

AIHEC Membership Standards

The American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC), as it comprises the nation's Tribal Colleges and Universities, adheres to a specific mission and set of goals. Member institutions are committed to a philosophy of providing higher education defined and controlled by each tribe's particular people.

Standards for AIHEC membership have been established. Any American Indian or Alaska Native institution of postsecondary or higher education meeting the eligibility criteria, as outlined in AIHEC's bylaws, may pursue membership.

Please review [AIHEC's bylaws](#), which specify classes of membership, duties and rights, and the membership application process.

CLASSES OF MEMBERSHIP

AIHEC has six classes of membership: Regular Member, Associate Member, International Member, Organization Member, Developing/Emerging Member, and Honorary Member.

Regular Member

The AIHEC bylaws state that a regular member must be a tribally-controlled institution of postsecondary or higher education that:

1. is a subdivision of a government of a federally recognized American Indian tribe, Alaska Native village, or Alaska Native corporation or has been chartered, sanctioned, or formally established by a federally recognized tribal government or an Alaska Native village, or Alaska Native corporation;
2. has a governing board that is comprised solely of American Indian or Alaska Native members, except in those cases where the charter of the tribal college authorizes a majority of such members;
3. primarily serves an American Indian, or Alaska Native community or communities;
4. has a majority of full-time equivalent American Indian or Alaska Native students;
5. has demonstrated that it is fulfilling the goals and purposes for which it was established, sanctioned or chartered and is adhering to an educational plan of operation;

6. is accredited or a candidate for accreditation by a regional institutional accrediting association recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education; and
7. has made application as outlined in Section 3.08 of the AIHEC bylaws and has received an affirmative vote of 75 percent of the directors in attendance at a meeting of the board of directors.

Each Regular Member is required to pay annual dues.

A postsecondary or higher education institution that has been granted membership status by action of AIHEC's Board of Directors on or before October 9, 1998 (i.e., Haskell Indian Nations University, Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute, Institute of American Indian Arts, White Earth Tribal and Community College, and Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College [by action of the board on March 15, 2014]) will be recognized as a regular member and enjoy all of the privileges and rights associated with the status of a regular member.

Associate Member

The AIHEC bylaws state that an associate member shall be a tribally-controlled institution of postsecondary or higher education that:

1. is a subdivision of a government of a federally recognized American Indian tribe, Alaska Native village, or Alaska Native corporation or has been chartered, sanctioned, or formally established by a federally recognized tribal government or an Alaska Native village or Alaska Native corporation;
2. has a governing board that is comprised solely of American Indian or Alaska Native members, except in those cases where the charter of the tribal college authorizes a majority of such members;
3. primarily serves an American Indian or Alaska Native community or communities;
4. has a majority of full-time equivalent American Indian or Alaska Native students;
5. has demonstrated that it is fulfilling the goals and purposes for which it was established, sanctioned or chartered and is adhering to an educational plan of operation;
6. is not accredited or a candidate for accreditation by a regional institutional accrediting association recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education; and
7. has made application as outlined in Section 3.08 of the AIHEC bylaws and has received an affirmative vote of 75 percent of the directors in attendance at a

meeting of the board of directors. Associate members shall have no voting rights and may not hold office in AIHEC, but may have other rights and responsibilities as specified in the AIHEC bylaws.

Each associate member is required to pay annual dues.

Associate member status is for a period of five years. During the five-year period, it is assumed that the associate member will apply for and receive accreditation or candidacy status for accreditation by a regional institutional accrediting association recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education. If an associate member does not achieve this status within five years of admission into AIHEC, the board will evaluate the institution's membership status and may renew the associate's membership for an additional period not to exceed five years.

International Member

The AIHEC bylaws state that an international member is an institution of higher education that:

1. is located outside of the United States;
2. serves primarily indigenous people from the region of the world in which such institution is located;
3. has a majority of indigenous people on its governing board and has an educational plan of operation to which it is adhering;
4. has a statement of mission and has demonstrated that it is meeting the goals and purposes for which it was established; and;
5. has made application as outlined in Section 3.08 of the AIHEC bylaws and has received an affirmative vote of 75 percent of the directors in attendance at a meeting of the board of directors. International members shall have no voting rights and may not hold office in AIHEC, but may have other rights and responsibilities as specified in the AIHEC bylaws.

Organization Member

The AIHEC bylaws state that an organization member is an organization or association composed of institutions of postsecondary or higher education that:

1. serves primarily indigenous people, institutions, or organizations from any region of the world;
2. has a majority of indigenous people on its governing board;
3. is incorporated as a non-profit entity that serves the higher education needs of its membership; and
4. has made application as outlined in Section 3.08 of the AIHEC bylaws and has received an affirmative vote of 75 percent of the directors in attendance at a meeting of the board of directors. Organization members shall have no voting rights and may not hold office in AIHEC, but may have other rights and responsibilities as specified in the AIHEC bylaws.

Developing/Emerging Member

The AIHEC bylaws state that a developing institution member shall be a federally recognized American Indian tribe, Alaska Native village, or Alaska Native corporation that provided to AIHEC adequate evidence that it is engaged in establishing a TCU that ultimately would meet the criteria of an associate member as outlined in Section 3.03, has made application as outlined in Section 3.08 of the bylaws, and has received an affirmative vote of 75 percent of the directors in attendance at a meeting of the board of directors. Developing/emerging members shall have no voting rights and may not hold office in AIHEC, but may have other rights and responsibilities as specified in the AIHEC bylaws.

Developing/emerging member status is for a period of five years. During the five-year period, it is assumed that the developing/emerging member will apply for and receive associate member status. If a developing/emerging member does not qualify for associate member status within five years of admission into AIHEC, the board will evaluate the institution's membership status and may renew the developing/emerging membership for an additional period not to exceed five years.

Honorary Member

The AIHEC bylaws state that in the event that a founding member of AIHEC is deemed ineligible for regular membership in AIHEC, such founding institution shall be an honorary member as set forth in Section 3.10.01 of the AIHEC bylaws. Honorary members shall have no voting rights or responsibilities and may not hold office in AIHEC.

AIHEC Founding Members are:

1. D-Q University
2. Navajo Community College (Diné College)
3. Oglala Sioux Community College (Oglala Lakota College)
4. Sinte Gleska College (Sinte Gleska University)
5. Standing Rock Community College (Sitting Bull College)
6. Turtle Mountain Community College

CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP—GOOD STANDING

To receive AIHEC benefits and participate in AIHEC sponsored activities, including if applicable, grant, contract, and cooperative agreement opportunities¹, a member must maintain “membership in good standing” with AIHEC.

Requirements

1. Annual Report—Submit to AIHEC an annual report of the institution’s operations for the preceding year, which will include the status of membership requirements as outlined in Sections 3.02 and 3.03 of the AIHEC bylaws. The report shall be accurate, signed by the chief executive officer or president of the member, and submitted in a form and manner prescribed by AIHEC.
2. Payment of Fees—Make timely payment of fees as specified in membership dues assessment.
3. Active Participation: Duty of Care—With respect to a regular member, actively participate in the meetings and activities of the board of directors, as specified by the Membership and Accreditation Committee.
4. Code of Conduct—Comply with any **code of conduct** adopted by the AIHEC board.
5. Reporting Requirements—Ensure that all reports required to be submitted to AIHEC, under the AIHEC bylaws or by contract, grant, or cooperative agreement are submitted in a complete and timely manner.

¹ The AIHEC bylaws state that only regular members are eligible to participate in AIHEC sponsored grants, contracts and cooperative agreements.