



NORTHWEST  
INDIAN COLLEGE  
*Xwilemi Elh>Tal>Nexw Squi*



# *Northwest Indian College*



*Bellingham, Washington*

Year One Report | March 1, 2011

Submitted to  
Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU)

## CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	3
INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT .....	4
PREFACE .....	5
Update on Institutional Changes.....	5
Response to NWCCU Recommendations .....	6
Chapter One - Standard One	
Mission, Core Themes, and Expectations .....	12
SECTION I: MISSION .....	12
SECTION II: CORE THEMES .....	14
Core Theme One: Engage Indigenous Knowledge.....	14
Core Theme Two: Commitment to Student Success .....	18
Core Theme Three: Access to Higher Education Opportunities	
At All Levels for Tribal Communities .....	22
Core Theme Four: Advance Place-Based Community Education and Outreach.....	25
SECTION III: CHAPTER SUMMARY .....	28

---

# NORTHWEST INDIAN COLLEGE

## YEAR ONE REPORT

### INTRODUCTION

Northwest Indian College (NWIC) is a tribal college with a baccalaureate level of accreditation with a focus on meeting the higher education needs of tribal communities in the Pacific Northwest. NWIC is a 501 c3 non-profit educational institution chartered by the Lummi Nation. Its main campus is on the Lummi Reservation with extended sites and learning centers situated throughout the service area. The rich cultural diversity of the Northwest Indian tribes is represented in the programs offered at the extended campuses located at the Muckleshoot, Nez Perce, Port Gamble S'Klallam, Swinomish, and Tulalip Reservations.

The educational philosophy of NWIC is based upon acknowledgement that tribal values and beliefs are the foundation of education and must include a study of Native American culture, language and history within the tribal community. The following are among the beliefs and values of the Lummi Nation, where the main campus of NWIC is located.

#### ***LUMMI VALUES AND BELIEFS***

***SELA-LEXW:*** Our strength comes from the old people. From them we receive our teachings and knowledge and the advice we need for our daily lives.

***SCHTENGEXWEN:*** We are responsible to protect our territory. This means that we take care of our land and the water and everything that is on it and in it.

***XWLEMI-CHOSEN:*** Our culture is our language. We should strengthen and maintain our language.

***LENG-E-SOT:*** We take care of ourselves, watch out for ourselves and love and take care of one another.

Northwest Indian College prepared a full-scale self study report for the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) in 2008 for its 10-year review and was reaffirmed for accreditation at the two-year degree level. As a result of request for a substantive change in degree level the College prepared another full-scale self study report and hosted an NWCCU site-evaluation committee in 2010. The College was granted accreditation as a four-year institution in the spring of 2010 effective September 2008.

The College has now transitioned to the revised accreditation standards. The purpose of this report is to address Standard One of the NWCCU Accreditation Requirements. In addition, a response to the five recommendations of NWCCU in the 2010 Evaluation Report is included in the preface of this report.

## INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

Northwest Indian College is chartered by the Lummi Nation and is a member of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC). NWIC's primary purpose is to meet the higher education needs of tribal communities.

Northwest Indian College evolved from the Lummi Indian School of Aquaculture (LISA). Established in 1974, LISA provided fish and shellfish hatchery training for Native American technicians. On April 1, 1983, the Lummi Indian Business Council approved the charter for Lummi Community College, a public non-profit, comprehensive two-year institution. The service area slowly expanded to other reservations and to workshops and conferences focusing on important Native issues. Lummi Community College became Northwest Indian College in January of 1989. It began serving a variety of Indian people, tribes and organizations in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and southeast Alaska. In 1993 the college was granted accreditation and in 1994 it was given Congressional approval as a Land Grant college. In 2007 the College expanded again to begin offering a Bachelor of Science degree in Native Environmental Science and received accreditation in fall of 2010 as a bachelor granting institution effective September 2008.

### **On-Reservation Programming**

Northwest Indian College collaborates with tribes to leverage resources to better serve the diverse needs of its tribal populations. Shared resources include professionals and tribal knowledge experts, finances, technology, and facilities. Providing placed-based programming provides opportunity for each tribe to promote indigenous knowledge important to their community.

### **Student Profile**

The typical NWIC student is first generation (neither parent has a four year degree). Native students generally come from a culturally rich environment and have many strength-based resources to draw from. However, the majority of students have an annual income at or below poverty level. Such students are often under-prepared for college, but are able to rapidly catch up given the opportunity. In 2010 NWIC served 1,132 students.

<b>Ethnicity</b>	Native American 82%
<b>Gender</b>	Female 70% ; Male 30%
<b>Age</b>	41% between age 16 and 29 and 58% age 30 or above
<b>Type</b>	49% declared a program of study (degree seeking), 14% non-degree seeking, and 37% were in continuing education (CEU) courses only

*Source: 2009-2010 Annualized Enrollment Report*

# **PREFACE**

## **UPDATE ON INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES**

### **Accreditation Approved at the 4-Year Level**

The NWCCU approved accreditation of NWIC at the four-year level in 2010. The College continues to strengthen its capacity to operate as a four-year institution. Noteworthy are the feasibility studies to determine the number of and selection of additional baccalaureate degree programs. Those programs currently under consideration are: Native Studies; Human Services; and Business/Tribal Administration. A formal process for adding new programs has been adopted.

### **Development of an Indigenous Framework for Institutional Effectiveness**

Over the past two years deliberate efforts have been made to connect the College purpose, mission and goals with implementation, assessment, and efforts for improving and communicating results. The process includes mission and core theme review, strategic planning, implementation of work plans, assessment in fulfillment of objectives, and developing action plans for improvement of effectiveness. This work is all done in the context of the mission, values and beliefs, and philosophy of teaching and learning. As a result, an updated Strategic Plan was adopted in November 2010. The NWIC Assessment Plan is currently under review and will be updated by 2012.

NWIC supports research that improves institutional effectiveness. Recent examples of such efforts include:

- Self-study related to the First Year Experience Program, using the national organization, Foundations of Excellence, to assess effectiveness. Recommendations from this study are incorporated into the updated plans.
- A multi-year award from College Spark, Achieving the Dream grant was received that will sponsor a study on increasing student success through improving institutional practices.

### **Administration**

The results of the 2009 shared governance study were used to support relationships among administrators and faculty that honors and facilitates the continued development of NWIC as an effective tribal college.

Strengthening of institutional support included the expanding access to faculty resources (see [www.nwic.edu](http://www.nwic.edu) – faculty homepage):

- NWIC Philosophy of Teaching and Learning
- Teaching and Learning Toolkit
- Incentives to participate in action-based research



The following is an excerpt from the NWIC Philosophy of Teaching and Learning (2010):

*The philosophy of teaching and learning at NWIC acknowledges that each tribal student has a distinct, place-based identity. The role of the faculty and our support system for students is to create access to the political, social and cultural knowledge that strengthens their identity.*

*NWIC provides education that is:*

- 1. Place-based within a learning environment that intentionally focuses on cultural context and integrated experiences.*
- 2. Informed by the highest expectations of the abilities of students to be self-motivated, disciplined and willing learners.*
- 3. Committed to development of the skills of our students to address issues of social justice.*
- 4. Intergenerational with specific focus on the development of young leadership.*
- 5. Holistic in support of student's understanding of who they are and their sense of place.*

### **Addition of New Facilities**

Since 2010, the following new facilities have been added to the main campus:

1. Center for Student Success—all student services programs now occupy the new student services building. This is a wonderful improvement because now students can access services in a one-stop center rather than having to go back and forth between several buildings.
2. Classroom and Science Laboratory facilities—this facility is equipped to provide a high quality and safe learning environment for the sciences including biology, chemistry, global information systems, and other science courses.
3. Infrastructure and general campus improvements—some of the improvements include a paved parking lot on the south campus, improved exterior lighting, and the upgrade of new computers and software in all classrooms and offices.

### **RESPONSE TO NWCCU RECOMMENDATIONS - (APRIL 26-28, 2010 REPORT)**

In 2010 NWCCU conducted a comprehensive evaluation including a site visit on April 26-28, 2010. The focus of the review was to evaluate the viability of offering four-year programs at NWIC. The Comprehensive Evaluation Committee Report provided five commendations and five recommendations. NWIC has incorporated the five recommendations of the commission into its Institutional Effectiveness process.

#### **RECOMMENDATION ONE:**

***The committee recommends that Northwest Indian College create and maintain three-year budget projections for major categories of revenue and expenditures, ensuring they include the impacts of projected enrollments, capital needs, and program expansions (Standard 7.A.2).***

The College has established the foundation for development of a three-year budget projection in the upcoming FY12 budget cycle. The Financial Manual was amended to support consideration of a three-year budget proposal in the annual budget process and the structure for preliminary projections for major categories of revenue and expenditure has been laid. The past experiences of delayed and competitive federal funding have been resolved with forward funding of the Tribally Controlled Community College Assistance Act (TCCUAA) funds which support operations and formula funding of US DOE Title III, Strengthening Developing Institutions funds for Tribal Colleges. The combination of these two changes has significantly strengthened the capacity of the institution to develop projected budgets with increased confidence.

#### **RECOMMENDATION TWO:**

***The committee recommends that Northwest Indian College maintain adequate financial reserves to meet the fluctuations in operating revenue, expenses, and debt service (Standard 7.B.7).***

In the past, given the funding cycle of the TCCUAA funds from the federal government and the impact of the “continuing resolution” environment, NWIC had to rely on a line of credit to manage institutional operations during the latter part of the calendar year. This experience impacted the college’s ability to build adequate financial reserves. As noted above, this funding environment has shifted and the forward funding of these funds has enabled the institution to establish an investment account to manage the operational funds throughout the year and begin building a financial reserve with the interest from that account.

A reserve policy will be adopted by the Board prior to the start of the next fiscal year (June 1).

#### **RECOMMENDATION THREE:**

***The committee recommends that Northwest Indian College implement a governing board policy guiding the use and limit of debt (Standard 7.A.4).***

The institution’s Finance Committee is working on a draft policy for proposal to the Board on the use and limit of debt. This policy should be before the Board by June 2011. NWIC has historically not carried debt, with the exception of the line of credit and

a small USDA bridge loan for the current capital campaign. The policy will address these two types of debt experiences as well as allow the potential for future financing opportunities.

#### **RECOMMENDATION FOUR:**

***The Evaluation Committee recommends that Northwest Indian College periodically and systemically evaluates the appropriateness, adequacy, and utilization of student services and programs and uses the results of the evaluation as a basis for change. (Standard 3.B.6)***

The Center for Student Success (CSS) is currently refining a model for outcomes-based assessment of its departments and programming. The academic year of 2010-2011 work efforts are focused on developing the details of what needs to be assessed, how to track the data, and determining the need for staff training on assessment and program planning.

CSS supervisors researched articles, attended webinars, and read Demonstrating Student Success: A Practical Guide to Outcomes Based Assessment of Learning and Development in Student Affairs (Brisciani, Moore Gardner, Hickmott) and held conversations about how NWIC Student Services can use the results of outcomes-based assessment to change and improve our programs that contribute to student learning and success.

CSS also completed their 2010-2011 work plan linked to the NWIC Strategic Plan 2010-2017. One of the department work plan goals states: "Evaluating academic support services for continuous improvement and using the results for improved student success". Thereafter, each smaller department will link their work plan to this particular goal.

Over the last two years as part of institutional program outcomes efforts, CSS advisors developed co-curricular outcomes with the NWIC faculties. These outcomes focus on providing students with the opportunity to learn the knowledge, skills, and possibly the attitudes that lead to behavior change. Our next step is to determine if they are measurable, manageable, and clear.

NWIC traditionally serves first generation students and through the First Year Experience self-study process and assessments associated with first generation programming, CSS moved toward specialized advising including creating a new position for the FYE/1<sup>st</sup> Generation & Outreach Advisor. This supports better tracking and evaluation of first generation student data. It also improves our Early Alert communication in concert with the faculty for first generation student success.

NWIC will be participating in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) during the Spring Quarter of 2011. We also intend to look at some of the other nationally recognized assessment tools, such as the College Student Survey



(CSS), the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), and the College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ) as formal assessment tools.

#### **RECOMMENDATION FIVE:**

***The Evaluation Committee recommends that Northwest Indian College complete the process of publishing the expected learning outcomes for each of its degree and certificate programs. The Committee further recommends that the College regularly and systemically demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes by students who complete their programs. (Standard 2.B.2)***

#### **Program Level - Expected Learning Outcomes**

Program outcomes have been completed and approved by the curriculum committee for all 2 year programs of study and our four year BS-Native Environmental Science (NES) program of study. The outcomes will be posted on our assessment- faculty web site, along with rubrics and curriculum mapping as they become available.

In the process of designing program outcomes the faculty considered questions such as; what is most important for our students to learn in this program? What should graduates of this program be able to do? And how do the program outcomes reflect our goals as an institution? Particularly relevant discussions about program learning outcomes have taken place with faculty depending on the academic discipline. The program outcomes focus has been a focus on student learning. Faculty continues to have ongoing conversations regarding curriculum mapping and the link among program level learning, course outcomes and institutional outcomes.

#### **Development of Rubrics and Curriculum Mapping**

Program outcome methods of assessment are being implemented across all programs of study. Faculty members depending on the academic discipline area are developing rubrics associated with the approved program outcomes - i.e. rubric with articulated measures of beginning, developing and achieved competencies for each program outcome. Rubrics will be completed for implementation in the fall of 2011 with use by faculty for the 2011 graduates as a way to test the rubrics. Three programs of study, Early Childhood, Information Technology and Chemical Dependency studies completed the rubrics and curriculum mapping of the program outcomes work and the BSNE is continuing to reassess the curriculum mapping that is in place now that the program has completed a two year cycle. Depending on the academic discipline faculty in conjunction with creating rubrics are also developing curriculum maps for each program - i.e. identify which required courses in the program will be used to assess program outcomes at program entry, midway, and exit. We hope to have this completed by the spring of 2011. All outcome work is posted on our Teaching and Learning web site.

## **Assessing Learning Outcomes**

Faculty members address student learning outcomes with a variety of direct and indirect methods. Program outcome methods of assessment reflect the same systematic assessment process used for assessment of course outcomes. Faculty members identify the instructional activities, capstone experiences, projects, or assignments for every course identified in the curriculum map that are used to assess program outcomes at program entry, midway, and exit. Currently program outcomes (for those completed) are included on syllabi for every course identified in the curriculum map.

An example of our program outcome work is embedded in our BSNE program of study. The BSNE Program Learning Outcomes provide foundational goals for development of the program components (e.g. courses, individualized learning, internships, and thesis projects).

Both tracks of the BSNE (environmental science and interdisciplinary concentration) require completion of NES 499A-B, Native Environmental Science Thesis Project, which consists of five credits per quarter during the final two quarters of a student's degree program. The Thesis Project is the student's culminating experience in the BSNE and will represent an identifiable extension of the student's program, regardless of which track a student chooses to pursue. The intention of the thesis project is for students to demonstrate accomplishment at a high level within their chosen area of study.

Students in BSNE work closely with primary faculty advisors on their Thesis Projects (for ESO students, the NES Faculty Advisor, and for ISO students, the Concentration Committee Chair). These faculty advisors are the main contacts and instructors of record for students' thesis projects, but students may also have other experts involved in guiding their thesis project work.

The Thesis Project involves:

- An inquiry, research, or problem-solving basis, using Native and Western science methods of inquiry,
- Relationship to the meaning of "sense of place" (with respect to a geographical, cultural and environmental location),
- Relationship to the meaning of "to be a people" (with respect to community and culture),
- Clear service or benefit to the community (to be identified), and
- Final element(s) represent(s) a synthesis logically leading from all the prior work and being holistic in nature

There are a number of possible forms a Thesis Project may take, such as the major paper, a research project, a portfolio of a student's work, a series of demonstrations or lectures, teaching a course or, finally, service learning project.

## **Review of Mission and Core Themes**

Since spring of 2008 NWIC has engaged in an extensive and collective process to review the mission of the College. The process included both external and internal reviews, surveys, data collection and studies that contributed to the development of the NWIC Core Themes. Simultaneously, the new 2010-2017 strategic plan was under development.

---

# CHAPTER ONE - STANDARD ONE

## MISSION, CORE THEMES, AND EXPECTATIONS

### SECTION I: MISSION

The Northwest Indian College charter<sup>1</sup> reflects the vision of its founders as: *“To improve the quality of life with all northwest Indian communities by encouraging, preparing and promoting Indian people to successful completion of secondary and post-secondary education.”* The tribal values, educational philosophy, and purpose as defined in the charter provide the framework for the development and periodic review of the College’s mission and Core Themes.

#### **Current Mission Statement (adopted July 2004):**

*Through Education, Northwest Indian College promotes indigenous self-determination and knowledge.*

The following Core Themes (adopted in 2010) correlate to the essential elements of the mission. The essential elements of the mission include *education, indigenous self-determination, and indigenous knowledge.*

#### **Core Themes**

1. Engage Indigenous Knowledge
2. Commitment to Student Success
3. Access to Higher Education Opportunities at All Levels for Tribal Communities.
4. Advance Place-Based Community Education and Outreach

Each of these themes has measurable objectives and is included as goals of the NWIC Strategic Plan. The core theme and objective definitions explain the expectations for mission fulfillment.

#### **Core Theme Objectives/Institutional Goals (adopted 2010)**

1. NWIC promotes student self-identity through the tribal college experience.
2. NWIC promotes Indigenous Knowledge is the foundation for all programs of study.
3. NWIC actively engages faculty and students in research and scholarship in support of the College’s mission and programs.
4. NWIC prepares students to be successful at the associate, baccalaureate and graduate levels.
5. NWIC promotes student success in college-level courses through the First-Year Experience program, especially for first-generation and low-income students.

---

<sup>1</sup> NWIC Charter amended February 5, 2010 by LIBC Resolution#2010-014.

6. NWIC offers career and workforce opportunities in response to community and individual needs.
7. NWIC provides access to and opportunities for engagement in the tribal college experience at all entry points.
8. NWIC increases access to program of student courses through distance education modalities and site-based services.
9. NWIC promotes healthy living and nutrition, tribal leadership, and financial security through place-based community education.
10. NWIC promotes Land Grant programming that builds institutional and community capacity in the marine sciences, aquaculture and natural resources

### **Interpretation of an Acceptable Threshold of Mission Fulfillment**

The process for determining the acceptable threshold for mission fulfillment has been a vibrant and engaging process. For the last three years, the College has hosted staff meetings, planning retreats, and numerous focus groups to gather and consider input at many different levels about the mission and institutional goals. The result of this effort includes clearer definitions of the terminology used in these documents and the development of standards for success that are measureable and realistic, yet challenging and value-added. In this document the standards for successful mission fulfillment are called “Indicators of Achievement.”

### **Evaluation of Mission Fulfillment**

The College has adopted an Institutional Effectiveness Model that includes an annual assessment of effectiveness of the Strategic Plan, Core Themes, and Mission Fulfillment. Data from the Office in Institutional Research and progress reports from departmental work plans and other assessment information will be distributed to individuals and teams assigned to review institutional effectiveness. Changes for improvement to the plans will be documented and disbursed on an annual basis. This model attempts to close the loop between data collection, analysis, and application of improved strategies. The intended result will be providing quality, effective services that promote student success.

The next section of this report describes in detail the “indicators of achievement” and the “rationale as to why the indicators are meaningful measures of achieving the core theme objectives.”



## SECTION II: CORE THEMES

### CORE THEME ONE: ENGAGE INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

Core Theme One emerges directly from our mission statement, which is:

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

As a tribal college, Core Theme One is about who we are and tells our story. It is a story about the hopes and dreams of our tribal elders and leaders who envisioned a safe place for Native students to get a quality education and strengthen their cultural identity through the teaching of tribal histories, language, and culture in a postsecondary context. Indigenous knowledge is central to this story—it reflects our cultural values and beliefs, and guides our strategic planning, priorities, decision making, and future direction. NWIC has a distinct mission of providing access to higher education for Native students and preserving and revitalizing Native culture. Indigenous knowledge, therefore, is directly tied to the fulfillment of our institutional mission and is foundational to all that we do.

NWIC outlined three objectives to ensure that Core Theme One of engaging indigenous knowledge has been achieved. Indicators of achievement will be used to measure the degree to which each objective has been achieved. Described below are the objectives, indicators of achievement, and rationale.

#### **Core Theme One Objectives**

##### **1. NWIC promotes student self-identity through the tribal college experience.**

###### **Indicators of Achievement of the Objective**

###### **a. High student satisfaction with access to cultural experiences and knowledge**

One of the strengths of the tribal college experience is the ready access to indigenous knowledge and experiences. NWIC focuses on bridging historical and contemporary knowledge in a cultural context. Cultural knowledge is shared both inside and outside of the classroom by tribal scholars and researchers, local cultural teachers, native language speakers, community leaders, advocates and elders. Students are the beneficiaries of this cultural knowledge and share their own knowledge all of which helps foster a positive self-identity development and future outlook.

NWIC recognizes that our faculty plays a key role in the overall growth and development of our students. Ongoing faculty development and training is necessary to deepen faculty understanding of Native perspectives and provide the support to successfully integrate cultural knowledge into their teaching practices,

classes and curricula. Pedagogical strategies that have made a positive impact on student learning include but are not limited to interdisciplinary approaches, place-based instruction, action research projects, seminars, service learning projects, active learning strategies and case studies.

As a community-based institution, NWIC seeks to build tribal communities by building our students. Today's student could be tomorrow's leaders of their tribes and communities. The college aims to tap into the potential of each student and provide an opportunity to reach their full potential. The tribal college experience is about imprinting the importance of education and cultural knowledge in the lives of our students.

#### Rationale as to Why the Indicators are Assessable and Meaningful Measures of the Core Theme Objective

- a. The rationale for why this indicator is an assessable and meaningful measure of achievement is that the cultural identity development of our students is just as important as their academic and intellectual development. Given our cultural-based mission, our role is not so much to help students *find* themselves, but to see themselves in all aspects of the college—from the curriculum and instructional materials they read and reflect on, to the stories and histories that are discussed and shared, to the place and context in which they are exploring and studying, indeed, even into the future using their education to make a difference in lives of Indian people.

Student satisfaction ranked the highest contributing factor to student success in the First Year Experience (2009 Foundations of Excellence Study). Other assessment instruments include periodic CCSSE and alumni surveys, annual graduate survey, and quarterly student course evaluations. Qualitative input is gained through interaction with students such as in monthly student focus groups with the College president and student government meetings with the College Board of Trustees.

## **2. Indigenous Knowledge is the foundation for all programs of study**

#### Indicators of Achievement of the Objective

- a. Integrated approaches are demonstrated in Native Studies core; NWIC requirements; and general education courses
- b. All certificates and programs will have native language requirement

The measures that will be used to capture progress in this objective include a periodic review of syllabi of certificate and degree programs.

### Rationale as to Why the Indicators are Assessable and Meaningful Measures of the Core Theme Objective

- a. Over the past few years, the college has made significant progress to integrate cultural content into all programs of study. This has been done by developing cultural outcomes at the course, program, and institutional level, which is one of the unique aspects of NWIC. To assess whether the cultural outcomes are met, students have to demonstrate an understanding of 1) a sense of place, and 2) what it means to be a people. At the course level, faculty integrates cultural content into the curriculum by developing and incorporating cultural outcomes into their course syllabi. At the degree program level, cultural outcomes were developed and integrated into the curriculum by utilizing a curriculum mapping approach of identifying and linking course outcomes to the broader program outcomes within a particular degree.
- b. Placing an increased emphasis on native language development is a vital indicator of achievement given that a deep understanding of language and requires a deep understanding of culture—they are inextricably tied together. Cultural knowledge and values are embedded in the language. Therefore, adding the native language requirement into all current and future programs of study, including bachelor degree programs, is another way to ensure that students are learning the essentials of indigenous knowledge in all programs of study at NWIC.

### **3. NWIC actively engages faculty and students in research and scholarship in support of the college's mission and programs**

#### Indicators of Achievement of the Objective

- a. NWIC provides opportunities for participation in experiential research-based learning centered on community needs for students, staff and faculty.
- b. Publish research inclusive of both original and reprinted publications

### Rationale as to Why the Indicators are Assessable and Meaningful Measures of the Core Theme Objective

- a. By placing an increased emphasis on research the college trains students not only to be consumers of knowledge, but producers of knowledge. NWIC represents indigenous self-determination, which means that the college will determine its own definition of what community-based research and scholarship looks like based on indigenous knowledge and perspectives. The college seeks to position itself to become active participants in the preservation, creation and dissemination of indigenous knowledge, which aligns with and supports our mission. Involving our students in research projects early in their college journey could be a powerful means of student

engagement, which could lead to increased retention and persistence. Currently important active research is conducted within the Coast Salish Institute, Northwest Indian College Center for Health, Teaching and Learning Initiative, and BSNEs internship requirement.

- b. Publications support cultural resource development. The Coast Salish Institute (CSI) is engaged in the collection of original and reprinted cultural materials and information that can be used for curriculum development and research projects. An annotated bibliography of cultural resources is available for students and faculty.

The measures that will be used to capture progress in this objective include course syllabi, tracking of publications annually, American Indian Measures of Student Success (AIMS) report, and self reported data.

## **CORE THEME TWO: COMMITMENT TO STUDENT SUCCESS**

Northwest Indian College is committed to supporting students to achieve their educational goals.

Student success at Northwest Indian College means students will be able to demonstrate competency in their chosen discipline and in foundational cultural outcomes. NWIC recognizes its students have a diverse and distinct, place-based identity. The role of the faculty and student support system is to create programs and services that support students' understanding of their unique cultural identity. NWIC supports students with experiential learning opportunities that use Native knowledge for the benefit of the student and the tribal community.

### **Core Theme Two Objectives**

#### **1. NWIC prepares students to be successful at the associate, baccalaureate and graduate levels.**

##### **Indicators of Achievement of the Objective**

- a. Student demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes at the program and institutional levels
- b. Improved course completion, graduation (21%, 2010 baseline/IPEDS), and transfer rates (8%, 2010 baseline)

Students attending NWIC have a range of educational goals from certificates to baccalaureate level degrees. NWIC intends to prepare students who wish to continue their education for transfer to baccalaureate or graduate programs.

##### **Rationale as to Why the Indicators are Assessable and Meaningful Measures of the Core Theme Objective**

- a. Cultural competencies are integrated into the curriculum to engage students in cultural restoration and revitalization. Student success relies on promoting success in course work as well as providing development opportunities outside the classroom. The assessment plan allows faculty to work together to develop criteria, benchmark, and scoring rubrics to assess student achievement. Curriculum mapping to shows how and where students learn and build competencies.

The Coast Salish Institute has developed the following characteristics for building Native knowledge: Native Studies must...

- Be “endogenous” - regenerate from within;
- Have a “body of knowledge” from which the curriculum is drawn;
- Requires development of shared beliefs about practices, teachings and knowledge;



- Requires extensive inquiry that is also sensitive to private knowledge and intellectual property;
  - Occurs in a contextualized education environment that place-based in indigenous homelands is designed with a western education delivery model.
- b. Course completions of critical filter classes by program of study, graduate data, and transfer rates are used as measures of student success and provide information for the analysis of program effectiveness.

## **2. Demonstrate that co-curricular outcomes and activities support student's growth and development appropriate to a four-year college.**

Upon enrollment students are provided opportunity and encouraged to experience courses and programming experientially grounded in Native perspectives and values. Co-curricular activities are sensitive to and grounded in *place*. Student study their connection to place with the guidance and support of faculty and community resources.

### Indicators of Achievement of the Objective

- a. Student achievement of co-curricular outcomes
- b. Retention rate (2010 Baseline is 78% for full-time students; 38% for part-time students/IPEDS)
- c. Community College Survey for Student Engagement (CCSSE)

### Rationale as to Why the Indicators are Assessable and Meaningful Measures of the Core Theme Objective

- a. Co-curricular outcomes are directly connected to course learning outcomes. At NWIC co-curricular activities such as Indigenous Service Learning, tribal internships, and undergraduate research experience provide experiential application of academic learning. Co-curricular activities allow students to build on their strengths of indigenous knowledge and reinforces their connection to community. Through a systematic integrated approach academic programming and student services efforts are aligned to ensure academic success.
- b. Retention rate will assist in measuring the effectiveness of co-curricular activities.
- c. CCSSE will provide aggregate data related to student satisfaction with their tribal college experience.

## **3. NWIC students persist to the completion of their academic goals**

At NWIC we believe community and family have an important role in student's success. The College has adopted the Family Education Model which has a strength based perspective that is centered on student resiliency and provides access to student support systems. Faculty and staff use the strength-based concepts of this

model in development of extra and co-curricular activities that provide opportunity for student engagement in their culture on campus and in the community.

#### Indicators of Achievement of the Objective

- a. Quarterly persistence as compared to level of student participation in support services such as academic advising, tutoring, and engagement in learning communities.
- b. Annual retention rate
- c. Achievement of First Year Experience Learning Outcomes.

#### Rationale as to Why the Indicators are Assessable and Meaningful Measures of the Core Theme Objective

- a. Regular and systematic review of persistence will indicate the effectiveness of student support services. Lack of persistence will initiate a review of support services practices and inform recommendations for improvement.
- b. Through institutional study, NWIC has found students who persist for two consecutive quarters increase their likelihood to return for degree completion by 43%.
- c. The First Year Experience (FYE) program includes building a community of learners that increases student success and support and to increase student's self-awareness and connection to their past and to their identity.

#### **4. Promote Native leadership through exploration of self identity, tribal identity, connection to place, and civic responsibility.**

Numerous opportunities for students, faculty and staff are provided by the College for the practice of Native leadership. This ranges from classroom experiences to extra-curricular activities to professional development and classroom action research. There is a focused institutional commitment to a core group of emerging Native faculty and staff and toward mentoring faculty and staff.

The College promotes opportunities for leadership skill development through culture. This is in evidence through assessment, curriculum development and through participation in student governance, clubs, AIHEC Student Congress and activities.

#### Indicators of Achievement of the Objective

- a. Student participation in student leadership activities such as Associated Students of Northwest Indian College; American Indian Business Leaders, American Indian Science and Engineering Society, Language and Culture Club, Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, and American Indian Higher Education Consortium for Students.

## Rationale as to Why the Indicators are Assessable and Meaningful Measures of the Core Theme Objective

- a. Through participation in these culturally integrated leadership activities students demonstrate their understanding of indigenous knowledge and civic responsibility. In recent months NWIC students have received national recognition for student leadership in such activities as the First Nations Rocket Launch (2<sup>nd</sup> Place for altitude prediction) and the NASA sponsored, University Student Launch Initiative. Students demonstrated excellence in national academic competitions in the areas of speech, writing, talent, and art. They have demonstrated engagement with the local community by planning and hosting such activities as traditional pow-wows, welcome back luau, midnight breakfast events; and provided support at the national Summit for Indigenous Service Learning.

## **CORE THEME THREE: ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES AT ALL LEVELS FOR TRIBAL COMMUNITIES**

Northwest Indian College serves the educational needs of Tribal communities. This includes a strong focus on culturally relevant curriculum which includes Native American culture, history, and native language. Providing access to higher education opportunities embedded in native culture helps sustain and further develop our tribal communities. Main campus, on-site, ITV and Distance Learning modalities provide instruction in both academic and vocational programs.

### **Core Theme Three Objectives**

#### **1. NWIC offers Career and Workforce Opportunities in Response to Community and Individual Needs**

In the past two years, NWIC conducted community surveys, and focus groups of tribal leaders, and community groups. The results of these external scans indicate there is a high interest in preparing tribal members for the workforce preferably in high-wage/high-demand fields. The College has added a Career and Workforce Development programs that will be responsive to the needs of local tribal communities and employers. Current areas of interests to community we serve are marine industries, health service, and Early Childhood Education.

#### **Indicators of Achievement of the Objective**

- a. Student participation and completion of workforce programs that result in employment.
- b. Student participation in career ladder opportunities: 70% of students or higher continue or return for next step on career ladder

#### **Rationale as to Why the Indicators are Assessable and Meaningful Measures of the Core Theme Objective**

- a. Student Satisfaction Surveys suggest strong student satisfaction with their vocational experience. The data will indicate if students receive cultural and academic instruction that meets their employment needs. Tracking of student placement will indicate if students are employed in demand occupations. Intake data suggests a need for workforce education programs.
- b. Annual enrollment data indicates a 70% or higher rate of completion in certificate programs of students who continue on to the next level of achievement on the career ladder. This number is likely to increase as articulations of the career ladder programs and degree programs are increased, outlined, and made available to students. Career Placement data will indicate if access to employment opportunities will increase because of the vocational training the student has received.

## **2. NWIC provides Access to and Opportunities for Engagement in the Tribal College Experience at all Entry Points.**

NWIC has experienced enrollment growth of nine percent over the past five years. Current FTE enrollment is 811 (AY 2010). This has resulted in a growth experience for student services programs, including admissions, academic advising, and financial aid, student housing, tutoring, and planning of extra and co-curricular activities.

### Indicators of Achievement of the Objective

- a. Increased enrollments of students at multiple points of entry including Lummi campus sites, and distance education modalities.
- b. Improved admissions and advising process encouraging early enrollment and completion of admissions and financial aid processes.

### Rationale as to Why the Indicators are Assessable and Meaningful Measures of the Core Theme Objective

- a. Enrollment Data providing the number of students enrolled at all sites and modalities each quarter will provide a quarter by quarter look at enrollment numbers. Increased numbers in enrollment will show that barriers to education are being eliminated, especially in regards to site based enrollments.
- b. Improved admissions and advising process encourages early enrollment and completion of admissions and financial aid processes. Enrollment and financial aid data are important indicators of student access and can help us better serve students at all entry points. The numbers are important indicators of our effectiveness of admissions, financial aid, and advising services. Their initial success at the institution relies heavily on proper advising. An improved advising process, including student access to information will help improve the overall advising experience. Early registration into classes will also help ensure a successful start of each quarter.

## **3. NWIC Increases Access to Program of Study Courses Through Distance Education Modalities and Site-Based Services**

NWIC increases access to academic programs to other tribes in the Pacific Northwest through distance education modalities and site-based instruction. The annualized (AY 2010) FTE from extended campus sites was 277 (34% of total FTE). The instructional delivery methods at extended campus sites include on-site teaching using local instructors, interactive telecourses (ITV), learning contracts, and on-line courses. Student support and enrollment services are provided to extended campus sites by professional staff located at the main campus and at various sites.



They provide information and assistance with admissions, financial aid, registration, advisement, career services, and other areas of interest.

### Indicators of Achievement of the Objective

- a. Increased student completion of program of study using multiple modalities. Students in rural communities receive instruction either in-class or via distance learning modalities. On-site classroom based and distance learning modalities provide opportunities for students to successfully complete their program of study. On-site faculty and staff support student success through:
  - Academic, vocational and financial aid advising.
  - Tutoring, academic and organization skills training.
  - College employees closely monitor student attendance and scholastic achievement and provide pre-emptive scholastic advising.

### Rationale as to Why the Indicators are Assessable and Meaningful Measures of the Core Theme Objective

- a. Student enrollment numbers, including course completion rates will indicate student success. In addition, increased student retention and degrees conferred indicate significant accomplishment in community and institutional support of students, and student appreciation of life-long learning. Transfer rates will provide us with data regarding successful transitions onto other higher education institutions and allow us to track the successful transitions of our students after leaving Northwest Indian College.

Students engaged in their academics show improved scholastic characteristics which culminate in graduation. These students develop a variety of requisite interpersonal communication skills to navigate academic, professional, community, and personal challenges. Building a network of support systems across socio-cultural and academic communities is demonstrative of other aspects: increased cultural and linguistic awareness, identification of healthy relationships, and improved intellectual self-concept.

## **CORE THEME FOUR: ADVANCE PLACE-BASED COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND OUTREACH**

The fourth core theme relates to professional development, outreach and continuing education activities that help achieve the NWIC mission. These educational programs, workshops, classes and events were designed to meet the educational needs of and build self-sufficiency across tribal communities and people. We will achieve our goals broadly by collaborating across departments, partner organizations and tribal communities.

NWIC is a place-based institution with many tribal employees and access to a significant number of Native scholars and community resources. Students have constant exposure to tribal role models, access to tribal experts through formal and informal interactions and attend numerous cultural and professional events. The mixture of Native and non-Native faculty and staff exposes them to diversity and cross-cultural communications.

NWIC embraces a unique place based tribal college experience because we offer services to tribal locations throughout our region requiring us to be capable of supporting student individual and tribal identity from their place of learning through their birthright as tribal citizens. Students from over 100 different tribes attend our College so while we emphasize Coast Salish culture and knowledge, we support diverse tribal experiences and history of our students.

### **Core Theme Four Objectives**

#### **1. NWIC promotes healthy living and nutrition, leadership and financial security.**

Indigenous knowledge includes a core understanding of the role of healthy living, relationships and kinship and of the ability to take care of oneself and one's family. NWIC reaches out broadly into the NW native community to support family and personal self-determination, individual and community health, citizenship and wealth management.

#### **Indicators of Achievement of the Objective**

- a. Comparative enrollment and student satisfaction data related to programs and training.
- b. Increase in publications and product development to support program curriculum and training products.
- c. Increase participation in traditional tribal leadership program including workshops, face-to-face courses and on-line modalities.

## Rationale as to Why the Indicators are Assessable and Meaningful Measures of the Core Theme Objective

NWIC provides CEU and credit courses in cooperative and community education responsive to the needs of the communities we serve. This is achieved through the design and delivery of tribally relevant educational programs, workshops, classes and events in such areas as healthy living, nutrition, and financial security. In addition, research and development tied to curriculum and outreach services will include publication of educational materials. Two recent publications of the Outreach and Extension Division are, *Wild Rose and Western Red Cedar: the Gifts of Northwest Plants* and *Feeding the People Feeding the Spirit*, both unique examples of connecting knowledge to accessible publication.

The Coast Salish Institute has developed a traditional tribal leadership curriculum focused on the deliberate development of leadership skills grounded in tribal knowledge such as origin stories, genealogy and relationship to natural resources. This curriculum is adaptable to various modes of delivery. Designed as a 3-quarter series, the curriculum was most recently delivered in a summer seminar with follow-up activities throughout the academic year for participants.

- a. Comparative enrollment and student satisfaction data related to programs and training will document that professional development and community education offerings are supportive of tribal community and individual training priorities.
- b. Publication and dissemination of research and products relevant to tribal communities further demonstrate responsiveness to tribal interests.
- c. Comparative enrollment data and course evaluations will document the effectiveness of tribal leadership opportunities. In addition, use of student portfolios and presentations provide evidence based assessment of program effectiveness.

## **2. NWIC promotes land grant programming that builds institutional and community capacity in the marine sciences, aquaculture and natural resources.**

NWIC received congressional approval as a land grant college under the Equity in Education Land-Grant Status Act of 1994. This status allows the College to have a formal relationship with the federal government through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to provide extension, outreach and research services in support of family and resource development. The College continuously explores use of this status to assist in fulfilling its mission and goals. Capacity building activities include short and long-range planning, development of policies to support research and program development. Current research activities including a hypoxia study of Bellingham Bay and student internships provide a foundation of outreach partnerships that model future developments. NWIC's new science building and its soon-to-be constructed research laboratory provide additional

facilities for expansion. The following indicators of achievement have been identified for the implementation of this core theme objective.

#### Indicators of Achievement of the Objective

- a. Increase in collaborative research projects between agencies
- b. Increase student participation in National Indian Center for Marine Environmental Research and Education (NICMERE) and Salish Sea Institute courses
- c. Increase opportunities for student participation in internships with various agencies

#### Rationale as to Why the Indicators are Assessable and Meaningful Measures of the Core Theme Objective

- a. Increase in sponsored research from such agencies as National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), National Marine Fisheries, Fish and Wildlife, Northwest Fisheries Science Center, Sea Grant, USDA Research, National Science Foundation and other agencies will be pursued individually or in collaboration with partners to support tribal interests in the areas of marine sciences, aquaculture and natural sciences. Technical expertise exchanges between the various agencies will provide valuable information, leveraging of resources, and increase learning opportunities for faculty and students.
- b. Collaborative NICMERE research projects between NWIC, tribes, and other agencies contribute to scholarship while perpetuating Indigenous Knowledge.
- c. Tracking number of internships documents opportunities for students to apply what they have learned in a work environment and recognize that benefit to the community. (14 internships in the 2009-10 AY included United States Geological Survey supported internship with the annual Canoe Journey as well as an Alaska-based internship)

## SECTION III: CHAPTER SUMMARY

### Mission

The Year One Report of the revised accreditation standards of the Northwest Commission on College and Universities was submitted on March 1, 2011. In Chapter One of the report the mission is defined in the context of its purpose as a tribal college chartered by the Lummi Nation. The mission statement is: *Through education, Northwest Indian College promotes indigenous self-determination and knowledge.* Furthermore, the four Core Themes developed by the College exemplify the essential elements of the mission.

### Core Themes

1. Engage Indigenous knowledge
2. Commitment to Student Success
3. Access to Higher Education Opportunities at All Levels for Tribal Communities
4. Advance Place-Based Community Education and Outreach

### Expectations and Mission Fulfillment

The mission and Core Themes guide the planning of the College. Twelve Objectives were developed to implement the Core Themes and Indicators of Achievement were identified for each Core Theme Objective. These measures also align with the Institutional Effectiveness Plan and its assessment results will be reviewed on an annual basis to determine the extent of mission fulfillment.

### Response to recommendations of the NWCCU Evaluation Report, 2010

An update regarding action taken by the College in response to the five NWCCU recommendations is included in the preface of this report. A detailed follow-up report will be prepared in the fall of 2011 for recommendations 1, 2, and 3.

### Summary

The process of preparing Chapter One of this report has helped clarify the connection of mission, measurable goals, assessment, and improvement. As a result we hope to enjoy a more productive focus on mission fulfillment to meet the higher education needs of the Native people in the Pacific Northwest.