

# Business law grad wants to give back to Indigenous communities

By Renee Joseph, ASU News  
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**Editor's note:** *This story is part of a series of profiles of notable spring 2025 graduates.*

For Ethan Tacheene, pursuing a business law degree wasn't just a personal goal — it was a mission rooted in serving his community.

Growing up in a small Navajo Nation community in Many Farms, Arizona, Tacheene understands the challenges Indigenous communities face. Originally an aerospace engineering student, he switched majors after connecting with W. P. Carey students who shared his passion and goals for helping others.

"I wanted to learn how to directly impact my community while providing resources for economic development," says Tacheene. "Business law was the most reasonable solution since I wanted to understand more about legal frameworks and business practices."

Since arriving at ASU, Tacheene has distinguished himself as a leader, mentor and advocate through serving as a chief operations officer for the [Native American Business Organization](#) and working with the Office of American Indian Initiatives and the Alliance of Indigenous Peoples. He has advised Barrett, The Honors College on ways to increase Native American student enrollment and has mentored students from his hometown, guiding them through college applications and scholarship opportunities. Tacheene's honors thesis focuses on strategic economic development within the Navajo Nation — work that reflects his academic dedication and personal mission.

Last spring, [Tacheene was named a 2024 Udall Undergraduate Scholar](#), a prestigious federal fellowship awarded to 55 juniors and seniors nationwide who demonstrate leadership, public service and commitment to issues related to Native American nations or the environment.

Tacheene hopes to one day establish a law firm employing Native professionals and is currently applying to law school while preparing to intern at Congress this summer through the Udall Foundation.

We asked Tacheene to share more about his journey and how his ASU experience is shaping his future in law and advocacy.

**Question: What's something you learned while at ASU — in the classroom or otherwise—that surprised you or changed your perspective?**

**Answer:** I learned there is a misconception about right and wrong. Although there are often multiple solutions to a problem, and they are categorized as either right or wrong, innovation teaches us that these misconceptions should not determine our decisions.

**Q: Which professor taught you the most important lesson while at ASU?**

**A:** [Jacquie Scott Lynch](#), teaching professor and Honors Faculty Fellow at Barrett, The Honors College, provided the most crucial lesson.

In her Human Event course, I was exposed to literature that was an iteration of important moments in human history that helped define society today. Her lessons provided me with the insight I needed due to my lack of knowledge of American society. Being born and raised on a tribal reservation, I was isolated in Native American society. This had some negative effects on my transition to ASU, but the Human Events course and Professor Lynch helped me adjust.

**Q: What's the best piece of advice you'd give to those still in school?**

**A:** Stay true to your values while remaining open to learning from others. The most impactful growth happens when you step outside your comfort zone and engage with diverse perspectives. Build a network of mentors who can help you navigate both academic and professional challenges.

**Q: How will your ASU education continue to support your career after graduation?**

**A:** My business law education has equipped me with the analytical skills and legal knowledge necessary to advocate for economic development in Native American communities. ASU's emphasis on leadership has also prepared me to engage in policy discussions and governmental work, where I plan to focus on tribal legislation.

**Q: If someone gave you \$40 million to solve one problem on our planet, what would you tackle?**

**A:** I would tackle the issue of economic inequality in Native American communities. I would invest in initiatives that promote economic independence, such as funding tribal businesses, creating job training programs and providing tribes with access to capital. These efforts would help break the cycle of dependency on federal aid and foster long-term sustainability for Native nations.

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**Main image**



Ethan Tacheene. Courtesy photo