EMERGING DINÉ WRITERS’ INSTITUTE

2023 AGENDA
The Emerging Diné Writers’ Institute (EDWI) is a creative writing program for Diné writers by Diné writers. At the EDWI, Diné writers at all levels of creative writing experience and from various backgrounds gather to learn from acclaimed Diné writers and visiting faculty members. We also invite regional hataałii (traditional healers) and cultural knowledge holders to share ancestral stories and storytelling practices with Diné writers to support their storytelling capacity and to ensure Diné writers have a strong cultural foundation to inform their creative works. At the heart of our community is the ancestral stories and knowledge that continue to fortify our people. Our overarching goal is to support Diné writers in telling their own stories and to gain confidence in their storytelling ability.

While we especially focus on supporting Diné writers, the EDWI also welcomes our non-Diné allies, colleagues, friends, and relatives to share in storytelling. The EDWI features public programming to build community and to share stories in a supportive space. There is a place for all writers to attend the EDWI.

Now in our seventh year, the EDWI fosters a supportive, close-knit community where writers at all points in their literary life can expand their writing practice, explore new genres, and grow in the company of like-minded thinkers, and acclaimed Diné writers. Past EDWI faculty have included Dr. Laura Tohe, Jake Skeets, Esther Belin, Rex Lee Jim, Amber McClary, Kinsale Drake, Kimberly Blaeser, and many more. Through collaborations with Diné writers and visiting faculty members, we hope that all Diné writers grow in this space. It is important work that we continue our storytelling traditions, and that more Diné writers continue to support programs like the EDWI by teaching and attending literary events. Through k’é and hane’ ‘ilii, we can continue adding to the storytelling legacy of our relatives from the past, present, and into the future.

ABOUT THE EMERGING DINÉ WRITERS INSTITUTE

Welcome to the Emerging Diné Writers’ Institute (EDWI)!

The EDWI was created in 2017 in collaboration with the Navajo Women’s Commission. It was our goal to offer a creative writing program that supported Diné community members to tell stories in all their forms. Diné have always had a love of storytelling. Any time we gather, whether it be at a chapter meeting, a family gathering, or even just visiting our relatives, we rejoice in sharing our stories. It is the vitality of these stories—emergence stories, family stories, poetry, photography, etc.—that has empowered us to thrive and reach for new heights. At the EDWI, we are proud to continue the storytelling legacies and traditions of our ancestors while moving toward contemporary expressions of our human experience.

This year, we gather in a virtual space to support the next generation of Diné writers and storytellers. Through craft talks, generative writing sessions, faculty readings, and cultural storytelling, participants will think critically and creatively about the importance of storytelling and our roles as writers. Our faculty consists of acclaimed Diné writers and authors as well as non-Diné allies from regional college and university writing programs and organizations. This summer, we are thrilled to have all Diné faculty members to lead our next generation of Diné writers. The future of Diné literature is a bright one!

At the EDWI, we center our writing and storytelling practice in the cultural teachings and knowledge inherited from our families and ancestors. We welcome Diné writers at all points in their writing life to engage in this important and necessary work. This means we are committing ourselves to supporting one another. It is up to us to carry forward the stories of our relatives forward while adding our own along the way. We exist on a continuum of language and stories.

With good thoughts and prayers, I welcome you all to the Emerging Diné Writers’ Institute. May this program be all that you need it to be and so much more. Let us continue to support the literary and creative pulse within our communities on the Diné Nation.

In k’é,
Dr. Manny Loley
Director of the Emerging Diné Writers’ Institute

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The logo depicts a male and female being along with a cornstalk that is placed within a pencil. The pencil symbolizes the power writing has within our communities with a streak of lightning shown at the pencil’s tip. Finally, six crosses are shown representing the six sacred mountains that will offer blessings to our past, present, and future Diné writers beyond and within the Navajo Nation. The EDWI logo was designed in 2019 by Quanah Yazzie who comes from Rock Point, Arizona.

THANK YOU FROM EDWI

The EDWI faculty and students would like to thank our sponsor for supporting the program. Ahxéhee’ nitsaago to the Office of the President at Navajo Technical University.

ABOUT THE EDWI LOGO
DAY ONE
MONDAY, JULY 24TH

9:00 am - 9:30 am
Welcome & Introductions (Writing Fellows Only)

9:30 am - 10:30 am
Keynote - Advice to Myself: A First Gen Diné Writer with Stacie Denetsosie
15-minute Break

10:30 am - 10:45 am
Baahane’ Bee Óol’įįł: Exploring Diné Writing Practices and Theory with Ramona Emerson, Stacie Denetsosie, Amber McCrary, and Manny Loley

10:45 am - 12:00 pm
Eastern Diné Reading Series with Stacie Denetsosie, Ramona Emerson, and Manny Loley

2:00 pm - 4:00 pm
Fiction I: An Intro to Visual Storytelling with Ramona Emerson (Writing Fellows Only)

4:00 pm - 5:00 pm
Stacie Denetsosie
Stacie Denetsosie is Tó Dích’íinii born for Naakaii Dineé; her maternal grandparents are the Tlįłdziłlání and her paternal step-grandparents are Bilagáana. She is from Kayenta, Arizona but currently resides in Logan, Utah. She holds an M.F.A. in Fiction from the Institute of American Indian Arts. Denetsosie’s short story collection The Missing Morningstar And Other Stories debuts September 12th from Torrey House Press.

Ramona Emerson
Ramona Emerson is Tł’áá’shchí’í born for Naakaii Dineé. Her maternal grandparents are Táchii’nii and her paternal grandparents are the Naakaii Dineé. She is a writer and filmmaker originally from Tohatchi, New Mexico. She received her degree in Media Arts in 1997 from the University of New Mexico and her MFA in Creative Writing (Fiction) in 2015 from the Institute of American Indian Arts. She has worked as a professional cinematographer, writer, and editor for over twenty-five years and is currently working on her 8th film project, Crossing the Line. She is an Emmy nominee, a Sundance Native Lab Fellow, a Tribeca All-Access Grantee and a WGBH Producer Fellow. Ramona just released her first novel, Shu/t_ter, the first of a trilogy, which was published with SOHO Books in 2022 and was recently longlisted for the National Book Award and was a finalist for the PEN/Open Book and PEN/Hemingway Award. She currently resides in Albuquerque, New Mexico where she and her husband/producer, Kelly Byars run their production company Reel Indian Pictures.

Manny Loley
Manny Loley is Áshįįhi born for Tó Baazhní’ázhí; his maternal grandparents are the Tódích’íi’nii and his paternal grandparents are the Kinyaa’áanii. Loley holds a Ph.D. in English and literary arts from the University of Denver, and an M.F.A. in fiction from the Institute of American Indian Arts. Loley is an inaugural In-Na-Po Fellow, and a member of Saad Bee Hózhó: Diné Writers’ Collective. Since 2018, he has served as director of the Emerging Diné Writers’ Institute. His work has found homes in Poetry Magazine, Pleiades Magazine, the Massachusetts Review, the Santa Fe Literary Review, Broadside Press, the Yellow Medicine Review, and the Diné Reader: an Anthology of Navajo Literature, among others. His writing has been thrice nominated for Pushcart Prizes. Loley is at work on a novel titled They Collect Rain in Their Palms. He is from Tsétah Tó Ák’olí in New Mexico.

DAY ONE
FACULTY MENTORS & VISITING WRITERS
DAY TWO
TUESDAY, JULY 25TH

9:00 am - 9:30 am
Morning Writing & Sharing Session
(Writing Fellows Only)

9:30 am - 10:30 am
How to Listen, When to Speak with Esther Belin

10:30 am - 10:45 am
15-minute Break

10:45 am - 12:00 pm
Dinévica: Unsettling Poetry with Esther Belin (Moderator), and Jake Skeets (Moderator)

2:00 pm - 4:00 pm
A Fighter Flowers: Intro to Shape Poetry with Amber McCrary (Writing Fellows Only)

4:00 pm - 5:00 pm
Eastern Diné Reading Series with Esther Belin, Jake Skeets, and Amber McCrary

DAY TWO
FACULTY MENTORS & VISITING WRITERS

ESTHER BELIN
Esther G. Belin is a writer, multi-media artist, and citizen of the Navajo Nation. She lives on the Colorado side of the four corners. She has been described as a second-generation off-reservation Native American, a by-product of the US federal Indian policies of termination and relocation. Both of her parents were taken off the Navajo reservation when they were teens to a federally run Indian boarding school in Riverside, CA. She received the baccalaureate of an 8th-grade education and some basic trade skills. As a result, she was raised in the Los Angeles area, where she learned to transplant and strengthen her Diné worldview with the help of her parents and the small Indian community that remains there. She is grateful for those courageous relocatees who survived and adapted, their collective scar tissue has eased her path in life. Belin’s art and writing reflect the historical trauma from those policies as well as the philosophy of the Navajo creator thought, the worldview of the Navajo people. Her writing is widely anthologized, and her poetry examines identity, politics, checkerboard land status, and the interplay of words (abstraction) and image (realism). In 2020, she was awarded an American Book Award for her first book of poetry, From the Belly of My Beauty. Her honors include a National Endowment for the Arts Grant for Arts Projects, a Mellon Projecting All Voices Fellowship, and the 2023-2024 Grisham Writer in Residence at the University of Mississippi. She teaches at the University of California at Berkeley.

JACE SKEETS
Jake Skeets is Tsi’naajínii born for Tábąąhá; his maternal grandparents are the Táchii’nii and his paternal grandparents are the Tódík’ózhí. Skeets is from Vanderwagen, New Mexico. He is the author of Eyes Bottle Dark with a Mouthful of Flowers, winner of the National Poetry Series, American Book Award, Kate Tufts Discovery Award, and Whiting Award. His poetry and prose have appeared widely in journals and magazines such as Poetry, The New York Times, and The Paris Review. He holds an M.F.A. in Poetry from the Institute of American Indian Arts. His honors include a National Endowment for the Arts Grant for Arts Projects, a Mellon Projecting All Voices Fellowship, and the 2023-2024 Grisham Writer in Residence at the University of Mississippi. He teaches at the University of Oklahoma.

AMBER MCCRARY
Amber McCrary is Ki’uchi born for Naakaii Dine’é; her maternal grandparents are the ‘Áshįįhi and her paternal grandparents are the Ta’neeszhání. McCrary is a Diné poet, zinester, feminist, and artist. She holds an M.F.A. in poetry from Mills College in Oakland, California, and a BA in Political Science with a minor in American Indian Studies from Arizona State University. She is the author of Eyes Bottle Dark with a Mouthful of Flowers, winner of the National Poetry Series, American Book Award, Kate Tufts Discovery Award, and Whiting Award. Her poetry and prose have appeared widely in journals and magazines such as Poetry, The New York Times, and The Paris Review. She holds an M.F.A. in Poetry from the Institute of American Indian Arts. Her honors include a National Endowment for the Arts Grant for Arts Projects, a Mellon Projecting All Voices Fellowship, and the 2023-2024 Grisham Writer in Residence at the University of Mississippi. He teaches at the University of Oklahoma.
DAY THREE  
**WEDNESDAY, JULY 26TH**

**Morning Writing & Sharing Session**  
(Writing Fellows Only)

**Beauty in Brevity** with Natanya Pulley

**15-minute Break**

**Writing Poetry** with Kinsale Drake

**Memoryscapes: A Writing Workshop Focusing on Memory Mapping** with Shaina Nez  
(Writing Fellows Only)

**Eastern Diné Reading Series** with Shaina Nez, Kinsale Drake, and Natanya Pulley

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**DAY THREE**

**FACULTY MENTORS & VISITING WRITERS**

**SHAINA NEZ**

Shaina A. Nez is Táchíʼnii born for Áshįįhí. She is Senior Lecturer in Creative Writing and English at Diné College. She is also a doctoral candidate in Justice Studies with the School of Social Transformation and Inquiry at Arizona State University. Nez earned her M.F.A. in creative nonfiction from the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Her work has appeared in “A Gathering of Native Voices” (The Massachusetts Review), “Nomads and Women: 121 Micro-Essays on Being in the World,” winner of the 2023 Silver IPPY award in the category of Adult Multicultural Nonfiction, “Between Pleasure and Pain: An Authentic Voices Anthology” (Sunday Dinner Publishing), and Issue 14: Indigenous Ecopoetry (Green Linden Press). Nez is an alum of Tin House, VONA (Voices of Our Nation Arts Foundation), WNDB (We Need Diverse Books), Av 2023 (Authentic Voices Fellowship), and a recipient of the 2021 Open Door Career Advancement Grants for Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) women writers.

**KINSALE DRAKE**

Kinsale Drake is Nát’oh Diné Táchíʼnii born for Bilagáana; her maternal grandparents are the ‘Áshįįhí and her paternal grandparents are the Bilagáana. Drake is a writer and narrator whose work has appeared in The Adroit Journal, Yale Literary Magazine, TIME, New World Coming (Torrey House Press, 2021), her zine Hummingbird Heart (Abalone Mountain Press, 2022), and elsewhere. She is an In-Na-No Fellows and the recent winner of the Academy of American Poets/Swan T. Latham Poetry Prize, and the Young Native Playwrights Award. Her work is forthcoming in Poetry Online, Poets.org, The Languages of our Love (Abalone Mountain Press, 2022), and elsewhere.

**NATANYA PULLEY**

Natanya Ann Pulley’s clans are Kinyaa’áanii and Táchíʼnii. She is published in McSweeney’s, Split Lip, and The Offing (among others). Her essays have been anthologized in Shapes of Native Nonfiction, The Diné Reader, and Unbound: Composing Home. She is a 2022 recipient of a NEA Creative Writing fellowship and her short story collection With Teeth is a winner in the 2018 Many Voices Project book competition with New Rivers Press. Natanya is an associate professor and editor of Hairstreak Butterfly Review at Colorado College where she teaches texts by Native American writers, fiction writing, and experimental forms.
DAY FOUR
THURSDAY, JULY 27TH

Morning Writing & Sharing Session
(Writing Fellows Only)

Screnwriting I: Reclaiming Ideation Through the Lens of Indigeneity with Chris Hoshnic

Na’iishná: Kinetics in Diné Screenwriting with Chris Hoshnic, Sabrina Saleha, and Lonnie Begaye

Eastern Diné Reading Series with Chris Hoshnic, Lonnie Begaye, and Sabrina Saleha

15-minute Break

Na’iishná: Kinetics in Diné Screenwriting

Screenwriting II: Reclaiming the Hero’s Journey with Chris Hoshnic and Sabrina Saleha

DAY FOUR
FACULTY MENTORS & VISITING WRITERS

CHRIS HOSHNIC

Chris Hoshnic is Kin Łichíí’nii, born for Táchíí’nii; his maternal grandfathers are the Bit’ahnii and his paternal grandfathers are Áshįįhnii. He is from Tó Łikan (Sweetwater) in Arizona. Hoshnic is in the final year of his Bachelor of Arts in English at Arizona State University. In 2003, he graduated with an Associates in Applied Science with a concentration in Video Production at Glendale Community College. Hoshnic then went on to write, direct and produce under his production company C&M Imagine. His 5-minute short film “Ozzy” was accepted into the 2018 Jerome International Film Festival. He was also a finalist in short screenplay competitions at Austin Micro Film Festival and the Phoenix Film Festival. In 2022, he was a Ha’a’aahdęę Writing Fellow with the Emerging Diné Writers’ Institute (EDWI) under his mentor Ramona Emerson. He is currently writing fiction and planning to attend graduate school to further his studies in creative writing. He recently presented a multilingual community poem titled “The Landscapes of Languages” at the 2023 Northern Arizona Book Festival for the Thousand Languages Project. In the summer of 2023, Chris became a fellow of the Native American Media Alliance’s Native American Writers Seminar.

LONNIE BEGA YE

Lonnie Begaye is Hałtsoí Dine’é born for Deeshchii’nii. He is from Tsé Na’ashje’ii and currently resides in Ch’ínílį. He holds a bachelor’s degree in cinematic arts & technology from the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA), and an associate’s degree in liberal arts from the New Mexico Military Institute. In his storytelling and screenwriting, Begaye applies the skills and knowledge he learned from the IAIA to bring light to life on the Navajo Nation. He writes and expresses his creative ideas while learning the cultural teachings and vast knowledge carried by his family and colleagues.

SABRINA SALEHA

Sabrina is Todích’íí’nii born for Shádi’ááh Binaadaltsózí. Her maternal grandparents are Áshįįhnii and her paternal grandparents are Shádi’ááh Binaadaltsózí. Sabrina is a screenwriter and actress. She recently graduated with her Master of Fine Arts in Screenwriting from the Institute of American Indian Arts in May 2023. Sabrina has been recognized with scholarships from Warner Bros. Discovery, American Indian Circle Fellow and Navajo Nation. She was also a ’22 Native American Media TV Writer’s Lab fellow with SkinsFest and currently a ’23 ImagineNATIVE’s Screenwriting Feature Lab fellow sponsored by Netflix. Her most recent acting credits include BARRY, SINGLE DUNCE, FEMALE, PANHANDLE and ECHOES. Her voiceover work will be in the upcoming PlayStation video game, THE FOGLANDS.
DILLÉN PEACE

Will directly fundraise, market, and community development and works with publisher Kristen Siler and editorial director Ryan McCarthy at Multnomah Books, an imprint of Multnomah Publishers, currently looking to expand their portfolio of books on contemporary Indigenous life and culture.

Natalya “Tasha” Nez is Tsi’naajínii, born for Dibé Łizhiní; her maternals grandparents are the Tábąąhá; her paternal grandparents are of Angle descent. Peace was raised near the landmark Tsé Bitsii’ on the west side of Tsé Nitsaa Deez’áhí (Rock Point). He received his B.A. in Studio Art and Native American Studies from New Mexico State University in 2016. Nez completed his M.F.A. in Visual Art at Dartmouth College in 2019. In 2020, the NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale will be publishing his first book, “Ach’į’ Silá: Balancing Diné Thought and Contemporary Art Practice” (Abalone Mountain Press) and Will Neville-Rehbehn with Amber McCrary

Julie Fiveash

Fiveash has been a writer and editor for over a decade. She is the editor of the literary magazine, Leafy Roots and the managing editor of the journal, The Native American Review. She is also the author of the 2020 poetry collection, “Making the New World.” Fiveash is a member of the Northern Cheyenne tribe and has been a writer and editor for over a decade. She is the editor of the literary magazine, Leafy Roots and the managing editor of the journal, The Native American Review. She is also the author of the 2020 poetry collection, “Making the New World.”

Cristal LittlePeople

Cristal, the daughter of Joe and Vi LittlePeople, a lifetime book nerd, Will returned to Salt Lake City in 2020 with his husband, their young son and very old cat.

TASHA NEZ

Tasha Nez, also known as N Dise, is an anishinaabe writer, performer, artist and activist. She grew up on the Cheyenne River Reservation in South Dakota. Nez has a BA in Indigenous Literature and Contemporary Native Studies from the University of Montana, MA in American Indian Studies from Harvard University, and MFA in Writing from the Institute for American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, NM. In addition to being a Program Manager, she also owns a silversmithing business called Leading with Fire: Asdzáá Atsidí.

WILL NEVILLE-REHBEHN

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