

DEPARTMENT HAPPENINGS

UPCOMING CONFERENCES

- 11/7-11/8 AASP Conference
- 11/7 ASHE (11/20-11/23 in person)
- 2/3-2/4 AZSCA Conference
- 2/28-3/1 NBCC Foundation Symposium

UNIVERSITY DATES + DEADLINES

- 11/11 Veterans Day
- 11/28-11/29 Thanksgiving

CAMPUS EVENTS

- 11/1 Public Telescope Viewing

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

- Dragana Dilas

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

- Ashley Vaughan

CULTURAL SPOTLIGHT

- Halloween
- Disability Heritage Month

School Psychology Trip

Students from the School Psychology, EdS and Combined Counseling/School Psychology PhD programs joined faculty members to provide mental health consultation for children at 4 Hopi HeadStart locations on September 20th. It was a great opportunity that benefited both our students and the students from the HeadStart locations. Our school psychology faculty members are excited to be bringing back more of these kinds of trips this year. Thank you to Drs. Bohan, Cota, Calderon, Fillhouer and Professor Zamora for making these trips possible! Stay tuned for more throughout the year!

Theater Collaboration

The department has embarked on an exciting new collaboration with the NAU Department of Theater. Drs. Haberstroh, McDonald, and Guida are partnering with Kathleen McGeever and her students to do counseling simulations. These simulations allow our students to get practice with a more real feeling client beyond their role play with their classmates. This also gives the theater students the opportunity to get fully into a character developed by Kathleen with common concerns that are often seen in counseling.

Fellowship

Dr. Susana Hernandez was selected as a fellow for the American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education (AAHHE) Faculty Fellowship program. Congratulations Dr. Hernandez! There will be more to come on this in the November newsletter.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

For October, we are spotlighting an Applied Human Behavior student, Dragana Dilas. Dragana was nominated by Dr. Noe Vargas. Dr. Vargas says, “Dragana is an outstanding student; she is interested helping others and makes a difference in the lives of individuals and families. She excels in her knowledge about behavioral health and is looking to continue her learning with a graduate degree. I am confident that Dragana, with the education she is obtaining at NAU in the Applied Human Behavior program, can be an excellent para-professional in the helping professions.”



Dragana feels that one of her most significant achievements is “going back to school in my fifth decade, earning an associate's degree from Phoenix College, and completing a bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies of human behavior, maintaining a 4.00 GPA throughout both programs.” She is also proud to have received scholarships to aid in her academic pursuits.

Dragana is very active in her community outside of the classroom. “I am actively involved in volunteer work within my church, local community, and other organizations such as St. Mary's food banks, where I contribute to the monthly distribution of food at community colleges for those in need.” She is also currently volunteering with an organization called AQE Group which is an “international company that specializes in providing consulting and engineering services in the environmental sector, focusing on water, air, and land pollution.” Dragana also participates in various clubs, including the International Club, where she organized fundraising activities to support the club and she is member of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society.

Dragana aspires to pursue a master's degree in school counseling. She says, “my focus would be on working with younger children, as I believe that early intervention can profoundly impact their overall well-being.” She also hopes to further explore the human services sector to gain a deeper understanding of social structures, differences, and inequalities within society. She feels that her knowledge and personal attributes can be instrumental in serving both individuals and the community at large.

Dragana describes herself as a communicative and open-minded individual who has a passion for traveling, cooking, and reading. “Exploring new places and engaging in conversations about culture and social conditions to gain a better understanding of diversity brings me great joy. I take pleasure in cooking for my family and friends, and occasionally for humanitarian organizations and charity events, as it helps me bring people together and allows me to connect with others through the exchange of recipes. I possess a small library that I am happy to share with others. Reading serves as my means of relaxation and stress relief, providing me with an escape into the world of fantasy. Originally from Eastern Europe, specifically Serbia, I have been here for eight years. My life journey has been challenging, with numerous obstacles, but I take pride in my achievements and am grateful for the opportunities I have had.”

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

This month we are spotlighting Dr. Ashley Vaughan, who is the Human Relations MEd program coordinator. She is currently focusing on innovating the HR program including updating the coursework, degree title, improving the program's online presence, and building a sense of community for students despite the online nature of the program. One of her favorite courses that she is teaching is EPS 340/EPS 605 for the Preparing Indigenous Teachers for Arizona Schools (PITAS) program. She says, "my PITAS students challenge me in novel ways, keep me humble, and demonstrate so much passion for their education and their communities that I leave every class feeling inspired and rejuvenated."



Dr. Vaughan is also active in research. "A primary focus of my research is collegiate service-learning. Service-learning is the integration of community service into course curriculum so that students gain real-world experience using what they learn in class to effect meaningful change in their communities. When done well, students who take service-learning courses tend to perform better in school than students who take traditional-style courses, and they are more likely to graduate, be informed about their communities, stay engaged in civic activities, and think more highly of themselves and their abilities." Dr. Vaughan presented on her research at APA over the summer. Her findings suggested that "student outcomes are greatest when they have some autonomy over the type of service they do for their courses, find their service activities to be personally meaningful, and reflect on their service both individually and with their classmates." Dr. Vaughan is actively working to bring more service learning programming to NAU. She is collaborating with NAU's Center for Service and Volunteerism and First Year Seminar to develop a service-learning program for first-year undergraduate students.

Beyond her service learning research and goals, Dr. Vaughan is also working on a multi-disciplinary project with faculty in Educational Leadership and the Arizona School Administrators (ASA) organization to explore the [well-being of school administrators across the state of Arizona](#). This project is ongoing and she is also in the process of applying to the Southwest Health Equity Research Collaborative (SHERC) for the Pilot Project Program (PPP) grant to help fund the continuation of this work.

When asked what a key takeaway of all her work is, Dr. Vaughan said "while my research is heavily focused on community-based pedagogies, such as service-learning, the thing I love most about conducting research is working with others to answer important questions and find solutions to community and educational problems. I am motivated and inspired by working with people who are passionate about making our communities stronger and the world a kinder place." In addition, she concluded by saying that "working with students is genuinely my favorite part of this job. I love seeing them get excited about learning, and I appreciate being asked difficult questions that keep me on my toes. As a three-time college dropout and a first generation college graduate, one of my greatest passions as an instructor is helping struggling students succeed. I am incredibly proud of my students!"

Though she stays very busy with all of her academic and professional endeavors, Dr. Vaughan does enjoy several hobbies including listening to live music, taking in forest and mountain views, playing video games and board games with her kids, cross-stitching, trying new foods, and traveling.

Halloween Culture and Traditions



Halloween traditions in America began around the 19th century during the Irish Celtic feast of Samhain celebrated on October 31. People disguised their faces to ward off spirits and gathered to tell ghostly stories around lit bonfires. During this evening, vigils were also held for the souls of those trapped in purgatory. In fact, children would go door to door on October 31 begging for food and money in exchange for praying for the souls of the deceased. Lit jack-o-lanterns that today dorn doorways to welcome trick or treaters evolved from carved turnips, potatoes or beets the Irish used to light their festivals.

The name “Halloween” originated from the Scottish referring to October 31 as ‘Hallow-e’en” - “hallow” which loosely translates to “saint” or “holy person” and “een” meaning “evening”.

Halloween celebrations occur around the globe. While Americans celebrate with spooky movies, haunted houses, and dressing up to go trick-or-treat, celebrations vary across the world. In some countries, the holiday is overshadowed by others with more cultural significance. For example, in Italy, All Saint’s day is celebrated on November 1st. In other countries, like Japan, Halloween is a newly embraced holiday that focuses significantly on pop culture and costume parties. In Mexico trick-or-treating is used as a primer to celebrate el Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) which is October 31 through November 2. This holiday goes back 3,000 years to pre-columbian mesoamerica and celebrates the gates of heaven opening to allow the spirits of deceased loved ones being reunited with their still-living family. An ofrenda is set up to celebrate loved ones and ancestors with pictures, candy, favorite foods of the deceased. Candles are burned to help the deceased find their way home.

Disability Pride and Heritage Month

Disability Pride and Heritage Month is widely celebrated in October. The holiday was first established by the state of Idaho in 2007 and is now recognized by the United States Department of Labor (DOL). The DOL holiday is focused on employment and is called [National Disability Employment Awareness Month](#). The DOL’s theme for this year is “Access to Good Jobs for All.”

NAU celebrated Disability Heritage Month through numerous events, including a film series featuring films made locally including NAU students. These events will culminate in an “accessibility expedition.” If you are interested in exploring the NAU campus and discussing how the design of our campus can be more accessible to all, join the Commission of Disability Access and Design’s [Accessibility Expedition](#) on November 1st from 12 to 2 pm. Food will be provided during the discussion that follows the expeditions.

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UNIVERSITY DATES + DEADLINES

- 11/11 Veterans Day
- 11/28-11/29 Thanksgiving

CAMPUS EVENTS

- 11/2 Diwali Festival of Lights
- 11/5 Parade to the Polls
- 11/8 INE Showcase and Open House
- 11/12 NIH Proposal Training
- 11/19 Code Talker Presentation

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

- Timmesse Thompson

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

- Susana Hernandez

CULTURAL SPOTLIGHT

- Native American Heritage Month

CSA Student Success One of our counseling - student affairs students, Julia Garfield, was selected for the Association for Student Conduct Administration (ASCA) Presidential Graduate Internship. As an intern, she'll have the opportunity to gain insight into the Board of Directors' meetings, including the opportunity to interact directly with them. This position will pay for Julia to attend the annual conference. She is also currently the GA for the Student Conduct office in the Dean of Students, so this opportunity connects well to her career interests and goals.



Please be sure to send us pictures and announcements of all the wonderful things that happen this year and we will feature them in the newsletter. Send these to Tessa.Alexander@nau.edu.

UPCOMING CONFERENCES

- The [Arizona Association of School Psychologists](#) 2024-2025 Annual Hybrid Conference will be on November 7th and 8th. The in person portion will be held in Phoenix at the Desert Willow Conference Center.
- The [ASHE conference](#) will have a virtual conference on November 7th and the in person conference November 20-23 in Minneapolis.
- The [Arizona School Counselors Association \(AZSCA\)](#) conference will be February 3-4 in Fort McDowell at the We-Ko-Pa Casino. You can reserve discounted hotel rooms until January 17th on the AZSCA website.
- There will be an [NBCC Foundation symposium](#) on eliminating mental health disparities on February 28-March 1 in Georgia.

ACADEMIC DATES + DEADLINES

- 11/11 Veterans Day - University Closed
- 11/28-11/29 Thanksgiving Holiday - University Closed

CAMPUS EVENTS

- 11/2 | [Diwali Festival of Lights](#) | Join the Indian Association of Northern Arizona and CIE for performances, food, and more. | 4 to 8 pm at the du Bois Center.
- 11/4 | Native American Heritage Film: Gather | North Valley Campus 1-3 p.m. room 157
- 11/5 | [Parade to the Polls](#) | Join a parade starting at the union pedway where there will be refreshments for students and end at the NAU polling center which is South Beaver School. | 1 pm at the Union Pedway
- 11/8 | [Institute for Native-serving Educators Showcase and Open House](#) | 8:30 to 4:30 in the duBois Center.
- 11/12 | [NIH Proposal Development](#) | Register for a training about NIH proposals on zoom from 1 to 5 pm.
- 11/18 | Native American Heritage Film: The Cherokee Word for Water North Valley | 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. Room 157
- 11/19 | [Code Talker Chester Nez: Navajo Military Services in WWII](#) | 7 to 8 pm in the Native American Cultural Center

NAU
Events

Flagstaff
Events

Phoenix
Events

Tucson
Events

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

For November, we are spotlighting a human relations student, Timmesse Thompson. Timmesse has big plans for her future after she completes her HR degree and she has shared what has led her to this point in her life.

“As a homicide survivor, my perspective on life has been shaped by the realization that our time on this earth is limited. At a young age, I understood that I needed to escape harder circumstances and embrace the value of life. I am grateful to say that currently, I am staying true to that promise. I found my purpose in bringing light through celebrating every aspect of life. As an event planner, I use my ‘unique set of skills’ (Liam Neeson voice) to create impact one event at a time. You can call me ‘The Planner’ - and I mean it, seriously.



So, how did I transition from Claiborne Homes in Memphis to the concrete jungle in Phoenix, despite facing numerous challenges? As a Black woman in the workplace, I face a daily battle to break through the glass ceiling. Working harder than everyone else and enduring blatant disrespect is standard practice. You've probably heard this story before. Yeah, because it's true. After being fired or quitting a few jobs behind being disrespected at work you get the message quickly to not report it, keep your head down, and deal with it. What is the protocol when you get a watermelon placed on your cubicle desk chair as a ‘harmless’ joke from your co-workers? In those moments, I had to remind myself that no matter how defeating it felt, it could never compare to the pain of being returned to the same violence after months of healing in the hospital. Yet here I am now, having made it through. I endured hell to reach where I am today, and I refuse to let haters in the workplace disturb my peace any longer. Instead of waiting for someone else to help me, I decided to take matters into my own hands. I'm making the path easier for other people of color in the events industry.”

Timmesse is working on her long term goals by pursuing higher education. After my daughter graduates high school in 2028, I plan to pursue a Ph.D. in African American Studies, despite the challenges of relocating for 4-6 years. This degree is a lifelong aspiration and I am excited to elevate Arizona's educational landscape with the expertise I gain.” Her more immediate goals include obtaining her Certified Meeting Planner (CMP) and Certified Meeting Manager (CMM) certifications. She also has already founded a non profit organization, Black Event Professionals of Arizona (BEPA), that she hopes to continue developing. “My goal is to grow my nonprofit organization from a membership organization to an established resource center that addresses the diverse needs of Black event professionals, offering services such as housing assistance, training, and workplace trauma counseling. Additionally, I aim to teach African American history and contribute to society through DEI consultation and research. I envision a future where countless financially successful Black event professionals thrive in Arizona, breaking generational curses.”

Timmesse shared, “My journey has been marked by struggle, but I refuse to let difficulties define me. I have hustle and grind. My authenticity, dedication, focus, and unwavering commitment have remained unchanged since the first time I fought for my life. With God's will, I am confident that I will graduate from this program with the highest distinction. If I know anything, I know that everything I aspire to is possible when I set my mind to it. Like the OG's (Original Gangstas) always say, “It's in you...not on you”.

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

For November, we are spotlighting Dr. Susana Hernandez to recognize and congratulate her on her recent accomplishments. Dr. Hernandez is the faculty program coordinator for the Counseling-Student Affairs, MEd program.



Dr. Hernandez was selected for The [American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education \(AAHHE\) Faculty Fellowship Program](#). “The AAHHE fellowship program’s primary goal is to prepare Latine/x faculty for successful careers in academia and beyond by increasing the number of tenured and promoted Latine/x faculty. The program also provides strategies to assist tenure-track faculty in achieving their scholarly and career goals; build community and network with other Latine/x faculty; and develop future leaders who are dedicated to uplifting their communities.”

Dr. Hernandez shared some details on what her work as a fellow will entail. “As an AAHHE Faculty Fellow, I have been attending monthly webinars since September with other faculty fellows. I’m looking forward to building community with other Latine/x faculty across the U.S. and learn new strategies to help with my tenure-promotion. I will also have the opportunity to attend the AAHHE National Conference in March 2025 so I’m excited to be in community with everyone in-person, as well as offer my support and mentorship to Latine/x doctoral students who are part of the AAHHE Graduate Fellowship Program.”

Dr. Hernandez was also a featured panelist at the 2024 Arizona Drive-in Conference for the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (AzNASPA) on Friday, October 18, 2024. The topic of the panel was Charting the Future of Student Affairs in Arizona.

Congratulations Dr. Hernandez on these accomplishments!

CULTURAL SPOTLIGHT

Native American Heritage Month celebrates the culture, history and contributions of the Native American people. It is an opportunity to educate and learn awareness about the tribes and various challenges they face today and in the past. NAU respects and acknowledges the cultures, traditions, beliefs, tribal laws, codes process and protocols of the sovereign tribes. This commitment is upheld through ongoing partnerships and consultations with federally recognized Native American tribes. The [Office of Native American Initiatives](#) (ONAI) was established at NAU ensure compliance with the [Tribal Consultation policy](#) through the Arizona Board of Regents. The ONAI makes a substantial and enduring contribution through partnerships with the Native American/Indigenous communities, collaborations with tribal college and universities, building bridges to and from Indigenous-serving institutions across the globe and contributing to a culture of support for Native American/Indigenous students.

NAU celebrates the Native American culture through events during the month of November. You can find them here:

<https://nau.edu/indigenous/native-american-heritage-month-events/>



November 11 is the universal day to recognize the men and women who served our country. This holiday was established on this date to celebrate the ending of World War I at 11 a.m. on November 11, 1918 (the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month). Parades take place across towns in Arizona honoring and thanking our veterans for their service and sacrifices.

Happy
Thanksgiving