

Institutional Setting and Regional Demographics

Arizona has 22 federally recognized Native American Tribes and seven of the most populous Native American tribes have reservation lands within the state (Fig. 1), including the Navajo nation, the most populous tribe in the US. In 2010, more than 5% of the population of Arizona self-identified as Native American or Alaskan alone (www.census.gov). Arizona is also home to large and growing Hispanic population (Fig. 1). As of 2011, more than 30% of Arizona's population self-identified as Hispanic (www.pewhispanic.org).

Northern Arizona University (NAU), located in the mountain town of Flagstaff, Arizona, is situated on the Colorado Plateau in the geographic center of the most populous tribes in the Southwest (Fig. 1) and is the only research institution serving the rural Four Corners area. Because of its physical location and demographics, NAU has a clear mission to provide opportunities for underrepresented minorities, especially those of Native American and Hispanic descent, most of whom are first-generation university attendees (Carter et al. 2013). Indeed, because of the diverse population of Arizona and the proximity of the university to tribal lands, NAU is uniquely situated to provide educational opportunities and training in Science, Technology, Mathematics and Engineering (STEM) fields for students from underrepresented minority (URM) groups — particularly Native American and Hispanic students from the rural Southwest. In addition, a major component of NAU's institutional mission is to “achieve multicultural understanding as a priority of educational and civic life” and a key aspect of NAU's strategic plan is to “become the nation's leading university serving Native Americans.”

Top 20 Reservations and Alaska Native Village Statistical Areas With the Largest American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) Alone Population: 2010

(For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/doc/pl94-171.pdf)



Hispanic or Latino Population as a Percent of Total Population by County: 2010

(For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/doc/sf1.pdf)

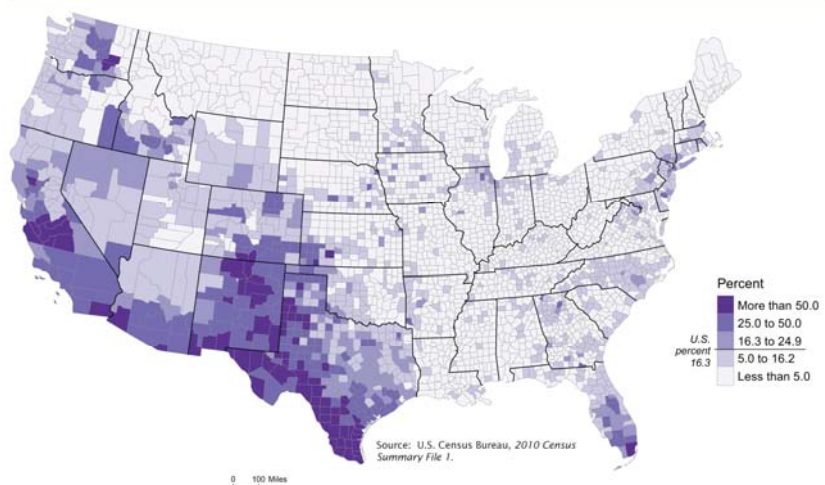


Figure 1. Arizona contains seven of the 20 most populous Native American tribes in the United States (top panel) and has a large and growing Hispanic population (lower panel). Data and images from the 2010 US census (<http://www.census.gov>).