Dear Friend,

It is with great pleasure that we invite you to join us as we welcome a scholar, elder and national leader to the University of Arizona for a visit. Dr. Cassandra Manuelito-Kerkvliet is a trailblazer with a legacy of service and boundary crushing. She served as president of Antioch University Seattle, the first Native American to serve as president of a non-tribal college. She also served as president of Diné College, a tribal college with eight campuses in Arizona and New Mexico.

Dr. Cassandra Manuelito-Kerkvliet is known for her wise leadership as she has navigated campus financial challenges and led during national, state, and local crises. We invite you to learn how she used her cultural knowledge and traditions to guide her decisions and leadership and how she continues to serve and lead.

During Covid she jumped into action, established the Nizhoni Masks project, created a GoFundMe account and led a group of volunteers who sewed 11,536 masks and 2,231 surgical caps. These critical items were sent to remote communities and health clinics with high need across the Navajo reservation.

Dr. Manuelito-Kerkvliet carries the legacy, strength, and wisdom of her clans. She is the great, great granddaughter of legendary Navajo Chief Manuelito or Hastiin Ch’il Haajini, who rallied the Navajo nation against U.S. military efforts to forcibly remove the Navajo people from their lands. Chief Manuelito’s strong advocacy for education for Navajo children, and his famous quote, “My grandchildren, education is a ladder. Tell our people to take it,” continues to guide Cassandra today.

This is an important collaboration between the College of Education Office of the Dean, the UA Office of Native American Advancement & Tribal Engagement, the UA Office of Diversity & Inclusion, the College of Education Native SOAR, UA SKODEN – Native American Faculty and Staff Association, the Dean of the College of Education, the College of Education Diversity and Inclusion, and Native American Student Affairs. We look forward to seeing you soon.

Below please find the schedule of events. Please RSVP at https://forms.gle/Am7aQk3uPpJRs1vXA. We hope you will join us and take advantage of this wonderful opportunity to meet and learn from an exceptional leader. Please contact me with any questions or accommodation you might require at sramos@arizona.edu or by cell 520-471-1995.

Wishing you well,

Director of Diversity and Inclusion - the College of Education
Leading with Honor, Authenticity and Dignity Amidst Unending Challenges

As the first Native American president of a non-tribal college and president of an 8-campus tribal college.

Higher Education has faced unprecedented challenges, learn how culture, traditions, and Hózhó, or balance can help guide and sustain your leadership. Explore how to thrive, not just survive through challenges.

November 29th 10:00 - 11:00 am
Welcome and Blessing Ceremony
Blessing by Carlos Gonzales, MD. College of Education West Patio, light refreshments.

November 29th 11:30 am – 1:00 pm
Our Culture is Our Treasure
Lunch and discussion Native American Student Affairs, Robert L. Nugent Bldg., 2nd Floor,
Contact: Julian Ryan Juan, julianjuan@arizona.edu or (520) 621-3835

November 29th 4:00 – 6:00 pm
Leading with Authenticity and Dignity Amidst Unending Challenges
Campuswide presentation and reception in the Student Union Kiva Room
Hosted by UA Office of Diversity & Inclusion, the UA Office of Native American Advancement & Tribal Engagement, and the College of Education
Contact Sofia Ramos sramos@arizona.edu (520) 471-1995

November 30th 11:30 - 1:00 pm
Navigating Predominantly White Spaces
SKODEN UA Welcomes Native staff and faculty to an intimate gathering and professional development.
College of Education, EDU Room 104
Contact Felisia Tagaban Gaskin at fjtagaban@arizona.edu, 520-621-5691

November 30th 3:00 - 4:30 pm
Using Hózhó, Balance to Guide and Sustain You
Hosted by Native SOAR in College of Education, EDU Room 104
Contact Sofia Ramos sramos@arizona.edu 520-471-1995

With support from the UA Office of Diversity & Inclusion, the Office of Native American Advancement & Tribal Engagement (NAATE), the College of Education Native SOAR, UA SKODEN – Native American Faculty & Staff Association, the College of Education Dean, Native American Student Affairs and the College of Education Diversity and Inclusion Office.