

Robert Hicks Jr.

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SUMMARY

Educator, artist, advocate, and member of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe with over a decade of experience in higher education and community-centered work. Teaches courses that blend storytelling, visual media, and Native knowledge systems to engage students in culturally grounded learning. Combines academic instruction with creative practice to amplify underrepresented voices and uphold cultural continuity. Brings perspective shaped by community, tradition, and deep commitment to representation and self-determination.

EXPERIENCE

Haskell Indian Nations University

Lawrence, KS

Instructor

2023 – Present

- Teach undergraduate Media Communications courses that integrate Indigenous storytelling, filmmaking, photography, and digital media; develop culturally responsive curricula centered on Indigenous knowledge systems and contemporary issues.
- Plan and deliver instruction through lectures, interactive discussions, and community-based projects; establish course objectives, create syllabi, and design lesson plans that promote student engagement and critical thinking.
- Mentor and support 50+ students annually in research, media production, and Indigenous-centered narratives; provide academic guidance and creative feedback to foster personal and scholarly growth.
- Advise and lead Indian Leader newspaper club, guiding student-led journalism, photography, and multimedia reporting; facilitate editorial planning and content development aligned with Indigenous perspectives.
- Coordinate and host community film screenings and post-screening discussions; connect classroom learning to public dialogue on Indigenous media representation, sovereignty, and cultural continuity.

Adjunct Faculty

2022 – 2023

- Designed and taught undergraduate courses in Indigenous Studies, developing course content and lesson plans aligned with institutional standards and culturally grounded learning outcomes.
- Facilitated lectures, discussions, and experiential learning activities to engage students with Indigenous knowledge, history, and contemporary community issues in meaningful, culturally relevant ways.
- Assessed student learning through assignments, exams, and creative projects; maintained detailed records of attendance, grades, and academic progress while providing timely feedback to support continuous improvement and student success.
- Provided academic support and mentorship through office hours, personalized feedback and guidance on coursework and research.

Freelance

Lawrence, KS

Artistic Director & Photographer/Sound Engineer

2013 – Present

- Direct video, photography, and multimedia projects for clients including Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe, Haskell Indian Nations University, and Great Basin Native Artists; create culturally grounded visual narratives that elevate Indigenous representation.
- Capture, edit, and deliver high-quality images and video for exhibitions, institutional media, and documentary projects; manage all aspects of production including lighting, composition, post-production, and archival.
- Provide audio production and sound engineering for film and broadcast; assisted with live mixing and editing at V-Asian TV.

Kansas Serves Native American Families

Lawrence, KS

Research Assistant

2020-2022

- Produced photography and video content for community-based research focused on Native American family wellbeing.
- Led visual storytelling projects, balancing creative direction with program goals to ensure cultural integrity and accessibility.
- Collaborated with researchers to develop culturally resonant media aligned with program objectives.

PROJECTS

Missing, Murdered, Indigenous Girls, Two-Spirit, and Trans (MMIP)

2021 – Present

Case Worker

Support advocacy for local chapter of MMIP, addressing violence against Indigenous individuals through culturally grounded care and intervention. Contribute to awareness campaigns, coordinate with families, and collaborate with law enforcement to ensure accountability. Develop outreach strategies to amplify Indigenous voices and support healing within affected communities.

- Guided families through legal processes & investigative systems, resulting in increased visibility & institutional follow-up.
- Led community outreach efforts that highlighted unique risks faced, expanding local awareness and media coverage.
- Created culturally responsive educational tools and support resources used in prevention workshops & advocacy training sessions.

PROJECTS (CONTINUED)

Spencer Museum of Art

2024 – Present

Lead Photographer, Native Fashion Show

Lead photographic direction, highlighting work of Indigenous designers and cultural narratives woven into Indigenous fashion. Ensure visual storytelling reflects both artistic intent and cultural integrity, supporting broader efforts to elevate representation in arts.

- Produced high-quality images selected for museum marketing, archives, and future exhibition materials.
- Shaped visual narrative that elevated show's cultural storytelling, resulting in increased media attention and community turnout.

Indigenous Food System Study

2023 – Present

Advisor

Advise on revitalization of traditional Indigenous food systems as part of study focused on sustainability, sovereignty, and continuity. Provide input to ensure research framework reflects Indigenous knowledge, practices, and priorities. Collaborate with scholars, leaders, and policymakers to elevate food sovereignty as pathway to health, self-determination, and intergenerational resilience.

- Integrated Indigenous knowledge systems into research design, resulting in culturally grounded framework used across all phases.
- Co-developed policy recommendations & community-based strategies aimed at advancing food sovereignty initiatives.
- Elevated traditional food systems in cultural preservation through public education and academic collaboration.

Additional Projects:

- **Tommaney Library – Event Organizer, Femme Fest (2024):** Coordinated national gathering of Indigenous women musicians; expanded platforms for cultural expression and artistic recognition.
- **Hoop House Project – Organizer (2024):** Coordinated effort to build year-round growing space; engaged students in Indigenous agriculture and environmental stewardship.
- **Hydroponic Workshop – Facilitator (2023):** Led interactive training on sustainable hydroponics; connected modern techniques with Indigenous food sovereignty practices.
- **Mural Project – Photographer (2023):** Documented public art at ethnic markets; highlighted cultural identity & strengthened community visibility through visual storytelling.
- **Den of Snakes – Cinematographer (2023):** Shaped visual language through lighting & composition; contributed to recognition for atmospheric & culturally rooted storytelling.
- **The Relocation of Nokwsi – Short Film Director (2022):** Wrote & directed narrative exploring Indian Relocation Act; premiered in Chicago & sparked dialogue on Indigenous resilience.

EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy in Indigenous Health

Expected in 2028

University of North Dakota

Master's Degree in Indigenous Studies

2022

University of Kansas

Graduate Certificate in Community Health & Development

2021

University of Kansas

Bachelor's Degree in Indigenous American Indian Studies

2019

Haskell Indian Nations University

Associates in Health, Sport & Exercise Science

2018

Haskell Indian Nations University

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Indigenous Health Scholars Association – Founder & Organizer

Grand Forks, ND

President

2024 – Present

- Built a cross-disciplinary network supporting Indigenous scholars in health and wellness fields.
- Organized monthly knowledge-sharing events rooted in Indigenous science and community healing

SKILLS AND CERTIFICATIONS

Core Skills: Indigenous Curriculum Development | College-Level Teaching | Media Production | Community Engagement | Research & Writing | Qualitative Methods | Lesson Planning | Student Mentorship | Creative Direction | Workshop Facilitation | Storytelling & Advocacy | Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration | Academic Program Assessment | Verbal & Written Communication

Technical Skills: Microsoft Office Suite | Final Cut X | Logic Pro | Pro Tools | Audacity | Kontakt 5 | Massive | Battery 3 & 4

Awards: AIHEC Film Festival – Best Animation, Best Special Effects, People's Choice Award: *Anxiety* | Best Editing: *Strength*

Certifications: First Aid & CPR | SafeTALK Suicide Prevention | Berklee College, Composing & Producing Electronic Music