

John McCoy (Lulilalāš)

SINCE TIME IMMEMORIAL

Tribal Sovereignty in Washington

EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAM NEWSLETTER
WINTER 2024

University educational partnerships: Promoting Native knowledge in teaching and learning together

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We invite you to take **meaningful steps** toward understanding your role in this vital work, **engaging** with Native peoples, and **collaborating** to dismantle the barriers within education. Together, we can **restore** a shared responsibility for learning outcomes and positively impact Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. -*Authors*

INTRODUCTION Collectively, we have been in education, seeing generations evolve, from PK-12 Indian Education to school teachers and administrators. Where we are today, teaching and learning are in our blood. We have learned our connections and even found common relations as cousins.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES The experience of stepping onto unfamiliar ground evokes a sense of *déjà vu*, awakening ancestral knowledge and wisdom. This journey unfolds through conversation and connection with new landscapes and local people, reminding us of our shared history and the importance of understanding our roots.

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Exploring intergenerational approaches to education highlights the significance of linking past and present knowledge. The narratives passed down through generations shape our identities and encourage a contextualized understanding of education, emphasizing our role as stewards of our ancestors' legacies.

Cultural perspectives on education reveal shared views on stewardship, enriching our sense of community on a global scale. **As educational systems seek innovative methods to enhance engagement, Indigenous immersive learning models present a transformative vision.** Education becomes a way of life that is intertwined with culture and relationships, fostering a lasting connection to knowledge.

Unlike traditional educational models, Indigenous education integrates learning into daily life through experiences tied to specific places and their stories. **This approach strengthens cultural connections and allows learners to internalize concepts from various fields, creating a lifelong bond with knowledge beyond conventional learning.**

PARTNERSHIPS Establishing partnerships with Native organizations and communities is crucial for education. Programs like the Office of Native Education (ONE) and the John McCoy (Iulilaš) Since Time Immemorial (JMLSTI) initiative promote inclusivity and enhance understanding among school staff.

It's essential to recognize that discussions about Indigenous communities often focus on federally recognized tribes, which can exclude many nations unable to form treaties or affected by systemic erasure. The JMLSTI legislation, in effect since 2005, highlights the need to acknowledge diverse Indigenous heritages, including those not federally recognized but identified as historical treaty tribes.

Senator McCoy's vision emphasized the inclusion of all Native peoples in educational materials, encouraging respect for the diversity among Indigenous populations. Many individuals are now tracing their ancestral roots through family and village connections rather than solely tribal affiliation, reinforcing ties to their place-based heritage.

Whether federally recognized or not, tribes deeply value their village and familial connections, honoring their Ancestors. Historical actions, such as relocating Native peoples, have not severed these ties. For instance, families still visit ancestral burial sites, which are largely inaccessible due to governmental structures or residential private property, reflecting a deep connection to history and land. Community involvement in



University educational partnerships, continued

creating educational narratives shows the importance of embracing shared power in shaping these narratives.

In 2016, Western Washington University hosted a conference on teacher education featuring Senator John McCoy. Senator McCoy advocated for collaboration between higher education and teacher education programs. Educators working with Indigenous communities should use analytical thinking while also recognizing the importance of oral traditions and storytelling. **Emphasizing social and emotional well-being involves honoring the emotional needs of Indigenous students and adapting teaching methods to their cultural contexts.**

Despite the importance of integrating Indigenous perspectives, effective implementation remains a challenge. McCoy's advocacy for the Since Time Immemorial Tribal Sovereignty Curriculum (STI) aimed to strengthen the classroom community and engage the local Native communities. However, current teaching, learning, and assessment practices in Washington need to pay more attention to the unique contexts of Indigenous students. The teaching workforce remains predominantly non-Indigenous, creating a disparity in representation.

In honor and respect of the late Senator's legacy, the STI curriculum was renamed the John (Iulilaš) McCoy Since Time Immemorial (JMLSTI) Tribal Sovereignty Curriculum in a signed proclamation by the governor in March 2024.

RELATIONSHIPS Essential in learning, especially within Native and Indigenous communities, relationships where education intertwines with the natural environment are embodied in concepts like wahi pana. **Engaging with the land through practices such as fishing and gathering deepens connections and enriches subjects like science, math, and history.** However, contemporary education often promotes individualism and commodification, detaching us from these vital experiences.

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“Community involvement in creating educational narratives... shows the importance of embracing shared power in shaping these narratives.”



University educational partnerships, continued

A storytelling approach can foster responsibility and connectedness, as seen in discussions around sustainable practices. The nettle metaphor symbolizes how diverse experiences weave together a community's knowledge, emphasizing the importance of engaging with our senses and local contexts.

Authentic storytelling is vital to understanding history and science, highlighting the need for a community-centered approach to education. Narratives foster relationships, reinforcing cultural heritage and identity. Recognizing the significance of treaty and non-treaty tribes, we must integrate Indigenous practices into education, ensuring respect for their cultures and promoting environmental sustainability for future generations.

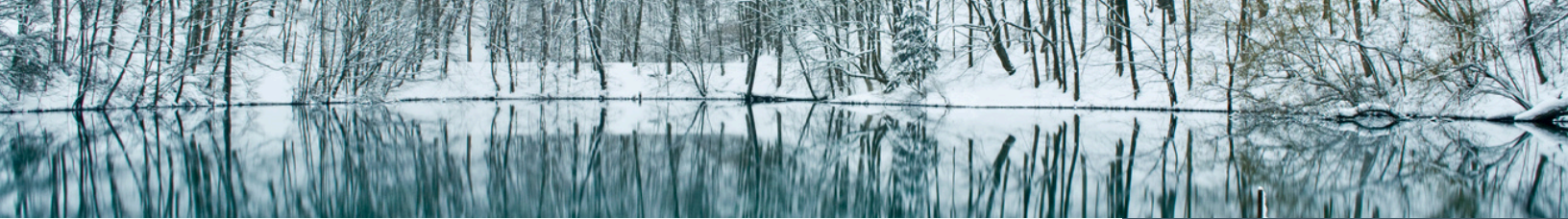
By engaging with the land, we confront historical traumas linked to land ownership and strive for a future grounded in shared responsibility and understanding.

WEAVING RELATIONAL AND IMMERSIVE APPROACHES TO EDUCATION Implementing the JMLSTI reveals concerning trends in districts that still need to engage with the program fully. This highlights the need for a holistic approach to education that values learning environments shaped by lived experiences. **Authentic learning transcends traditional classrooms, allowing sensory engagement with the land, which fosters deeper connections to diverse cultural perspectives.**

To effectively guide students, educators must embrace cultural responsiveness and understand diverse cultures, especially when teaching about indigenous peoples. There is a recognized need for targeted programs to develop Indigenous educators and administrators, enriching educational leadership with varied perspectives. Collaborative networks among educators are essential to address disparities and empower Indigenous students within the system.

As we discuss Native peoples' experiences in education, we face systemic challenges, yet there is potential for transformation. Key questions arise regarding strategies to nurture prospective educators and cultivate inclusive environments, engaging both federally recognized tribes and broader Native communities.

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University educational partnerships, continued

The current educational landscape must value experiences beyond traditional metrics, promoting social-emotional learning and well-being. This calls for accountability among educators to foster empathy and understanding, raising questions about our responsibilities in shaping the next generation.

Ultimately, education must resist complacency and promote stewardship and resilience. This will allow educators to redefine the educational narrative in alignment with sustainability and respectfully acknowledge the past.

CONCLUSION There is a pressing need to dismantle the compartmentalized structures, or "silos," in Native Education while fostering allyship and honoring tribal relationships. By embracing a collective identity among Native, Indigenous, and Aboriginal peoples, we can overcome these divisions and support holistic education. Advocacy efforts must focus on integrating practices from John McCoy (Iulilaš) Since Time Immemorial to serve all Native populations effectively.

The dissonance within educational frameworks reflects a broader lack of trust stemming from settler colonialism, highlighting the need for rebuilding this trust. Educational reform should emphasize community engagement and the importance of the land in the learning process, calling for collective action to advance Native Education.

Educators and policymakers must recognize their broader responsibilities beyond just native communities. This shared responsibility is akin to the art of weaving, emphasizing unity and collaboration. **By sharing our stories, we can tackle local, national, and global challenges, promote social-emotional well-being, and empower cultural narratives through mindful practices.**

“Educational reform should emphasize community engagement and the importance of the land in the learning process...”



University educational partnerships, continued

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STI implementation from a former Native superintendent's view

By Will Makoyiisaaminaa, Ed.D.

Implementation of John McCoy (Iulilaš) Since Time Immemorial (JMLSTI) curriculum is required by law and yet, there is a no data detailing the levels of implementation in school districts and anecdotally, there seems to be a real lack of energy around its implementation.

JMLSTI is located on OSPI's [website](#). The website is simple to navigate and provides easy-to-access and ready-to-use lessons created and vetted for accuracy and sensitivity by Native Americans from the communities and places where the lessons take place. There are many other resources available here. The intentions were to create a curriculum that is easily accessible, immediately available, with little-to-no planning needed to implement in classrooms from Kindergarten through 12th grade. There are lessons at every level about various topics and themes that create classrooms rich in stories, traditions, culture, respect, community, and relationships.

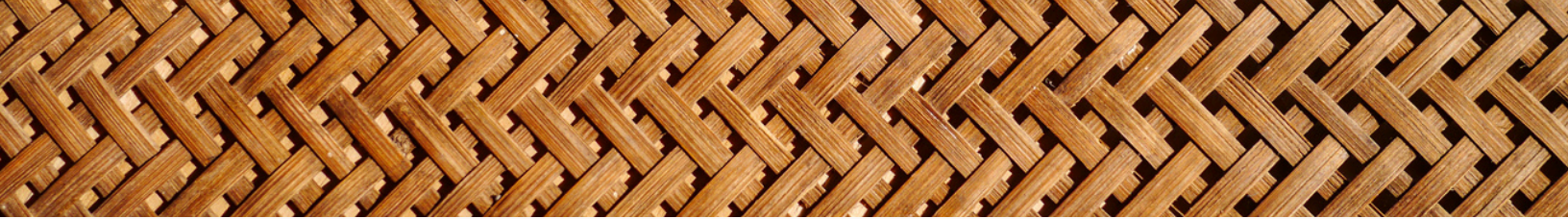
Almost ten years later, with HB 1879 recently passed, you might ask yourself how are we doing across the State of Washington in implementing the JMLSTI curriculum that is mandated by law. **There haven't been any studies to date measuring the levels of implementation of JMLSTI, however I can give you a glimpse into one district in the state of Washington where I served as superintendent.**

As an enrolled member of the Blackfeet Nation, I recognized the importance of the JMLSTI curriculum and its implementation to further the understanding of Tribal sovereignty, Tribal self-governance, and treaty rights, as well as the contemporary and historical contexts of Tribal communities in Washington State. One of my first tasks was to hire a liaison who could be the main person supporting this work. The liaison was from the local Tribal community and was well-respected. It is unfortunate that, after I resigned my position due to feeling a lack of support from the local school board, the Tribal liaison left as well, not feeling the support needed to do this important work. However, while the Tribal liaison was in this position, we made good progress.

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Since Time Immemorial: Tribal Sovereignty in Washington State curriculum was signed into law first in 2005 with Senate Bill 5433, then updated in 2015.

In 2024, House Bill 1879 codified Senator John McCoy's ancestral Lushootseed name into Washington State law, renaming the curriculum Senator John McCoy (Iulilaš) Since Time Immemorial, and his endless efforts in securing a law mandating the implementation of this important curriculum.



STI implementation, continued

We knew that we needed a plan to ensure that we were following the law (this was before the most recent update with HB 1879). We determined that we needed to know what the current levels of implementation were, and that we needed professional learning about STI to create a baseline of understanding for all educators in the district. So we started with these two big tasks. The Tribal liaison crafted a survey to send out to all teaching staff asking for a response to questions such as:

How comfortable/familiar are you with the STI Curriculum?

Which elements of the STI curriculum do you currently use?

How many STI lessons do you teach a year?

What challenges do you have implementing STI in your classroom?

The first year we surveyed the teachers the response was quite low and the n-size was too small to really determine any significant results from the survey.

The next year, we again surveyed the teachers, but this time, we really asked the teachers to respond and emphasized the importance of the survey so we could measure how well we were doing in implementing STI. The n-size of respondents the second year gave us data we could use to determine our success.

“Of the teachers who responded, only 36% were teaching at least one STI lesson during the school year. When I think about the importance of a shared understanding that comes from the implementation of STI... we really were failing all of our students and especially the approximately 40% who identified as Native American/Alaskan Native.”

Of the teachers who responded, only 36% were teaching at least one STI lesson during the school year. When I think about the importance of the shared understanding that comes from the implementation of STI around Tribal sovereignty, Tribal self-governance, and treaty rights, as well as the contemporary and historical contexts of Tribal communities, we really were failing all of our students and especially the approximately 40% who identified as Native American/Alaskan Native.

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“The learning from JMLSTI gives our children and youth a foundation for a better, and more transparent future so that all of us can live together in balance and in good, respectful, and reciprocal relationships.”

STI implementation, continued

That second year, we also really ramped up our professional development around the law mandating STI implementation, around the purpose of STI, on the use of the STI curriculum itself, on how to engage students using STI, and finally to challenge teachers to implement STI daily. Unfortunately, after three years into the superintendency in the district, I resigned and I’m unsure if these efforts are continuing. The Tribal liaison who had so much energy, time, passion, and commitment to STI implementation is also no longer in the district.

In my opinion a study needs to happen statewide that measures the success of JMLSTI implementation across all districts in the state. This will allow us a glimpse into the state of implementation and help us determine the importance each district is placing on the JMLSTI implementation that is mandated by HB 1879. **This will give us the data needed to determine what the next steps are in securing a more successful and comprehensive state-wide implementation of the JMLSTI curriculum.**

While teacher preparation programs include learning about JMLSTI in the classroom, I also strongly believe that principal and superintendent preparation programs should include a refresher on JMLSTI in the classroom. More importantly they should focus on how to best implement JMLSTI, including strategies, best practices, focal areas, steps of implementation, ideas to measure implementation, etc. This is extremely important to ensure that we are meeting the law mandating implementation, but also to ensure that we are furthering structures of educational equity, educational and social justice.

The possibilities and hopes that come with JMLSTI for a shared understanding of Tribal sovereignty, Tribal self-governance, and treaty rights, as well as the contemporary and historical contexts of Tribal communities, create opportunities for respect, reciprocity, and relationality. The learning from JMLSTI gives our children and youth a foundation for a better, and more transparent future so that all of us can live together in balance and in good, respectful, and reciprocal relationships.



Integrating social justice, John McCoy (lulilaš) Since Time Immemorial curriculum, cultural competency, and SEL into teacher education: Our journey at Yakima Valley College

By Netty Hull

INTRODUCTION

In the 2019-2021 academic years, my colleague, Dr. Julie Schillreff, and I embarked on an ambitious and rewarding journey to integrate key educational frameworks into our courses in the Bachelor of Applied Science in Teacher Education (BAS-TE) program at Yakima Valley College. With a shared commitment to social justice in education and creating inclusive classrooms, we focused on embedding the Washington State John McCoy (lulilaš) Since Time Immemorial Curriculum (JMLSTI), the Cultural Competency Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (CCDEI), and Social

Emotional Learning Standards (SEL) into our two-year, course based classes. This process wasn't just about meeting state requirements; it was about reshaping the way future educators engage with students from diverse backgrounds and dismantling systemic barriers.



“This process wasn’t just about meeting state requirements, it was about reshaping the way future educators engage with students from diverse backgrounds and dismantling systemic barriers.”

THE FOUNDATION: THE STATE’S VISION FOR INCLUSIVITY

To understand our work, it's important to recognize when and why these initiatives began. Washington State has been at the forefront of integrating culturally responsive and inclusive practices into its educational framework. The JMLSTI curriculum, which began as a state initiative, seeks to teach all students about the history, culture, and contributions of Native American tribes in Washington. This curriculum, launched statewide in 2015, made a direct impact on how we approached education at Yakima Valley College. In 2023, Washington State passed House Bill 1879 requiring districts to implement the JMLSTI Curriculum.

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Photo courtesy of Island Light Photography

“...for teachers to be effective in diverse classrooms, they needed to be grounded in historical impact, trauma, contributions of Tribal communities through collectivism, cultural competence, have strong social-emotional intelligence, and possess the skills to foster inclusive environments”

Integrating social justice, continued

Additionally, the Washington State social-emotional learning standards and cultural competency standards reflect a growing recognition of the need for educators to be equipped not only with academic knowledge but also with the skills to support the emotional and diverse needs of students, families, and communities. These frameworks were not only timely but resonated deeply with the values we both held as educators to ensure we train and empower future teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to advocate for social justice in education.

THE COLLABORATIVE FOUNDATION: A SHARED VISION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

Our commitment to these standards didn't begin at Yakima Valley College. In fact, it was during our time at a prior Teacher Prep Program when we first integrated the JMLSTI curriculum into our courses. This was our first collaboration on integrating similar frameworks into our teaching. When we joined the BAS-TE program at Yakima Valley College, it was a natural extension to bring our shared vision and experience forward.

Social justice in education is at the heart of our approach. We knew that for teachers to be effective in diverse classrooms, they needed to be grounded in historical impact, trauma, contributions of Tribal communities through collectivism, cultural competence, have strong social-emotional intelligence, and possess the skills to foster inclusive environments. We wanted our students—future teachers—to leave our program with not only the content knowledge but also the mindset and practical tools to be advocates for equity in their classrooms.

THE WORK: WEAVING STANDARDS INTO THE CLASSROOM

Integrating the JMLSTI curriculum, SEL, and CCDEI standards into our courses was no small feat. It required us to rethink how we structured our curriculum, the kinds of activities we used, and the way we engaged with our students. For us, it was essential that these elements were not just “add-ons” but rather woven into the fabric of everything we did.

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Integrating social justice, continued

John Mcoy (Iulilaš) Since Time Immemorial Curriculum (JMLSTI): We began by reviewing the JMLSTI curriculum and aligning it with our course outcomes. This wasn't about just teaching a lesson on Native American history—it was about creating a deeper, ongoing conversation throughout the course. We embedded these lessons in discussions, readings, and projects, ensuring that all students, regardless of their cultural background, had an opportunity to learn about and appreciate the history and cultural significance of the Native American tribes in Washington.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL): A focus on social-emotional learning was equally critical. We ensured that our students understood the importance of SEL both for themselves and their future students. We incorporated reflective practices, role-playing scenarios, and mindfulness techniques, creating a space for students to explore their own emotional growth while learning how to create emotionally supportive classrooms.

Cultural Competency, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (CCDEI): CCDEI standards weren't just theoretical for us—they were the lens through which we viewed every part of our teaching. From course readings that highlighted diverse voices to classroom discussions that centered on equity, we worked hard to foster a space where every student felt seen, valued, and heard. We also used real-world case studies to highlight the challenges and opportunities that come with teaching in diverse, multicultural classrooms.

CHALLENGES AND TRIUMPHS: REFLECTING ON OUR WORK

The process of integrating these standards into our curriculum wasn't always smooth. There were challenges, particularly when it came to finding time to adequately cover all the required material while ensuring these important components weren't sidelined. But through creativity, collaboration, and a shared commitment to our mission, we were able to develop a cohesive and meaningful approach that resonated with our students.

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“This wasn't about just teaching a lesson on Native American history—it was about creating a deeper, ongoing conversation throughout the course.”



“The triumphs came in the form of student feedback, the ways in which our future educators began to internalize and apply these concepts in their own teaching practices, and the community that began to form around this work.”

Integrating social justice, continued

The triumphs came in the form of student feedback, the ways in which our future educators began to internalize and apply these concepts in their own teaching practices, and the community that began to form around this work. It was incredibly fulfilling to watch our students grow in confidence, not just as future teachers, but as advocates for social justice in education.

CONCLUSION: THE IMPACT ON OUR STUDENTS AND BEYOND

Looking back on this journey, I’m proud of what we accomplished in the BAS-TE program at Yakima Valley College.

We didn’t just meet state standards—we helped shape the next generation of educators into culturally competent, emotionally intelligent, and socially just leaders in the classroom.

This work was not just about compliance or meeting state mandates. It was about deeply embedding the values of equity, inclusion, and respect for all cultures into the very fabric of how we teach and how we expect our future teachers to teach.

And while the work continues, I’m excited about the ripple effects it will have as these future educators go on to transform classrooms across the state. It was a privilege to collaborate with my colleague on this important project, and I am hopeful that our collective efforts will inspire even more educators to prioritize social justice and cultural competency in their work.



NIEA 2024 overview from Palm Springs, CA

By Dr. Dawn Hardison-Stevens
and Sui-Lan Ho'okano

The **National Indian Education Association (NIEA)** held its 55th Annual Convention and Trade Show from October 9th to 12th, 2024, in Palm Springs, California. This significant gathering brought together over 2,000 participants, including Native educators, students, tribal leaders, and advocates. It emphasized the importance of collaboration within the Native education community and highlighted the crucial role NIEA plays as the most prominent Native education conference in the United States.

The work is to create an environment where everyone feels warmly welcomed into conversations with Native peoples. There must be an approach to this topic that avoids becoming fragile or defensive. The work in education is to reevaluate our authentic identities as Native and Indigenous peoples and what it truly means to gather and honor the work of our ancestors for future generations.

Let's engage in meaningful dialogue about Indigenous experiences and perspectives, acknowledging that they may differ based on blood quantum, federal recognition, treaties, land displacement, and internal community dynamics. While Indigenous people understand the fight against white racism and American colonization, particularly for Native and Hawaiian communities, what it means to do the necessary work within the communities needs to be considered. Now is the time for honest conversations that address the shifts needed to serve Native communities better.

The NIEA Trade Show is incredible, with Native vendors sharing their products, from handmade to Native-specific education materials and academic opportunities. These events bring forth a Native community of collaboration in sharing ideas and promoting education with Native perspectives. This sharing is geared towards the incredible work around "Indian Country," a federal law term encompassing land held in trust for Native American tribes, including reservations and allotments. This designation has deep cultural significance tied to Indigenous peoples' spirit, pride, and community, reflecting the historical and ongoing connections to lands which act as an essential intersection of legal, social, and cultural realities for Native Americans.

THEME AND FOCUS This year's conference theme, "***Education Sovereignty: A Declaration of Change***," reflects a commitment to addressing contemporary challenges in Native education while fostering a vision for the future. The presentations featured contributions from Native peoples across various tribes and communities within the United States, instilling a sense of hope and determination for advancements in Native education.

NIEA 2024 overview, continued

PURPOSE AND ADVOCACY The primary purpose of NIEA is to advocate for policies that foster self-determination and develop culturally grounded learning opportunities for Native students. By empowering Native communities, NIEA facilitates the cultivation of skills, knowledge, and voices necessary to nurture the strengths and resilience of Native youth.

Educators need to consider how to engage with history and identity while recognizing Indigenous historical context. It's important to discuss the impact of colonization in a way that fosters understanding. There needs to be an acknowledgment that colonization is part of Indigenous reality and a shift in consciousness to understand that it is also part of the narrative. It's crucial to move away from viewing it as something separate; rather it is intertwined because of our familial-raised framework. Embracing this reality is not necessarily a negative aspect.

Developing effective education policies and recognizing our responsibilities within our communities is essential. How can this collaboration with others be effective if there is a struggle to address issues like lateral oppression, lateral harm, or the divisive "us versus them" mentality? The concepts of blood quantum and federally recognized tribes highlight essential aspects of heritage that should be honored, as they come with certain inherited rights tied to ancestors. However, there must also be opportunities for those who do

not have treaties with other nations or are not federally recognized. Fostering restorative practices that enhance health, wellness, and shared ecosystems is crucial. Excluding segments of a community only perpetuates the very colonialism that we seek to dismantle. While there is recognition and respect for the privileges of federally recognized individuals, there must not be a disregard for those who fall outside this framework, as doing so only continues cycles of oppression.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT The organization has its roots in the "First Convocation of American Indian Scholars" held at Princeton University in 1969. During this pivotal event, educators discussed significant concerns related to the education of Native children. This meeting underscored the need for continued discourse and collaborative efforts to enhance educational practices. Consequently, NIEA was incorporated in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on August 21, 1970, to improve educational

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Perhaps one way to move forward is by acknowledging the complexities of being Native and Indigenous, considering our diverse recognition statuses, cultural connections, and lived experiences.

NIEA 2024 overview, continued

systems and preserve language and cultural programs. NIEA is governed by a 12-member elected Board of Directors composed of American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians. The current Executive Director, Diana Cournoyer, oversees the organization's operations. Board members serve a four-year term (or two years for student members), with elections held during the Annual Convention.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS Perhaps one way to move forward is by acknowledging the complexities of being Native and Indigenous, considering our diverse recognition statuses, cultural connections, and lived experiences. We can create opportunities for participants to share their stories, fostering empathy and dismantling lateral oppression and the biases we may have developed due to our own experiences.

- **Engaging with history and identity**
 - Recognizing historical context
 - Discussions on the impact of colonization, blood quantum policies, land displacement, and treaty rights
 - Incorporate historical education to ensure a shared understanding of systemic challenges and their legacy
 - **Exploring identity and belonging**
 - Acknowledge the complexities of being Native, such as differences in federal recognition, cultural connections, and lived experiences
 - Create opportunities for participants to share their stories, fostering empathy and dismantling inter-lateral oppression
 - **Embodying a community call to action**
 - This is more than just a call to action; it's a call to community action. It's about fostering a collective understanding of our needs and inviting everyone to the table to discuss what this means for the health and wellness of our communities Together, we can identify specific issues impacting us and collaborate on solutions. Many communities have successfully engaged in this process, especially when reclaiming sovereignty and utilizing our ancestral ways of knowing
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NIEA 2024 overview, continued

Historically, we gathered in circles to address challenges—every community has its unique approach to coming together and tackling pressing concerns.

- **Embracing Kāhea**

- This approach integrates the spiritual, cultural, and relational dimensions essential for building a cohesive and empowered Native Indigenous community. By facilitating these crucial conversations, the hope is to nurture a future rooted in sovereignty, resilience, and shared purpose. Invoking—speaking out to the universe—signifies much more in attempting to articulate the needs of Native and Indigenous people through the English language, which often falls short of conveying true intentions. While many Indigenous people understand messages more clearly in their native languages, there is a recognition that not everyone shares this background. Nonetheless, if we express what we strive to communicate in the Indigenous and Aboriginal languages, the clarity of messaging would be significantly enhanced, as language encapsulates what we aim to convey.

Today, many face numerous issues, and it's essential to conduct regular self-check-ins. The resilience we aim for and the solutions we seek should be grounded in hope and love. There needs to be continuing dialogues in the spirit of Aloha, acknowledging the heavier topics and celebrating the inspiring stories of hope and love emerging from our communities. This ensures consideration when dwelling in challenging spaces and highlights the beauty within collective efforts.

The following October 2025 NIEA conference will be hosted in Spokane, Washington. Attendees are encouraged to engage deeply with Native philosophies and perspectives, fostering educational practices that align with the needs and aspirations of local Tribes and Native communities. This commitment to engagement and transformation underscores NIEA's ongoing mission to nurture and advance Native education. How can you further support building this framework or preparing for specific events? There is hope to see you all there on the Kalispel and Spokane Peoples lands!

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<https://www.ncai.org/news/ncai-response-to-usage-of-the-term-indian-country>



Author bios

Dawn Hardison-Stevens, Ph.D., has an Ancestral history from peoples and lands of the Omushkeg Cree-Metis/Anishinabek Ojibway/Cowlitz/Steilacoom, where she is a council member. As an Assistant Professor in Native American Education at UW-Tacoma, she has been recognized as the 2024 Higher Education Educator of the Year by the Washington State Indian Education Association based on a rich background in PK-12 education since 1987. Before entering higher education, Dawn worked Title VI Indian Education, taught high school, and coached multi-state tripartite partnerships between Tribal schools or high schools with large Native populations, higher education partners, and respective Native communities. She promotes collaborative teaching and leadership, emphasizing Indigenous representation and storytelling in land-based understandings. She expresses often, "We are our Ancestor's Future: promoting legacies."

Sui-Lan Ho'okano's current journey is PESB Program Manager for Curriculum Transformation and Tribal Liaison. Sui-Lan's roots are from Moku o Keawe (Island of Hawaii). Mother of five, grandmother of five, and a large Ohana (family). Sui-Lan is a multidisciplinary educator, facilitator, and narrative strategist. She has navigated over 30 years working with youth, educators, and cross-sector leaders locally, nationally, and globally to harness the power of narrative, co-imagine, and share stories in building equitable educational learning experiences. Lecturer at UW Tacoma, Seattle, and Western Washington MED, AIS, and Anth programs, her research and consulting work focuses on community environmental asset-based storytelling, racial equity, narrative change, healing, culturally responsive leadership, and organizational development. Recently featured in the 2024 Aurora Institute Competency Blog "[Voices of Indigenous Educators Series](#)," Indigenous Climate Science Learning professional series [CLIMETIME](#) since 2021, featured example in the Washington State Board of Education 2020 Mastery-Based Credits and Learning Policy [Senate Bill 5249](#): valuing place-based experiential learning experiences through Indigenous epistemology, and culturally responsive Indigenous practices ([CRISP](#)).

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William Makoyiisaamainaa, EdD, is enrolled with the Blackfeet Nation and a Visiting Assistant Professor in Education Leadership at Woodring College of Education at Western Washington University. Will has served in public education as a paraeducator, teacher, CTE teacher, assistant principal, principal, director, superintendent, and Visiting Assistant Professor, always uplifting the voices of non-dominant students and their families and advocating for social, educational, and environmental justice. Will also serves on the Northwest Indian College Institutional Review Board.

EVENTS

Holiday Native Art Market

Dec. 13-14, **Olympia**

s'g'wi g'wi ? altxw: House of Welcome

<https://www.evergreen.edu/houseofwelcome/events>

Cowlitz Winter Bazaar

Dec. 14, 2024, **DuPont**

<https://tockify.com/tribalevents/detail/96/1734199200000>

Duwamish Holiday Native Art Market

Dec. 14, 2024, **Seattle**

<https://www.duwamishtribe.org/events/2024/12/14/holiday-native-art-market>

Cowlitz 2024 qáwm' (Camas) planting

Dec. 14, 2024, **Toledo**

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2024-qawm-camas-planting-tickets-1087072265409>

Native Makers Market

Dec. 14, 2024, **Suquamish**

<https://suquamish.nsn.us/event/native-makers-market/>

Nooksack Christmas Craft Fair

Dec. 14, 2024, **Everson**

<https://nooksacktribe.org/nooksack-events/>

Cowlitz Holiday Bazaar

Dec. 15, 2024, **Toledo**

<https://www.cowlitz.org/events>

Swinomish Holiday Bazaar

Dec. 18, 2024, **Anacortes**

<https://www.swinomish-nsn.gov/swinomish-tribal-senate/page/swinomish-holiday-bazaar-2>

Annual Last Stop Shop Christmas Bazaar

Dec. 19, 20, and 21st, 2024, **Olympia**

<http://www.nisqually-nsn.gov/index.php/calendar/events/december-19th-20th-21st-5th-annual-last-stop-shop-christmas-bazaar/>

Nisqually Winter Moon Ceremony

Dec. 21-22nd, 2024, **DuPont**

<http://www.nisqually-nsn.gov/index.php/calendar/events/december-21st-22nd-winter-moon-celebration/>

Puyallup Tribe's Christmas Parade

Dec. 21, 2024, **Puyallup**

<https://www.puyalluptribe-nsn.gov/event/christmas-parade-2/>

United Indians Native Art Market

Dec. 21-22, 2024, **Seattle**

<https://unitedindians.org/nativeartmarket/>

Chehalis Pop-up Christmas Shoppe

Dec. 21-22, 2024, **Oakville**

<https://www.chehalis tribe.org/event/christmas-bazaar-december-21-and-22/>



Join us to learn and share!

STI
educator preparation
program planning team
monthly meetings

Contact
Leiani.sherwin@k12.wa.us
for dates and times



Resources

More resources on JMLSTI are available at:

- **PESB** - [JMLSTI](#)
- **OSPI** - [Office of Native Education](#)

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