language to talk about compliance and risks, with attention to the current compliance landscape and the broader goals of promoting ethical conduct and full compliance with the updated regulations.

4:45-6:15 pm

Let's Talk Compliance: Elevating NAGPRA Within Institutions and Beyond

Carol Samarah, NAGPRA Program Director, Southern Illinois University; C. Timothy McKeown, Ph.D., Repatriation Advisor, National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers; Edward Halealoha Ayau, Hawaiian, Executive Director of Hui Mālama I Nā Kūpuna O Hawai'i Nei (Group Caring for the Ancestors of Hawai'i) and Hui Iwi Kuamo'o

NAGPRA remains largely invisible to institutional compliance programs and often isn't allocated appropriate authority and resources. However, as NAGPRA continues to gain increased attention following the major updates to its regulations, it is time for institutions to uphold the promises of the law. This session aims to equip NAGPRA practitioners with actionable language to talk about compliance and risks, with attention to the current compliance landscape and the broader goals of promoting ethical conduct and full compliance with the updated regulations.



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Thursday, February 19

2:00-3:30 pm

Lessons Learned from NAGPRA

Basil Stewart, NAGPRA Trainer at the Association on American Indian Affairs; Kay Kkendasot Mattena-Short, citizen of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, Program Associate & NAGPRA Trainer, Association on American Indian Affairs; Winter BearKing, Hunkpapa Lakota descendant, Cultural Sovereignty Curriculum Development Project Lead, Association on American Indian Affairs

Through the process of developing their NAGPRA expertise, the NAGPRA trainers fell into some unexpected requirements and processes in NAGPRA that continue to deepen their understanding of the Act and its regulations, and how NAGPRA should be interpreted and practiced. This talking circle seeks to provide a space to share personal experiences and solutions to commonly misunderstood aspects of NAGPRA.

3:45- 5:15 pm

The Importance of NAGPRA for all "Indian Tribes"

Charlene Mijmeh, Chairwoman for the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe; Harlen Chavis, citizen and Tribal Historic Preservation Officer for the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina; June Lorenzo, Pueblo of Laguna, and Cultural Sovereignty Director for the Association on American Indian Affairs; Peter Landeros, Pascua Yaqui Tribe, Regional President of the American Indian Movements for the Woodland Territory

The definition of "Indian Tribe" was changed in the new NAGPRA regulations to only include Native Nations that are on the Department of Interior's Tribal List. This takes away rights of other Tribes, Bands and Communities that are recognized by other federal agencies and receive services because of their status as "Indians." This change has diminished non-recognized and state recognized "Indian Tribes" rights under federal law, leaving institutions unsure about how to consult with non-recognized Tribes, Bands and Communities for legal and ethical return. Listen to stories and learn why it's important for all of us to support the return of culture to all affiliated Native Peoples.





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WEEK FOUR | TO PROTECT AND RESTORE

Tuesday, February 24

2:00-3:30 pm

Carrying Ancestors Home - Native Nation-Directed Repatriation and Research

Fermin Lopez, Pueblo of Pojoaque, THPO for Pueblo of Pojoaque; Meg Hardie, Ph.D. candidate, Consultant Osteologist, University of Colorado, Boulder
The Pueblo of Pojoaque is working to repatriate Ancestors from various U.S. institutions. As a result of institutions often uncovering Ancestors that have not been properly included in repatriation processes, this session discusses how osteological assessments, with the consent of the Pueblo of Pojoaque, can support museum accountability to make sure the Ancestors are returned appropriately.

3:45-5:15 pm

Learning from the Ancestors: Recentering the Jones Museum, A Collaboration with Native Artists

Brent Greenwood, citizen of the Chickasaw Nation, Chickasaw Nation Director of Fine Arts; Jenny L. Davis, citizen of the Chickasaw Nation, Associate Professor of American Indian Studies & Anthropology, University of Illinois; Jessica Dees, Moundville Archaeological Park Education Director and Festival Coordinator; Lisa Brazelton, Ph.D. candidate, Anthropology and Learning from the Ancestors CARL Project Intern, University of Alabama and Moundville Archaeological Park; Mairin Odle, Ph.D., University of Alabama Department of American Studies; Roger Amerman, citizen of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, Artist; Ted Clay Nelson, Ph.D., Moundville Archaeological Park Director

This session describes the collaboration between the University of Alabama's Moundville Archaeological Park, UA's Department of American Studies, and Brent Greenwood, Chickasaw Nation Director of Fine Arts, to create a special temporary exhibit which ran from February 3 to May 31, 2025 titled, "Learning from the Ancestors: Historical Influences on Contemporary Native Art." This exhibit was only possible after the museum returned every Ancestor and belonging back to Native Nations. The relationships with Native Nations that came from this massive repatriation led to a collaboration with contemporary NaAGPRA compliance, the importance of building relationships with Native Nations, and the eclectic artists to reinvigorate the space. In this session we will also discuss the Jones Museum's economic and social impacts this work has had on the museum.



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Wednesday, February 25

2:00-3:30 pm

11th Agent of Deterioration

Angela Garcia-Lewis, Cultural Preservation Compliance Supervisor, Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community; Martin Schultz, Independent Curator; Melanie Deer, Collections Manager and Assistant NAGPRA Coordinator, Center for Archaeology and Society at Arizona State University; Reylynne Williams, Gila River Indian Community, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, Gila River Indian Community

There are 10 agents of deterioration understood in collections care. This session will work with attendees to discuss the possibility of adding an 11th Agent of Deterioration called Incorrect Cultural Care. This is a new movement to change the way Western ideology views the care of cultural heritage outside Native Nation's control.

3:45-5:15 pm

Illicit Trafficking and Lootings

Christopher Dudley, Special Agent, FBI Salt Lake City Division, Helena, MT Resident Agency, FBI Art Crimes Team; Franklin Chavez, Kewa Pueblo, Supervisory Special Agent/Division Chief, BIA-OJS Cultural Resources Division; Kay Kkendasot Mattena-Short, citizen of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, Program Associate, Association on American Indian Affairs

This session will share ways Native Nations and the public can report trafficking of cultural heritage, what resources are available to support the protection of cultural heritage, and the Association's auction monitoring efforts with data from auctions selling potentially sensitive cultural resources in 2025.





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Thursday, February 26

1:00-1:50 pm

Learn More About the Cultural Sovereignty Program and the Tribal Partners Working Group

Christopher Dudley, Special Agent, FBI Salt Lake City Division | Helena, MT Resident Agency, FBI Art Crimes Team; Franklin Chavez, Kewa Pueblo, Supervisory Special Agent/Division Chief, BIA-OJS Cultural Resources Division; Kay Kkendasot Mattena-Short, citizen of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, Program Associate, Association on American Indian Affairs

This session will share ways Native Nations and the public can report trafficking of cultural heritage, what resources are available to support the protection of cultural heritage, and the Association's auction monitoring efforts with data from auctions selling potentially sensitive cultural resources in 2025.

2:00-3:30 pm

Supporting Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Repatriation

Abigail Thomsen, Ph.D. candidate, University of Massachusetts-Amherst, National Science Foundation Center for Braiding Indigenous Knowledges and Science; Anne Young, Director of Legal Affairs and Intellectual Property, Newfields Museum; Emily Santhanam, citizen of the Chickasaw Nation, Outreach Manager, Local Contexts; Emma Carter, Rights and Reproductions Specialist, Newfields Museum

Digital tools in collections care can provide support for Native Nation control and cultural authority, as well as protecting Native Nation data sovereignty. Local Contexts is a global nonprofit that supports Indigenous Peoples with tools to reassert cultural authority in heritage collections and data. This presentation focuses on what Local Contexts does and how their tools can be used for broader consultations, including a case study of how one art museum operationalized the system as part of its rights management and repatriation process centering the transparent disclosure and repatriation of all digital information associated with belongings in their collection.

3:45-5:00 pm

KEYNOTE: Shannon O'Loughlin: Who do you want to be?

Shannon O'Loughlin is a citizen of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and Chief Executive and Attorney for the Association on American Indian Affairs.

Shannon will share with us her personal experience and reflection on working in Native Country on repatriation issues, and asking the question "who do we want to be?"