



What is THESIS?

The Tribal Health Experiential Student Internship Seminar program (THESIS) is a virtual eight-week paid internship for undergrad and recently graduated college students interested in Native American health. THESIS lets you experience Tribal public health alongside mentors as you move your career forward and make a life-long impact.



**Application Deadline
for 2024 Internship:
January 5, 2024**

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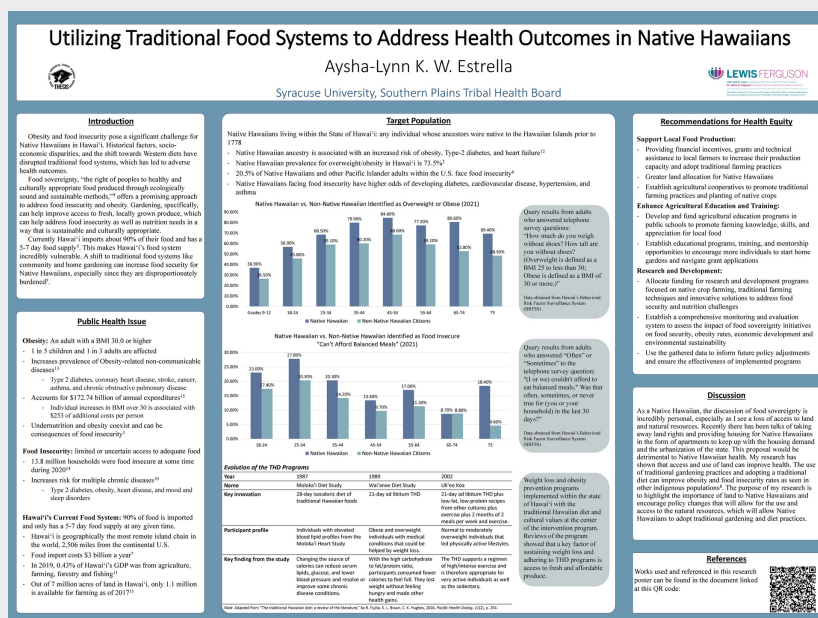
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Aysha-Lynn Estrella Williams-Hutchins Award Winner

The Williams-Hutchins Health Equity Awards are chosen based on exceptional projects that promote overcoming difficult circumstances. The award is named after two revered CDC employees, Walter Williams and Sonja S. Hutchins. One intern from each award recipient is chosen.

Aysha-Lynn Estrella was named the Williams-Hutchins award recipient for the cohort class of 2023. Aysha-Lynn's primary objective was to advocate for food sovereignty and outline potential policy changes that can help address high obesity and food insecurity rates in the state of Hawai'i. Historical factors, socioeconomic disparities, and the shift towards Western diets have disrupted traditional food systems, which, in turn, have led to adverse health outcomes for Native Hawaiians. The policy suggestions made were informed through research using data analysis and literature reviews. The main conclusion of the project was that greater land allocation for the purpose of growing traditional foods could help address obesity and food insecurity rates. Congratulations, Aysha-Lynn!



A Moment of Thankfulness: Gary Piercey, Program Manager



It's been over two years since I started working at Southern Plains Tribal Health Board. Having spent most of my professional career in education, it was a new learning curve, but one that has definitely been worth it. I still wake up with such thankfulness that I get to work for such a great organization. Fast forward two years, and I have been given this incredible opportunity to lead the THESIS program. It is such a worthwhile program. I must first say thank you to Marifrances Montell and Chris TallBear for seeing the vision of this program within our organization. Marifrances laid an incredible foundation and established such a successful start. (And I still get to work with her within the organization!) Thank you for your strong example of leadership. I am thankful for an incredible staff and look forward in continuing to make this an incredible program.

Meet our new team:



Misty Doney - Public Health Specialist

MISTY GREW UP IN THE ENID, OK AREA. SHE GRADUATED FROM OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY WITH A BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN MARKETING AND MINOR IN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS. AFTER MANY YEARS IN COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE THEN DABBING IN BUSINESS OWNERSHIP AND SMALL CONSTRUCTION, SHE FEELS VERY FORTUNATE TO HAVE FOUND HER WAY TO THE THESIS PROGRAM AT SPTHB. MISTY ENJOYS TRAVELING AND BEING WITH HER ALMOST 6 YEAR OLD DAUGHTER, ELLIOTT. SHE HOPES TO BE AN ASSET TO THE PROGRAM AND HELP THESIS THRIVE. MISTY IS KIOWA AND CHOCTAW.



Jamison Short - Program Coordinator

JAMISON IS COMING TO US FROM THE OKLAHOMA CITY INDIAN CLINIC. HE HAS SPENT THE LAST FOUR YEARS WORKING IN THE NATIVE AMERICAN NON-PROFIT WORLD. JAMISON GRADUATED FROM OU WITH A BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN NATIVE AMERICAN STUDIES WITH A SECOND MAJOR IN ADVERTISING AND MINORS IN HEALTH AND EXERCISE SCIENCE AND BUSINESS. JAMISON IS A CITIZEN OF THE CHEROKEE NATION AND GREW UP IN PURCELL, OKLAHOMA. HE ENJOYS SPENDING TIME WITH HIS FIANCÉ, TENDAI, AND THEIR TWO CHOCOLATE LABRADOR RETRIEVERS, FRANKLIN AND PENELOPE. JAMISON IS PASSIONATE ABOUT NATIVE AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH AND IS EXCITED TO MAKE AN IMPACT WITH THE THESIS PROGRAM!



Lauren Wong - Evaluator

LAUREN IS A RECENT GRADUATE FROM TUFTS UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE WITH A MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH IN EPIDEMIOLOGY AND BIOSTATISTICS. SHE IS FROM EDMOND, OKLAHOMA, AND A PROUD ALUMNA OF OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY. HER FAVORITE WAY TO SPEND HER WEEKENDS IS WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY OR PICKING UP A GREAT BOOK! LAUREN IS EXCITED TO FURTHER THE THESIS PROGRAM AND WORK ALONGSIDE THE THESIS TEAM AND INTERNS TO IMPROVE TRIBAL HEALTH THROUGH RESEARCH AND EDUCATION.

Even within a short time, I can tell you what a great THESIS team we have. Each one of these team players brings a fresh perspective and some really strong talents and skills to the THESIS program. I can't wait to see the additional successes that they will bring to this program. Welcome to the team!



We are looking for mentors!

We are searching for program mentors for the 2024 cohort. Information can be found at the QR code to the left. This is a great way to help others understand some of the possibilities of having a career in public health.

A Full Circle Moment



We have a full circle moment here! Needless to say, I had quite a smile on my face, when during an All Staff meeting we were made aware of some new hires at Southern Plains Tribal Health Board. Colton Shaver, an intern in our inaugural class will be working as an evaluator for one of our programs. One of the goals of the THESIS program is to create a better awareness of the opportunities in Tribal public health. We are thankful to have Colton on board...and do I see a future mentor :)?

- *What will you be doing at Southern Plains?* Evaluator I under TEC Core
- *What is your future career direction?* In the coming years, I plan to obtain an MPH to build upon the foundational knowledge I have learned through a combination of academic and career experiences. Additionally, I want to work my way up in the world of Public Health, by obtaining a PhD- with the aim to one day be working in Policy/Admin or Education.
- *How has the THESIS program been helpful to you?* THESIS will be an experience I will never forget & always be thankful for. THESIS allowed me to develop a keen interest in research, as all THESIS interns were granted the autonomy to choose their own research project in an area of interest/passion. Likewise, all of the THESIS interns had the opportunity to travel to the CDC in Atlanta to present their research findings. Lastly, I met so many wonderful people and truly made friends throughout the process.
- *What advice would you give to someone who is considering pursuing a Public Health degree?* Please DO it, we need more Public Health practitioners. Within Public Health we are attempting to address and tackle systemic issues, and in order to do this, we need collaboration. It requires people from all walks of life, and all aspects of careers to develop a public health perspective of the world. Public Health is such a fulfilling area of study that truly has a plethora of opportunities to do upon graduation. Find your passion, ignite the spark, and help bring about the change you want to see in the world. But to do this, we must start with being the change that we wish to see.

CDC Atlanta Showcase - 2023

