

## **2024 National agInnovation Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Award**

### **GROUP AWARD**

#### **The Montana State University Indigenous Pathways in Agriculture Team**

Former Associate Dean, Tracy Dougher, (Montana State University College of Agriculture) and the Indigenous Pathways in Agriculture Team including Rikki Ollinger (Indigenous Pathways in Agriculture Program Director), Barbara Komlos (University of British Columbia-Okanagan), Florence Dunkel (Montana State University), Bruce Maxwell (Montana State University), Marissa Bremner (Blackfeet Community College), Mari Eggers (Montana State University), John Doyle (Little Bighorn College), Helen Augare Carlson (Blackfeet Community College), Melissa Weatherwax (Blackfeet Community College), and Alicia Yellow Owl (Blackfeet Community College) have created a groundbreaking program to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion within the College of Agriculture and across Tribal Colleges. The Indigenous Pathways program has fostered educational opportunities for indigenous students through a range of innovative initiatives and collaborations.

Prior to this initiative, the Montana State University College of Agriculture lacked programs specifically supporting indigenous students. The Pathways program has strengthened tribal college capacities for coursework and degree programs in food production and environmental resource management. The program also provides culturally relevant, place-based, experiential learning from high school through graduate school and incorporates indigenous teaching methods to better support students in the agricultural pipeline.

Through academic and financial support, the Indigenous Pathways program has facilitated stronger transfer pathways from Montana Tribal Colleges to Montana State University. It has set a new standard for diversity, equity, and inclusion programs, serving as a model for agricultural experiment stations and institutions nationwide.

In recognition of their outstanding contributions and leadership in advancing DEI in the agricultural experiment station system, The Indigenous Pathways in Agriculture Team has been selected as the group winner of the 2024 National agInnovation Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Award.