The 4th Annual Tulane Gulf South Indigenous Studies Symposium:

“SASSAFRAS, STICKBALL, AND STORIES: INDIGENOUS CULTURES OF THE GULF SOUTH”

On March 18 and 19, the New Orleans Center for the Gulf South at Tulane University (NOCGS) will host the 4th Annual Tulane Gulf South Indigenous Studies Symposium and bring scholars, artists, and practitioners from different backgrounds together for learning and collective contemplation. Over the course of two days, presenters from thirteen regional Tribes and several universities and organizations will address the myriad ways Indigenous culture is expressed, practiced, and endangered, through topics such as Indigenous sports, foodways, storytelling, and the plantation/petrochemical complex. Hurricane Ida recently made landfall in an area that is home to several Tribes and special consideration will be given to the impact of climate change on Indigenous communities.

The keynote speaker this year is Dr. Andrew Jolivétte (Atakapa-Ishak Nation), founding director of the Native American and Indigenous Studies Program at the University of California, San Diego. Dr. Jolivétte’s talk is titled, “Thrivance Circuitry: Queer Afro-Indigenous Futurity and Kinship through Wi hokišak kuš in Louisiana and Beyond.”

On day one of the symposium, LeAnne Howe (Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma) will present her research on Tribalography, while Leila K. Blackbird (adoptee of Apache and Cherokee
descent) will analyze the relationship between settler colonialism and the
plantation/petrochemical complex, and closing remarks will be given by Tulane Native
American Studies Program Director Dr. Judith Maxwell (Etowah). The second day will
include a discussion on Indigenous foodways with Chef Loretta Barrett Oden (Citizen
Potawatomi Nation), and a language panel with Tunica Biloxi and Coushatta members
among other topics. To view the full schedule, please visit:
https://indigenoussymposium.tulane.edu/

The Gulf region has always been a polyglot place where numerous people have arrived and
settled, sometimes of their own volition and sometimes by force. Indigenous people have
lived here continuously for centuries. We acknowledge that the land upon which the colonial
city of New Orleans sits has been and is known as Balbancha. Balbancha is a Choctaw word
for “a place of other languages” and was commonly used by many nations such as the
Acolapissa, Bayagoula, Chitimacha, Choctaw, Biloxi, Houma, and Tunica. The surrounding
area along the Mississippi River has traditionally included the Natchez, the Taensas, and the
Chawasha and Washa, among others. Tribes continued to come and trade on this land and
also settled on the banks of Lake Pontchartrain (Choctaw) and along the waterways in
Lafourche and Terrebonne (Chitimacha). There are several Tribes who live in this region,
including but not limited to the Isle de Jean Charles Band of the Chitimacha, Choctaw, Biloxi
Tribe, the United Houma Nation, and Pointe-au-Chien Indian Tribe.

The Opening Day symposium reception will take place at 5 p.m. on Friday, March 18, at the
Newcomb Art Museum, in honor of their current exhibit, “Core Memory: Louisiana
Native American Basketry”. The museum is a short walk from the Lavin-Bernick Center
for University Life. https://newcombartmuseum.tulane.edu/portfolio-item/louisiana-native-american-basketry/

Tulane Office of Undergraduate Admissions will host a Campus Tour and
Information Session for Indigenous prospective students and families from 10 a.m. - 4
p.m. on Saturday, March 19.

Visit the symposium website: https://indigenoussymposium.tulane.edu/

To register for in-person and online attendance (free): https://tinyurl.com/2p8u9art

For more specific information or queries, contact gulfsouth@tulane.edu

The 4th Annual Tulane Gulf South Indigenous Studies Symposium will take place
from 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. on Friday, March 18, and Saturday, March 19, in the
Kendall Cram Lecture Hall in the Lavin-Bernick Center at Tulane University (Uptown
campus) and will be simultaneously streamed online.