



*Summary Report of the Fort McDermitt,  
Walker River, and Yerington Paiute Tribe's  
University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Visit  
Nevada Native Youth Community Project*

November 2023

**PREPARED FOR:**

Fort McDermitt, Walker River, and Yerington Paiute Tribes  
Nevada Native Youth Community Project

**PREPARED BY:**

RMC Research Corporation  
Tampa, FL



**Summary Report on the *University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Visit***  
*Nevada Native Youth Community Project*

Prepared by  
RMC Research Corporation  
November 2023

**Overview of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Visit**

The three-day-long *Native Youth College Camp* was held from June 21 through June 24, 2023, at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). The trip was funded by the Nevada Department of Education’s Native Youth Community Project (NYCP) and included students from the Walker River Paiute Tribe and McDermitt Combined School in Humboldt County School District. NYCP partnered with UNLV and the Palms Casino Resort to provide Native students from Nevada with information and experiences related to college and career readiness. Representatives from UNLV’s Office of Admissions (Early Outreach) served as the primary designers and planners of the college camp.

Eighty-three students in Grades 6–12 were accompanied by eight chaperones. Among the chaperones were Humboldt County School District/McDermitt Combined School Community Liaisons and Walter River Paiute Tribe’s College and Career Coaches.

Each morning began with a circle of intention led by motivational speakers Abby Rush and Rudy Indigenous of Tribal Unite. Students participated in a campus scavenger hunt and enjoyed presentations from UNLV staff along with an off-campus visit to Omega Mart-Meow Wolf and a tour of Palms Casino Resort, the first Tribal-owned and operated casino in Las Vegas, Nevada. Students learned about programs and services available specifically to Native American students, financial aid, sports programs, and college readiness (Figure 1). An overview of the camp’s activities across all three days is detailed in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Overview of Session Topics and Activities*

Day	Session Topics and Activities
1. Day One Evening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Orientation, dinner, and guest speakers</li><li>• Keynote speaker Mercedes Krause (Lakota), UNLV Native American Alumni Club President</li><li>• Alumni shared their college journeys</li><li>• Fredina Drye Romero (Southern Paiute), Nevada Department of Education and Tammi Tiger (Choctaw), UNLV College of Hospitality</li></ul>
2. Day Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Scavenger Hunt</li><li>• Presentations – Majors and Careers, Pre-Professional Advising Center, Sneak-a-peek activity, and Tech Trekkers</li><li>• Omega Mart – Meow Wolf Tour</li></ul>

Day	Session Topics and Activities
3. Day Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harrah College of Hospitality Presentations – Demonstration with Chef, Golf Simulator, Tribal Education Initiative, and Boyd School of Law</li> <li>• Palms Casino Resort Tour and Presentations</li> <li>• Student Panel, Native American Student Association</li> </ul>

***Orientation, Dinner, and Guest Speakers***

Day 1 activities included a camp orientation, ice breakers, bingo, and a keynote address by Mercedes Krause, Native American Alumni Club President who has worked extensively with tribal communities and organizations. Ms. Krause motivated students with her opening remarks. Her presentation was followed by alumni presentations, including Kostan Lathouris (Chemehuevi), an attorney in Tribal law, Chairman of the Nevada Indian Commission, and councilmember of his Tribal Nation. This dinner was funded by the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians UNLV programs at the College of Hospitality and Boyd School of Law.

**Figure 1**

*Camp Team Orientation Provided by Tammi Tiger*



Photo by Fredina Drye-Romero

Day 2 activities included a Campus Scavenger Hunt, which was a fun way for students to experience UNLV (Figure 2). In addition, students had the opportunity to discover how their interests connected with majors and careers and learned about career possibilities associated with a Liberal Arts major with assistance from the UNLV Early Outreach team (Figure 3).

**Figure 2**

*Students and chaperones take part in the Campus Scavenger Hunt.*



Photo by Linda Fredericks

**Figure 3**

*Students learn about the Academic Success Center during their tour of the UNLV campus.*

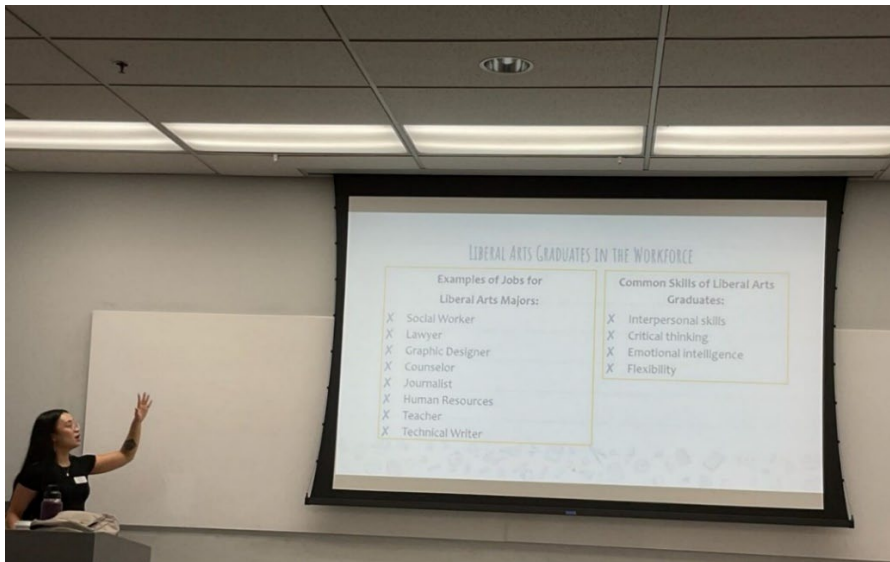


Photo by Fredina Drye-Romero

Students learned about pre-health and pre-law courses of study at UNLV (Figure 4). They also explored life skills such as teamwork and problem-solving (Figures 5 and 6).



**Figure 4**

*Students learn about the health care and law programs at UNLV.*



Photo by Fredina Drye-Romero

**Figure 5**

*Students learn to problem-solve through communication.*



Photo by Fredina Drye-Romero

**Figure 6**

*Students learn about life skills.*



Photo by Fredina Drye-Romero

Later in the day, students let their imagination soar at Omega Mart – Meow Wolf (Figures 7 and 8). Colorful and imaginative artwork engaged all the senses, and students immersed themselves in interactive artscapes. This tour was organized by Fawn Douglas (Southern Paiute), Cultural Engagement Specialist at Meow Wolf, and Richie Savage (Chemehuevi), Clark County School District – Indian Education Opportunities.

**Figure 7**

*Students wait outside Meow Wolf for some fun and games.*



Photo by Fredina Drye-Romero

**Figure 8**

*Students testing their mental skills*



Photo by Fredina Drye-Romero

***Harrah College of Hospitality Tour and Presentation***

On Day 3, breakout sessions provided students with an inside look at what the Harrah College of Hospitality and Boyd Law School had to offer. There were four specialized presentations of interest during which students could ask questions and actively participate: Boyd Law School – Indian Nations Gaming & Governance Program, Tribal Education Initiative in Gaming & Hospitality, A Demo with Chef (culinary), and Golf Simulator (Figures 9–11).

**Figure 9**

*Students engage in setting intentions for the day in front of Hospitality Hall.*



Photo by Fredina Drye-Romero



The speakers further described how the program provides internship and travel opportunities that feature the hands-on experiences required for degree completion. UNLV presenters also mentioned that students receive in-depth training in their major area of interest, such as event management, finance, or a food and beverage concentration. Students learned that UNLV is one of 18 colleges in the country with a program in golf resort management accredited by the PGA.

**Figure 10**

*A view of the Marriott Foundation Executive Kitchen in the Hospitality Hall.*

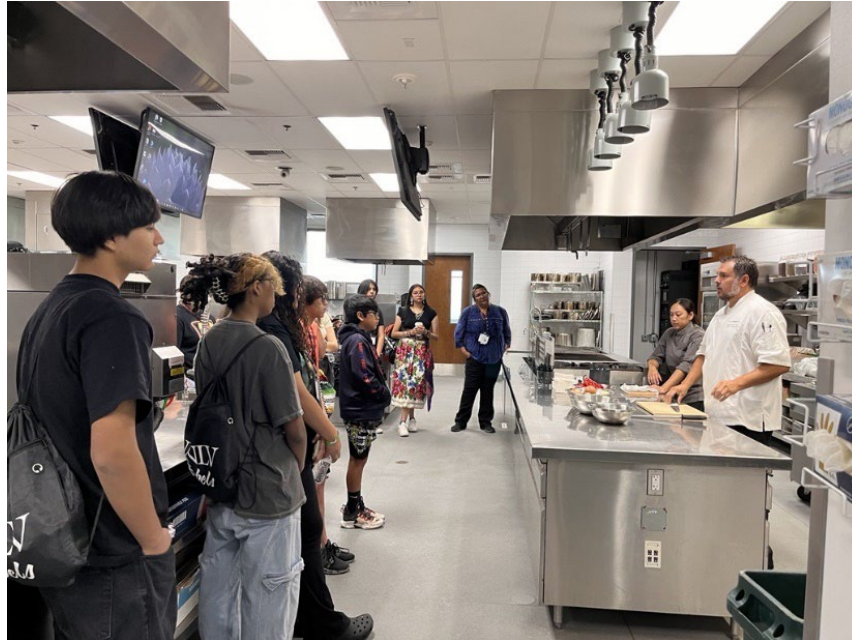


Photo by Fredina Drye-Romero



## Figure 11

*Students had the opportunity to learn more about UNLV's Pre-Law Program.*



Photo by Fredina Drye-Romero

### **Participant Perceptions of the Native Youth College Camp**

At the conclusion of the camp, participants were asked to complete an electronic survey (Attachment A). The statistical software packages *Stata* and *SPSS* were used to analyze the data. The 32 respondents provided consent and had obtained parent permission to participate in the survey; they represented a response rate of 39%. There were slightly more Grades 9–12 students than Grades 6–8 students who completed the survey (56% versus 44%, respectively). Slightly more than one-half of the respondents come from McDermitt Combined School, and approximately one-fourth come from Yerington area schools. The remaining respondents came from a variety of areas around the state, including Moapa Valley, Mineral County, and Reno. Attachment B contains all respondent comments.

Seventeen survey items pertained to the impact of the college camp on students, one item asked if they would recommend the college camp to a friend, and four open-ended items asked students about what they learned, what they would like to learn more about in the future, suggestions for improving the college camp, and questions they still had about attending or applying to college or trade school. Results for the first 18 survey items are reported in Table 2. Overall, participant perceptions of the college camp were very favorable, with at least 84% agreeing to all 17 survey items relating to the impact and quality of the camp. Additionally, all agreed to seven of these items, including that the camp helped them to better understand that they control their future, get along better with other students, know that they can do well in school, want to graduate high school even more, learn what it's like to be a college student, learn what college majors there are, and learn which college majors might be of interest. All participants indicated that they would

recommend this college camp to a friend.

**Table 2**

*Participant Perceptions of the Native Youth College Camp*

Item	N Respondents	% Strongly Agree	% Agree	% Disagree	% Strongly Disagree
Going to the College Camp helped me to...					
a. Learn to be a leader.	32	34	59	6	0
b. Learn to stick up for myself.	32	37	47	16	0
c. Understand I control my future.	32	66	34	0	0
d. Get along better with other students.	32	78	22	0	0
e. Know I can do well in school.	32	47	53	0	0
f. Want to graduate from high school even more than before.	32	56	44	0	0
g. Increase my <i>motivation</i> to attend college or trade school.	32	50	44	6	0
h. Increase my <i>readiness</i> to attend college or trade school.	32	50	38	9	3
I would recommend this College Camp to a friend.	32	66	34	0	0
The College Camp and tour helped me to learn...					
a. How to get ready for college.	32	56	38	6	0
b. What it is like to be a college student.	32	53	47	0	0
c. What college majors there are.	32	66	34	0	0
d. Which college majors might interest me.	32	59	41	0	0
e. Where college students live.	32	63	34	3	0
f. Where college students eat.	32	66	28	6	0
g. Clubs and activities for college students.	32	56	34	9	0
h. Programs, clubs, and activities for Native college students.	32	63	34	3	0
i. What to expect from going to college.	32	59	34	6	0

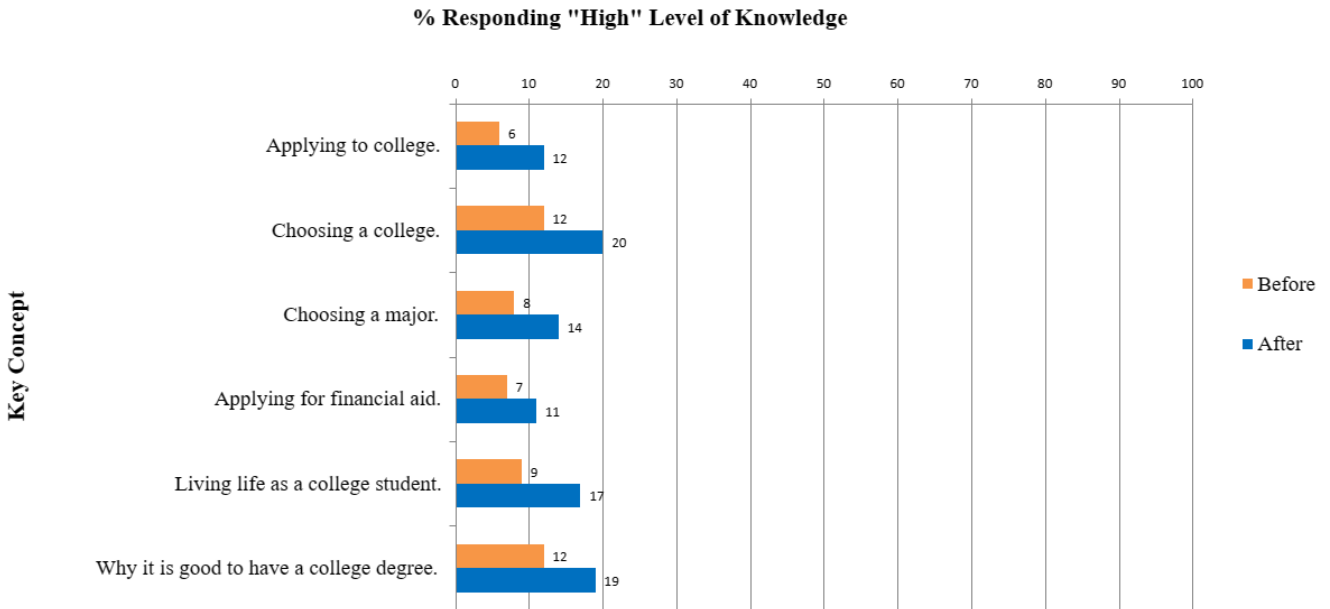
*Note.* Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

## Perceived Impact on Participant Knowledge

Participants were asked to rate their level of understanding of key concepts covered during the college camp using the following scale: *Low*, *Moderate*, or *High*. The percentage of participants rating their level of knowledge as *High* before and after the camp is presented in Figure 12.

**Figure 12**

*Participant Perceived Knowledge Gains*



Prior to the college camp, participants' perceived knowledge level of the six key concepts was low, with between 6% and 12% rating their knowledge level as *High*. Following the college camp, these percentages increased between four and eight percentage points. Reported knowledge gains were highest in the areas of choosing a college and living life as a college student, with reported gains of eight percentage points for these concepts. Reported knowledge gains were lowest for the concept of applying for financial aid, with a gain of only four percentage points.

Participants were asked to provide commentary on the two most important things they learned at the college camp.

**Figure 13**

*Students enjoy a view of the Las Vegas Strip from the rooftop of Hospitality Hall.*



Photo by Elizabeth Bright

Thirty-two participants responded to this item and expressed that they had learned about a variety of topics. These generally centered around two main themes: (a) self-advocacy and resilience and (b) information on majors, as evidenced by these comments:

*[I learned] to always ask questions and to be comfortable with the uncomfortable.*

*I control my future.*

*[I] need to learn to be more independent.*

*[I learned about] staying focused and learning to adjust to change.*

*Always choose the path you want to go and don't let anyone tell you what path to take.*

*When you first get in to college it's best to explore your options.*

*That there are a lot of opportunities at the college and never give up just work harder to achieve your goals in life.*

*Knowing more about a specific area I wish to pursue.*

*Knowing what majors I can select from and what to expect from college.*



*Try to find what you want to major in before you attend college so you don't keep switching majors.*

*[I learned that] applying to financial aid can help and how to pick a major.*

Participants were also asked to provide commentary on the topics they would like to learn more about. Thirty-two participants responded to this item and expressed interest in learning about a variety of topics. These were predominantly organized into three themes, including (a) majors and careers and the course requirements for these; (b) financial aid, including scholarships and Nevada's Native American fee waiver; and (c) sports and clubs. Representative comments from the students include:

*[I] would like to learn more about nursing school.*

*I would like to learn more about Law School and biology.*

*[I would like to learn more about] the hospitality industry.*

*[I would like to learn more about] trade programs.*

*I would like to learn more about everything you can do.*

*[I would like to learn more about] college degrees.*

*[I would like to learn more] about majors and financial aid.*

*[I would like to learn more about] scholarships and good ways to earn money out of college.*

*[I would like to learn more about] sports for native students.*

Participants were also asked to provide suggestions to improve the college camp. There were thirty-two responses. Of these, several offered praise for the college camp, and others suggested featuring more activities and better sleeping accommodations. Several respondents asked for more breaks for socializing and shopping. These sentiments are evidenced by the following comments:

*[I]t's actually pretty perfect.*

*[The college camp] was great!*

*It's been fun, I haven't seen any problems.*

*I would like to have more fun activities.*

*[I would like to] do more stuff after dinner.*

*Having more fun activities and more better food.*

*[The College Camp could be improved by] better dorms to stay in and fixing the beds cause they are too high.*

*[I'd] say having kids from different areas communicate more.*

*[The College Camp could be improved by] a longer stay and a merch store.*

When asked about questions they have about attending or applying to college or trade school, 32 participants responded. Of these, several wanted to learn more about the application process and what is needed academically to be considered for entry into college or trade school. Others mentioned specific areas of interest that they would like to learn more about, including marine biology, as well as other majors and technical opportunities.

Several participants provided additional commentary on their experiences, including:

*[I have a question about] the procedure to apply to college.*

*I would like to know the steps how to get into college.*

*How many colleges should I apply to?*

*[I would like to know] how to apply to a trade school.*

*Do I have to have straight A's in order to get a scholarship??*

*What are some of the harder questions that are asked in a application?*

*[I do not know] idk if I even wanna go [for sure] fs but I think maybe what majors are good for certain jobs that students want. [L]ike for example, marine biology. I know there probably isn't a specific major other than biology for it, but if we could get answers to questions and requirements for jobs that are out of state, it would be better.*

*To learn about more majors.*

*What things can you do at a trade school?*

## Figure 14

*Students pause for a group picture in front of Hospitality Hall.*



Photo by Fredina Drye-Romero

### **Summary of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Visit**

The *Native Youth College Camp*, held from June 21 through June 24, 2023, at UNLV, sought to provide Native students from Nevada with information and experiences related to college and career readiness. The camp was very well received by participants, with at least 84% agreeing, at least somewhat, to all 18 survey items relating to the impact and quality of the camp. All agreed that the camp helped them realize their ability to control their future and to learn what college majors are offered and which ones might interest them. Additionally, at least 50% of the respondents selected *strongly agree* on 15 of the 18 survey items relating to the impact and quality of the camp. One hundred percent would recommend this college camp to a friend. Reported knowledge gains were highest in the areas of choosing a college that best meets their needs, choosing a college major, and living life as a college student. Reported knowledge gains were lowest for the concept of applying for financial aid. Students offered commentary on topics they learned about, topics they would like to learn more about, and their experiences during the college camp.