

## Food Sovereignty Workshop: Community-Centered Approaches for Food Systems Transformation

Keynote by Brandy Phipps

Thank you for having me here. So I just want to kind of make clear that this is a little bit different kind of talk than I think I'm used to giving.

I'm normally used to being at scientific conferences. There's graphs, there's data on the slides, and we're talking about those. But when I was invited to do this, I was really told, tell your story. talk about how you got here you know why are you doing the work that you're doing how did you get to do the work that you're doing and what are the things that you've learned about food systems transformation and

specifically related to community-centered partnership and so that's what I'm here to do so I hope that as I share how I got here and what I continue to be learning that that will spark conversation that will be continued by our roundtables speakers and then ultimately by y'all because many of you have been doing this work a lot longer than I have and so I'm hoping that after I share what I've been doing that I will learn from each of you and continue my growth in this journey of working together to support communities and individuals that need food sovereignty and food security.

So again, thanks for having me. So, a little bit. about my journey that Casey already started talking about. So my academic background is a little bit winding.

I had originally got my PhD in biomedical sciences in the early 2000s. And so a lot of bench science, it was translational, but it was, okay, what are these compounds? How are they working at the molecular level to affect chronic diseases, like cancer, type two diabetes, et cetera. So you might go, "How in the world did she get here?" And so then I ended up leaving academia after several years and during that time I spent over a decade in the nonprofit space.

And so, which is interesting and I'll talk about what I've done over the past decade, but as I was thinking about this, I thought all the way back to when I was in college, I went to the University of Florida and thank you for watching.

about community work. And what I chose to volunteer and do when I was a college student, so 19 years old, 20 years old, 21 years old, was to work at the Florida Alachua County District of Health during the peak of the AIDS epidemic, which peaked in 1995, okay, which is when I was there. Working as an HIV testing and counselor and educator in that space.

space and so as I thought back I've always really had this desire to work with the most vulnerable individuals to learn from them to figure out how I could with whatever little power I had as a 19 or a 20 year old right in a science field how could I use whatever I had to end gatekeeping to break down barriers to find some way to learn from and give back to communities communities that are often left out and excluded. And so that was just kind of interesting when I was thinking back. I was like, oh wait, I've been doing this for a lot longer than I thought. And so, but over the past 10 years, like I said, I was really into nonprofit and community experience.

I live around Clark County, which is about an hour west of here. And there's a lot of food insecurity and issues related to that negative public health that could help in that very rural area and so as Casey mentioned in 2017 I think is when work towards the Clark County Local Foods Council started and so the purpose of that and I came in kind of on the front end which is when I met Casey and ended up being the inaugural chairperson and I stepped down in 2021 I believe and they're still doing some great work in that area.

But we saw that local foods was becoming a movement, right? We hear local foods everywhere and we wanted to be really careful that it didn't become, as it had in many other places, this sort of bourgeoisie kind of movement where there were the people that always had access to whatever kinds of food they wanted and then there were always the people that were never going to have access because of a variety of... barriers, whether that was financial, whether that was location, et cetera. And so after really reviewing a lot of the literature and really seeking input from the community, all of the community, we knew that we needed to have a group of people that, A, included all of the right voices to determine what was really needed. And B, people at the table that could actually turn that into power. and action that would create change within the community and protect that local foods movement from again becoming sort of this bourgeoisie movement for only a select few.

And so this food council ended up having the city manager's office, Clark County commissioners on it, and non-profit leaders from community gardens, community health foundations. We had members that were directors. The Clark County Commissioner was a member of the Clark County Local Foods Council. And then we had higher education individuals.

And then, and this is something that at that time was not done very often. We also had leaders from neighborhood communities. And so one individual lady, I love her, she said, I'm the watchdog grandma, right? And she said, I'm the watchdog grandma, right? this area. I know who's eating what, I know what's happening, I know who's getting into trouble, I know who to talk to when we need something done.

And we knew that we needed to have those people to quite frankly keep us straight in doing the right thing. And so we weren't sure how it was gonna go.

We knew we were doing something a little bit different and a little bit nontraditional. And it turns out that, not long after the council was officially formed, one of the only grocery stores in a five mile radius in an already designated USDA food desert closed with about a month of warning.

Okay, the same thing happened around Dayton and around Cincinnati, this particular, it's Kroger did that. And through the actions of this food council, we were able to get Kroger couldn't get them to stay.

We knew that wasn't going to happen, but we were able to get them to donate that land to the Clark County Land Bank, Land Trust. They had never done that in any of those other spaces.

In any of those other spaces where they had closed, historically, they had sold that to other entities, and those entities had non-compete clauses where a food um,

a grocery store couldn't be placed. And so now in that location, a couple of years later, we have a locally owned grocery store with more produce in that area than has ever been.

And that could not have happened without the pressure of all of these different groups of stakeholders working together to pressure back with with political pressure as well as media pressure in order to make that happen.

And then not long after that, COVID hit. And so the food council worked with the food banks and again with the city government to make sure that the individuals that were most impacted by those things on top of each other were able to make that happen.

to continue to have access to food from a variety of sources and not just food. And I love that Casey brought up food security and then you pointed out that you can have a diet full of calories,

but if it's not full of nutrients, you still don't have security of health. And so I actually prefer the term nutrition security or nutrient security because I really think it touches on the most important part of it.

parts of making sure that people have quality of life and have the opportunity to live out a long and healthy life doing the things that they want to do.

And so that was the Clark County Local Foods Council. At the same time, I was also an executive officer on the board of directors for Second Harvest Food Bank of Clark Champaign and Logan County,

which is a subsidiary of Feeding America. And so on the board of directors for Second Harvest Food Bank on the board of directors for Second Harvest Food Bank of Clark, I was also an executive officer of Clark, I was also an executive officer of Clark, I was also an executive officer of Clark, I was also an executive officer of Clark, I was also an executive officer on the board of directors for Second Harvest Food

Bank of Clark, I was also an executive officer the one hand, I was on the food council, right where we were working with government agencies and other nonprofits. And then I was also involved in seeing the nonprofit work and having fiduciary and organizational responsibility for a food bank that was feeding a very large and secure population as well.

And so again, I did that, I just stepped down from the food bank after quite a few years this past December. And so so through kind of those activities,

I realized that if I ever went back to academics, I didn't think at the time that I was going to be doing that, that I knew that I didn't want to just do the bench science, the biomedical science work. I wanted this work and what I had learned to inform how I moved forward in the nutrition space, and so that's what I wanted to do in the nutrition space. make sure, again,

that, you know, we were really translating the things that we do in nutrition science and in health science into this full holistic idea of health and quality of life.

And so much unexpected to me and probably the rest of the academic world, I did end up back in academics. So in June of 2019, I was approached about a position that had opened opened up at Central State University,

which is a public historically black college and university in Ohio outside of Dayton. They recently were granted land grant status. Casey, if you want to talk about, again, issues related to land grant institutions, Ohio State fought very heavily against Central State University receiving their land grant status for over a hundred years.

Very, very active against that. And finally, they received after over 100 years of that, they received land grant status in 2014 and began hiring extension workers first and they hired their first research faculty in 2017 and then I was hired in 2019.

And since I've been there, so I just started my fourth year in August and since I've been there, I have kind of of um one of the the joys to me of being at a small institution is I don't have to pick a really small niche line to follow for 30 years of my life.

I get to do all of the things that I like to do which is a blessing and a curse. I'm sure everybody in this room is doing more than they probably should be with their time but we do what we love and what we feel like is impactful and I get to do that and so I get to do a little bit of that biomedical stuff.

I do have a contract with the FDA. I work with hemp as one of the plants and plant medicines that I work with. And so our FDA contract is looking at like the chemical constituents of hemp,

smoked and baked products. Again, but always translational with this idea of, are they safe? Are they effective? How can we give the government the information that they need and consumers the information they need to make good decisions for themselves? right? Sovereignty over their health and what they're choosing to do with their bodies. But then the things that are related to this, I have a couple of other grants primarily through the USDA. One is called Growing Healthy Communities.

It's a pretty small grant where we're working with a low resourced, a historically low resourced area outside of Dayton and providing training, business training, and producer training to small farmers. on micro farms. And again, right in this low resource area in a location that is one of the local gathering spots for that community. And then in addition to providing the producers with training in all of those areas, there's a farm market that then they can sell what they're producing in this low resource area.

area, right, where we know that there's food security and access needs. And then we also bring a mobile kitchen to provide at that farm market demonstrations of how to prepare foods for people who may not have as much experience with those particular ingredients.

And so, again, this idea is we're hitting multiple social determinants of health in one location. with one project to create nutrition and health literacy, to create healthy food access,

and to create producers from the community themselves to make this sustainable and resilient. And so what is that? That's a type of food sovereignty, isn't it,

right? Within this small local community. And then what I was invited here really to kind of talk about is, and my colleague, Brian, who will be part of the project.

roundtable later who is a major partner on this project is what we call the Sushi project

and so this is a sustainable agriculture systems grant through the USDA that we received in September of 2021 so we just finished our first year it was a lot of building infrastructure and making sure that we had all of the right things in place to kind of start moving forward and large and so oh and so I'm gonna talk in the second half of this about the sushi project and how the things that I learned about food sovereignty,

which I'll share in the first half are being applied hopefully well, but I still have a lot to learn in the sushi project. And then Brian can come up during questions and answers and talk about whether anything that I said is actually happening or not.

I always make the joke that, you know, you shouldn't ask my stuff. if he's a good husband. You should ask me if he's a good husband, right? Because I'm the one that really knows of what he thinks he's doing is what he's actually doing.

And so I say that I can talk about what I think I've learned and how I think I'm applying it and whether it's okay, but really Brian and my other partners in the nominee and elsewhere, they're really the ones that can speak to whether what I'm saying makes any sense or not and whether I'm actually doing what I think I'm doing.

or what I'm saying I'm doing and I always appreciate and I think that's an important part of the work that we do is being held accountable by a lot of different stakeholders so that we are actually having the impact that we hope that we're having and so we have to remain as I'll talk about later flexible and humble enough to receive correction and to receive feedback and be able to pivot and make changes without

being asked. offended or feel like somehow, you know, we can't handle that. And so I hope that those are some of the discussions that we have today. So you know, like I said, for the first half of this talk, I really just want to talk about what I learned about food sovereignty, where it started, the terms that were coined, how they've evolved over time,

and then in the later half, how I hope that I'm applying those ideas to the work that I'm doing and hope to continue doing perhaps with some of you in this room as we all move forward in the in the work.

So Levia Campesina International and you're going to see me at this point read a lot from my paper because this is information that doesn't come from me and I want to make sure that I'm honoring the people that that used this language and that coined these terms and I think that's very important for me to not try to summarize but to tell you what they said about this work.

And so the Via Campesina International, it's a global social movement. It's led by rural families primarily. Currently, they represent about 200 million food producers and rural people globally.

And so they were the original ones responsible for pointing this term food sovereignty in an official capacity. And so they coined this term food sovereignty. 1996, and then they were one of the founding organizations of the International Planning Committee of Food Sovereignty, which is called the IPC. So again, this is a global social movement that works to amplify the voices and the views of rural and urban families around food sovereignty in global policy spaces.

And so if you may have heard of the U.S. Food Sovereignty Alliance, at some point, if you haven't, I do encourage you to check them out. They can be found online. They're a regional process arm of this International Planning Committee on Food Sovereignty of the IPC.

And so in 1996, in Rome, Italy, there was the first World Food Summit. OK, and at that location,

a declaration was made. made that sort of adopted this terminology and this language around food sovereignty for the first time that was coined by La Campesina.

And so there were about 600 delegates that were at this World Food Summit from five different continents. And they represented all sectors of society that had an interest in agricultural and food issues.

Okay, and so the World Food Summit made a deliberate decision to hold this meeting in Africa, where agriculture plays a central role, and where numerous rural and urban families suffer from hunger,

despite the abundance of natural resources. And I think any of us that have ever done any even small reading on the history of Africa and colonization and the African slave trade,

I think we know that they had a thriving-- thriving agricultural economy and cultures that imperialism and colonization went in and in large part tried to destroy.

And so I do, I appreciate that this is where, so the, the, in Rome was where this food summit happened, but then 2006 in Mali, there was this official declaration made.

And that's what I want to share next. And so in 2007 at this in Mali where this conference was held, this is what you typically see as the declaration on food sovereignty.

And so I want to read it, it's very powerful. And so even though it's on the slide, I'm going to read it out loud because I think words have power and I want to speak them into this room as we as we start the process of this two days. Food sovereignty is the word.

of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods and their right,

the right of the peoples to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food safety.

and this is important and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations. That's pretty powerful when I think about that.

And so many people have seen this. This is typically like if you look up food sovereignty this is what comes up first. Okay. There's some other quotes that I read in the full declaration that I also want to read out loud to y'all.

'all that I think are important. So listen to this. Food sovereignty gives us the hope and power to preserve, recover, and build on our food producing knowledge and capacity.

And so you're gonna hear a lot today from our other speakers and I hope conversations in the room about the knowledge that indigenous people already have.

Thank you. practices that we have, A, try to destroy, and B, very clearly said or not evidence-based by whose definition,

right? So those are things I think to think about. Food sovereignty prioritizes local and national economies, right? And so we heard Casey talk about how a lot of times we think about food sovereignty on a national scale.

I want to encourage us to move beyond that and think about food sovereignty on smaller scales within individual communities at the local level, at the regional level, not just the national, right, or the global level. So they prioritize local and national economies and markets and empowers peasant. And they use the word peasant, that's a specific word by the United Nations, and I'll just... what that is in a moment, and I forget, you can ask me in the questions, and I'll define it there if I forget on one of the slides. And family farmer-driven agriculture, artisanal fishing, pastoralist lead grazing, and food production, distribution, and consumption based on environmental, social, and economic sustainability.

So see that holistic view, right? We're not saying nutrition's over here. agriculture's over here, economy's over here, and then if we can get some environmental sustainability and responsibility,

we'll do that, but it'll be an afterthought. This is saying it should be at the center of our talks about food sovereignty and about nutrition. I love this one. Food sovereignty implies new social relations free of oppression and innovation.

between men and women, peoples, racial groups, social classes, and generations. So they're saying in this declaration,

we can't talk about food sovereignty without it being truly intersectional. And that was really before we were using the term intersectional a lot in our work. But they understood that you can't talk about one without talking about all of the systemic and structural issues that prevent food sovereignty from happening.

And so then they go on to talk about what are we fighting for with food sovereignty, okay? We're fighting for a world where all peoples, nations, and states are able to determine their own food producing systems and policies that provide every one of us with good quality,

adequate, affordable, healthy, and culturally appropriate foods. foods. Recognition and respect of women's roles and rights in food production and the representation of women in all decision-making bodies.

All peoples in each of our countries are able to live with dignity, earn a living wage for their labor, and have the opportunity to remain in their homes. Where food sovereignty is considered a basic human right,

recognized and implemented by communities in each of our countries. peoples, states, and international bodies. This goes back to what Casey said. We are able to conserve and rehabilitate rural environments,

fish stocks, landscapes, and food traditions based on ecologically sustainable management of land, soils, water, seas, seeds, livestock, and other biodiversity.

A world where we value, recognize, and resilient. our diversity of traditional knowledge, food, language, and culture, and the way we organize and express ourselves. Where we share our lands and territories peacefully and fairly among our peoples,

be we peasants, indigenous peoples, artisanal fishers, pastoralists, or others. Where people's power to make decisions about their material, natural,

and spiritual heritage. are defended. And then I think this is really important. We're thinking about all of these natural disasters that we're seeing more and more, right? As we move into climate change continuing to be an issue. And this was in 2007, right? So this is 15 years ago now. In the case of natural and human-created disasters and conflict recovery situations, people's power to make decisions about their material, natural, and spiritual heritage are defended. that we're seeing more and more, right? and conflict recovery situations. food sovereignty acts as a kind of insurance that strengthens local recovery efforts and mitigates negative impacts, where we remember that affected communities are not helpless, and where strong local organization for self-help is the key to recovery. So I don't know about y'all, but I have chills again, even though I've read that declaration. upwards of 50 times. I don't think it will ever stop having this really powerful effect on me and the choices that I try to make in the work that I do and the partnerships that I seek out. And I hope that if you get a chance to go back and read it for yourself, maybe print it out, frame it, I don't know, but that you will keep it close to you and perhaps... it will strike you in even different ways than it strikes me. And so there's these seven pillars of food sovereignty that were kind of coined through this declaration, right? And so food, right, as a basic human right. So this idea, which I think we all kind of think about when we think about food sovereignty. This one is the most obvious, I think, and I think it is. at least to me. Everyone must have access to safe nutrition and culturally appropriate food in sufficient quantity and quality, like Casey said, to sustain a healthy life with full human dignity. Agrarian reform, again, also already referred to by Casey. A genuine agrarian reform is necessary, which gives, but this is kind of new when we talk about agrarian reform, which gives-- gives landless and farming people, especially women, ownership, and I would I would extend that women, non binary individuals, everybody within the queer spectrum, also, okay, especially women and non binary individuals, ownership and control of the land they work, ownership and control over the land. that they work and returns territories to indigenous peoples. Did y'all get that? That is not the kind of agrarian reform that I grew up learning in the College of Ag at land-grant institutions. But I love it, I'm here for it, okay? The right to land must be free of discrimination on the basis of our nation. gender, religion, race, social class, or ideology. The land belongs to those who work it, period. Protecting natural resources. Food sovereignty also entails the sustainable care and use of natural resources, especially land, water, seeds, livestock breeds. The people who work the land must have the right to use natural resources. practices that come from indigenous and ancestral heritage. This can only be done if they have ownership again of the land that they work. Reorganizing food trade. So now we're getting into economies,



global economies. This is way outside of anything that I work with on a regular basis. But I appreciate it. that food, when I look at this food as first and foremost about nutrition and quality of life and should only be secondarily viewed as an item of trade. Again, I'm pretty sure that's not how we do things currently, but this is what we should be working towards. If we're gonna say that we believe in food sovereignty, if we're gonna say that we are working towards food sovereignty, then we have to think. think about these things as part of that mission and vision and action of what we're doing. Ending the globalization of hunger, I think that one probably makes sense, but then how do you do that? We say we want to do that, but food sovereignty and this is undermined by multilateral institutions and by speculative capital. Uh -oh, now we have to start rethinking some other things. things that maybe make us a little bit uncomfortable, right? But that's the whole point, right? If we're gonna, real progress is only made when we really tear down those bricks at the foundation and think about how they were built, was the foundation appropriate that they were built on? And if not, well, we might need to tear it down and start again, right? Social peace, the idea that everyone has the right to be free from it. violence. Food is often used as a weapon, right? Think about times when aid was brought to countries, and people on one side or the other of a conflict prevented that food from going to their enemies on the other side of the conflict. Food should never be used as a weapon, right? On a more... subtle but just as insidious level, right? Sort of weaponizing poverty and marginalization through food in order to maintain or keep power in certain hands, right? That certainly undermines food sovereignty as well. And then democratic control. So again, this gets back to if you work the land, it should belong to you. If land was taken from you, it should be returned. I get that these are enormous ideas and things to be discussing. I don't have the first clue because I'm not in policy. There are people here that are in this room. I don't know how to make this happen, but I know that it should happen. And so we need to keep asking the questions and pushing. pushing so that somehow in our lifetime or our kids' lifetimes, we do see some of this start to happen in both local, regional, and national, and dare I say on global scales. And so then in 2017, there was this reforming, so 10 years later, right, after that 2007 declaration, there was another forum. And this one was again about food sovereignty, but they really really wanted to expand that focus into Agroecology as well, which again touches very nicely on what Casey talked about in his Introduction and so again, I want to read this new one to you. I know you can see it But like I said, I like to speak words into the space Food sovereignty which we said implies new social relations free of oppression and Inequality between men and women people's racial groups social classes in general Food sovereignty makes sense for people in both

rural and urban areas, poor and wealthy countries. Whether we do it on a small scale or on a large scale, food sovereignty makes sense.

It works. We do see an increase in people's health and quality of life and sense of belonging and ownership. ownership and all of that when we approach food sovereignty as a real thing.

I thought this was interesting, but I was going to add it. It is as much a space of resistance to neoliberalism, free market capitalism, destructive trade and investment as a space to build democratic food and economic systems and just and sustainable.

futures. And so I love that evolution that happened over 10 years from it really being about the food and about the land. And now we have all that still,

but now we're talking about market structures, right? And economies and governments on top of that, which I think is really interesting. And so I wanted to,

there's a QR code here. I hope it works. This is my first time trying to use a QR code. I'm trying to get with the times as my students say to me. But I love these. These are sort of graphic novel style fanatic booklets that were put out by,

perfect, it does work, by Lavia Campesina, who I mentioned at the very beginning, first coined this term. And I thought it was so timely that the second one,

peasant rights and food production. came out just a couple of weeks ago. And so has everybody had a chance to get the QR code if you would like it? I want to make sure you can do that.

And that'll take you right to their section on food sovereignty on their website. They do some other things as well, but I knew that many of you would probably like to see these. These are great to share with students or people who are just sort of becoming familiar with the idea.

idea of food sovereignty. I'm going to give you just a few seconds to make sure everybody can get that. Somebody yell out if you still need it. We good?

You can tell I'm an educator. I'm like, is everybody good? I'm looking at your faces. Wear your eyes. OK. And so again, this is on one of the first pages of that booklet.

And in that book, I'm going to give you just a few seconds love, again, that Casey talked both about food security and food sovereignty. And look at what that top statement says. The right to adequate food and nutrition requires the right to food sovereignty.

It says food-- can I read it on here? Food is life. Food is the expression of values and human dignity, cultures, and social relations. relations and self-determination

interdependence with nature and human dignity and I will tell you when I hear those

words I think about every Native American or Indigenous person from other countries that I've ever talked to about how they view food and the land and their relationship

with plants and animals and water and the soil and the things around them and we have a lot to learn. learn. We have a lot to learn from the cultures that we try to

destroy and that we perpetually and continue to say don't have value to bring to this discussion.

And I think that they have incredible value to bring to this discussion, which is why I have chosen to work with a Native American community so that I can learn and we can work together.

which is why I have chosen to work with a Native American community so that I can learn from this discussion, community so that I can learn from this discussion, community so that I can learn from this discussion, which is why I have chosen to work with a Native American which is why I have chosen to work with a Native American can become a better person and a better researcher and hopefully a better partner to everybody that I come into contact with. And so again, it's saying that those things and peasants in this context is defined as workers in rural areas that work the land people. So again, artisanal, fishers, peasants. pastoralist grazers, people that have historically, this is a global term that's used, a self-coin term actually by those individuals who have historically worked and depended on the land.

And so when I think, I'm just gonna leave that up there. So when I think about these definitions that I've shared, those seven pillars that we talked about, these booklets that I've read through, I find myself, in thinking about my work and what I'm passionate about, considering the following, okay? And now I'm getting kind of back into academic research terms here for just a little bit.

Work in the food sovereignty space is by nature and necessity, both transdisciplinary and intersectional, right? Long before those words were ever coined, right? In the literature, you've seen me talk about all of those things throughout these past slides, right? And so it's intersectional because it's dealing with rights, it's dealing with classism, it's dealing with gender discrimination, it's dealing with racism, it's dealing with colonization, but it's transdisciplinary in that if you're gonna do the work well, you really have to touch on all aspects of agriculture, the value chain of different... production methods, social sciences, humanities, nutrition, political science at the local, all the way up to the global level, community and economic development and community planning, natural resource management, environmental sciences, engineering, the list could go on. I can't think literature, I can't think of a field that wouldn't be of use.

in the food sovereignty space, right? And so I think that's important. Who can we bring into this conversation, even at Ohio State or at Central State, that maybe doesn't think they belong in a discussion about food sovereignty and help them understand, "No, no, we need you and this is why we need you and this is how you can contribute with your particular areas of passion and expertise?" And then second, while there are many nuanced goals associated with the food sovereignty movement and many definitions,

because as we'll talk about today, I have been adamant that nobody can truly define food sovereignty, right? In our planning meetings, I've said that a thousand times, and I was like,

I'll stand by that till I die. Yes, yes. And that's because think about the word sovereign, right? Sovereign means self-determined. So how can I, in my community, in my family, in my home, on my land, how can I define what sovereign means? means to another person, in another community, in another space? Right? That's the nature of food sovereignty. Now,

that being said, there's no specific definition. But I certainly see a common thread of some things. People, people, right? Power. Who has it? Who doesn't? How do we make sure that it's getting to them? people who should have it? Dignity, cultural pride, and cultural humility. Self-determination, kind of the definition of sovereignty, not food sovereignty, 'cause we're not doing a definition. Safety, resilience, connection to natural resources. So regenerative farming practices, practices, indigenous and ancestral knowledge and practices. And then third, because of the systems and structures that continue to perpetuate those things that we talked about, racism, classism, a colonizing and imperialist mindset, communities, right, the people who work the land, the people who depend on the land, the people that want to work the land but don't have access to it, right, we think about urban communities. communities. They can't simply reach food sovereignty on their own, no matter what their knowledge is. In this country, I can't speak, but we have other speakers that can speak to in other countries. In this country, black folks, indigenous folks, and other communities of color have been historically and currently excluded from land and resources. [END PLAYBACK] whether rural or urban. In addition, they are consistently excluded from positions of power that would determine land rights, access to funding and other resources that would contribute to food sovereignty for them and their communities.

Because of this, it's imperative for those of us that do have resources, whether that's somebody like me, a researcher with funding access, right, people who have it. over public policy.

I think many of us in this room have have access to people who create public policy. Government officials at all levels of government, nonprofit organizations with funders and influence in various areas that affect food sovereignty to not only partner with each other,

which we're pretty good at already. I think, you know, we're pretty good at partnering with each other. We like to work with our own people, right? But that we support the the communities working to become more food sovereign.

And then most importantly, we can't just say we're partnering with them. We have to really consider how we're partnering with them. I will share some of the questions that I try to ask myself when I'm thinking about partnerships and working with communities. The main question that I've already said this that I ask myself is how can I leverage whatever resources and privilege that I have, right? right? Compared to some of you in this room, I don't have a lot of power and privilege and resources.

I'm in an HBCU, right? I'm a woman of color. I'm an assistant professor. There's a lot of power and privilege that I'm missing compared to many of you in the room. But compared to some of you in the room,

I have more privilege and resources, right? So all of us are in that space, most of us, some of us are at the top of the food chain in both power and resources. in this room. But most of us are somewhere on that continuum where we have some privilege and resources and then we're lacking some.

So how do I, with whatever I have, not thinking about what I'm lacking, with whatever I have, what am I doing with it? And how am I making sure that other people who have access to less are receiving what I have and how am I leveraging that to amplify them?

Yeah. And then secondly, I think about where does the power sit? So again, as a researcher, okay, so I may be PI on this project, I may be the lead, right? Does that mean that I and my other PIs or co-PIs should be consistently coming up with the ideas of how to help or where the funds should be best spent?

I mean, that's what we think, but I would say no, right? Okay. We're just the holders of the resources. I don't think that means we need to be the ones in the power of deciding where it goes.

Or am I listening to others in the community and following their lead, okay? And how is that visible in the organizational and power structure? Meaning, am I having community listening forums where I let people talk and then I go away and we do what we're gonna do anyway?

Or do they have actual people listening to me? on my external advisory board that keeps me accountable and that I have to actually follow what they're telling me their community wants?

How am I responding to correction from my community partners when I start to fall back into elitism, right, or evidence-based programming that's so easy to fall back into because we're all very indoctrinated as academics?

In what ways am I empowering my community partner? to create and when I say new methods I don't mean to them. I mean new methods that may not be in the literature but to know that they can use methods that they know work in their communities and I'm going to break down barriers and gatekeeping to make sure that they're allowed to do that and that we have a way to put that out there and and provide new methods for

all of us to be able to use. How am I making sure that them help? I offer is as a true partner and not as a fixer? For that last one,

it comes from a place of having an asset-based mindset about every individual partner community that I have the honor of working with. So rather than approaching a situation with,

what's wrong? What do they need? They're so unhealthy. How can I help fix that? It's coming from a place of, what are they doing? How can I learn? What do I do? have that will support their work,

right? And help break down any external barriers that or gatekeeping that they're facing. It rejects the concept that just because I have money or resources or power or a certain type of education or credentialing that I have the best ideas,

answers, approaches or solutions. It instead approaches every person and community and partner from a place of authentic respect. What I hope is humility. transparency, and a willingness to be the learner.

For me, it's been a lot of learning to talk a lot less and listen a lot more. I'm a talker, I love ideas. So that's been a really welcome challenge for me.

And so now that I kind of, that was sort of the first half, I wanted to share where food sovereignty sort of came from, how it evolved, how powerful it was. the ideas behind it are,

and the people behind those ideas, and what I have been learning. And now I want to talk a little bit about the Sushi Project. How are we on time? Okay,

perfect. So the Sushi Project, which you can read about, it's a lot of research. We have education, where we're providing scholarships to Native American people. American students too Which from a tribal college College of the nominee nation Brian here is from College of the nominee nation?

When they finish their two -year degrees, they can come then to Central State And finish a number of bachelor's degrees and Agri STEM programs the the goal there is hopefully that it will create a sense of belonging cultural Learning opportunities for both our current students as well as the Native American students that will come and and hopefully they'll feel a little more at home than they might going to a large urban predominantly white institution which is where many of them go and have kind of stated many of them from what I understand have stated that they don't really feel at home and they don't really feel like they belong there and so we're kind of out in the middle of some cornfields in the Tolago Woods and so it's a little similar to the reservation and we figured it might be be a good learning space for them.

But what I'm really kind of talking about today is the extension work that we do. And so Menominee Nation and Brian will talk more about this in a little bit is 72 out of 72 counties in food security and public health outcomes,

okay? And we know that that is not... not necessarily driven just by choices that people make. We know there are systemic and historical things in place that have led to that, not to mention all of the new literature coming out about how historical trauma affects epigenetics and the way that we metabolize and all kinds of other things that are coming out in the literature now.

And so as we talked with the nominee nation, and in a second, I'm actually going to start with you. gears for the last couple of minutes. Brian told us how they had really gotten excited about moving toward food sovereignty.

He's going to talk about what they discovered and why they're so excited about it, and I said, "This is great. I'm going to get this grant. I know that I'm going to get it. I'm not going to apply for it unless you will be my partner,

even though I'm really excited, and if you will be-- my partner, you tell me what the people want and how much money you want from this grant and what you wanna do with it.

And I will write it in and we're gonna get this grant and we're gonna make it happen. And we did get the grant. We were the first HBCU, we're the first school in Ohio to ever get a sustainable agriculture systems grant.

Sorry to y'all in the room. (audience laughing) And so to be HBCU -led, to have a major partner as a tribal college, we're making HBCU -led. and we're doing it well. But part of that is we wanted to create the opportunity,

they wanted to produce more of their own food, right? We know that fishing is a traditional activity of the monomony because of what colonization and pollution have done to waterways.

We know that we're being encouraged to eat more fish and seafood. And at the same time, oh, but also don't because there's all of this stuff in fish and seafood that's not good for you. And so there's this global push through the UN and the FAO towards aquaculture,

both fishery and land-based aquaculture. And so through this partnership, they said, hey, why don't we train new producers in small-scale aquaponics production so that, again, sort of like that other grant that we talked about, we have new producers, so we have locally produced healthy and nutritious produce and fish. and then an aquaculture extension facility where we can train those new producers,

create certificate programs, provide startup funding, do nutrition programming. And so we're touching everybody within the community, increasing production,

increasing nutrition literacy, increasing access to foods. Right at the same time. And then we know that when you have all of those things and you're moving to a food sovereignty you at the same time move towards quality of life and health and so I Hope that I spent more time on the beginning But I think it was really important that I did that you see how this idea and these declarations of food sovereignty Developed into this now really successful partnership between between organizations in a way that I didn't say, hey, I got this grant.

I wanna come in and do these things in your community because y'all really need some help. Instead, I went at the beginning. So where does the power lie? Brian's a PI. We haven't made one single step without going to the tribal elders and to the leadership within the community saying this is what we're thinking,

what are you thinking? do y'all want? And we got a lot of no's, right? We got a lot of mmm, that's not really what we're interested in. Okay, how can I, how can I switch? How can I pivot? How can I remain flexible?

How can I make sure that you are getting what you need out of this situation? So we have a lot of collaborators, but I already talked about that. Brian is one of our main ones. You could find all of this information on the USDA website or on our Twitter page, which I'll give you that QR code for as well. And so this is just talking about the extension work that we're doing. And again, you can see on the bottom left of the image that the goal of this,

by increasing nutrient access, we don't use words like self-efficacy anymore. I really messed up with that. See the learning and the growing about that. And there's reasons we don't use self-efficacy and self-confidence.

And I just learned that three days ago. So see, we're always living and learning. But again, the ultimate goal, right, is to support efforts already being done by that community towards food sovereignty.

And so, and I've already talked a lot about these lessons that I'm learning. So best practices, which is what's in the literature, what are the easiest things to grow in an aquaponics facility?

We're gonna do lettuce and tilapia, 'cause everybody does lettuce and tilapia. That's just what you do in aquaponics aquaponics too. Instead, the best actual practice of what do you want and we'll figure out and develop new methods for growing in aquaponics if we need to.

So instead of lettuce and tilapia, we are growing a little lettuce because they did want that bluegill and sage, right? And so you use, but you can see like how by remaining flexible and open. to community input, there's real power in the work that we're doing and the power is not coming from me. It's not even really coming from Brian.

It's coming from the community and we did a community needs assessment. We talk a lot about micro equity. I'll leave that up if somebody wants to ask a question about that. But the idea that any community and especially a minoritized community, they're not homogeneous, they're not a monolith. So even within the monopoly. Menominee Nation, there are pockets, demographic pockets, where things are not necessarily, or they feel like it's not as necessarily, equally, equitably distributed. And so part of the work that we're doing is identifying those specific pockets and making sure that the work that we do, both receiving input and also distributing outward products,

are equitably, equitably distributed within the the Menominee nation. So I like to call that equity within equity. I've already talked a lot about flexibility and cultural humility. Place-based work is really,

there's a whole body of literature on place-based work. Australia actually does this really well, but it's the idea that you develop things uniquely for each community, right? So that it's equitable and you have input from the specific community. that you're in. And then I've already talked about an asset-based mindset. So thank you for letting me share a little bit about what I've learned.

You may know a lot of it. I hope that at least something was new for you and how I'm applying it. And then this, if you happen to want to know more about the things we're doing on Sushi, you do have a Twitter. I'm still not great at social media, but I'm getting better, I hope, every day. But this is the QR code. I hope, for that. And you can follow along. I post different things that we publish, talks that we give, workshops that our PIs are involved in, and kind of as we get more up and running at Menominee, you'll see more there. So thank you again for having me. And I guess now back's going to come up and start the next part of this.

Thank you so much.

I'm Rebecca Tannotti. I'm the Aussie she was just pointing out. I work with the Global Water Institute together with my colleague Amanda Davy who's sitting up the back and we're co-organisers of this event and speaking of learning I feel like I've been speaking to Brandi for months as we've planned this event and I just learned a whole bunch from her even though I've been speaking to Brandi.

to her about this for a very long time. So I appreciate that. So we're going to ask Brian and Brandy to take some questions for a while.



We've got like half an hour. I mean, I know it's a small room, but that hopefully means some good and deep questions. And then we'll have a short break before we come back. So I just want to give a formal introduction for Brian.

So Brian Kowalkowski is Dean of the Department of Continuing Education at the College of the Menominee Nation. He started there in 2007 as Assistant Director of Education Outreach and Extension.

Prior to that he worked for the Menominee Tribal Government for nine years, first as a land use planner and then as a community resource planner. His current position as Dean of Continuing Education requires him to manage and administer all grants and contracts of the department and act as the extension director.

He analyzes community data to determine appropriate activities to be undertaken by the department. He also works with different community agencies to establish cooperative working relationships.

A major accomplishment has been the creation of a local farmer's market on the Menominee Reservation that has coincided with the improvement of agriculture. to fresh foods. He's involved with numerous local, state, and federal professional organizations representing his college and 1994 tribal land grant schools. So we welcome Brandi and Brian to take any questions that y'all might have.

I'm learning how to use "y'all" as a very gender inclusive term. My accent's probably terrible, but I like the terms. so yes institution, but come to an offensive way, not to pull off too much, and not, you know, it's not really an abstraction. Do you already take that?

Do you need me to come up there or? Oh, if I remember what you mean, I can. Good morning. Oh. So,

how can this process be done? replicated, I guess, would be the question, correct? And authentically. Sure, sure. And I was going to bring this up, you know, Randy was talking about this, and how this whole project came about really. I mean, when I'm in college, very small college, or maybe 30 years old now in 2023.

So we've always been really trying to find resources to build ourselves up because we've grown initially very fast and now it's been struggling because we just don't have the capacity.

So we're always looking for ways to bring in additional resources. On the flip side of that, we also have instances where we get pulled in or we get asked to be pulled into a project to a grant proposal where we might be, you know, the check box where they want to see our names on their proposal at the last minute and we even had, we were burned by that numerous times.

We were young. We, naive. We didn't really know. We didn't know. We didn't know. We didn't know. We didn't know. We didn't know. We didn't know. We didn't know. We didn't know. We didn't know. We didn't know. We didn't know. us to get some more resources, so let's do this. And we get up early, we were assigned by other organizations. So we really took that on,

we had to figure out how we're going to create these partnerships without that happening to us anymore. Because we would have one where, here's a \$5,000 check was sent to us.

And it said, we need to know we're a partner out there, out there randomly. and they sent us the check. Hey, here's the \$5,000 you were awarded from our proposal and we didn't even want to say we were a part of the proposal.

So it was a lot of nightmares like that. But just to be able to partner from the beginning,

build that relationship, understand that everybody's a partner. equal playing field. Us as a small 94 as we have the same rights as a large 1862 when it comes to to being apart.

Now Randy, so it was probably a year and a half ago now. I was on travel, I got back and being one of our employees that he had at this call talked to someone for Central State University,

"Dr. Phipps, they're interested in partnering with us "on this big African." I knew what an African was, right? I mean, I'm like, "Wow, that's like the big galore "right there, and that's huge." Well,

we'll see, you know, I don't know. So, luckily, I did call back, and we hadn't had a relationship yet. -Yeah. We didn't know what to do around. We don't have a relationship.

So we're going to be very cautious when we come to this. Brandy did her homework. She knew we were, she knew what we were working towards. And just by her reading us in at the very beginning was the key.

And she said, I want you guys to be a part of this. If you're not going to be a part of this. it, we're not going to do it. And we saw that,

and I saw that as a deciding moment of, hey, this could be a really interesting partnership, bringing college nomination into an AFRI grant,

which no other tribal college has ever received an AFRI grant, and to really hopefully build capacity like never before. And I think it's going to be a really interesting partnership heard Ramis come from the beginning,

making us an equal partner in allowing us to share ideas and being able to be part all the way through. I think that was the key and that continues to be the key.

We're still on that equal playing field. We're equal level partners. I think. think you know you have a relationship when we exchange cell phone numbers and all of a sudden we're texting each other so I mean so we have the relationship.

I always say in order to have a good partnership, you have to have a good relationship. A good relationship leads to a good partnerships which leads to sustaining a building.

I think you kind of answered your question, in your question, you said authenticity, right? And I think too often, and this goes back to even beyond us as researchers or academics,

the whole system is kind of garbage, if I'm really honest. And so we're years off from that getting changed. But I think, you know,

I've been approached by people at Ohio State. two days or five days before a grant was due that said, "Oh, we want you to be on this, we'll give you, you know, a few thousand dollars,

they want a minority serving institution," I said, "Thank you, I've met you." You're saying I'm a major partner, one out of four, I'm going to have 25 % of that budget. Thank you,

I'll get you my budget and budget justification and scope of work tomorrow, right? And then you know what to do. with that. And I knew I didn't want to be that person. If I'm going to, if somebody's my partner, they're my partner, where's the power, right? And so, yeah, I called, I just found out that they weren't going to call me back. And I actually think I called twice.

I think I called twice before we called back. But that's who I am. You can ask any of these people that have worked with me. me in this room, some of you in this room I've met through other capacities,

who I am up there, who I am when I call Brian, that is who I am. And so I think if you're gonna replicate it authentically, you have to authentically truly believe in the mission and vision of partnership and trust and relationship.

You can't fake that and you can't fake it till you make it because it's not what you want it to be. going to fall apart. So you have to really transform yourself and your vision about research and partnership to be the authentic person that creates authentic partnerships.

I have a question. Yes, hi there Oliver. My daydress is absolutely decent. My day job has absolutely nothing to do with this,

and I'm Director of Development for the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. I used to work in FADS, so little things were planted along the way to where my path, whose sovereignty, work in,

I'm a co-founder of the Grown New Growth Collective, which supports, you know, the ethos of all of this on the nearing side in Columbus, Ohio. So,

thank you. another nugget from my past is that I am a lawyer by degree and one of the things that you said that stood out to me was the not-to-peak clause in the exit of Croker.

And so it got me thinking about the land and when we talk about power and access, that's really huge. And so I wanted to know if you had more examples of what it feels like to be a lawyer by degree.

truly equitable exchanges in property that or you know like that whole true land back process not like a 99-year-dollar lease type thing that's still ultimately controlled by the original entity that thing.

So you can speak to other examples of where actual land has been acquired by or given back to entities. and have prompted you know the ability to really sustain food sovereignty from the growing space.

And I say that because we're dealing with this now because we have land-made properties for our community gardens and we're trying to figure out should we just figure out how to buy them. Do you have a Saturn?

No. no. There are, I think, recently in the news, and then there was this big headline, like, for the first time ever, land was given back to an indigenous peoples where it was stolen,

I was like, why? And I opened it up and it's like, oh, this new park, it's open, we're gonna say that part of it, I was like. So,

honestly now, I mean, things that have been disguised. right, are things like, well, all of these labor and institutions came to be because of land that was stolen and sold.

Why aren't, why is it tuition, boarding, full rides available as reparations for every single Native American student in this country?

It's not being done, but there's an example of how it could be done. And then you go, okay, it's not just tuition. about indigenous people whose land was stolen, but what about people whose bodies, their ancestors' bodies,

they were ripped from their homes and brought here. And the wealth of this country was built on their backs, right? And they were promised 40 acres in a mule, and we know that didn't happen, right? And so even promises that were made, right, for worthless time. tiny reparations still haven't happened.

So the answer to your question-- and maybe others in this room, I'm happy to share the mic-- but I'm not aware of anything substantial that has actually happened in this country for sure.

And I have even less knowledge of on the global scale where that has been done well, unfortunately. [INAUDIBLE] I have a follow-up question, but really this raises the point of what is the role of land ownership in the concept of food sovereignty?

Because it seems odd to me, and I've known about food sovereignty since it was the term first being used, but it's always had it heard with this idea of land ownership, but isn't land ownership part of the problem? the problem? And I'm thinking right now the Supreme Court is considering a case looking at wetlands on farms and whether they're living,

breathing ecosystems, or are they mud politics. Those are the two different presentations made by the two sides in that Supreme Court case.

I mean we really have to try to come to that. terms with, what does land ownership mean? And how does it relate to food sovereignty? Because isn't all of the land fundamentally shareable,

I think is the word I want to use. And so the major question would be, we're hearing more about co-management. And I think this might be an important concept when you're looking at the relationship of 1990.

1994 to 1862. Is there a way that we can think about co-managing lands that can get at food sovereignty and some of the reparations that are needed?

It's a very rhetorical question. I don't want to know the real question, sir. [INAUDIBLE] [INAUDIBLE] Yeah,

that's interesting. I mean, I guess the way you look at land and the monarchy here at Palo Alto looks at land as a relative. The lands are relative, trees are relative, so the waters are relative. So you don't own the land, because you're relative, I think it helps you, it feeds you, and so there's no ownership, and I think I really think that's really,

really good. way to look at it. And I would add just real quickly, yes, that's the ideal, right? And Casey, again, talked about this in his map, right, where he was like this idea of land ownership and joint lines is a very colonial, sort of mindset. But until we get there, someone owns it. And so I would say that's the end goal. and what a tree, I mean that would be so common, right? But until we get there, someone owns it, and we need to start changing what that ownership looks like on the way. And again, I don't have the answers for exactly how to do that, but I certainly know that we are way past due for it happening.

I don't have a relationship. is different from land ownership. There was one example that I know of where the Methodist Church gave a cemetery that included the remains of ancestors of the Wyandot tribe back to Wyandot.

And it wasn't mentioned in one of those long series of treaties and sessions up in the North Ohio. And the first thing the line has said is it took up a collection of years for like \$20,000 to the people who had been maintaining the cemetery because of, you know, out of respect for what they had done for the relationship between the land and that land which contains their mark against it. >> I'm sorry,

I want to read out the question about [inaudible] >> Oh, I'm sorry. This is switching gears a little bit after how you did your community needs assessment and how did you make sure that you got all the correct voices at the table and then [inaudible] went forward with what was the consensus.

We have a project with the NAMOM Nation, and we struggle greatly with the different voices and needs that we're hearing, and who, how do we choose and select what voices heard,

always through NAMOM, because they all have different ideas about what they want for the community. community. We could come from that back up front. Let me guess right.

Yeah, like this was just saying, we kind of got lucky everybody was kind of saying the same thing. And we deal with this, with this constant trying to,

we want the community to see it work, but what's the best way to get it? People struggle. They don't want to take surveys. It's not an easy way,

but we did some listening sessions and these sorts of things. We went to community events, halls, and the farmers market.

You know, the areas where we knew the majority of the community were going to be there in the community room. to them and let them know what we were working on and just getting their input,

the folks at the farmers market, they're always interested in what we can change and what we can do differently. So yeah, it's a tough way to do it.

I mean, it is a small scale, you know, we're only 4,000, 4,000 folks within the community. on reservation. The other thing that Bradie and I talked about though, even within the community, there are small communities in the end. What do we call them? - Micro, micro-acquity is like - - Micro-acquity, or micro-acquity communities.

And it's funny because there's one community, it's called Kishina, and it's like the, it's like - rich one. It's like, I don't know,

but in terms of the seat of the reservation, it's where the tribal offices are. And then you have four other smaller communities around the reservation, very remote.

But I mean, the argument is, oh, kashina gets everything. They get the community center. They get this. And so it's important that we even work in kashina. you know, from this war, a standpoint of listening to these smaller communities as well to make sure we're meeting their needs and not just getting all their data from the one community and saying,

"Okay, here, we know now what everybody wants," and I don't think you ever know what everybody wants, but you keep trying to work with them. - This is just a clarification question.

I am a student from the D & D Design Program, so really oddball. But for our Senior Capstone project that we're doing,

we are partnering with Franklinton, the community. community in Columbus. And there are many areas of opportunity that the students can focus in.

I chose to focus into the food security area in Franklinton. And you mentioned there is a program that you had built.

It was through Farm and then the markets and all that stuff. And I was wondering if you could talk to us about what we're doing here in Franklinton. could reinstate what that was because it's quite similar to what I'm trying to go for and I just wanted to know the names so I could do a case study on it and I just need to look more into it so if you can reinstate what that was,

I'm sure. I hope you can read it. Later on today or tomorrow? Students are here.

Thank you. Later on today or tomorrow I'm happy to actually sit down with you and we can pull up the internet. I can actually take you right to it and I'm going to give you the name of the person who's the PI on that project who was kind of boots on the ground and she can give you numbers and just file our first annual report.

I forget the whole title but it's something like growing healthy communities might grow farming or something like that or health and social social something of communities, right? Those titles, that's why I have sushi for my other one because it's easier to remember. But make sure that we get together and I will make sure that you have all the right context 'cause I think that that's normal.

I'm super excited to hear how interior design and security are at play 'cause that's awesome. Like I said, Transdisciplinary. We need everybody in the room, right?

I have a quick question through this. This is why I first said about we, Brandon and I told them for like a minute last week, about power sharing as PIs and when you apply for it around who's name is likely to win it with different agencies and you know when you have a certain name or an institution on the ground how that appears to funding agencies and so on.

And I struggle with this myself. I work alone in Tanzania and Tanzanian-based collaborators and trying to get the equitable recognition and funding on grounds that's a non-starter with NSF,

but even with the USA, it's challenging this, of the perception of risk is really what it is, of giving a large amount of money to a smaller institution.

And I was wondering how maybe not wisdom, but if you have thoughts or experiences to share on navigating that space of recognition and power with funding agencies.

I'll start and then Brian will make it sound good. And on this grant, I mean, we serve. of broke all the rules and all the barriers and just got this grant that we shouldn't have gotten by all rules and typical standards within the USDA,

you know, AFRI funding. It wasn't just that it was an AFRI, the Sustainable Agriculture Systems Grant are a pinnacle of the NIFA funding. It's considered their flagship programs, the \$109 piece, they're a big deal. I don't know if you thought we were going to get it, but we did. So we have three 1862s that are part of it,

very, very well known in their fields. They're all economists, all of our economists come from 1862s. And so, for me,

it was important, again, and based on what you said. I had with the United States, that I knew that I want-- they were not going to be other personnel. Ryan was going to be a GOP guy,

right? Because what that does is, A, position of power, right? He's one of eight of us, right, so we're all the counseling leads. And secondly, we get this grant,

we manage it successfully, now his name is recognizable, right, within us. other funding agencies, when he goes in as a LEPI or something else, right, and so,

and then these sort of large names in the field, right, in our proposal and in the letters that they wrote supporting me, right, not only as a woman of color,

not only in an HBC, but an assistant professor nonetheless, right, then writing about why, they were part of this, why they trusted my leadership. And so it's a matter of really using the people who have the name recognition and the power,

not saying, well, I'm gonna get it 'cause they know me and then I'll let you be another personnel, right? I'll give you a couple of percentage, but your name isn't really gonna be anywhere associated. It's saying, no, your name should be at the top.

And we're gonna write the language in and use our connections and power to make sure that people know that you're strong. and that you can't do this. So I don't know if that answers them then again,

now that we've gotten it, now Brian can be a PI on other really large things. He could break the car's wheel 'cause he would break other tribal colleges in as PIs. Now their names are gonna be recognized and they can go in for their own.

And so it's a matter of like you just continue amplifying and building up and then you don't have the same names. It's always being the one recognized. because we're building the pool of recognizable, successful,

managed project names. - Yeah, it was definitely one of those like for this grant and we got the grant and it was like, holy,

maybe we got the grant. (audience laughing) So yeah, I mean, it really goes back to that argument when I talked earlier about the capacity the capacity and our need to build capacity and we can't build capacity without getting funding to build capacity.

So I mean, it came down to that. I also think Colorado nation is a little unique over how it's gonna be other tribal colleges and that we have our own board,

a lot of the other colleges. colleges are governed by the, the local tribal government. We never, we were chartered by the Minami people, not the Minami tribe. So,

so we, we answered the Minami people. That makes it very unique. It's not an instance where, you know, someone else becomes the chair of the tribe and you know, some people are meeting or changing jobs or these sorts of things. We've got some stability and I think that's helped us in being able to get into some of these larger grants as well,

that's stability and understanding that we do have the capacity to handle these types of large dollar bonds and meet the outcomes in the end and get good work done.

on their own, then it's going to happen. I want to add something to that. I think something, again, that I really appreciate about the 1862 workers I have,

and they would be our close friends of mine and mentors who I appreciate so much. These two endowed chairs, millions and millions and millions and millions of dollars are responding now over the years.

to say, to write letters about me saying like, we will work on any project that she ever does, right? This is by far the best leader I've ever had on a project.

That means something. And so those of you in this room that have that kind of power, right? That have that kind of payback admission to be able to provide that kind of language,

right? right, to people that aren't as well-known. And then the other thing I appreciate you is they understand the pressure that Ryan and I are under, right, the only HBCU in tribal college to have one of these grants.

There's a lot of eyes on us expecting us to fail. And so that's an additional pressure. You know, we all have that pressure of failing, but I think if you've only ever been in 1862,

if you've only ever been a white man at 1862, you don't understand who the additional pressure that comes when people are expecting you to fail and are waiting and watching,

and dare I say, sometimes hoping for you to fail. And so to have these people who have again the power that are saying,

you've got this and we're gonna protect you and we're gonna make sure that you are again protected. and supported every step of the way is something that I can't overstate as the importance.

So going back to that first question, they're not here right now, but that first question about how we build these partnerships authentically, that's part of it. It's putting your name on a line,

right, in order to build other people up as well. I'm sure we're going to be able to stay on this. The other thing was, you know, there are, for us,

there are the positives to being a small child. We've looked at working with our 1862 E .W. Patterson in partnering with them over the last 10,

15 years. We do have the local county office right on our campus, which is very unusual. And we actually are in the same building, and it's very unusual for tribal.

colleges to have that great relationship with their local office. But in that relationship between the 1862 and the '94, the positive is,

from a '94 perspective, there's not as much bureaucracy. I can, if I'm writing a grant, I don't need to have five, six people sign off on it. I literally go into the president's office.



and I say, hey, we're going to write this grant and he's like, okay, well, just get it to me when you're done. I mean, so, I mean, we do wear a lot of hats, but in some ways,

that definitely helps things to move a lot faster. (indistinct chatter) I've managed several AFRI panels and I can tell you I've seen name recognition come up on the panel as a quality it could shut down the need by the rest of the panel.

So I that doesn't mean there's an implicit bias amongst the panel members on that kind of thing. But it is not something you can even start to discuss.

Your proposal is exceedingly well organized to answer to every question possibly apparent to be successful in this program.

So that trumps everything. And the part where they will, where families can come up with an argument is the qualifications of the something like this off and write those support letters,

say something that, you know, the history of the work and the way you put the proposal made the case of why this collaboration makes sense is absolutely credible.

And then the last thing is you typically have to resubmit multiple times the higher ed channels grant that we have in Central State. We got it up. fifth trip. And it was perfect after the second trip.

The third time around came back and I was like, there's absolutely nothing wrong with it. So you have the resubmissions. I mean, you don't want to take it as,

oh, cool, we're in HBC. We're never going to fund this. It doesn't matter who you are, it often takes a lot of pressure. Do you want to put them in the ball category?

Yes, I have a question about the Indigenous minimum fishing practices and the goal that they will play in your project.

And also, (audience chattering) (audience chattering)