

presidential welcome



Welcome from President Cristina Danforth

Sheku Members and Supporters of NAFOA,

Welcome to Minnesota! Thank you for attending our 2019 Fall Finance and Tribal Economies Conference, and thank you to the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community, our gracious host tribe. When I reflect on our accomplishments of this past year and look ahead to NAFOA's plans for the future, one word comes to mind: capacity. NAFOA is ramping up efforts to build and strengthen capacity on multiple levels; organizationally, within Indian Country, and with stakeholders outside of Indian Country.

Organizationally, whether its new roles, new policy issues, or new projects, NAFOA is taking on more than it ever has before. Our team has doubled in the last year and a half. By growing our staff capacity and building out our various teams, we have been able to grow stronger, become more specialized, and make a bigger impact as an organization.

Within Indian Country, our professional development institute is building capacity for leaders at various stages, including pre-professional, mid-career, and executive levels. With the support from our grant from Wells Fargo, we've been able to develop an online career preparation program

for youth, culminating in a leadership summit held here in conjunction with this conference. For the mid-career professionals, our Tribal Financial Managers Certificate Program has trained over 1,000 tribal financial professionals in the last ten years. Our work with OSU's Introductory Tribal Finance and Accounting Certificate Program is progressing. Finally, for executive tribal officials, in partnership with Harvard Business School, we offer an Executive Education program focused on governance and investing that has trained 240 tribal professionals throughout North America over the last three years. All three programs are building the capacity that Indian Country needs now and in the future.

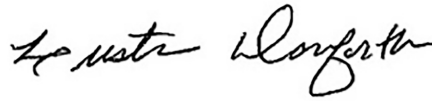
The most critical changes needed in Indian Country require education of those outside of it, and NAFOA has been focused on building those bridges and capacity too. After taking five years to form, the full Treasury Tribal Advisory Committee (TTAC), a federal advisory committee tasked with advising the Secretary of the Treasury on matters relating to the taxation of Indians, for which NAFOA serves as the lead supporting organization, had its first two meetings and they are taking on an ambitious slate of issues. Additionally, this past August,

NAFOA partnered with the Office of the Comptroller of Currency to bring together multiple federal agencies, bankers, and tribal leaders for a tour of pueblo communities in New Mexico as part of a tribal community engagement effort focused on how the Community Reinvestment Act can be modernized to support our unique communities and bring Indian Country much needed capital for stable long-term development.

It is our member tribes, corporate partners, university collaborations, and federal partners that help make this possible. The board is grateful for your engagement and moved by your

dedication to NAFOA. I look forward to meeting as many of you as I can over the next two days. Thank you again for allowing me the opportunity to serve as your President. I'm excited for what the year holds as we partner to strengthen and grow both NAFOA and Indian Country.

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Cristina Danforth
NAFOA Board President