

May 30, 2013

Dr. Sandra Elman, President  
Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities 8060 1651h Ave. NE  
Redmond, WA 98052

Dear Dr. Elman:

Northwest Indian College (NWIC) is notifying the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) of our intention to revise the program of study for the Bachelor of Science in Native Environmental Science (BS-NES) to include a set of seven courses, totaling 35 credits, that the college plans to make the common foundation for all bachelor programs of study. This revision to the BS-NES program of study does not alter the institution's mission and goals, the scope of its degree offerings, or meet other conditions of a substantive change request. It is, however, a revision to the current program of study (Accreditation Handbook, 2003 edition, page 105) and, as such, we are informing the Commission of the intended change. Attached are the current program of study and the proposed revisions to the program of study for the BS-NES, which includes the foundational courses as program requirements.

The foundational courses were originally developed as core requirements for the Bachelor of Arts in Native Studies Leadership degree. These same foundational courses were also implemented as requirements in the Bachelor of Arts in Tribal Governance and Business Management. Our intention is to include these courses in all bachelor programs offered at NWIC. As such, the BS-NES is the only remaining bachelor program that currently does not require the foundational courses.

Implementation of the foundational courses in our bachelor programs of study is a direct reflection of our culture-based mission and our strategic plan. Core theme 1, goal 2, of the NWIC Strategic Plan for 2010-2017 states that "*Indigenous knowledge is the foundation for all programs of study.*" Implementing the foundational courses is a natural extension of our efforts to promote indigenous self-determination and knowledge through the teaching of tribal histories, language, and culture in a postsecondary context.

The implementation of the foundational courses also aligns well the BS-NES program outcomes and strengthens the original intentions of the program, as articulated in the 2007 prospectus for the BS-NES program, which stated that the program would:

- 1) promote and acquire tribal knowledge,
- 2) ensure that teaching and learning is grounded in traditional knowledge and the use of contemporary best practices ensuring a voice of native people teaching and learning,
- 3) Help students learn ways to appropriately present Native identity and knowledge, and
- 4) Empower students by increasing their cultural competencies and resiliency.

Students who have completed an approved associate's degree at NWIC or other college and wish to declare any of our bachelor programs of study may transfer in 90 credits and will be required to take the Cultural Sovereignty Transfer Seminar, CSOV 300. In this way, transfer students will be able to receive the benefits of the foundational courses without being unduly hindered in progressing toward degree attainment.

As indicated in the proposed program of study for the BS-NES, 30 of the 35 credits in the set of foundational courses satisfy general education requirements in social science and humanities. Thus, inclusion of the foundational courses has little impact on the total number of credits required in the program of study. In addition, as a result of the proposed changes, a Native Studies-coded (NASD) natural science course will no longer be required as part of the program of study. BS-NES program faculty and administrators performed a structured degree analysis process for the BS-NES

program beginning in September 2012 in order to determine the effects of the proposed changes. The inclusion of the foundational courses in the BS-NES program was subsequently approved by the Curriculum Committee on April 23, 2013. These changes to the BS-NES serve to fulfill our culture-based mission and to advance the self determination and tribal sovereignty of Native people.

Thank you in advance for your assistance and consideration regarding this notification. Please contact me at 360-392-4338 or [jguillory@nwic.edu](mailto:jguillory@nwic.edu) if you need additional information.

Attachments:

Sincerely,

Current BS-NES program of Study  
Proposed BS-NES program of Study

Justin Guillory, President  
Northwest Indian College