



**HEATHER SAUYAQ JEAN
KWAMBOKA GORDON, PhD
(Iñupiaq)**



Heather Sauyaq Jean Kwamboka Gordon, PhD, MS is an Iñupiaq scholar-advocate whose work illuminates the interconnected systems that sustain communities, cultures, and futures. From Homer, Alaska, she is a Tribal citizen of the Nome Eskimo Community and a Kisii Tribal member (Kenya) through marriage. As owner and principal consultant of Sauyaq Solutions, Dr. Gordon works at the nexus of Indigenous Knowledges, sustainability, and relational governance. She served as a Fulbright Arctic Initiative scholar; co-chair for the International Conference on Arctic Research Planning IV's Sustainable Communities priority; a committee member on the U.S. National Academy of Sciences committee on Co-Production of Environmental Knowledge, Methods, and Approaches, and co-led the Global Indigenous Youth Summit on Climate Change in 2023 and 2024.

Across all her roles, Dr. Gordon is a relationship builder and knowledge translator who works to bridge perceived differences: scientific, cultural, political, and ecological. Her contribution to the Momentum Speaker Series draws on this grounding. Rather than approaching the conference's lighthouse metaphor through a Western lens, she turns to the Iñupiaq *qulliq*, the traditional oil lamp that has sustained Arctic peoples for generations. A *qulliq* is never tended alone; its flame depends on shared responsibility, on fuel gathered through respectful relationships with land and animals, and on knowledge passed down through time. It is a living ecosystem of care, reciprocity, and continuity. Dr. Gordon invites audiences to consider our cultural "lights" in this way, drawing on the teachings of our ancestors, where relationship-building, mutual care, and interdependence are foundational. Her work challenges us to think differently about our



roles within these systems and to imagine futures we illuminate together: responsive, relational, accountable, interdependent, and always becoming.

Heather will be speaking in the Bahamas during the MOMENTUM convening on July 15, 2026.

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