

**James Mestaz**

**CSU Representative**

**Campus Preference:** Sonoma

**Qualified:**

Ph.D. History, University of Chicago 2016

M.A. Latin American History, University of Miami 2009

Mr. Mestaz is qualified as he has more than five years of experience teaching at a graduate level in history, specifically his focus is on the colonization of Latin America. His most recent publication is titled *Strength from the Waters: A History of Indigenous Mobilization in Northwest Mexico*. Culturally his roots are Yaqui and Tararahumara Mexican Indigenous.

**References**

Stephen Bittner, Charlie Toledo, Karen Moranski, and Troi Carleton recommend the candidate.

**Current CSU Sonoma Committee**

1. Tribal Representative (Non-Federally Recognized): **Vacant**
2. Tribal Representative (Federally Recognized): **Lorelle Ross** – Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria (Appointed July 10, 2024)
3. Tribal Representative (Federally Recognized): **Paul Steward** – Elem Indian Colony (Appointed July 10, 2024)
4. Tribal Representative (Federally Recognized): **Vacant**
5. CSU Representative: **Vacant**
6. CSU Representative: **Vacant**
7. CSU Native American Studies Representative: Siliva Soto (Appointed November 7, 2024)

## NATIVE AMERICAN GRAVES PROTECTION AND REPATRIATION ACT IMPLEMENTATION AND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

### NOMINATION FORM

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The California State University (CSU) is committed to fully implementing the spirit as well as the legal requirements of both the Federal Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) and the California Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (CalNAGPRA), which were enacted to acknowledge the fundamental human right of Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians to their ancestral Human Remains and Cultural Items.

On behalf of the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), the CSU is soliciting and accepting applications for the Systemwide and Campus Committees. The purpose of the committees is to provide oversight and guidance for the development and implementation of Systemwide and Campus CalNAGPRA and federal NAGPRA compliance, which includes NAGPRA policy development. All applications, incomplete or complete, will be forwarded to the NAHC for consideration. Nominee candidates will be interviewed by the NAHC for potential Commission nomination and appointment by the CSU Chancellor or chancellor's designee. The CSU is referencing the requirements as outlined in Assembly Bill 389 Section 8028.7 and Section 8028.71 to guide the committee selection and policy development processes.

If you are interested in serving or nominating a candidate please review the criteria below, complete the following application materials, and submit completed materials with 1) a short biography or resume demonstrating that the nominee meets the criteria below; 2) a letter of support from Tribe, Tribal resolution or a letter of interest with this form; and 3) a list of at least three references, with name, telephone number, and email address for each.

Committee Term: 3-year renewable staggering term

**Tribal Nominees:** Support letters or Tribal resolutions for Tribal nominees should be from Tribal governments, Tribal community organizations or Institutional leadership organizations, include the strengths of the candidate, as well as any information that might be relevant.

**CSU Nominees:** Support letters or resume for CSU nominees should include professional experience demonstrating the ability to work in collaboration with Native American Tribes successfully on issues related to repatriation or museum collection management.

Please note, the CSU and NAHC will keep completed application on file for committee positions that may become available in the future.

The CSU and NAHC will continue to receive and solicit Campus NAGPRA Oversight Committee nominations on an ongoing basis. Submit the following nomination materials to [nagpra@calstate.edu](mailto:nagpra@calstate.edu).

## QUALIFICATIONS

### **Tribal Nominees**

A voting member of a California Indian tribe shall be an elder, spiritual leader, tribal leader, or tribal member, as designated by the governing body of the individual's tribe, with a minimum of five years' prior experience in any of the following:

- Repatriation of human remains and cultural items pursuant to federal NAGPRA;
- Cultural resources protection under Tribal, state, and federal law; or
- Consultation with state and federal entities and agencies.

Preference shall be given to members of a California Indian Tribe. If no members of a California Indian Tribe meeting the qualifications of 8028.71 subdivision (c) paragraph (1) are available, members of other Tribes may serve.

### **CSU Nominees**

CSU Nominees must be affiliated with or employed by the California State University and have the following:

- A graduate degree in any of the following: Archaeology, Anthropology, Native American Studies, Ethnic Studies, Law, Sociology, Social Sciences, Environmental Studies, or History, with a focus in California
  - If there are no candidates satisfying this clause, candidates that have degrees and direct professional experience in fields relevant to repatriation or tribal cultural resources matters shall be deemed to meet the requirements of the clause; and
- A minimum of five years' experience working in his or her field of study.

Preference shall be given to members who have demonstrated, through their professional experience, the ability to work in collaboration with Native American tribes successfully on issues related to repatriation or museum collection management.

In the event that candidates from the California State University are not available or do not meet the above criteria, the California State University representative positions may be filled by retired emeriti of the California State University who meet the above criteria.

**Note:** At least two CSU nominees to the Systemwide one CSU nominee to the Campus Committee(s) must be affiliated with an American Indian or Native American Studies program

**You are encouraged to submit a nomination/self-nomination if the nominee meets a majority of the requirements, even if you are unsure as to whether they meet a specific requirement.**

## COMMITTEE(S) SOUGHT

Please indicate the Committee(s) to which the nominee is seeking appointment. If nominating for a campus committee(s), list the campus(es) where the nominee is interested in serving, in order of preference. Check all that apply. If a nominee selects both the CSU Systemwide Committee and Campus Committee, their application will be considered for both Committees and they may be appointed to either, however at this time Committee members will only serve on one Committee at a time, unless the pool of candidates does not allow.

☐ CSU Systemwide Committee (*if only Systemwide please skip to Nominator Information below*)

☒ Campus Committee (*please fill out Section A below*)

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A. If the Nominee would like to serve on a Campus Committee, please fill out the following additional information.

Campus Committee (*Preferred Campus*): Sonoma State University

Alternative campus(es) Nominee will consider (*candidates are encouraged to complete this section, if possible*):

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

## SUBMISSION INFORMATION

### **Nominator Information (if applicable)**

Name: Elise Green Title: Director of Tribal Relations

Tribal/CSU Institutional Affiliation: Hualapai Tribe/Sonoma State University

Email: elise.green@sonoma.edu Phone: (707) 664-4440

### **Nominee Information**

Name: James Metaz Title: Professor

Tribal/CSU Institutional Affiliation: Sonoma State University

Email: mestazj@sonoma.edu Phone: (707)664-2505

Position Sought: ☐ Tribal Nominee ☒ CSU Nominee

Please attach:

- (i) A short biography and, if desired, a resume or CV;
- (ii) A tribal resolution or letter of support from Tribe (if applicable), and
- (iii) A list of at least three references, with name, telephone number, and email addresses for each.

Submit completed nomination materials to [nagpra@calstate.edu](mailto:nagpra@calstate.edu).

Incomplete materials will not be considered.

# **James V. Mestaz**

**Department of History  
Sonoma State University  
Stevenson Hall, #3707  
Rohnert Park, CA 94928**

**Office Phone: 707-664-2505  
Email: Mestazj@sonoma.edu**

## **Education**

|      |   |
|------|---|
| 2016 | University of Illinois at Chicago<br>Ph.D., Department of History (Summa Cum Laude)<br>Dissertation Title: Fuerte River Histories and Ambivalent Mayo Modernity in Mexico, 1926-1970<br>Dissertation Committee: Christopher Boyer (Chair and Advisor)<br>UIC: Joaquín Chávez, Javier Villa-Flores, John Monaghan (Anthropology)<br>Jeffrey Banister (University of Arizona) |
| 2009 | University of Miami<br>M.A. Latin American History (Cum Laude)  |
| 1998 | University of California, Los Angeles<br>B.A. History/Specialization in Chicana/o Studies   |

## **Areas of Scholarship**

Latin American History, Indigenous Latin America, Environmental History, Native American History, Mexican History, Ethnohistory, Indigenous Latinx Immigration, Water History, Borderlands, Race and Ethnicity, Gender History, Social Movements, Indigenous Mexican Diaspora, Oral Histories, History of Indigenous Dance.

## **Areas of Teaching Interest**

Modern Latin American History, U.S. History, Indigenous Latin America, Native American History, Native Dance History, Environmental History, Global Indigenous Studies, Colonial/Pre-Columbian Native Latin American History, Race/Identity, Gender, Ethnohistory, Mexican History, Native Stories, Native Water Rights.

## **Academic Appointments**

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|--------------|--|
| 2022-Present | Assistant Professor of History, Department of Social Sciences<br>Sonoma State University |
| 2021-2022.   | Assistant Professor of History, Department of Humanities<br>Central State University     |

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| 2019-2021 | Lecturer on History and Literature<br>Harvard University   |
| 2017-2019 | Visiting Assistant Professor/Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of History<br>Claremont McKenna College |
| 2016-2017 | Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of History<br>University of Iowa                            |

## **Teaching Experience**

### Assistant Professor, Sonoma State University, 2022-Present

History 242: History of the Americas Since Independence  
 History/AMCS 275: Latinx and Black Experiences  
 History 342: Modern Latin America  
 History 433: History of Mexico  
 History/WGS 449: Gender and Sexuality in Latin America  
 History 372: Latin American Revolutions  
 History 202: World History Since 1500

### Assistant Professor, Central State University, 2021-2022

Introduction to Africans in the U.S.  
 U.S. History, 1900-1941  
 U.S. History, 1877-Present

### Lecturer on History and Literature, Harvard University, 2019-2021

Latin American Revolutions  
 Water Justice and Resistance in the Americas  
 De/Colonialism in Latin/x America: Political and Cultural Modes of Resistance  
 Latinx Communities: Intersections of Identity, Migration, and Activism  
 Water Rights in the Americas Freshman Seminar

### Visiting Assistant Professor/Postdoctoral Fellow, Claremont McKenna College, Dept. of History, 2017-2019

Latinx Immigration  
 The Mexican Revolution  
 Latinx Immigrant Youth Experiences (Co-Taught Course Funded by Mellon Grant)

### Visiting Assistant Professor, University of Iowa, Department of History, 2016-2017

Mexican History  
 Modern Latin America  
 The Mexican Revolution  
 Latinx Immigration  
 Mexican American History

Teaching Assistant, Department of History, University of Illinois at Chicago, 2011-2016

History of Western Civilization

Latin American History

World History

Modern Mexican History

Teaching Assistant, Department of History, University of Miami, 2001-2003

History of Western Civilization

History of the United States

## **Publications**

*Strength from the Waters: A History of Indigenous Mobilization in Northwest Mexico* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2022)

Review of *Sewer of Progress: Corporations, Institutionalized Corruption, and the Struggle for the Santiago River*, MIT Press 2023, by Cindy McCulligh, *Water Alternatives*, December 2024.

Review of *Bountiful Deserts Sustaining Indigenous Worlds in Northern New Spain*. By Cynthia Radding for *The Americas*, Volume 80, Issue 3, July 2023, pp. 508-509

Review of *Soldiers, Saints, and Shamans: Indigenous Communities and the Revolutionary State in Mexico's Gran Nayar, 1910-1940* by Nathaniel Morris, *Ethnohistory* Vol. 70, issue 3, July 2023, pp. 416-417.

“Sweetness and Water Power: El SICAE Sugar Cooperative and Mayo Struggles for Water, 1943-1955,” *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Vol. 52, Issue 1, February 2020: pp. 1–25

Review of *Agrarian Revolt in the Sierra of Chihuahua 1959 - 1965* by Elizabeth Henson *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 89, No. 1, Winter 2020: pp. 156-158

Review of *Border Land, Border Water: A History of Construction on the US-Mexico Divide* by C. J. Alvarez *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 100, No. 4, Nov. 2020: pp. 736–738

## **Works in Progress**

"Yoremes, Commodities, and Contentious Notions of Natural Resources in Northwest Mexico" (Chapter in Progress) to be Published in 2026 in Edited Volume, *Indigeneity, Shatter Zones and Unruly Spaces: Mapping Statelessness in the Americas' Transnational Pacific*.

“The Rise of Bachomo the Cat: An Environmental History of an Indigenous Mexican Revolt” (Journal Article in Progress)

“Our Culture Will Guide Us: Tuxpanenses and the Meeting of National and International Ancestral Dances” (Journal Article in Progress)

*The Dammed: Indigenous Healers Building Bridges from Ancient to Modern in Mexico and California* (Transcript in Progress)



## **Invited Lectures**

- 2023 “Bachomo and Juyya Annia: An Environmental and Ethnohistory of an Indigenous Mexican Revolt”  
Brownbag for School of Social Sciences, Sonoma State University
- 2023 Guest on Mental Margarita Show, airing on CW Network, discussing my manuscript, *Strength from the Waters*. Link to Interview: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JwwQKAa9AwE>
- 2023 *Strength from the Waters: A History of Indigenous Mobilization in Northwest Mexico*  
Harvard University, Mahindra Humanities Center and Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies
- 2023 The Spanish Conquest of Tenochtitlan and Early Colonial Latin America, Sonoma State University, History 251
- 2023 *Strength from the Waters: A History of Indigenous Mobilization in Northwest Mexico*  
Claremont McKenna College, History Department Forum
- 2022 *Strength from the Waters: A History of Indigenous Mobilization in Northwest Mexico*  
Rohnert Park-Cotati Public Library

## **Conference Presentations**

- 2024 “Hiak Vatwe and Zuaque: Yoreme River Defense in Northwest Mexico” Presented at Symposium Riverhood: histories across time, place, and waters, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, April 9-11.
- 2024 "Our Culture Will Guide Us: Tuxpanenses and the Meeting of National and International Ancestral Dances" Presented at the Rocky Mountain Council of Latin American Studies, Salt Lake City, UT, March 13-16.
- 2024 “Progress or Environmental Politics? Mexico’s Indigenous People, Technocrats, and River Basin Projects, 1947–78” Presented at the Conference on Latin American History, San Francisco, CA January 4-7.
- 2023 “Indians, Commodities, and Contentious Notions of Natural Resources in Northwest Mexico”  
Conference on Latin American History, Philadelphia, PA, January 5-7.
- 2022 “Our Water, Our Identity: Indigenous Combatants in the CNC and CTM Water War”  
Conference on Latin American History, New Orleans, LA, January 6-8.
- 2021 “The Rise of Bachomo the Cat: An Environmental History of an Indigenous Mexican Revolt”  
Conference on Latin American History, Remote Conference, January 7-9.
- 2020 “Old Water Woman and other Latin American Indigenous Stories tied to Environmental Change”  
Southeastern Council of Latin American Studies, Austin, TX, March 5-7.

## **Honors and Travel Awards**

2025 & 2023 Professional Development Award, Sonoma State University

2024 RSCAP Mini-Grant to conduct summer research in Mexico for second manuscript, tentatively entitled *The Dammed: Mexican Curanderas Building Bridges from Ancient to Modern*. The award also allowed me to hire a student research assistant.

2023 Dean's Summer Research Award, Sonoma State University

## **Community Service**

2023 & 2024: Organizer of the Meeting of National and International Ancestral Dances in Tuxpan, Jalisco, Mexico. As a guest/organizer of the conference, I continue to bring together indigenous activists from the U.S. and Mexico

2023-Present: Regularly attend and help promote local community events, especially those hosted by Native organizations. Offer extra credit to my students to attend events.

2023-Present: Maintain contact with the Suscol Intertribal Council and attend cultural exchange events they plan with members of Indigenous Nahuatl leaders from Jalisco, Mexico.

2014-Present: Organizer and intermediary with Mayo elders in Sinaloa, Mexico. Most recent actions include: attempts to regain water rights and access to traditional Rivershore spaces for ceremonies.

## **University Service**

2024-Present: Koret Scholars Program: Currently conducting research with four students under the project entitled "Indigenous Curanderas/Healers and Ecosystems in Mexico and California"

2023-present: Affiliated Faculty for the Cultural Resources Management M.A. Program. Served on several committees that focus on Native studies and history, including Juan Montes Lepe (M.A. Cultural Resources Management) thesis committee, for thesis "Deliberate Population Implosion: Native American Resistance to Reproductive Exploitation in Alta California."

2023: Reviewed the Journal Article "Racialized Overlaps & Indigenous Eclipses on O'odham Land: U.S. Settler Militarism & Policing of the U.S.-Mexico Colonial and Imperial Border" for *The Journal of Latino/Latin American Studies*

Dr. James Mestaz

Professor, Department of History at Sonoma State University

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## BIOGRAPHY

The pride of having both Yaqui (Yoeme) and Tararahumara (Rarámuri) indigenous roots pushed my intellectual curiosity. I began to examine how Native groups historically approached their ecosystems, and particularly their water sources, in hopes that it would help humanity save our dying world. My book *Strength from the Waters: A History of Indigenous Mobilization in Northwest Mexico* is an Environmental and Ethnohistory that interrogates the historic connection between humans and water. While it focuses mostly on indigenous Mayo people of Mexico, it methodically draws comparisons to other Native groups of North America to exhibit similarities in practices. These attempts at bridging relations between indigenous people has also influenced my teaching style. My courses focus on the histories of marginalized groups in both the U.S. and Latin America, especially Native people, allowing students to draw connections between past and current social and environmental justice struggles.

This approach fits into my commitment to linking students to Native grassroots and community organizations throughout the Americas. My most recent book project *The Dammed: Indigenous Healers Building Bridges from Ancient to Modern in Mexico and California* will focus on how Native healers adapted their healing practices amidst changing natural landscapes as a consequence of irrigation projects. Through the Koret Scholars Program, I have had the honor of working with students to identify local indigenous healers to interview, which has allowed me to make valuable connections with the Native community. I will continue to work with Native organizers and scholars to uncover the historical importance of indigenous environmental stewardship in the Americas. For instance, this summer I am teaching a course entitled “Indigenous Water Rights” at the Northern Arizona University NEH Summer Institute: Indigenous Histories of the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands. My ability to participate in the partnership between the SUSCOL intertribal council and indigenous Nahuatl of Mexico has given me the insight and confidence to seek the establishment of relationships between local and international Native organizations.

## REFERENCES

Stephen Bittner

Chair, Department of History and Political Science, Sonoma State University

Email: [steve.bittner@sonoma.edu](mailto:steve.bittner@sonoma.edu)

Phone: 707-360-5000

Charlie Toledo

Director, Suscol Intertribal Council

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Karen Moranski

Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, Sonoma State University

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Troi Carleton

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