



**Salish Kootenai College**

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## Salish Kootenai College: Priorities for the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress (February 2025)

Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) provide rigorous postsecondary 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. Through these educational opportunities, research, and industry partnerships for high-demand careers, TCUs are laying the foundation for sustainable economic development within Tribal Nations and beyond. Together, we build *Strong Sovereign Nations through Excellence in TRIBAL higher education*, empowering individuals and strengthening communities.

### SALISH KOOTENAI COLLEGE: AT A GLANCE

- Enrollment Fall 2024: 683 students
- Affordable Tuition: Tuition and Fees per Quarter are \$1,437.00
- Student to Faculty Ratio: 10:1
- Part-time/Full-time: 25% Part-Time, 75% Full-Time
- Persistence Rate: 68% of Bachelor Degree Students graduate within 8 years
- Highest Level of Degree/Program Available: Master's Degrees
- TRIO Program: Yes, SSS and Upward Bound Programs
- Fun Fact: SKC Students come from up to 60 different reservations and 20 different states



Salish Kootenai College (SKC) offers a variety of critical supports to alleviate barriers that might otherwise prevent students from obtaining a postsecondary education. Given limited resources, the College strives to meet basic needs by maintaining a student food bank and strategically placing snack stations around campus, which provided 48,549 lbs. of food in 2023-2024. Onsite childcare accommodates up to 30 children, ages 0 to 8. Additionally, the College offers affordable individual and family housing, costing approximately one-third to one-half of local rates, which currently serves 131 students and houses a total of 271 occupants. SKC works with the Indian Health Services to provide free, on-campus healthcare to all students and their families, regardless of Tribal affiliation. The College provides onsite wellness services and contracts with outside partners to provide free mental health services, including behavioral health counseling and programming, which served 583 students last year.



### Salish Kootenai College: Strengthening Our Workforce

Salish Kootenai College offers pathways from short-term training for specialized workforce needs to Bachelor's and Master's Degrees that address the workforce development needs of the Flathead Indian Reservation and the western Montana region. Partnerships with the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes and numerous regional business entities provide opportunities for student internships and employer engagement with academic programs. The College participates in reservation and regional economic development planning to promote the development of new training programs that are needed. For example, the Highway Construction Training Program provides courses in Commercial Driver's License (CDL) and heavy equipment operation for the Tribes' Roads and Natural Resources Department. SKC's Natural Resources Departments added a master's degree in Natural Resources Management, preparing Tribal members to combine traditional ecological knowledge and modern scientific research to increase revenue and sustain culturally and ecologically significant resources.

TOTAL ALUMNI IMPACT		<b>SALISH KOOTENAI COLLEGE: Driving Economic Development</b>  In 2015, 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.  Salish Kootenai College utilizes local and regional workforce projections to create educational pathways for entering high-skill, in-demand careers that offer family-sustaining wages. In January 2025, SKC was acknowledged by the U.S. Department of Education (ED) for ensuring that its graduates possess the credentials and education necessary to start their careers. The ED found that 68% of SKC students earned a degree and entered the workforce, earning more than their non-degree-holding counterparts in Montana.  SKC offers 52 certificates in addition to associate, bachelor's, and master's degrees to meet student aspirations and address regional workforce demands. Graduates strengthen community capacity to tackle challenges and provide leadership in planning and executing strategies related to health, economic development, resource management, and education within Tribal communities. SKC also seeks to cultivate faculty members who understand the local community and have the qualifications necessary to deliver quality education.
<b>\$2.3 BILLION</b>	<b>ADDED INCOME</b>	
<b>28,778</b>	<b>JOBS</b>	
Job equivalents indicate jobs created by TCUs, both full- and part-time. They are based on industry-specific jobs to sales ratios. The \$2.3 billion alumni impact supports 28,778 jobs nationwide. (EMSI & AIHEC, 2015)		



**SALISH KOOTENAI COLLEGE: Building Our Futures**

TCUs are resilient, resourceful, and proud to lead the nation in many areas, including preparing an American Indian and Alaska Native workforce of scientists, nurses, land managers, social workers, and teachers. Always looking to the future, TCUs are focused on building new partnerships, advancing educational excellence, and creating economic opportunities for Tribal and regional communities.

SKC's motto is "Grounded in Tradition, Charging into the Future." While rooted in Native cultures, academic programming prepares students for technological advancements and sociodemographic trends by incorporating artificial intelligence, remote sensing, and computerization to equip them with the skills needed for current and future workforce competencies. Academic programs collaborate proactively with employers to understand emerging trends and demands.

SKC also ensures that all students participate in work-based learning experiences that prepare them for their careers. Through job shadows and internships, students receive direct exposure to mentors who offer real-life experiences.



**SALISH KOOTENAI COLLEGE: Legislative Priorities**

Providing quality education in an era of rapidly changing technologies necessitates facilities and equipment that align with contemporary workforce demands. Securing funding to upgrade buildings and provide modern equipment is essential for the College's ability to prepare a workforce capable of addressing the challenges posed by technological advancements. SKC continues to pursue funding to offer quality education in critical fields such as healthcare, science, and transportation industries.

The College is also looking for resources to develop programs in essential trades such as HVAC, remote sensing, welding, and electrical work. These fields fulfill economic development requirements by offering hands-on training for the workforce and addressing local employment demands.