



**2024 Annual Convention  
Ridgefield, Washington**

**RESOLUTION #2024 – 34**

**“SUPPORT OF WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY’S NATIVE  
AMERICAN SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM AND REPARATIVE JUSTICE  
FOR LAND-GRANT HISTORY”**

**PREAMBLE**

We, the members of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians of the United States, invoking the divine blessing of the Creator upon our efforts and purposes, in order to preserve for ourselves and our descendants rights secured under Indian Treaties, Executive Orders and benefits to which we are entitled under the laws and constitution of the United States and several states, to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the Indian people, to preserve Indian cultural values, and otherwise promote the welfare of the Indian people, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution:

**WHEREAS**, the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) are representatives of and advocates for natural, regional, and specific tribal concerns; and

**WHEREAS**, ATNI is a regional organization comprised of American Indians/Alaska Natives and Tribes in the states of Washington, Idaho, Oregon, Montana, Nevada, Northern California and Alaska; and

**WHEREAS**, the health, safety, welfare, education, economic and employment opportunity, and preservation of cultural and natural resources are primary goals and objectives of ATNI; and

**WHEREAS**, Washington State University is a public land-grant research university committed to providing practical education for all, engaging in scholarly inquiry that benefits society, and sharing expertise to positively impact the state and its communities; and

**WHEREAS**, the Morrill Act of 1862 established land-grant institutions by providing each state with “public” and federal lands, which is traced back to the dispossession of Native American lands often taken by coercive means, violent acts, and the disregard of treaties; and

**WHEREAS**, Washington State received 90,081 acres of “public” and federal lands in 1890 through the Morrill Act to sell or retain these lands to establish WSU and the lands retained were placed in trust and are now managed by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources for inclusive use of WSU, and the annual revenue from retained lands contributes to the Agricultural College Permanent Fund (RCW 43.79.136). This permanent fund is managed by Washington State Investment Board and can only be granted for construction of new buildings, debt service on new buildings, and the maintenance through legislative authority; and

**WHEREAS**, WSU has a longstanding Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with regional Tribes and established a Native American Advisory Board (NAAB) in 1997 and through guidance of the NAAB, several programs and centers were developed such as the Native American Student Center (Pullman Campus) and student services, the Native American Health Sciences and student services, the Tribal Nation Building Leadership Courses and Mentorship program, the Native Teaching and Learning Center, the Plateau People’s Web Portal for Cultural and Digital Archiving, the Center for Native American Research and Collaboration, and created several other Native youth pathway programs, undergraduate and graduate retention programs, among others; and

**WHEREAS**, WSU is also committed to increasing Native American faculty and staff to support Native American students, research, initiatives, and Tribal engagement and, currently, WSU has over 50 Native American faculty and staff members and has collaborated with the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation and the Kalispel Tribe of Indians to establish two WSU Tribal Extension Programs; and

**WHEREAS**, despite these efforts, Native American students continue to experience the largest financial need gap compared to other students and tend to have the most dependents while attending college, which remains a major barrier to college access and success; and

**WHEREAS**, WSU, as a land-grant institution benefiting from Native American lands, has a responsibility to support the education of Native American students and to address this financial disparity and the land grant history; and

**WHEREAS**, WSU received a 1.7 million Washington State budget proviso, sponsored by Representative Lekanoff, during the 2023-2025 legislative biennium to establish and pilot a Native American scholarship program to help meet the unmet need up to full cost of attendance (tuition, housing, books, fees, etc.) after FAFSA and all other financial aid is applied; and

**WHEREAS**, through discussions with WSU’s Native American Advisory Board (NAAB), Tribal listening sessions, and meetings with Tribal Education Managers across the state, WSU established eligibility requirements and a mentoring program to support the recruitment, retention, and graduation success of Native American students and the scholarship program was successfully implemented, allocating 80% of funding to members of federally

recognized Tribes in Washington State and federally recognized Tribes whose current and traditional lands include Washington, and 20% to Washington State residents who are members of federally recognized Tribes outside of these areas; and

**WHEREAS**, on June 17, 2024, the WSU Board of Regents approved the Native American Scholarship programs as one of their four 2025-27 Biennial Operating Budget Requests from the state, showing this is one of their top priorities even during fiscally challenging times for WSU; now


**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that ATNI endorses and supports Washington State University's request to the Washington State Legislature for a 2.2 million biennial operating budget request to continue the Native American Scholarship Program, which aims to help meet the full cost of attendance for undergraduate students from federally recognized Tribes based on the eligibility determined through Tribal engagement and consultation; and


**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Native American Scholarship Program at WSU will be essential in ensuring that Native American students have access to higher education and will provide the necessary support to persist and graduate from WSU, a land grant institution, and share documented best practices with other higher education institutions; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that ATNI requests the Washington State Legislature approve WSU's \$2.2 million biennial operating budget to sustain the Native American Scholarship program as this funding is vital in addressing the historical injustices of the land-grant system, which is linked to the dispossession of Native lands under the Morrill Act of 1862.

**CERTIFICATION**

The foregoing resolution was adopted at the 2024 Annual Convention of the Affiliated Tribes of the Northwest Indians, held at ilani Casino Resort, Ridgefield, Washington on September 29 – October 3, 2024 with a quorum present.

  
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Leonard Forsman, President

  
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Norma Jean Louie, Secretary