

## Picture and bio of Dr. Susan C. Faircloth



Dr. Susan C. Faircloth (an enrolled member of the Coharie Tribe of North Carolina) is professor and Director of the School of Education at Colorado State University. Dr. Faircloth is a graduate of the American Indian Leadership Program (AILP) at The Pennsylvania State University.

Dr. Faircloth's research interests include: Indigenous education, the education of culturally and linguistically diverse students with special educational needs, and the moral and ethical dimensions of school leadership. She has published widely in such journals as *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *Harvard Educational Review*, *The Journal of Special Education Leadership*, *International Studies in Educational Administration*, *Values and Ethics in Educational Administration*, *Tribal College Journal of American Indian Higher Education*, *Rural Special Education Quarterly*, and *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*.

Dr. Faircloth is the editor of *Oxford Bibliographies in Education*, senior associate editor of the *American Journal of Education*, Associate Editor of AERA Open, and a member of the editorial board of the *Journal of American Indian Education*. In addition to editorial service, Dr. Faircloth has been actively involved in service at the national level, including serving as the Chair of the Technical Review Panel for the National Indian Education Study conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics in collaboration with the Office of Indian Education, and the Educational Testing Service, and as the former Vice President of Division A (Administration) of the American Educational Research Association (AERA).

Dr. Faircloth has also had the honor of serving as a Fulbright Senior Scholar to New Zealand, Ford Foundation Postdoctoral Scholar with the Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles at the University of California Los Angeles, research fellow with the American Indian/Alaska Native Head Start Research Center at the University of Colorado Denver, and a *William C. Friday Fellow for Human Relations*.

Dr. Faircloth and her husband, Lee, live in Fort Collins, Colorado, with their daughter, Journey; dogs, Prince and Apollo; and an assortment of other pets. She attributes her pathway into education to her parents, Gene and Marie Faircloth, and her tribal elders. According to Dr. Faircloth, "they knew I was destined to be an educator long before I did".

## Picture and bio of Dr. Deborah Jackson Dennison



Dr. Deborah Jackson-Dennison, an enrolled member of the Dine (Navajo) Nation, is of Scottish decent of the McPherson Clan on her maternal side while her paternal heritage is of the *Kinyaa'áani* (Towering House) Clan of the Diné, people. Her paternal grandfather is of the *'Áshijhi* (Salt people) Clan. On a personal level Debbie is the middle child of 5 siblings of the late Dr. Dean Chee Jackson and Stephanie McPherson-Jackson. Debbie and her late husband Karl raised 3 children, Kyle, Devyn and Cassidy, on the family ranch and homestead in Tohatchi, New Mexico.

Debbie obtained her Associate of Arts degree from Diné College, the first tribally controlled college in the nation in 1981. She then earned her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Education from the University of New Mexico in 1986, and her Masters and Doctoral graduate degrees in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies from Arizona State University in 1997 and 2001 respectively.

Known professionally as an educator for 35 years, Dr. Deborah Jackson-Dennison has always believed passionately in the ideology of continuous school improvement for quality and excellence in education for the Indigenous students she serves through systemic reform that correlates and integrates community responsiveness and cultural relevancy throughout all areas that impact learning. In fact, Dr. Dennison's dissertation titled "*Perceptions of Effectiveness in Navajo Nation Public High Schools and Student Achievement, (2001)*" continues to guide the research-based reforms in the leadership roles she successfully serves. In 2002, Dr. Dennison became the first Navajo woman to serve as an Arizona public school superintendent when she was selected and served as superintendent of Window Rock Unified School District, also her alma mater, through 2005. She also successfully served as superintendent of Ganado schools from 2005-2009. In the fall of 2009, Dr. Dennison returned to her former post as Superintendent of Schools for Window Rock Unified School District where once again she and her team worked to revitalize the "*Embracing Change for Student Learning*" systemic reform model to better correlate with the Navajo philosophy of life long- learning while encompassing the components of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to ensure her Navajo students would have the quality education system they wholeheartedly deserve.

In May, 2010 Dr. Deborah Jackson-Dennison was appointed by President Barack Obama to the

National Advisory Council on Indian Education (NACIE), and still continues to serve as Chair of NACIE to date. Dr. Dennison has also served 9 years on the National Association of Federally Impacted Schools (NAFIS) board, as well as 16 years on the National Indian Impacted School Association (NIISA) board.

She is also currently serving for a second time as President of the Arizona State Impact Aid Association (ASIAA).

A few highlights of Dr. Dennison's now 19-year career as an Arizona school superintendent include as President of ASIAA in 2010, leading the passage of AZ Education HB 2725 that continues to protect federal Impact Aid from state funding sweeps. Through Dr. Dennison's research and leadership, Window Rock School's "*Embracing Change for Student Learning*," Education Reform Model was selected for national recognition and profiled on The Discovery Channel by The Pat Summerall Education Station, highlighting the first public school to implement a K-6 Navajo Immersion School that was also selected for National Testing Services (NTS) research under NCLB "What Works" in Indian Education. Dr. Dennison also led both Window Rock and Ganado schools to increases in student achievement yearly. In 2005 Window Rock School District was the first and only Indian lands public school district in Arizona to have all 7 schools labeled Performing or Performing Plus while also making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) by the Arizona Department of Education. From 2009 to 2014, Dr. Dennison led the culturally responsive design, development, finance bonding and construction to completion of the state of the art, \$37-million dollar, 6,500 seating capacity, *Bee Hóldzil* (Stronghold) Fighting Scouts Event Center. Dr. Dennison also led Window Rock schools to earn their first ever Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting in 2014.

Since July 2016 Dr. Dennison has served as Superintendent of the San Carlos Unified School District, located on the San Carlos Apache Nation in southern Arizona, where once again the students, parents and community are experiencing positive growth with student achievement district wide by designing and implementing necessary systemic reforms to better address the identified needs and desires within the school and community. In recent years Dr. Dennison also founded her business, Indigenous Ingenuity, LLC as a means to expand services and expertise with school reform across Indian country in both the United States and Canada.

## Picture and bio of Dr. Leilani Sabzalian



Dr. Leilani Sabzalian (Alutiiq) is an Assistant Professor of Indigenous Studies in Education and the Co-Director of the Sapsik'walaá (Teacher) Education Program at the University of Oregon. Her research utilizes Native feminist theories to create spaces to support Indigenous students and Indigenous self-determination in public schools, and prepare teachers to challenge colonialism in curriculum, policy, and practice. She is also dedicated to improving Indigenous education in the state of Oregon by serving on the American Indian/Alaska Native State Advisory Committee, and collaborating with the Office of Indian Education on professional development to support the implementation of Tribal History/Shared History, a law that mandates curriculum on tribal history and sovereignty in all K-12 public schools in Oregon.

Dr. Sabzalian's first book, *Indigenous Children's Survivance in Public Schools*, uses storytelling to document the ways colonialism continues to shape educational policy and practice, and to foster educators' anticolonial literacy and commitment to supporting Indigenous students in public schools. Her latest book, *Teaching Critically About Lewis and Clark: Challenging Dominant Narratives in K-12 Curriculum*, co-authored with Drs. Alison Schmitke and Jeff Edmundson, complicates the Corps of Discovery and promotes students' active and critical engagement with history.