



November 2025: A Newsletter for Salish Kootenai College

Integrity ~ Respect ~ Relationships ~ Reciprocity ~ Equity ~ Equality

Upcoming Dates

November 10th

Virtual Bookstore Opens for Winter

November 11th

Veterans Day Holiday

November 19th, 12:00 - 2:00

In-Person Employee Meeting

November 20th

Harvest Dinner

November 21st

Last Day of Classes

President's Welcome

As we begin the 8th week of the term, the week following Founders' Week and Inauguration, I find myself filled with a mix of gratitude, excitement, and solemn reflection. In my various roles at Salish Kootenai College (SKC), I've always paused to be grateful for the wisdom, vision, and values shared by those who came before us. Now, as the sixth President of SKC, I do this with a renewed purpose—seeking direction for our future.

Over the last few weeks, I have found myself pausing to reflect on the teachings shared by our Founders, Elders, Ancestors, and former Presidents. Their purpose, wisdom, values, and vision will continue to provide guidance for the next leg of SKC's journey as we walk it together.

Honoring Service and Community

Last week, we had the opportunity to extend a special thanks to Audrey Plouffe and Cleo Kenmille for their years of dedicated service to SKC's students, campus, and community. I would like to take a moment to reiterate that gratitude - lemlmtš ~ hu sukiḡukni—thank you to both of you.

The enduring gifts you have shared have shaped this College and contribute daily to the success of our students, employees, and SKC as a whole.

I also want to acknowledge and appreciate our Salish Kootenai College employees, students, and the members of our larger, interconnected communities. Your well-being remains our top priority. Without the wisdom, values, and vision that each of you brings, SKC would not be where we are today.

I am grateful for this opportunity to reassure our students, colleagues, and friends. Although we are walking this journey during uncertain and challenging times, and things are challenging, we move forward with the same core charge: strengthening partnerships and collaboration to ensure we are meeting the needs of our students and the Tribal Nations we serve by uplifting the cultures of our Séliš, Ksanka, and Qlispé peoples; strengthening our workforce, academic and research skills; and service to community as the preeminent Tribal College in the nation.

Moving forward requires that we work together, with every team member being a valuable contributor. As we collaboratively shape our future, be assured that your voice and continued involvement in supporting growth, professional development, and well-being will be prioritized. This includes taking a hard look at what's working and what we need to improve—a significant task when everyone is already carrying a full load.

Throughout this process, I strive to remember that truly transformative change is a gradual and slow process. This echoes the teaching Atwen Incashola shared with me: good things take time. I ask each of you to do the same as you continue walking this path with us. The voice, perspectives, and gifts you share are invaluable to our SKC students, campus, and community. Please, hang in there with us.

Open Enrollment is Coming Soon!

It is our time for annual Open Enrollment for health insurance and other benefits. This is the one time each year when you can review and make changes to your benefits coverage for the upcoming 2026 plan year.

We want to be transparent about upcoming changes and would like to inform you that, unfortunately, premiums for all or most SKC healthcare plans will increase.

We are pleased to announce that we will be increasing SKC's contribution to the *Self + One* and *Self + Family* options. The *Self* option will remain the same.

Once Open Enrollment officially begins, we will send an email with the detailed 2026 premium rates attached for your review.

For questions about Open Enrollment, plan details, or the premium changes, please contact our HR team:

- David Miller, HR Benefits Specialist:
david_miller@skc.edu
- Venessa Sandoval, HR Director:
venessa_sandoval@skc.edu

SKC Board of Directors

The current members of the SKC Board of Directors, as per the Bylaws, are:

- Eldena Bear Don't Walk, Chairperson
- Germaine White, 1st Vice Chairperson
- Vernon Finley, 2nd Vice Chairperson
- Jim Durglo, Board Member
- Selina Kenmille, Board Member
- Arrianna Henry, Board Member
- Janeal McDonald, Board Member

Please note that SKC Board of Directors meetings are open to the public and offer opportunities for public participation at the beginning of each meeting (typically between 12:30 and 1:00 p.m.).

You can attend in person in the Big Knife Conference Room or via Zoom: <https://skc-edu.zoom.us/j/84271424327>.

Upcoming Board Meetings are scheduled for:

- November 14th
- December 12th
- January 23rd, with respect for cultural activities

The Executive Council and Professional Development

We are deeply committed to strengthening the core of SKC's leadership team. To ensure a unified path forward, the Executive Council and I are prioritizing our internal communication and reinforcing our working relationships. This is supported by our ongoing "Dare to Lead" trainings, which are scheduled to be completed in December. By focusing on building a strong, cohesive team, we will be better equipped to deliver meaningful, culturally aligned support to all our SKC employees, students, and the broader community.

Building on this strengthened leadership, I am equally excited to announce that we're expanding professional development (PD) opportunities for employees. We intend to offer several optional, highly encouraged, and potentially incentivized opportunities during the first weeks of Winter Break. We are gathering feedback from the Staff and Faculty Councils to shape the offerings and look toward SKC's long-term future with gratitude, having applied for funding from the Arthur M. Blank Foundation. This initiative will enable us to streamline our campus sustainability efforts and youth development tracks. The goal is to determine shared objectives this Spring so we can move into deeper planning and next steps next summer.

Improving both internal and external communication remains one of my top priorities for the Salish Kootenai College. We are deeply committed to bringing as many voices and perspectives to the table as possible. My focus is on creating multi-directional communication channels that enhance dialogue with the Board, the Executive Team, the Councils, and all our valued stakeholders. We are awaiting funding confirmation to add a dedicated team member who will lead strategic, collaborative marketing and communication efforts across campus.

Fall Enrollment Update



We are thrilled to share the positive trends from our latest Fall 2025 Enrollment Report (Census 1)—our numbers are up! Lemłmtš ~ hu sukiłqúkni!

These strong gains demonstrate our SKC community's unwavering commitment to fulfilling the College's mission.

Key highlights include:

- Student Headcount is 697.
- Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) is 725.
- Tribal Student Enrollment is 71%.
- Flathead Reservation Permanent Residence Students: At 66%.

Gratitude and Community Strength

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude—lemłmtš ~ hu sukiłqúkni—to the many students, employees, and community members who have gone above and beyond in the last few weeks!

Your generosity and willingness to contribute to so many recent events made them successful. This includes the incredible effort put in for our presidential inauguration; the excitement of the Trunk or Treat and Halloween Carnival; the inspiration of the Premiere, Preview Day, and the Founders' Wall Honoring; and the cultural vitality of our Dry Meat Social, stickgames, and Native games.

Your participation and enthusiasm also made the SKC Tailgate and the SKC-CSKT All-Star and Alumni games a huge success! It was a special honor to begin the basketball season by awarding Championship rings to the Lady Bison, who have won the AIHEC Division I title for two consecutive years!

Campus-wide participation doesn't just make events happen—it fundamentally makes our community stronger, more vibrant, and deeply connected. I would like to thank each of our students, the campus community, and the larger community for your ongoing participation. As we look ahead, we encourage everyone to continue showing up and lending a hand—your energy and involvement are vital for keeping this spirit of success alive. <https://skc.edu/athletics>.



Don't Forget...



- **Veterans Honoring and Powwow is this Saturday, November 8th, 10:00 am - 11:00 pm**, JMHC Gym. Recognition dinner and powwow to honor all veterans.
- **Harvest Dinner - November 20th, 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm**
- See the email regarding payroll deductions that was sent out on Thursday, November 6th to **support the SKC Food Pantry**.
- **The Auditors will be here November 17th - 21st, 2025.** The Big Knife Conference Room will be unavailable during this time. It is important to note that the Business Office is extremely busy as it prepares for the upcoming visit. They will do their best to respond in a timely manner.

W4W Named “Favorite Community Project”

The Women 4 Wellness (W4W) Health Fair, hosted by the SKC Center for Prevention & Wellness, was named the 2025 Best of Lake County winner for “Favorite Community Project.” In 2025, W4W proudly served 1,273 participants, continuing a legacy that has reached more than 16,000 community members over the past 15 years.



1 - 2 - FREE!

The Montana State Legislators expanded the Montana University System’s 1- 2, *FREE!* program to include Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs). This allows eligible high school students to take up to 6 college credits tuition-free—covered directly by the State.



Indigenous Visionaries

Salish Kootenai College is pleased to announce that Kim Barber and Venessa Sandoval have been selected as recipients of the 2025-2026 American Indian College Fund Indigenous Visionaries: Women’s Leadership Program. Stacie Pretty on Top and Corinna Littlewolf participated in the 2024-2025 cohort.



Charge Into Your Future.

Your future, your path. Choose from over 41 diverse programs—from workforce certificates to master's degrees—and apply to SKC today to start your journey.

[Apply to SKC Today](#)

Interested in Donating to SKC?

Help cultivate the next generation of community leaders by supporting SKC's unique educational framework that encourages lives of purpose and leadership.

[Donate to SKC](#)

SALISH KOOTENAI COLLEGE
GROUNDED IN TRADITION. CHARGING INTO THE FUTURE.

