

## Episode 9: Dennis Wiedman on Raising and Connecting Global Indigenous Voices

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>>STEPHANIE: You're listening to Making Global Learning Universal--conversations about engaging diverse perspectives, collaboration, and complex problem solving in higher education on campus, online, in local communities, and abroad. I'm your Host, Stephanie Doscher, Director of Global Learning Initiatives at Florida International University.

>>DENNIS: Part of our efforts are to create places for our indigenous students to be able to celebrate and feel good about being here at FIU. Part of this empowerment is to have that story be told in many different forms. among native peoples and indigenous peoples of the world.

>>STEPHANIE: That was Dennis Wiedman. He's Associate Professor of Anthropology at FIU and a past president for the National Association for the Practice of Anthropology. In our conversation, Dennis explored the origin, mission, and secrets for success of FIU's Global Indigenous Forum and the student club, the Global Indigenous Group. These organizations work collaboratively. They raise indigenous voices and issues. And they make sure that FIU is a welcoming place for indigenous faculty, staff, students, and community members. Dennis went into great detail about the ways he facilitates connections and knowledge exchange, not only between indigenous and nonindigenous people, but amongst global indigenous groups themselves. I think he presents some really powerful strategies for promoting awareness and a sense of belonging for any historically underrepresented group. So here's Dennis and me.

This card is beautiful. So -- so this is a card. It says global indigenous group on it. Is this the student's group card?

>>DENNIS: It's the student group that was organized six years ago in 2013 to initiate our efforts to welcome indigenous peoples to FIU and to make a welcoming place for students and faculty here. The Global Indigenous Group is recognized under the student government organization. It's very active now for six years. And that colorful design was developed as a student and faculty effort with student designer David Martins. The design is now a logo on banners, table covers, web pages and things. You see the panther there for FIU; you see the turtle for turtle nation, which is a symbol for native peoples; you see a feather as a representation of the power of birds; and fire has an eternal energy. But there's many other symbolic meanings. If you look deeply, there's a world in the background behind all of that.

>>STEPHANIE: I do see that.

>>DENNIS: You see the globe.

>>STEPHANIE: Yes. So the global indigenous group is part of the story of your work --

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>>DENNIS: Mm-hmm.

>>STEPHANIE: -- around the indigenous peoples of south Florida and beyond. The group you said, that's the student piece.

>>DENNIS: Yes.

>>STEPHANIE: But there's also a faculty group.

>>DENNIS: Yes, it's called the Global Indigenous Forum. The Forum, the word "forum" means a place of talking and listening and respect. The mission of the global indigenous forum, and it's very close for the mission of the student group also, is to create spaces on FIU on the campus for the indigenous voice to be heard, to be respected and listened to. It is a University-wide initiative.

>>STEPHANIE: Mm-hmm.

>>DENNIS: So the mission of the Global Indigenous Forum is to bring indigenous voice to the FIU campus, to South Florida, and to the world. Through our various efforts, we have brought many different groups from around the world here. We engage with our local nations, the Seminole, the Miccosukee, Carib, Quechua, and the Lakota. There's many, many different Indigenous peoples who reside right here in South Florida.

>>STEPHANIE: Uh-huh.

>>DENNIS: -- I worked in the provost office for many years leading university accreditation, academic policy development, program review, and University strategic planning. I got to know what was happening throughout the university. I've been here at FIU since the early '80s. Over 30 years or so. I'm an expert in native peoples of North America with a PhD from University of Oklahoma in 1979. Over 40 tribal nations in Oklahoma were forced there by the U.S. military in the 1800s. All that time in the Provost Office, there was very little academic emphasis, or even campus events by indigenous peoples.

>>STEPHANIE: Mm-hmm.

>>DENNIS: I left the provost office in 2004, after 13 years, and took on my role as a faculty in the Sociology and Anthropology Department. With the addition of cultural geographers we transformed to the Department of Global Sociocultural Studies, where we now offer a PhD with that same title.

>>STEPHANIE: Uh-huh.

>>DENNIS: It is sociology, anthropology, and geography combined. So the university had all these events and programs going; but very rarely would any of our existing institutions, Latin American and Caribbean Center, Asian Studies, African Studies you know, they weren't talking about Indigenous peoples and their issues.

>>STEPHANIE: Yeah.

>>DENNIS: So there was a space for the Indigenous voice that wasn't being expressed. Then we have this global renewal of "indigeneity" around the world with the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007. It took indigenous peoples around the

world 30 years of building and organizing to influence the United Nations to where there's now a Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues In this politically active way Indigenous peoples were able to formulate this Declaration of Indigenous Rights, which then gave guidance from the United Nations to all the nations of the world. What stimulated this were the national political boundaries that we know of as the world today divided up the original peoples, the Indigenous peoples. Many of the current national boundaries have basically been imposed on the continents since the middle of the 1900s after the World Wars.

>>STEPHANIE: Mm-hmm.

>>DENNIS: And those political boundaries cut many indigenous peoples, tribal peoples, the original people of those continents apart. There were many nations of indigenous peoples who find themselves in two different countries -- with their peoples, their kinship all cut up. For example, between the Iroquois in the US and Canada; and the Apache or the Pima along the southern US border with Mexico. This happened all over the world and the UN was the place to begin to resolve this the wars in the Middle East are because those political boundaries were imposed upon them-- dividing religions and the original peoples of the land. So that wasn't being discussed here at FIU. But now that the UN had this initiative and it gives rights to the people to voice themselves politically, for the nation states to recognize them, and not to assimilate or try to exterminate them. Genocide and assimilation is actually continuing and there's 500 years of that here in all of North, South, Central America. These Rights empower the native people to speak up and say to nation states the UN says we should be able to speak our own language; we should not be persecuted for our own religions; we should be able to have our own media, television, arts. Now we see a flurry of that all over the world. We now have at least a dozen graduate students in five different academic departments, looking at the different movements or histories of this reemergence of the indigenous peoples of the world. We've been able -- in six years, we've been able to stimulate doctoral level training. Last semester, fall 2018, we graduated two students. One, of Lakota heritage, talking about economic development on reservations with the Seminole and Miccosukee as examples. And another on local and national organizations that try to get Indigenous people to use local foods. This dissertation focused on tribes in Washington state. It is good to see a student being engaged with the tribal peoples who are trying to regain access to their traditional foods. And I can go on and on.

>>STEPHANIE: Yeah. Well, what I hear, which is really amazing and I haven't thought about it that way before. There was an interesting confluence of events. There was the UN Declaration around 2007. That's just about the time this institution is starting to think about, what are we going to do for the next ten years to improve the quality of education for our students? So it was the birthing time of Global Learning for Global Citizenship.

>>DENNIS: Mm-hmm.

>>STEPHANIE: And around the same time, you are saying that you're really hearing students' calls for there to be some kind of indigenous groups, some kind of --

>>DENNIS: Yes.

>>STEPHANIE: Clubs.

>>DENNIS: Yes, yes. When students register here at FIU, there's an issue with homogenizing the peoples of the world. They put them in categories, a limited number of categories, Hispanic being one of them. But Hispanic is a Spanish language spoken all over the world, many

indigenous peoples from Guatemala speak various languages. There's hundreds of different traditional languages in Latin America. As soon as they come here, as soon as they arrive here, they are then denied their identities. And then they find difficulty surviving with success here because their identities are, oh, you're Hispanic. So part of our efforts are to create places for our indigenous students to be able to celebrate and feel good about being here.

>>STEPHANIE: Beautiful. So tell me more about how we do that. What -- what are the types of things that are happening inside the classroom, outside of the classroom, to achieve the forum's mission, which is the faculty component and the group's mission.

>>DENNIS: Right.

>>STEPHANIE: This, to bring indigenous peoples' voices to the table.

>>DENNIS: Yeah. Well, when you asked me what the Global Indigenous Forum was, I didn't go off talking about the faculty. But when we first started this, it was basically the compiling of an inventory of who in the university has expertise in this and teaches courses that are related to this. And so we already had people, faculty and staff who just weren't organized into a unit.

>>STEPHANIE: Right. And what sort of things were they doing?

>>DENNIS: Well, we had people like MaryLou Pfeiffer in Religious Studies who had been teaching "Native American Religions." Mary, Jim Hutchenson, and I developed this course about 2005. This is the longest running Indigenous course. Jim Riach in Earth and Environment was for years running a study abroad program through the Honors College, taking students to Project Amazona in Ecuador. They would go on a boat down the Amazon to a research station. They had many years of building a relationship with that community of indigenous peoples bringing health and education resources there. We also have Juliet Erazo, in the Department of Global and Sociocultural Studies whose whole career has been working with and studying governance of people in the Ecuador Amazon. She's teaching a course this semester where she teaches on the topic of indigenous ecological environmental issues and governance, how indigenous peoples are managing their resources. Right now, those students are doing a summer break study abroad engagement with that same community. Since the Ainu visited us, Masako Kubota in modern languages has led students on a study abroad each year to the Ainu community in Japan.

>>STEPHANIE: Fantastic.

>>DENNIS: Then there is my work with native North American peoples. I've worked in Oklahoma, Alaska and tribal communities on health and diabetes. Also, with the Seminole and Miccosukee. Indigenous content is in all of my courses, medical anthropology, introduction to anthropology, American Indian Ethnology, anthropological theories and at the graduate level I teach ethnohistorical research methods. Since the age of four I was brought up here in Miami, brought up in Opa Locka, graduating from Miami Carol City High School.

>>STEPHANIE: Hmm.

>>DENNIS: As a preteen, with my family and Scouts, I was engaged with the Seminole, Miccosukee, and intertribal pow-wows. My family is not of Indigenous heritage. So I have had this interest in Native peoples for a long time even before wanting to be an anthropologist, that's what got me interested in being an anthropologist. But those life-long relationships, were the foundation for creating the Global Indigenous Forum and the student Group. Creating

educational places for events and activities and making it public through modern media, through Facebook and our web page, [www.indigenous.fiu.edu](http://www.indigenous.fiu.edu). It's now very well developed. There's a column there, upcoming events if anyone wants to go to an event, anywhere in South Florida, it's just not FIU. Anybody who wants to do anything Indigenous. We post up University of Miami things, Miami-Dade, Seminole, Miccosukee, History Miami, wherever there's something indigenous. What we want to do is build a cohort of interested people to build a community.

>>STEPHANIE: A network, really.

>>DENNIS: Network, yeah.

>>STEPHANIE: Yeah.

>>DENNIS: So it seems to be working. We have hundreds of people listening in on our Facebook and web page. We had a panel discussion event when the Dakota pipeline was a big issue two years ago.

>>STEPHANIE: Mm-hmm.

>>DENNIS: Still is. We filled one of our biggest rooms of 250 people. At the same time, Internet, we had 825 people listening in from 12 different nations. Our local NPR radio station broadcasted excerpts for weeks expressing the Native perspective to South Florida.

>>STEPHANIE: Wow.

>>DENNIS: So we promote faculty who are teaching courses every semester. We have Jenna Gibbs in History, who established a brand-new course just for this purpose called Imperial Indigenous Encounters. It's a deep history of five different places of the world and how the indigenous have encountered imperial colonial peoples. Today decolonization is a major emphasis coming from indigenous peoples.

>>STEPHANIE: And I know that course -- I know that course very well because Jenna was -- that is a global learning designated course.

>>DENNIS: Mm-hmm.

>>STEPHANIE: And she was the first person, the first faculty member to take our online Global Learning Course Design and Instruction workshop because she was -- I can't remember if she was on sabbatical.

>>DENNIS: She's on research leave now.

>>STEPHANIE: Okay. She was on research leave then. And I created that mechanism, especially for our distance learning faculty and also faculty like herself who are off campus. She was the first person to go through that experience and develop that course. After that, it was, for me, incredibly gratifying --

>>DENNIS: Yeah.

>>STEPHANIE: That she -- that she was able to use that information for that purpose.

>>DENNIS: Right, right.

>>STEPHANIE: And it was also really the first course in history --

>>DENNIS: History department.

>>STEPHANIE: -- in History department that genuinely embraced global learning.

>>DENNIS: Yes.

>>STEPHANIE: In a fundamental way.

>>DENNIS: Yes.

>>STEPHANIE: And it set off a wildfire amongst our colleagues.

>>DENNIS: Yes.

>>STEPHANIE: So I'm excited about that intersection.

>>DENNIS: Yeah. Because some of our disciplines are so specific, Atlantic history for example.

>>STEPHANIE: Yeah.

>>DENNIS: Yeah. So where are the other people in the world.

>>STEPHANIE: Yeah.

>>DENNIS: So this course did that.

>>STEPHANIE: Mm-hmm.

>>DENNIS: Many of our courses are culturally specific, like Masako Kubota in Asian Studies. She's also in Modern Languages. She teaches Japanese language and Japanese culture courses. She and I worked together three years ago to bring the Ainu, original peoples of Japan from the island of Hokkaido here to FIU for a week. We had a young person who was in high school, all the way up to elders. So it was seven people. They were here at FIU performing and dancing. I brought a flyer showing their musical instruments and their clothing to show you. The event was titled the spirit of the Ainu, supernatural environment of Kamuy.

>>STEPHANIE: I was there that night.

>>DENNIS: Were you there.

>>STEPHANIE: I was there.

>>DENNIS: We had a full house, didn't we?

>>STEPHANIE: It was packed.

>>DENNIS: Yes.

>>STEPHANIE: The energy was truly emotionally moving. And it wasn't just because I have a connection to that course as well. It was because of the energy throughout the space.

>>DENNIS: Yeah, yeah. We incorporated students in that because Masako was teaching Japanese. She took each of her students and teamed them up with each one of our seven visitors to be translators. So for the next week, we then travelled as a group. They then performed at the Seminole annual event in November at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum, where they had their annual native arts celebration and they moved that crowd also. The Seminoles themselves thanked us so much to have brought the international global perspective to them. Since that event, they have been inviting other indigenous peoples from around the world. So we were able to influence them.

>>STEPHANIE: Fantastic.

>>DENNIS: But then after that weekend, we then went up to the Seminole Brighton Reservation, which is on the northwest side of Lake Okeechobee. They wanted to visit their schools and their senior centers. So they stayed there overnight on their reservation. And they learned how the Seminoles are making sure that their language is continued. They have a total immersion language program for preschoolers in the first few years there, where all the curriculum is taught in Muskogee, and is not allowed to speak any other language. They have elders teaching the youngsters, as well as accredited teachers teaching accredited curriculum. It's in Muskogee Creek language. Then we visited with a Miccosukee tribal leader. On these occasions the question the AINU wanted to learn about was, through globalization, peoples and corporations want to take resources from indigenous peoples -- take their lands, their medicines, their languages, and tourism is globally impacting people throughout the world. So for the AINU, the nation of Japan, says, okay, we're going to build a whole resort there among the AINU in order to promote the tourism. Isn't this great?

>>STEPHANIE: Right.

>>DENNIS: And the AINU said, this is our land; and what are we going to say about this? So they came here to learn and share with the Seminole and Miccosukee. This was funded through various grants through the Japanese foundations. It was their initiative, they wanted to come here not only to share their story with us but they wanted to learn from the leaders of global tourism, the Seminole and the Miccosukee because they had been at it so long and had succeeded so well.

>>STEPHANIE: Absolutely.

>>DENNIS: We set up the interviews where they could talk directly through interpreters to find out how -- how could they still control their own destiny through the tourism that's being imposed upon them. For another event years before, we brought people from the Columbian Amazon. Wherever we bring tribal peoples in, we try to not only have a large public kind of event for students and faculty, learning, and small learning groups. We also arrange for them to engage with our local communities. We have Carib communities; we have Iroquois; we have Seminole, Miccosukee, Quechua; and we try to bring them together for their voices to be heard among one another.

>>STEPHANIE: So this is deep global awareness, which is all about interconnectedness. And what I hear you saying is that the forum and the global indigenous group, it's not just about learning about the other; but it's about making connections --

>>DENNIS: Mm-hmm.

>>STEPHANIE: -- amongst different peoples and on so many different levels.

>>DENNIS: And empowering them.

>>STEPHANIE: And empowerment through that connection-making.

>>DENNIS: Yeah. Engagement of our students and faculty at that same time in things that are unfolding right before us. So we create a place and a space for that to happen.

>>STEPHANIE: That's creating a kind of a social value. It's creating value. I'm starting to think about, you know, social entrepreneurship and social innovation, and the space that colleges and universities occupy in -- in that realm.

>>DENNIS: Mm-hmm.

>>STEPHANIE: Because we are certainly about the production and exchange of knowledge. But could it be kind of like a triple bottom line in that through the production and exchange of knowledge, we're creating social value.

>>DENNIS: Oh, yeah.

>>STEPHANIE: We're creating, like you said, empowerment and engagement and economic.

>>DENNIS: And so there's this thing of indigeneity. Before this UN Declaration of Indigenous Rights in 2007, many indigenous peoples were denying their identities; and they were wanting to affiliate with the dominant group. Thus we have people who would say, well, in Mexico, we don't have any indigenous people. They're Mestizo. There's these intermediating terms that dominating colonizing settlers use. It erases the histories and the cultures of the original peoples. It's a way of dominating and dissolving them, and especially their land rights. By having the Global Indigenous Forum happen now for six years, bringing these people in, or, with us being part of the academic conferences and all, what we learn is that there's recurrent commonalities. with Indigenous people all over the world experience relationships with these settler nations, who would come and try to dominate and to erase their histories and culture and gain their resources. So part of this empowerment is to have that story be told in many different forums but also to create a place for native people, indigenous peoples of the world for them to learn that they're not alone it's just not happening to them.

>>STEPHANIE: Right. You're part of something much bigger.

>>DENNIS: This is part of globalization, and it's a global phenomenon, and it's recurring. That's the kind of academic enterprise that we're engaged with, especially with our advanced graduate students.

>>STEPHANIE: Mm-hmm.

>>DENNIS: Different places of the world, how is this unfolding in language retention, rights to religions, resources, sovereignty. And so it's happening.

>>STEPHANIE: And that's the academic enterprise; and it's -- it's doing well by our students.

>>DENNIS: Mm-hmm.

>>STEPHANIE: Because we know that grit and perseverance, it's deeply imbedded within one's identity.



>>DENNIS: Mm-hmm.

>>STEPHANIE: Right. And when one's identity is erased, that has such an impact.

>>DENNIS: Yes. Mental health, suicide, alcoholism. A lot of things, physical health and wellbeing. You know, I'm a medical anthropologist, with cross cultural mental health experience.

>>STEPHANIE: Mm-hmm.

>>DENNIS: A lot of health disorders are due to identity issues and not being clear about who one's self is. Especially if you're of a group which is always told your religion, your language is not good, it's actually demonized, with words like devil, Pagan, those kinds of words. For young people, it's just not a good healthy way to live. They have been dealing with that for all these years of colonization. Now we're in this new era, where the nations, the UN says it's okay to be indigenous.

>>STEPHANIE: Yeah.

>>DENNIS: So that's the hard part. A lot of the stories that are told will make you cry.

>>STEPHANIE: Yeah.

>>DENNIS: Moved by these tragic stories of extermination, genocide, ethnocide, displacement. These are very hard stories to listen to. But a part of it is, I think among our students in general, not just indigenous students, is a sense of I want to do something; I want to make a difference. So now there's a sense of activism. With our student group, global indigenous group, we're at it six years, student leaders graduate. What's consistent is faculty advisors and our community of Indigenous people around us. We see that the interests of the club and what they're doing is greatly influenced by whoever the leader is and wherever in the world they're from. We have had leaders from various tribes and places. Our founding Dennika Mays is from the Anishinaabe in northern Minnesota. We have had club Presidents from Lakota, Huatar, Lakota, Cherokee, Ecuador. And then we also have, non-natives. We have been able to actually do this to where non-native and natives actually are together.

>>STEPHANIE: Okay. Now you're bringing up what my next question was.

>>DENNIS: And when I talk about this at other universities, they say that is unusual because often, the student native clubs wanted to be native. And there's a friction and a tension there that I learned has happened at some schools that have been at this for 50 something years, Native American studies programs. The survival of student clubs is always problematic. Some of it is due to these identity issues of who's in power -- who's empowered and what tribe you're from and all. But we've been able to not have that as a major issue. But what is an issue is activism. How active do we want to be? Do we want to be the ones who are out there protesting? Or do we want to be the ones bringing up all these harsh, tragic, negative histories? Or be the ones that want to be celebrating all the good things? And so that's a careful balance.

>>STEPHANIE: Okay. So you just brought up three things that were floating around in my head while you were talking. One of them had to do with are non-native students engaged.

>>DENNIS: Mm-hmm.

>>STEPHANIE: And non-native faculty engaged? And if so, how -- how -- how is that balanced? And I think -- and then the other piece was, are we engaged with similar activities in other universities? And I think what I've heard you say and please correct me, is that, yes, we are and that there is something slightly different going on here around the -- around both the intersections amongst native peoples around the world; that it's not just our North American or even south Florida native peoples but peoples around the world. >>STEPHANIE: You mentioned that we have a Fulbright scholar before we started talking --

>>DENNIS: Yes

>>STEPHANIE: That we have a Fulbright scholar from India here right now. So there's that connection-making. And then the connection-making to identity in that this is an issue that all human beings grapple with is what is our identity?

>>DENNIS: Who am I?

>>STEPHANIE: Who am I? What are the aspects of my identity that are elevated in other people's eyes? And those aspects of my identity that are not recognized or denigrated in other people's eyes.

>>DENNIS: Mm-hmm.

>>STEPHANIE: And what control do I have over that? And for that reason, you're going -- as an anthropologist, I think by virtue of you going very deep into what is the purpose of the study of indigeneity; it's around identity and empowerment. And by going in that direction, it allows so many people to connect --

>>DENNIS: Mm-hmm.

>>STEPHANIE: -- with the work that you're doing.

>>DENNIS: Yeah. I'm overworked. I have so many things. I'm a teacher, I'm a researcher; publishing; national leader in my profession; and the director of this Global Indigenous Forum. And so sometimes I just say, oh, this is just too much; or, oh, this isn't working. But as soon as I come to campus and I'm at one of these occasions where this is all happening, it's like it's all self-sustaining now. You know, right.

>>STEPHANIE: How is it.

>>DENNIS: And it just happens. We now have so many students, faculty and community people engaged that it just happens.

>>STEPHANIE: Yeah.

>>DENNIS: You know. Like, oh, my gosh. I thought things weren't going -- happening right? And, boom, we have this great event happen. So we've built up enough critical mass now that I'm hoping it doesn't --

>>STEPHANIE: Yeah. People have taken ownership of it.

>>DENNIS: I'm at my six years as Director of this. I'm ready to hand this off to somebody else. And the question is can it keep happening?

>>STEPHANIE: Yeah.

>>DENNIS: You know, without Dennis? It's a big question. But I can see that we have so many different things happening at different levels. And we have so many institutionalized events, like we usually have an indigenous celebration each year. At Indigenous Celebration we create a space for Indigenous peoples to tell their stories in performance, music, dance, videos, but two years ago, the students were able to petition the student government to have Indigenous Day be on Columbus Day, each year in October. We normally have our indigenous celebration at different times of the year. It's been in April. Now we're in a transition to where, well, we're going to shift the indigenous celebration with dance performances in the Graham Center Ballroom, a hundred people or so. We're gonna -- move it to Indigenous Week in the beginning of the academic year. So right now we're in a transition. But because we still have the ballroom for April, we're putting another event in there called Indigenous State of Affairs. We're gonna have a panel discussion and open discussion on critical global issues of peoples in different parts of the world. Japan just recognized, their nation state recognized the Ainu. Seminole Sam Tommie to talk about the influence of corporations on core tribal values. We have Bina Segar from India, who has been here for nine months as a Fulbright visiting faculty. She learned about us through our internet presence -- e-mails and web page. This shows we have a global recognition. We have foreign scholars come from the other side of the world now to be here, self-funded through the Fulbright. She's taught and made many presentations, sharing perspectives from her side of the world. How it's unfolded in India is very different than the political history of colonization here in the Americas. So with this idea of identity, we have in a month, we have a whole evening, a Friday evening, dedicated to a panel discussion on "Who is Indigenous?"

>>STEPHANIE: Ah.

>>DENNIS: We have a person, a panelist from each continent. We have Bina Segar from India; we have Candy Hurtado coming from Peru; we have Janos Janine Bowen. Seneca Faith Keeper, Ed.M. Harvard Graduate School of Education, coming from the Iroquois Nation in New York. We're bringing what is happening on the different continents, different global situations, and these changing identities, reemergence of identities. How does it affect individuals? How does it affect the political economy and their control of resources? All of that is up for discussion. Who is indigenous? We have many students here. Some of our student leaders, they start out in an Indigenous related course and they then engage with our club. Over time you can see, they say, yeah, my parents, my grandparents, a faint story that somebody there is indigenous. What we do is help them go through the steps to find their family histories -- this has unfolded many times -- they then learn how to learn about their own heritage. How do you learn about your family history? What questions do you need to ask of your relatives? Because in many of those cases, the generations back then didn't want to admit that they were indigenous. They wanted to associate with the dominant group, the Spaniards or the British. Don't speak the language, don't do the religion. So there's students now querying their parents. We have a student who is past president of the club, who is Costa Rican. Cesar Castillo thought that there's some faint history there. He then started querying his family. He ended up going a summer with an uncle back to Costa Rica, learning that there's a dozen or more recognized tribes in Costa Rica. And he went right back to his Huetar community who welcomed him. Cesar is the first intern to be funded by the Global Indigenous Forum Dunnick endowment.

>>STEPHANIE: Yeah. Oh, I told -- you know, I told you before we started speaking that I usually cry in these podcast interviews. And now you're the one doing it.

>>DENNIS: So this is individual identity building --

>>STEPHANIE: Yeah.

>>DENNIS: -- for our students who want to know that. And so that's part of this effort.

>>STEPHANIE: So this is deeply personal work.

>>DENNIS: Yeah.

>>STEPHANIE: And there may be some of us in -- in our colleges and universities who feel comfortable doing that work and those of us who may not feel comfortable. And -- and I don't know if you agree. There needs to be space.

>>DENNIS: Yeah.

>>STEPHANIE: For both.

>>DENNIS: Mm-hmm.

>>STEPHANIE: And that implicates the, not really a dichotomy, but the discussion that you -- that you mentioned before. How active do we want to be? What -- what -- how -- how is that -- that dialogue played out --

>>DENNIS: Yeah.

>>STEPHANIE: -- here? I think that's important --

>>DENNIS: It is.

>>STEPHANIE: -- to hold back the curtain on that dialogue.

>>DENNIS: Yeah.

>>STEPHANIE: How is that played out here?

>>DENNIS: All right.

>>STEPHANIE: [Laughter.]

>>DENNIS: So. I am an applied and practicing anthropologist who uses anthropology theory and method to address human problems. I have a long career of initiating programs that become institutionalized. Along the way I consistently published these efforts at directing organizational culture change in journal articles and book chapters.

>>STEPHANIE: Yeah.

>>DENNIS: The question you asked me before, but I didn't answer; but it leads into this one. Is what is the relationship between people who have indigenous identities and heritage and people who are non-indigenous? And so I mentioned in the club, it's both.

>>STEPHANIE: Mm-hmm.

>>DENNIS: And the next, the club president right now is non-indigenous. But it looks like the ones engaged with us this year who will be leaders next year will be indigenous. So it goes to whoever is part of the group. You know, that's the leadership.

>>STEPHANIE: It evolves.

>>DENNIS: Who has the leadership skill.

>>STEPHANIE: Mm-hmm.

>>DENNIS: But when it comes to the faculty, one the main things that stimulated me to do this is that since I have this long history of my family and my professional career being engaged with Native North Americans and involved with the health and wellbeing is that here we have thousands of faculty. There isn't a single regular tenured line faculty who identifies in public as indigenous.

>>STEPHANIE: Ooh. Mm-hmm.

>>DENNIS: So in working with our development office, the FIU Foundation, we have developed our fund -raising efforts, with some listed on our web page under the Giving tab: <https://indigenous.fiu.edu/giving/>. In 2017, through the kind intentions of Marylou Pfeiffer, we received the Helen Dunnick Endowment which provides the interest earned each year for our programs. Marylou is one of the founding faculty of the Global Indigenous Forum. In our Development plan, - one of the main things is to receive a major contribution for an endowed professorship to support an internationally known Indigenous Studies scholar . We can't recruit saying you have to be indigenous.

>>STEPHANIE: Right.

>>DENNIS: But that's what we're hoping is to be able to draw faculty here who are of indigenous heritage and for them to find a place, to be comfortable here. After we started the initiative, department chairs come to me and say, Dennis, I wish you were around when we were recruiting for that line position because we had a leading scholar here in the topic we're focused on; and they were of indigenous heritage; but when they were here, they looked around and they didn't find a community to be part of.

>>STEPHANIE: Ah.

>>DENNIS: And so that's what we do.

>>STEPHANIE: Yes. Yeah. We have the dialogue, and we let what naturally emerges from that dialogue happen.

>>DENNIS: Yeah.

>>STEPHANIE: Yeah. And we invite that dialogue.

>>DENNIS: Yeah. So we do have to focus attention on faculty recruitment, in that most of our faculty who are teaching are non-indigenous, like I talked about with the Ainu, Masako, she's Japanese; but she's not Ainu.

>>STEPHANIE: Mm-hmm. This is an important point to discuss because so many institutions across the US and abroad are looking to internationalize at home. That's the --

>>DENNIS: Mm-hmm.

>>STEPHANIE: That's the term, the technical term, internationalization at home, meaning we don't have to, and we can't in many cases, send our students or our faculty abroad, bring people to our campus. We need to look for ways to enhance our students' global awareness, engagement, and perspective with the material, the perspectives, the peoples that are right here --

>>DENNIS: Mm-hmm.

>>STEPHANIE: On our campus and in our communities. And what I hear is you providing a model. And so fundamental dynamics for faculty, staff, or student leaders to create a space on their campuses and in their communities to engage different perspectives. And this is applicable -- it doesn't necessarily have to do with indigeneity. But it has to do with belonging and identity.

>>DENNIS: Mm-hmm.

>>STEPHANIE: And the way you've talked about the relationship between the faculty work and the student work and community work; the way you've talked about enhancing connections amongst those in the in-group and the out-group, to use an anthropological-sociological term; and amongst the diversity within different perspectives, these are -- this is what the work is about.

>>DENNIS: Mm-hmm.

>>STEPHANIE: This is how we can internationalize at home.

>>DENNIS: Yeah.

>>STEPHANIE: This is how we can make our home more welcoming to everyone who finds themselves here and wants to be here.

>>DENNIS: Mm-hmm.

>>STEPHANIE: If you had a resource --

>>DENNIS: Mm-hmm.

>>STEPHANIE: -- that you could recommend to -- to help others who want to create a space the way you have --

>>DENNIS: Mm-hmm.

>>STEPHANIE: -- on their campus, what might you recommend?

>>DENNIS: Well, the resources, since we started this and part of the success of it is two things -- one is we're an international city and second the use of Internet media to communicate>>STEPHANIE: Yeah.

>>DENNIS: And we're a hub for airports. People from all over the world come through here. So when we look at other schools, how -- how do you do this? I -- I think the foundation is just our place here in the world.

>>STEPHANIE: Mm-hmm.

>>DENNIS: In the hemisphere. When dignitaries are traveling or major indigenous leaders are traveling through the airport and they have a local friend who knows what they do, they call us up and say, hey, so and so is coming into town. They're going to have a layover here. Would you like to have them talk. And sometimes --

>>STEPHANIE: Oh, wow.

>>DENNIS: Sometimes, we have turned talks around in two weeks. And we get a whole roomful of people.

>>STEPHANIE: You know, there are those spaces, probably.

>>DENNIS: Mm-hmm.

>>STEPHANIE: Even in cities that we don't think of necessarily as global crossroads.

>>DENNIS: Right.

>>STEPHANIE: Very small towns. They might have -- they might be those ports of entry.

>>DENNIS: Sure.

>>STEPHANIE: They might be trading spaces. They might be the chamber of commerce. Who knows where they are. But what I hear you saying is find that place of intersection.

>>DENNIS: Yeah.

>>STEPHANIE: Nearby.

>>DENNIS: Wherever it might be.

>>STEPHANIE: Wherever it might be.

>>DENNIS: So we were able to bring in the Representative to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues that represented all of Latin America back in August. Also --

>>STEPHANIE: Mm-hmm.

>>DENNIS: -- to get the news out is, how do we do this? We have students who are motivated enough now to generate funding to get their own way to Washington to -- for this indigenous people march on January 18 that made the front page of our school newspaper. I'm holding it up now. Front page says "Prophecy of Unity Fulfilled: University Indigenous Groups March on Washington." Our student group is so active, they were able to gain enough access to resources to go up there with several of our local community indigenous leaders. By the way, where are the resources, you know, that you are asking me is --- the main resources is to tap the energy of -- of students, especially on this idea of activism. Not harsh activism, but I want to do something.

>>STEPHANIE: Yeah. I want to lay my hands to this thing.

>>DENNIS: Yeah. And so many of our clubs, I hear from -- that they don't last long because there's nothing really to motivate them to get things done.

>>STEPHANIE: Yeah.

>>DENNIS: I have been quizzed on how come this club's working so well. That's one of the features that I say, there's so many different aspects of this that people can find Indigenous issues or ways that they want to do things.

>>STEPHANIE: Ah.

>>DENNIS: It's so broad.

>>STEPHANIE: So lots of doorways in, open doors.

>>DENNIS: Yes. And I have already shared with you all of the multiple levels, not all of them but many of them.

>>STEPHANIE: Yeah.

>>DENNIS: And so people can find a place. And they can find a welcoming.

>>STEPHANIE: Mm-hmm.

>>DENNIS: We create student, faculty and community member roles, a way to be engaged in a recognized kind of way.

>>STEPHANIE: A way to find connection and relationship.

>>DENNIS: Yeah. What is the resource that we can share is that right from the very beginning, we used the Internet. I was in the provost office for a long time. And just to reveal the background a little bit.

>>STEPHANIE: [Laughter]

>>DENNIS: When we first were using micro desktop computers, I was the one that started accumulating the university policies and procedures. I helped develop the first policy procedure manuals, electronically --

>>STEPHANIE: Mm-hmm.

>>DENNIS: -- taking the written versions from various deans and all. At the same time, the Internet was starting. I'm actually the first one to post up a university web page. There we would put up the policies and procedures for everybody to build the university community. I have been trained in the use of computers -- before that, I was trained to be doing social science research using computers. I started with big IBM mainframes.

>>STEPHANIE: The IBM punch cards and the whole 9 yards.

>>DENNIS: I've been through this whole process of computer development and use. I teach fully online, and hybrid courses. When Dennika Mays came to my office and said, where's the Indian club, native club? And I said, oh, well, we had one ten years ago, the Native American Society. She says, well. I said, if you want one, I'll work with you on that. That struck up our



relationship, and we got the club going. The School of International and Public Affairs welcomed that. They provided their communications folks to start making the flyers, to build our web page and through the university announcements. And then through the student club, they had OrgSync

>>STEPHANIE: Mm-hmm. Which is the web site that --

>>DENNIS: All of the communication for all the 400 something clubs in the university supported by the CSO, the Council on Student Organizations It is now PantherConnect.

>>STEPHANIE: Right.

>>DENNIS: If you put things on there, you can make it go to just among the club, FIU, or public. There's little ways of doing that. We were able to use both the university media and the club media to get through the students, to the faculty, and the world. Most of those things were posted on our web page at: [www.indigenous.fiu.edu](http://www.indigenous.fiu.edu). So that's the resource I'm bringing to you.

>>STEPHANIE: That's like a gateway.

>>DENNIS: That's our web page.

>>STEPHANIE: And people can find us on Facebook.

>>DENNIS: The addresses, the links. We have a LinkedIn page; we have Instagram; and if you go back through the Web page events, click, you can go back all the way to the very beginning and see all the events we have done since 2013.

>>STEPHANIE: Oh, fantastic.

>>DENNIS: And as of the end of last year, I think we did 50 events in five years.

>>STEPHANIE: Wow. What an incredible resource. So again --

>>DENNIS: So all of these flyers that I'm showing you --

>>STEPHANIE: Yeah.

>>DENNIS: They can actually all be printed out still from the web page.

>>STEPHANIE: So you've got this history all the way back to your origin laid out right there.

>>DENNIS: Yeah. And there's even a tab called About Us. And there's a photo of the actual first meeting that pulled all this together as both the indigenous forum and indigenous group. That's where we decided to do this. The tab called Resources has links to student internships with the Seminole Tribe's Historic Preservation Office, and the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum. These are ways for students to build careers working with tribal governments and programs.

>>STEPHANIE: So what I hear is you are reiterating the group's mission, even how you communicate and publicize, which is many ways to connect.

>>DENNIS: Mm-hmm.

>>STEPHANIE: Many doorways, sharing stories, which is the way that we connect. And you're making this -- this is a resource that's open to anyone in the world who wants to connect.

>>DENNIS: We're a public university. Public information. It's -- it's there.

>>STEPHANIE: Open source. @@@

>>DENNIS: Yeah. And that's part of the success, too, is we view ourselves as a public university. The things that we do are open to the public and the events and people come. We have people that have been with us from the beginning. We even have two of the student presidents of the FIU Native American Society of the mid-2000s engaged with us, alumni from 17 years ago. We have an advisory council. We try to keep it 50 percent indigenous and 50 percent faculty and university folks. We have Seminole, Miccosukee, Quechua and Iroquois. Quechua Rubi Hurdato from Peru, an FIU alumni and founding Advisory Council member, also forcefully asked for us to work on establishing this Indigenous Forum and club. Maria-Luisa Veisaga, Quechua from Bolivia, is a research faculty, a senior teaching lab specialist in the School of Integrated Science and Humanity. Maria-Luisa has been pivotal in all of this. She and Rubi are Vice Chairs of the Forum. You know, my work with the Miccosukee. I did some research on global marketing of indigenous culture, the perspectives from Lee Tiger and the Florida Miccosukee. That was published in a leading journal, "American Indian Culture & Research Journal". This is after I left the provost office and I went back to the faculty, when I asked myself, how can I build up my research again?>>STEPHANIE: Hmm.

>>DENNIS: I started visiting with the Miccosukee. I said, well, here I have all these skills. How can I be engaged with you to your benefit? Lee Tiger, who is the son of Buffalo Tiger, the founding chief of the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida. Lee was the one that organized the Miccosukee festival between Christmas and New Year's every year. He was the main organizer of that for a very long time. He's now a senior. He said, yeah, come and visit. I and a graduate student, Masako Kubota, we'd go visit him at his house. And he started telling us his story. We got IRB approval and informed consent. We started recording. It turned into this story from the Miccosukee perspective of how they were able to succeed at tourism and more recently in gaming. You know, the Seminole now own Hard Rock International in 103 or more cities in countries throughout the world. They are a global indigenous tribe. But as the story unfolds is that I'm an intermediary. I'm just using my skills as the anthropologist for this community to tell their story of how they were able to attract tourists to their small place along the Tamiami trail. -- If you go out there -- every day of the year, you can drive down southwest 8th, go to the Miccosukee Village and Cultural Center.

>>STEPHANIE: Right past our university.

>>DENNIS: It's 35 miles out there. It's open every day of the year. Maybe the holidays are not. But you just take that tour. There will be groups of people around you. You will be amazed at the variety of languages that are being spoken. They have learned to bring populations from around the world to Miami to visit just them. They primarily figured out a way to bring in the people of Eastern Europe and Germany. So that's what that research is about is how this indigenous group was able to globally market indigenous culture. Lee Tiger and that group actually went to international tourism events and put on exhibits and tables for decades. They then became spokespersons for indigenous Native America. People didn't only want to see the Miccosukee, they wanted to see the Apache and the Navaho. So that little tribe of only 600 people actually started global tourism for many tribes as a model. Lee became a consultant to many tribes of how to do that. I was very close to that. So I learned from him too.

When this student Anishinaabe said where's the Indian club, I said, well, we can do this. I then talked to the people around me, Lee Tiger. And he says, you do that. You go ahead and do that.

>>STEPHANIE: [Laughter]

>>DENNIS: So not only did we have the students and alumni wanting to do it, our local native people wanting us to do this. Lee was a founding member of our Global Indigenous Forum Advisory Council. His advice, especially on how to keep a positive balance with the many critical Indigenous issues that are so hard for many people to hear.

>>STEPHANIE: Dennis, I think those words, "you do that," are -- are beautiful because I think what you just did is kind of open up a way to do that for so many people around the world who do want to do just what you are talking about, make these kinds of connections, bring new voices to the table, empower our students and faculty to exchange and produce new knowledge and create value in our communities. Thank you so much for being here.

>>DENNIS: Mm-hmm.

>>STEPHANIE: For sharing, for being so open, for talking with me today.

>>DENNIS: All right. It's been a pleasure, an honor. Thank you.

>>STEPHANIE: Thanks for listening to this episode of Making Global Learning Universal. This podcast is brought to you by FIU's Office of Global Learning Initiatives, Media Technology Services, and our Disability Resource Center. You can find all our episodes, show notes, transcripts, and discussion guides on our web page, [www.globallearningpodcast.fiu.edu](http://www.globallearningpodcast.fiu.edu). And if this episode was meaningful to you, please share it with colleagues, friends, and students. You can even give it a rating on iTunes. Thanks again for tuning in and all you do to make global learning universal.

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