

Unmai M. Arokiasamy

Lumbee, they/them

SUMMARY

Two-time graduate with a bachelor's degree in American Indian Studies and a bachelor's degree in Cellular/Molecular Biology. Passionate about exploring and sharing Indigenous history and culture through community and scholarly engagement. Experienced in working within scientific and humanities research, museums, archives, conservation, laboratory settings, cultural/community centers, and schools, with a focus on promoting Indigenous knowledge, ways of knowing, and traditions. Strong interest in Traditional Ecological Knowledge and its intersection with cultural history. Eager to contribute to meaningful research projects that highlight the vital connection between Indigenous communities and the natural world.

RECENT WORK EXPERIENCE

Assistant County Ranger

North Carolina Forest Service

October 2025 – May 2026

Responsible for initial response for wildfires in forests of North Carolina, supporting maintenance of forests by assisting landowners, completing Ranger Training, promoting the importance of forestry and provide educational opportunities in various settings, connect landowners with relevant government programs to aid in forest management activities, support the protection of NC's natural resources by developing wildfire suppression planning, conduct prescribed burning at request of landowners, mediate between landowner/agent, consultant, and state support to ensure effective land management for private landowners.

Student Assistant and Peer Tutor

Center for Student Success at UNCP

August 2022 – December 2024

Responsible for supporting daily office operations, scheduling appointments for students seeking tutoring services, managing the schedule and needs of over 30 tutors, and conducting one-hour tutoring session. Assist in planning and organizing recruitment events for new tutors and students, while ensuring smooth implementations of tutoring policies, practices. Administer proper training for new tutors and organize monthly meetings to strengthen and reinforce skills. Coordinate semesterly events, create promotional materials such as flyers, and provide client assistance in-person, online and via email.

Assistant Kitchen Manager

El Taccoriendo; Boone, NC

January 2021 – January 2022

Responsible for opening and closing food trucking, including prepping and cooking food for daily and weekly operations, upkeeping stock throughout the business day, ensuring food service and cleaning standards are up to code, overseeing and training all staff, and execute cleaning of all kitchen equipment after daily operations. Serve as liaison between staff and owners of the business to promote effective communication and collaboration. Assist customers in ordering food or in-store items.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Art in American Indian Studies

University of North Carolina at Pembroke

Minor in Creative Writing

Class of 2024

Bachelor of Art in Cellular/Molecular Biology

Appalachian State University

Minor in Philosophy

Class of 2019

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OTHER EXPERIENCE

Crew Member and Grant Writer Cultural Burn Association

2023–2024

Wrote grants to secure long-term funding for the CBA, supporting employee salaries, equipment maintenance, outreach events, and monthly/annual finances. Create informational graphics and fliers for outreach events. Conducted prescribed burns with community members under guidance of fire practitioners across North Carolina. Engaged with the local community through outreach events to provide information on prescribed burning, site visits, and fire-line preparation. Fostered relationships with community members, Indigenous environmental organizations, the NC Forest Service, grant makers, and other fire practitioners.

Mellon REACH Fellow

2022–2024

REACH Program at UNCP

Collected oral histories from Indigenous peoples of Robeson County, with emphasis on the Lumbee Tribe and transcribed them to contribute to the tribe's archive. Conducted research to better understand the oral histories and Lumbee Tribe through archives, literature, and film/TV with a focus on best ethical practices for representing minority identities. Presented research at relevant conferences.

American Indian Heritage Committee Chair University of North Carolina at Pembroke

2023–2024

Created engaging and interactive programming focused on Indigenous culture including an MMIW Walk and Indigenous People's Day Celebration. Collaborated with organizations, faculty, and students to ensure the effectiveness and impact of programs. Conducted outreach to promote events, provide campus information, and raise awareness about Indigenous history, culture, and contemporary issues.

SKILLS

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- Technical Proficiency (Microsoft Suite, Google Workspace, GIS, GPS navigation, etc.)
 - Physical capability (camping, hiking, heavy lifting, work in adverse weather, etc.)
 - Research skills (Archival, literature review, oral histories, ethics, cultural competency)
 - Public speaking/communication (Radio show appearances, presentations, conferences, performances)
 - Writing and editing (Speech writing, grant writing, literature review, publications, conferences)

CERTIFICATIONS

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- S-190, S-130, L-180
 - I-100, I-200, IS-700
 - S-112
 - FI-110
 - CPR
 - Wilderness First Aid