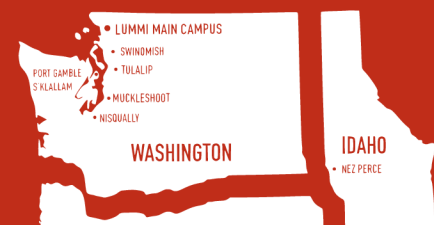




# NORTHWEST INDIAN COLLEGE

Xwlemi Elh > Tal > Nexw > Squl | Chartered by Lummi Nation since 1983



## ABOUT US

NWIC's main campus is located on the Lummi Nation Reservation in Bellingham, WA. NWIC is chartered by the Lummi Nation with six extended campus sites on the Reservations of the Swinomish, Tulalip, Muckleshoot, Nisqually and Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribes in WA and Nez Perce in ID.

## OUR PATHWAYS

The College offers four bachelor's degree programs and seven associate's degree options with in-person and online classes.

## OUR VISION

We are committed to our students, the Tribes we serve and advancing Tribal sovereignty for the protection and enhancement of our homelands and future generations.

## OUR SISTER TCUs

The College is one of 37 TCUs in the Nation and is a proud member of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC).



AMERICAN INDIAN  
HIGHER EDUCATION  
CONSORTIUM



## PRIORITIES FOR THE 119<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS IN 2025

### SUCCESS AT A TCU

Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) provide post-secondary education and research opportunities for American Indians and Alaska Natives (AIANs) and other rural community residents. TCUs offer higher education that is uniquely Tribal, founded on Native languages, culture and philosophy with strong student support systems and community engagement. Federal education completion metrics fail to consider the unique nature of our students. Federal completion rates focus on first-time, full-time students — but success at TCUs is defined holistically.



NWIC is the only accredited Tribal College serving the states of Washington, Oregon and Idaho. The College is a 1994 Land-Grant Institution — one of two in Washington state — and is supported by the TCCU Act in the FARM Bill.

### Grads by the Numbers

2,293 Degrees & Awards since '90  
463 Bachelor's grads since '10  
24 GED/HS+ Graduates in '24  
8 Years of 100+ grads



- ▶ 47% of 2024 graduates graduated with Honors
- ▶ NWIC broke its last graduation record with a total of 185 degrees and awards conferred. The previous record was 150, hit in 2023
- ▶ Students represent 140 Tribal Nations

- ▶ NWIC provided 2,000 meal kits since opening its community food pantry

- ▶ Our Indigenous mental health professional has more than 70 clients with only 15 hours a week

We are actively seeking support to continue and expand



- ▶ In 2024, the College brought back the NWIC Canoe Family, which participated in the Youth Canoe Journey
- ▶ Also in Summer 2024, NWIC opened its Health & Wellness Center, a multi-purpose space for cultural, recreational and athletic events



Through education, Northwest Indian College promotes Indigenous self-determination and knowledge.





## TALESHA FINKBONNER (Lummi)

Talesha is a dog mom who enjoys reading, puzzles and listening to true crime podcasts while finger-knitting chunky blankets. She says in high school, she was taught to think she couldn't be a good student, but NWIC has given her the tools to thrive.

"As a kid, I got Cs and Ds. Now I haven't had a quarter where I didn't get a 4.0. I hope other Native kids learn from me how possible it is to grow in college," she says.

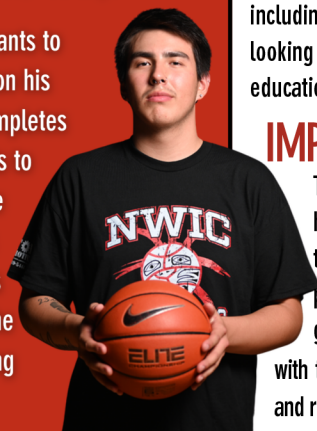
To her surprise, Talesha has come to enjoy math at NWIC and is set to graduate with her General Direct Transfer degree. She plans to pursue a bachelor's in accounting or finance while continuing her current job as the College's Grant Accountant.

## DELWYN "DJ" HOLTHUSEN III (Blood Tribe & Red Lake Nation)

DJ is a soon-to-be double Tribal College alum, having graduated with an Associate's in Health, Physical Education & Recreation from United Tribes Technical College and being on track to graduate with his Bachelor's of Arts in Tribal Governance & Business Management at NWIC. He says he chose TCUs because of their affordability and accessibility.

DJ is a scholar-athlete, maintaining a high GPA while playing on the men's basketball team. "Going to school, traveling, playing basketball and building this brotherhood has been the best experience," he says.

After graduation, DJ wants to travel before working on his master's. When he completes his education, he wants to settle back in his home community to help his people. Inspired by his parents' professions, he is interested in pursuing social services.



# BUILDING PEOPLE, BUILDING NATIONS



## STRENGTHENING OUR WORKFORCE

TCUs prepare professionals in high-demand fields, including agriculture and natural resources management, behavioral health, social work chemical dependency, early childhood education and building trades. By teaching the job skills most in demand within our communities, TCUs are laying a strong foundation for Tribal and regional economic growth.



NWIC's Workforce program implements a "practice for employment" model, paying students a wage & providing materials, training and certifications

## IMPACTS

Focused on non-traditional markers of success, NWIC's Workforce program has many students in their late 20s and 30s interested in first-time employment. Workforce partners with Lummi Nation's TERO and Silver Reef Casino, Bellingham Technical College and WA State Dept. of Labor for training in: heavy highway construction, high hazard facilities, flagging, concrete, carpentry, casino dealing, solar installation and more. The program hopes to gain funding for a coordinator, construction of a training facility and an IT lab. Goals for future programming include cybersecurity, customer service training, culinary arts and communications courses.

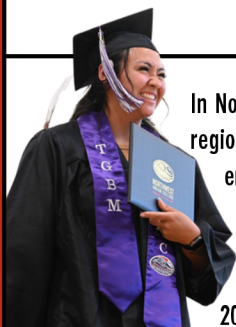


## DRIVING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In November 2024, AIHEC conducted an economic impact study to analyze the importance of TCUs in the regional and national economy. TCUs act as a catalyst for economic growth locally and regionally by enhancing educational opportunities, research, and leadership skills for Tribal and other rural students.

## IMPACTS

The B.A. in Tribal Governance & Business Management (TGBM) is the College's most popular four-year, with 200 graduates in its decade-long history. NWIC also offers an Associate's in Business & Entrepreneurship. The program focuses on career readiness. Graduates go on to start Tribal businesses, work in Tribal governments and bring their business-savvy skills to their communities to help diversify their Tribes' economies. The TGBM program is currently working with the Johnson Scholarship Foundation and the NWIC Foundation to create a \$1 million matched endowment for the program.



TCUs are resilient, resourceful and proud to lead the nation in many areas, including preparing an American Indian and Alaska Native workforce. Always looking to the future, TCUs are focused on building new partnerships, advancing educational excellence and creating economic opportunities.

## IMPACTS

The Behavioral Health Aide (BHA) program focuses on enhancing quality Tribal health care to create diverse economic opportunities within Tribal Communities that is ethical, self-directed, communal and centered in Indigenous values. The program has experienced significant growth. To meet student needs, their 2025 goals are to expand personnel with a Student Specialist to work in collaboration with the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board, hire a full-time BHA advisor and recruit a full-time instructor to accommodate increased class demands.

## BUILDING OUR FUTURES



In June 2024, the College's first cohort of four BHAs graduated. Seven are expected in 2025. There are currently 36 students enrolled in the BHA program. Students' work contributed to state plan amendments in integrating traditional healing practices in Oregon, California, Arizona and New Mexico.