

# ALEX KIMBALL WILLIAMS

ARTIVIST (ARTIST + ACTIVIST)

## CONTACT INFO



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Lawrence, Kansas- land of the Kansa, Osage, Wichita, Kiowa, Kiowa-Apache, Comanche, Pawnee, Cheyenne, & Arapaho

## ACADEMIC BACKGROUND

### HASKELL INDIAN NATIONS UNIVERSITY

*B.S. Environmental Science (2015)*

*Focus: Human Health*

- Honor roll and K-INBRE scholar

### UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS

*Neuroscience PhD Program (2 years)*

*M.A. Indigenous Studies, with*

*Departmental Honors (2020)*

- Neuroscience- electrophysiology; diabetes/stroke outcomes in AI/AN populations
- Indigenous Studies- integrated Native & Western health practices; racial health equity; collaboration & community organizing as research; arts as research; sanctuary city public policy; grant writing & proposals; research methods & ethics

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### CO-FOUNDER OF B.L.A.C.K. LAWRENCE

**Black Literature & Arts Collective of KS - 2017-present**

- Programming and networking for Black artists of all mediums, including dance, music, photography, writing & more. We champion equitable pay & fair treatment for Black artists in Kansas & Missouri. We host events for the community to learn about Black histories, futures, health disparities, arts & culture.

### HALL CENTER FOR THE HUMANITIES (KU)

**Board Member & Project Leader- *Stories For All* grant 2022**

- Project lead on \$40K grant with Andrew W. Mellon Foundation through *Stories For All* digital storytelling grant. Also a board member for the grant involving decision-making around budget, governance, application review, & mission.

### CHARLOTTE STREET FOUNDATION

**Juror - 2022**

- Reviewed artist & musician applications to select finalists for a competitive residency & studio space with Charlotte Street Foundation.

### EPICENTER

**East-side People's Intercultural Center - 2018-20**

- Conducting research, program development, event coordination & performance art with the goal of building cross-cultural understandings in our community. Curated a speakers series highlighting area artists & a historical exhibition showcasing protest art, writing, & other materials throughout Lawrence's history.

# TEACHING ENGAGEMENTS & RESIDENCIES

## COMMUNITY HOUSING OF WYANDOTTE COUNTY (CHWC, INC.) ARTIST IN FELLOWSHIP

2021

• Themes included place & Indigenous culture in Wyandotte county & surrounding counties of Kansas & Missouri. I developed community events & showcases with co-artist in fellowship Astrid Mier y Teran, telling our parallel stories of displacement as Indigenous people from other regions & residing in the Midwest. We brought in other similar artists for a live improvisation and sharing of traditional instruments & language. We additionally curated a culinary art experience coupled with exploration of common Indigenous cultural tenets. My culminating work with the residency is titled "Red & Black," examining the impact of colonial contact on Indigenous art & writing, & the persisting beauty of people of color.

## AMPLIFY LAWRENCE (FORMERLY *GIRLS ROCK LAWRENCE*) INSTRUMENT INSTRUCTOR

2015-2020

• Drums instruction for girls & genderexpansive youth enrolled in this music camp. I provided band mentorship for 1-3 bands per year & assisted with event coordination including music showcases & fundraisers. I evaluated the readiness of students to record & perform, & offered personalized lessons as needed.

## ZINN WRITER IN RESIDENCE WITH THE LAWRENCE ARTS CENTER

2019

• Development of 7th grade English curriculum with co-resident Mercedes Lucero, including several workshops with students centering writing as expression therapy; affirmation of ethnic, racial, & cultural identities & belonging; & increasing self-advocacy of our youth. Students presented at the Annual Poetry Fair in April 2019. We published a collaborative chapbook of their poetry & visual art around the topic of body literacy & emotions. We reported student achievement to grantholders & institutions involved: Lawrence Public Schools the Lawrence Arts Center.

## FREELANCE GUEST SPEAKER & PERFORMER

2014-current

I'm a multi-instrumentalist performing Indigenous Dance Music (NDM) under the name **Bad Alaskan**. I perform for local venues & larger events, such as Field Day Fest & Festival of Cultures, & for protests, ceremonies, weddings, & other commemorative events. My music can be found on Soundcloud & Bandcamp, among other platforms.

**Ultravivid** is an 80s darkpop band I was part of between 2014-2019. We elevated synth music locally, contributed to the establishment of an electronic music collective, & supported Lawrence Public Library's inclusion of modular synths in their recording studio.

I have composed scores for local **filmmakers**, such as *The Wishing Bench* by Marlo Angell (2020) & *Just A Sec* by Fally Afani (2019), & composed nationally for arts organizations- such as the Chicago Children's Theatre for *The Relocation of Nokwsi* (2021) by Indigenous filmmaker Robert Hicks. Currently, I'm working with an Andrew W. Mellon grant, *Stories For All* (KU Hall Center) as a board member & grantee creating an experimental music documentary featuring local Black & Indigenous musicians & knowledge holders.

## LAWRENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2015-2019

- Booking student & community artists for the MLK One Dream committee (2019-2020)
- Showcasing Indigenous history & music methods to classes ranging from 3rd-8th grades (2015-2018)

# TEACHING ENGAGEMENTS & RESIDENCIES CON'T

## PRIVATE LESSONS (PIANO, DRUMS, VOICE)

2013-2017

- I offered all-ages, all-styles private & small group music instruction to support myself through college. Lessons were often for school-aged children though adults commonly enrolled. I taught several KU School of Music students whose degrees required piano proficiency. I evaluated student skill levels & progress throughout lessons to curate learning materials, goals, & lesson frequency. I advised on the best music gear to fit each student's needs, & adjusted lessons to fit each student's learning style utilizing the VARK model (visual, auditory, reading/writing, kinesthetic). Currently, I continue to teach 5-10 students/year, but I taught between 15-25 students/month when teaching was my primary occupation. My top requests at this time are for synthesizer & music recording software lessons. My favorite lessons have been with Indigenous families looking for non-Western approaches to music education, & for recovering students whose lessons were part of a journey to regain coordination.

## RECENT WORK EXPERIENCE

### DEI CONSULTANT FOR ARTS PROGRAMMING (PART-TIME)

**Kansas Creative Arts & Industries Commission (KCAIC) - 2022**

- Developing arts & cultural infrastructure statewide focusing on, but not necessarily limited to, the Native American community statewide; Assisting with professional development training for artists & arts organizations; Assisting with strategic planning & asset mapping efforts to assess the state of the field & determine program needs; Completing quarterly written reports, attend meetings & conferences.

### PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH FELLOW (PART-TIME)

**Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) - 2022**

- Conduct research, presentation, & instruction tasks related to Indigenous rights, including climate & immigration justice, utilizing grassroots methods. My tasks involve utilizing cultural protocols & working with tribal organizations & nonprofits like [Alaska Institute for Justice](#) & the [Lowland Center](#) in the Isle de Jean Charles Native community.

### HEALTH EQUITY PLANNER (FULL-TIME)

**Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department (2020-2022)**

- Measuring & addressing inequities related to race, ethnicity, gender identity, (dis)ability, immigration status, age, geography, sexual orientation, & more in collaboration with community organizations, partners & stakeholders; Developing equity assessments of programs & policies; Guiding budgetary decisions for CARES Act, ARPA, & other funding with consideration for equity among recipients & community members impacted; Survey & focus group design; Interpreting & presenting findings or instruction in engaging, understandable formats internally & publicly (data dashboards, social media, websites, presentations); Designing and promoting educational and outreach campaigns as necessary; Grant reporting & journal publication; Staying actively informed of industry standards & trends through conferences, events, & courses; Finding & applying to grants; Providing planning, data & convening support.

### ANDREW W. MELLON IARI GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCHER (0.75-FTE)

**Spencer Museum of Art - KU (2019-2020)**

- Repatriation process for objects from Indigenous collections; Updating listings for culturally relevant objects; Curating Indigenous exhibitions of visual art & performances; Providing graphic & website design/content support for arts projects including "*Chronic Conditions*", a Sawyer Seminar examining art & health disparities across global Africa; Report writing for grants; Presenting tours & instruction for visitors including our elementary & high school programs; Participating in ongoing DEIA efforts internally & externally including staff trainings & accessible wayfinding for visitors.

## PUBLICATIONS

- Editor & foreword for *Beautiful Ashe: memoirs of a sweet black boy and other poems* by Tai Amri Spann-Ryan
- Curation of a chapbook composed of poetry & visual art by Lawrence Memorial Central Middle School 7th grade students as part of my Zinn Writers residency with Lawrence Arts Center & Lawrence Public Schools
- Lead creator & editor of the recently debuted B.L.A.C.K. Lawrence website: [blacklawrence.org](http://blacklawrence.org)
- Co-authored *Applying an Equity Lens: Reflecting on Harms from the COVID-19 Response and Mitigation Strategies Implemented in a Local Public Health System*, a health equity paper submitted to the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) for 2023 publication. Includes some of my community organizing work with area artists & institutions for COVID-19 clinics.

## AWARDS & RECOGNITION

- 3rd place for 2021 “Best of Lawrence” Community Leader (Racial Equity/Justice Issues)
  - Top 5 COVID-19 Hero for 2021 “Best of Lawrence”
- 2021 Preparedness Partner Award from Douglas County Emergency Management for contributions during COVID
  - 2018 MLK Dreamer's Award from Lawrence Public Schools
  - Featured in the Womxn of Color Mural installed on the Lawrence Public Library
- Speaker for the dedication of the Langston Hughes Mural on New York Elementary School in Lawrence, Kansas

## PRESS PRESENCE (NOT ALL-INCLUSIVE)

- [B.L.A.C.K. Lawrence to celebrate 5-year anniversary as a collective](#)
- [I Heart Local Music Presents: The Historic Spaces Project](#)
- [Indigenous Womxn Storytellers: Weaving Together Community Through Art + Resistance](#)
- [Not So Silent Cinema](#)
- [Alex Kimball-Williams balances activism with indigenous music](#)
- [Story Slam | On the Road Again](#)
- [A Frame of Mind](#)
- [Black-Indigenous Solidarity Panel](#)
- [B.L.A.C.K. Lawrence to host Juneteenth celebration featuring local artists](#)
- [Community members work to create a space for people of all cultures](#)
- [Live performance event invites storytellers to engage with Black history, futures](#)
- [Amplify Lawrence would like to remake your acquaintance](#)
- [Community in Tune](#)

## REFERENCES

- ★ Ruaa Hassaballa-Muhammad (research, project management, planning, leadership)  
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- ★ Charlie Bryan (design, communication, research, planning, presentations)  
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