

“Revitalizing Native Spirituality Among Tribal Colleges”

American Indian Higher Education Consortium Student Conference Newsletter



This year Northwest Indian College had the opportunity of bringing 16 students to Oglala Lakota College, in Rapid City, South Dakota to compete in AIHEC’s Annual Spring Conference. Students gathered together to compete in both academic and non-academic contests.



(Figure 1)

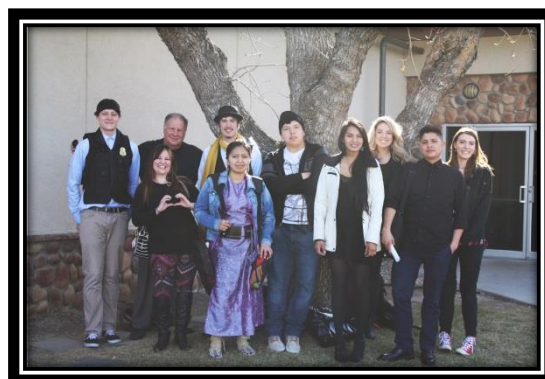
Northwest Indian College was represented in 14 competitions. These were the Archery, Art Exhibit, Business Bowl, Chess, Critical Inquiry, Hand Games, One-Act-Play, Poetry Slam, Science Bowl, Scientific Oral Presentation, Scientific Poster Presentation, Persuasive Speech, Informative Speech, and Traditional Plants and Herbs competitions. Student participants were Tia Allen, Talon Arbuckle, Donna Azure, Yakaiyastai Gorman, Estabon Hayes, Autumn Heaton, Natalya Johnson, Avery Jones, Mikale Milne, Sam Obrovac, Kyle Pittman, Noel Purser, Colton Romannose, Marlene Umtuch and Jewell Jefferson. Accompanying staff were Myron Fryberg (Business Faculty), Wayne Woods (Human Development Faculty), Sonni Tadlock (Science Staff), and Noelani Aure (Student Activities/Indigenous Service Learning Coordinator).

After a rigorous five days of AIHEC Conference festivities and competition, our students returned home safe and sound. Each and every student went over and represented the Northwest Indian College with esteem and such respect. We were complimented by community leaders, college constituents, organizations and hotel staff on how NWIC held themselves on such a mature and honorable level.

All of our students put their blood, sweat and tears into their work and everyone always did their best. Each one of their executions were something to be very proud of!

Our One-Act-Play and our Critical Inquiry crews took home 2nd place awards! These are both very prestigious and very competitive.

The competition was tough all around! But, we over here in the Northwest corner have some of the brightest students who will all make such purposeful impact on the world! It is because of our collective effort here at NWIC and within the Lummi and Inter-Tribal Communities that any of this is at all possible! Thank each and every one of you for the influence.



(Figure 2)

The Students

Tia Allen- Representing our Nisqually Site Campus, Tia participated in the One-Act-Play, as a last minute “clutch” fill-in. This act evidenced her flexibility and adaptability. Tia also competed on the Science Bowl Team, sharing her science knowledge. She was also a member of NWIC’s Critical Inquiry Crew, whom walked away with a 2nd place award in one of the most tolling competitions.



(Figure 3)

Talon Arbuckle- competed in the chess tournament and demonstrated incredible patience and sportsmanship, Talon also competed in the Science Oral Presentation competition and after a minor misunderstanding of registration, he presented his presentation: *Genetically Identifying Cryptic Sea Cucumber Species* in the last time slot of the day. Talon spent weeks, days and hours preparing his presentation. People have stood as witnesses to Talon’s presentation skills refine over the past two years and he should be very proud of his performance. Talon was also a key member in the Science Bowl contributing to their top 10 placing tremendously.

Donna Azure- Another one of our Nisqually Site representatives, Donna shared a unique homemade doll in the Art Exhibit. She also was a part of the Hand Games team. Donna too, was alongside our Critical Inquiry Team as they took home 2nd place. Donna was very supportive of the rest of our students’ competitions, hardly missing a beat in the action.

Azure Boure- One of our Port Gamble site students traveled along to AIHEC Conference as our Student of the Year. Azure remained supportive to her classmates as they competed in their various contests. She displayed such resiliency by continuing AIHEC participation, even though pre-flight experiences would have anyone else staying home. She represented NWIC well at the Coca Cola Scholars Banquet.

Yakaiyastai Gorman- Kaiya traveled over to Oglala Sioux Territory to compete in the One-Act-Play, where her acting skills helped contribute to our play’s 2nd-place victory. She also made it to the finals of the Informative Speech competition. Kaiya also was the only NWIC student to compete in the Traditional Plants & Herbs competition. She held herself as an exemplary ambassador for NWIC, networking and engaging with community leaders from all over Indian County. She also supported her fellow peers throughout their contests.

Estabon Hayes- Another one of our students representing the Nisqually Campus, Estabon was a great comedic contribution to the group. Estabon participated in the Archery contest, feeding the traditional hunter in him. He too competed on the Business Bowl Team. He also was one of the pivotal members of our Critical Inquiry Team. His research along with his team’s collective efforts led to our 2nd-place victory.



(Figure 4)

Autumn Heaton- competed in the speech competition and spoke about the safety of women in their everyday life. Her emotions were raw and her facts were striking. As a Native woman she faces such fear every day and feels the judicial system is not doing enough to support women who are afraid to go to grocery store, to go running alone or even walk to their cars alone in the dark. Autumn spoke with passion and clarity of what needs to be done to support women who are victims of harassment. Autumn also played Sunshine in the One-Act-Play, she played the younger sister and spoke for the youth that are aspiring activist but are being told they are too young. I personally think if there was an award for the person who has come out of her shell the most, it would be Autumn.

Jewell Jefferson- Jewell traveled alongside the AIHEC Crew as the 2017 Coco Cola Student of the Year. Jewell was any drivers' co-pilot, helping us navigate the unknown roads of Rapid City. She was tirelessly supportive of her AIHEC peers and engaged in all Oglala Lakota's cultural event. Jewell was also one of the students who served at our NWIC and Local Environmental Observation Network table. She alongside Azure was an honored guest at the Coca Cola Banquet.



(Figure 5)

Natalya Johnson- Natalya participated in the One-Act-Play and put her passion and energy into the role. Her character was the one to instigate a large scene in order to raise awareness, as all of us have all felt one way or another. Her character's tolerance of oppression and discrimination had run out and she was ready to fight to bring these important issues to the public's eye. Natalya

also brought up very important issues with her speech where she made it to the final round of the competition. Her speech focused on how the repeal of the Affordable Care Act could detrimentally effect tribal peoples suffering from alcoholism and/or substance abuse. She stated that if this is repealed then Tribes will not be able to provide resources to community members struggling with the disease of addiction. She spoke eloquently and passionately about how this would directly affect her family.



(Figure 6)

Avery Jones- traveled to Lakota Sioux to participate in the One-Act-Play contest, where his screen writing and role were imperative to the play's mission. Avery also participated in our Hand Games team! We didn't take home the victory, but we sure enjoyed the true value behind traditional games; community. Avery also competed in the Persuasive Speech where his discourse placed him into the contest finals.

Mikale Milne- Mikale was one of our youngest contestants. He is highly motivated evident in his endearing aspirations. Mikale contributed to the writing of and casting of NWIC's 2nd-place One-Act-Play. Mikale also competed in the Persuasive Speech contest. His first year at AIHEC was a grounding experience in professional development, and if given the chance to compete at AIHEC Conference again, Mikale will leave with even more decorated with awards.

Sam Obrovac- Sam held it down for the NWIC Muckleshoot Site Campus as their only representative applying and being accepted to compete at AIHEC Conference. Sam was a positive vibe enjoyed by all his

peers. He played a role in the creation and implementation of NWIC's esteemed One-Act-Play. He also participated in the Business Bowl, Hand Games and the Persuasive Speech contests.

Kyle Pittman- Coming from the Nisqually Site Campus, Kyle completed our dynamic comedy duo, alongside Estabon. They were a complimentary pair to the entire group. Kyle contributed heavily to NWIC's Critical Inquiry team preparation and competition, helping gain that 2nd place standing. He also selflessly supported every member of the group in whatever their endeavor was.

Noel Purser- A Native Environmental Science graduate, Noel comes from NWIC's Port Gamble Site Campus. Noel traveled with the AIHEC Crew to compete in the Poetry Slam, and the Informative Speech competitions. She displayed her resiliency and drive by continuing AIHEC participation, despite pre-departure devastation that left our Port Gamble students without their luggage and personal items.



(Figure 7)

Colton Romannose- Colton was a crucial member of the science bowl team. With his knowledge of psychology, anatomy and physiology he really rounded out the team. He was also a strong participant in the poster science presentation and on persuasive speech! His speech addressed the issue of unsustainability in producing and distributing plastic water bottles. His particular lens was a valuable discourse to have during AIHEC Conference.

Marlene Umtuch- Marlene took on her role as a natural leader by captaining our NWIC team in the Hand Games. She shared her songs, her voice and her drum. She was

also one of the core roles in the One-Act-Play production. Marlene displayed her artsy side by contributing a crafted cradle board to the Art Exhibit as well. She topped off her 2017 AIHEC experience by competing in the Informative Speech Contest too.

Highlights

One-Act-Play- NWIC's One-Act-Play was written by the participating students and directed by Professor Wayne Woods. The story narrated by a Lakota Sioux elder embodies the themes of Indigenous environmental/cultural activism, resiliency, resurgence, community values, and standing together to advocate for our way of life. The students placed 2nd for the original work.



(Figure 8)



(Figure 9)

Critical Inquiry- NWIC's Critical Inquiry crew hailed from our Nisqually Campus. The team was led by Kyle Pittman and Estabon Hayes alongside Tia Allen and Donna Azure. The crew researched the role of casino gaming on tribal resiliency in Nations among Washington State. They premised the ideas that the gaming industries have been conducive to resiliency through creating revenue to support various health, social, and recreational programming for their people. Casinos also provide jobs and career development to community members. The team placed **SECOND** in one of AIHEC's most challenging contests.



(Figure 10)

Sacred Space

Upon our departure from Lakota Sioux Territories, students were given the option to journey up to Paha Sapa (the Black Hills) for a sunrise hike and ceremony. Our early birds took advantage of the opportunity. As we hiked around a lake, we found ourselves convening at one of the only beaches, and we were called to share a song and prayer ... you could feel the energy of the people who gathered in the same space historically on the very grounds we stood. All were grateful for the power and energy of such a sacred space.

2018 AIHEC Applications



(Figure 11)

If you are an enrolled NWIC student, and have developed skills and interest in any AIHEC competition area (listed on application), please apply! Next year's AIHEC Student Conference will be held in Bismarck North Dakota, March 10-15, 2018. Applications and information are available online at:

<http://www.nwic.edu/student-activities/>

And also available in the CSS (bldg. 17) and the ISL Center (bldg.. 5).

Applications will be due Friday, October 27, 2017, by 5pm, via email to naure@nwic.edu or personally to the ISL Center.

Photo Captions

Figure 1: NWIC AIHEC contestants getting ready to participate in the AIHEC Conference Parade of Flags.

Figure 2: NWIC's One-Act-Play participants gather after a groundbreaking conference competition performance.

Figure 3: NWIC's Critical Inquiry crew gathers after their 2nd place presentation.

Figure 4: Students Yakaiyastai Gorman, Autumn Heaton, Natalya Johnson, Kyle Pittman, and Estabon Hayes up at Paha Sapa.

Figure 5: Natalya Johnson preparing for some Hand Games.

Figure 6: One-Act-Play peeps take their one last stand of unity.

Figure 7: Students Noel Purser, Azure Boure, Tia Allen, Talon Arbuckle, Colton Romannose and Donna Azure enjoy the AIHEC 2017 Banquet festivities.

Figure 8: One-Act-Play students, Sam Obrovac, Yakaiyastai Gorman, Natalya Johnson, Colton Romannose, Avery Jones, Marlene Umtuch, Mikale Milne and Autumn Heaton strike a pose after receiving their 2nd place award.

Figure 9: Students Sam Obrovac, Marlene Umtuch and Avery Jones are hot in play action during their set.

Figure 10: Critical Inquiry students, Kyle Pittman, Estabon Hayes, Tia Allen and Donna Azure celebrate as newly awarded 2nd place recipients.

Figure 11: Students Autumn Heaton, Natalya Johnson, Kyle Pittman, Yakaiyastai Gorman, Estabon Hayes, along with Sonni Tadlock enjoy the sacred space of Paha Sapa (the Black Hills).