



# Leech Lake Tribal College

*Gaa'Oziskwaajimekaag Gabe-gil'owigamiz*

Newsletter • Summer 2017





**Mission:**  
Leech Lake Tribal College provides quality higher education grounded in Anishinaabe values.

**Vision:**  
To be recognized as a center of academic excellence that advances the Anishinaabe world view and empowers life-long learners who are fully engaged citizens, stewards, and leaders.

The Annual Report/Wiindamaage newsletter is a publication highlighting events, activities, and news of the Leech Lake Tribal College and associated organizations. The Leech Lake Tribal College provides accredited higher education grounded in Anishinaabe values to the Leech Lake Community and surrounding areas.

The goal of the publication is to provide students and community with information and insight into the development of the college.

Wiindamaage College Newsletter; Summer 2017 Issue. Produced by the Office of Institutional Advancement. It is published twice per year and distributed to friends, supporters, and advocates of LLTC. Please direct any comments to the Multimedia and Marketing specialist by phone at (218)-335-4229.

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# From The President's Desk

Boozhoo Giinawaa,

It is an honor to serve as the Interim President of the Leech Lake Tribal College, a role through which I serve the people of the Leech Lake Nation and beyond. The College's mission is clear: to provide quality higher education grounded in Anishinaabe values. My best early assessment of our success comes from the interactions I have had with our students who graduated this year and with our past graduates. It is the stories of our graduates more than anything else that will determine the degree of our success. Within our 590 graduate numbers, there are 590 individual stories to be told.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank all of the people who have come before me to serve in the important role of President, as well as all others who have served in equally important roles throughout our 26-year existence. The Board of Trustees, all of whom serve as representatives of our Leech Lake community to provide programmatic and fiscal direction; the faculty who serve on the all-important "front line" with our students; and the staff who play a supportive role across all areas of operation must be recognized and validated. All entities are needed for the successful operation of our College, and it is my job to provide key leadership that will create the conditions for all of us to function effectively. As I begin the important work that lies ahead by giving thanks to all people who have served this College in some capacity, it is incumbent upon me to recognize the source of our very existence: the Leech Lake Tribal Council. Our missions are similar in that we are all situated to serve the people of our Nation. We will do this best by working together.

My promise to all of you is that I will work hard to uphold the Anishinaabe values that are the foundation of our goodness and our greatness. I will be prayerful and reflective in all decisions. In keeping with our Seven Grandfather Teachings, I will work to uphold the values in the following ways:

- |                             |                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Gwayakwaadiziwin (Honesty): | by speaking the truth and being open in my communication.                                   |
| Debwewin (Truth):           | by accepting reality and facing it and by avoiding hypocrisy.                               |
| Nibwaakaawin (Wisdom):      | by listening to others and seeking knowledge they possess; by being reflective.             |
| Zaagi'idiwin (Love):        | by being caring and compassionate of others and helping all to heal whenever possible.      |
| Manaaji'idiwin (Respect):   | by treating all fairly and working to ensure greater equity in all instances as needed.     |
| Inendizowin (Humility):     | by knowing that I am a tool for the Creator and in this position to serve others.           |
| Zoongide'iwin (Courage):    | by being bold to envision possibilities that will take us in positive ways into the future. |

I welcome this opportunity to contribute to the Leech Lake Nation by working hard to grow and develop our College. I have always maintained the idea that this is a "we job" and not an "I job," so I look forward to working side by side with all of you to do this important work. Miigwech!



Dr. Patricia Broker, Interim President

# Leadership and Commitment to Education



**Arnold Dahl-Wooley**  
Chairperson

Mr. Dahl-Wooley is a Native American business owner from the Bena area. He has immense knowledge of the local area and advance business knowledge to guide the College in most practical avenue.

Mr. Dahl-Wooley is involved in many social causes and is a strong advocate for human rights and social justice for all people.



**Gary Charwood**  
Vice-Chairperson

Mr. Charwood is a spiritual leader in the Leech Lake Nation. His involvement with the community and as an elder help guide the Board of Trustees to ensure the true values of the grandfather teachings are practiced in the grand outcome of decision making.

Mr. Charwood is deeply invested in the youth of Leech Lake and active member of area youth programs.



**Rochelle Pemberton**  
Secretary

Ms. Pemberton has extensive financial knowledge and background in higher-education which help guide the College to make financially sound decisions.

Ms. Pemberton is engrained in the community, taking part in many charitable events for the benefit of the Leech Lake area.

Ms. Pemberton earned her Associates Degree from LLTC, Bachelors of Science in Accounting from Bemidji State University. She is currently pursuing her Masters with Capella University.



**Rebecca Graves**  
Treasurer

Ms. Graves experience as the LLBO Internal Audit Director allows for critical insight in financial management and sustainability of the College. Her knowledge in this area helps ensure the Board operates at optimal standards.

She has her associate's degree, bachelor's degree, and a master degree from the University of Minnesota Duluth. Her academic and professional experience make her an asset for the College and the community at large.



**Donna Cloud**  
Elder Member

The Board has policy responsibilities for system planning, academic programs, fiscal management, personnel, admissions requirements, tuition and fees, and rules and regulations. The Board of Trustees act on the benefit and interest of the community and the College to ensure quality higher-education for future generations.



**Veronica Veaux**  
Member

The Board has policy responsibilities for system planning, academic programs, fiscal management, personnel, admissions requirements, tuition and fees, and rules and regulations. The Board of Trustees act on the benefit and interest of the community and the College to ensure quality higher-education for future generations.



**Yvonne Wilson**  
Member

Ms. Wilson is a life long learner who has been teaching elementary students for the past 32 years. She coordinates King's elementary annual pow-wow.

Ms. Wilson recieved her B.A. from Macalester College, B.S. and a Masters in Elementary Education from Bemidji State University.



**Dennis Banks**  
Honorary Member

Mr. Banks is a spiritual leader and recognizable member of the Board. He brings insight of culture and values to the Board. He is an honorary member of the Board to provide guidance and reflection of the Anishinaabe values.

Leech Lake Tribal College is governed by an elected seven-member Board of Trustees and a honorary member. The Board has policy responsibilities for system planning, academic programs, fiscal management, personnel, admissions requirements, tuition and fees, and rules and regulations. The Board of Trustees act on the benefit and interest of the community and the College to ensure quality higher-education for future generations.

Miigwech to all past and present Board of Trustees members for providing leadership for the College to succeed and grow. The College's 27-year history is due in part of leadership and visionary guidance of these individuals.

# An easier path to Bemidji State:

## BSU to sign dual-enrollment agreements with four tribal colleges

By Joe Bowen Originally published in the Bemidji Pioneer May 11, 2017.

BEMIDJI—Graduates from four Minnesota tribal colleges will soon be presented with a smoother path to Bemidji State University.

Leaders from Leech Lake, Red Lake, White Earth, and Fond du Lac tribal colleges are set to sign four dual-enrollment agreements with the university Friday. That means tribal college students who finish their two-year degrees are automatically accepted at BSU and can start studying there without an admission fee.

“Our goal is to have their students continue on and come to BSU, be supported by us, and reach their goals, get their degrees and go off and do the positive things they want to do in their communities,” said Bill Blackwell, Jr., the executive director of BSU’s American Indian Resource Center, who helped orchestrate the agreements. A \$20 application fee can sometimes be a hurdle for students on a budget, he said. “When you have a defined path that’s laid out for someone, it’s much easier to follow that path than it is to try and go create your own path.”

The agreement also means that tribal college students will be able to consult with the university’s academic and career advisers before they head to BSU. Any graduate of the tribal colleges can take advantage of the new agreements, even if they receive their diploma years ago.

BSU staff hope to increase the number of American Indian students enrolled at the university, which sits near three of Minnesota’s largest reservations and on a lake that was once an Ojibwe village. Blackwell said the university has granted over 1,000 diplomas to American Indian students, had the first American Indian studies program in the state, and put together the world’s first Ojibwe language program.

About four percent of the 5,000-strong student body identifies as American Indian, and Blackwell said he hopes to bump that number to 10 percent. The agreements, then, could make higher education more accessible for American Indian students and the university more diverse.

“The more diverse your campus is, and the more diverse populations you have around it, the better off every student is going to be prepared to go out into a very diverse world and work,” Blackwell said. “If you’re going to work in Northern Minnesota, you are going to work with American Indians at some sort.”

He said he’s not sure how many more students the new agreements might send to BSU and that the move isn’t related to the university’s projected budget deficit. Staff at three of the four tribal colleges reported 14-34 two-year graduates each. Fond du Lac staff did not return a request for comment.





# Azhegiwe Bagwajaya'ii

## He/She Returns to Nature/Wilderness

Cate Belleveau - STEM Project Outreach LLTC July 7, 2017



Leech Lake Tribal College *Preserving Culture Through Education*

Sixteen youth from the Leech Lake Nation gathered for Leech Lake Tribal College's first-ever Azhegiwe Bagwajaya'ii — Earth Systems Science Camp—from June 26th – 29th, 2017. The students ranged from 8th graders to high school seniors and came from Trek North Charter School, Bemidji High School, and Cass Lake – Bena Middle and High Schools, as well as homeschooling backgrounds. Guides and mentors included faculty from the University of Minnesota's Duluth and Twin Cities campuses, LLTC employees, KBXE Radio's phenology expert, staff from the Leech Lake Nation's Division of Resource Management, staff from the Neilson Spearhead Center, local arts & cultural experts, and a nationally recognized expert on Indigenous Research, Dr. Wren Walker Robbins. Dr. Robbins currently serves as Secondary Science Education Instructor at Salish Kootenai College in Pablo, Montana.

The very busy 4-day camp was spent in the forests, in the fields, and on the water. The goal was to expose students to the many aspects of "Earth Systems Science," which means learning about the biosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere (the rigid outer part of the earth, consisting of the crust and upper mantle), atmosphere, and cryosphere (the frozen water part of the Earth system). Students not see much of the cryosphere during summer camp, but everyone was okay with that!

Another goal of the camp was to gather students with community members to make shared observations about animals in the wild, plant changes, and general natural occurrences. These observations are being recorded in two ways: One way involves contacting LLTC's Earth Systems lead instructor, Mel Neville, so she can enter observations and sightings on the gidakiim.com website. This website becomes a valuable local database as more information is recorded. Mel can also share observations with student Michael Smith who attended camp and is willing to put together a segment for the Azhegiwe Bagwajaya'ii report on KOJB radio station during his programming.

The Azhegiwe Bagwajaya'ii camp ended with traditional feast and an invitation to community to join us in



becoming citizen-scientists and observers. Students showcased their fantastic work to family and friends. We plan to invite community members back to campus during the school year when we carry out nature observation trainings. Participants would include their findings on both the website and in the "Azhegiwe Bagwajaya'ii" segment on KBXE and KOJB radio stations.

Please call Mel Neville at 218-335-4232 if you would like to be placed on the list to serve as a local nature watcher or phenologist for the good of the Earth. Also, please call if you are interested in enrolling in LLTC's Earth Systems "2 plus 2" degree in conjunction with the U of MN Duluth.



If You would Like to Support LLTC Students, Scholarships, Campus Operations, or Athletics, go online to <https://www.razoo.com/organization/Leech-Lake-Tribal-College>



#### Benny Tonce Memorial Scholarship Fund

Benny Tonce was a long-time instructor of Ojibwemowin, drum and singing at the college. When he passed, a permanent scholarship fund was created to memorialize his life work and passion for the language.

#### Clem Nason Memorial Scholarship Fund

This scholarship award carpentry students enrolled in the IRB Program. If you would like to help us towards our goal of getting this scholarship endowed, please contact LLTC at (218) 335-4200.



#### Don and Priscilla Day Family Scholarship Fund

As the former president of the college, Dr. Day continues to contribute to the college by establishing the scholarship fund to support future students of the college.

#### Genawenjigjig Scholarship Fund

The Genawenjigjig scholarship awards Law Enforcement Program students with their expenses associated with the POST certified training program.

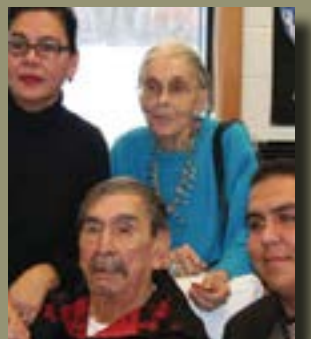


#### Leann Dick Memorial Scholarship Fund

Leann was Valedictorian of the LLTC class of 2009. Her quest for learning led her to continue her education at the U of M-Morris, but Leann's life ended abruptly in December of 2009. This scholarship is to memorialize her dedication to education and help other students to pursue their educational endeavors as she did.

#### Leroy Staples Sr. & Leroy B. Fairbanks Scholarship Fund

This fund was established to ultimately empower the people of the Leech Lake community. Both Leroy Staples and Leroy Fairbanks are committed to education and have begun a movement of giving back to the community.



#### Mishtakikosh Scholarship

The Mishtakikosh scholarship awards Business Program students who intend to pursue business careers. This scholarship is awarded at the completion of the program.

#### Susan Helen Tibbetts Sjolund Scholarship Fund

Colonel Cliff Sjolund established the scholarship in honor of his grandmother and on behalf of her three children. This scholarship is to honor his grandmother by empowering Leech Lake Band Members.



## LLTC Graduation

Michelle Saboo, Dean of Student Services

On a memorable May evening at the Northern Lights Casino Event Center, forty-five Leech Lake Tribal College (LLTC) graduates were celebrated, as they walked across the stage to receive their diplomas. The ceremony opened with the presentation of the colors by the Leech Lake Honor Guard, with the LLTC Eagle Staff carried by LLTC student veteran Jon Schneider. Board of Trustees Vice-Chairman, Gary Charwood led the pipe ceremony, while LLTC graduate and 2017 student of the year, Adriana Kingbird gave the invocation.

Maria Lahr shared tears with many in the audience with her moving Valedictorian address, recognizing the support she received from her family and LLTC faculty and staff. Salutatorian, Christopher Stauffer, drew tears and laughter from the audience with his speech, as he reflected on his favorite and most challenging courses at LLTC. Dr. John Gonzalez, Associate Professor of Psychology at Bemidji State University and a member of the White Earth Anishinaabe Nation, delivered the Keynote address. He shared his own challenges through academia and the words that his family echoed that "being Indian is hard", but encouraged students to persist and succeed in their next steps.





Faculty of the Year: Kelly Nipp

Staff of the Year: Melanie Wilson



Excellence in Building Science Award: Anthony Fair Sr.

Scholarship Awards: Fall 2017

## Awards:

Dean of Academics, Vikki Howard presented the award for American Indian College Fund 2017. Faculty of the year went to Natural Science & Technology Department Chair and Math Instructor, Kelly Nipp. Staff of the year was awarded to Director of Assessment and Institutional Research, Melanie Wilson. Career & Technical Education Department Chair and Carpentry Instructor, Rocky Carpenter presented LLTC graduate, Anthony Fair Sr. with the Excellence in Building Science Award. This award recognized his outstanding and tenacious pursuit of academic and artistic excellence in building science.



Scholarship awards for the Fall 2017 were also presented to the following students:

- Colin Eagle received the Leann Dick Memorial Scholarship. This scholarship is in memory of LeAnn Dick, 2009 LLTC Valedictorian and STEM student. It awards \$1,000 to an LLTC Student interested in or intending to pursue a career in Natural Resources, Environmental Management or related STEM (Science, Technology, engineering and Mathematics) field.
- Vanessa Peralta received the LeRoy Staples Sr. and LeRoy B. Fairbanks Scholarship. This scholarship awards \$1000 to a returning LLTC student. Councilman Leroy Fairbanks envisions this scholarship opportunity as a tool to develop the next generation of leaders for the Leech Lake Band and surrounding communities.
- Jonathon Staples received the Benny Tonce Memorial Scholarship. This scholarship awards \$500 to a returning LLTC Student with an interest in Indigenous leadership and studying and preserving the Ojibwe language. This scholarship is in memory of Benny Tonce, a longtime LLTC language and culture instructor.
- Alicia Bowstring received The Susan Helen Tibbetts Sjolund Scholarship. This scholarship awards \$500 to a returning LLTC student destined for a career in organizational or operational leadership who will inspire others to build a better tomorrow for those who share, respect, protect and advance their proud and honored cultural heritage.
- Jon Schneider received a \$500 scholarship from Paul Bunyan Communications.
- Verna King received a \$500 scholarship from Northern Lakes Vending.

# Doubling up:

## TrekNorth graduate already has degree from Leech Lake Tribal College

By Joe Bowen Originally published in the Bemidji Pioneer May 25, 2017

BEMIDJI—A lot of graduating seniors have their sights set on a two- or four-year college degree—but Eninatig Willow Miller's already one step ahead.

The TrekNorth senior already has an associate's degree in Liberal Education with an emphasis in science, technology, engineering, and math from Leech Lake Tribal College, and then she'll get started on an environmental science degree at Arizona State University in the fall.

In between, she'll get her high school diploma from Trek on Friday.

She expects to get her degree from ASU in two years, and then thinks she might work for the Leech Lake or White Earth tribal governments or maybe the Department of Natural Resources, which has a regional office in Bemidji.

"I always loved science, especially earth science. It just attracted me from a pretty young age," Miller said. "It's just important to get our education and us to have degrees, so maybe we can come back later to the tribe or locally... We can use that."

Miller's parents both have eighth-grade educations, she said, but her grandmother, who is pursuing a doctorate, teaches at the tribal college and impressed upon Miller the importance of education and achieving your goals. Miller's aunt is a middle school science teacher and inspired the soon-to-be-graduate to pursue a degree.



~ 2004-2005 Niigaane Kindergarten class ~

"It's not just for me," Miller said. "I'm doing it for my parents also...I want other indigenous Native American girls and boys to say that they can achieve the same goal as me. Go to college classes while you're in high school, you can achieve that goal. You have no limits."

Miller attended an Ojibwe immersion school through sixth grade and is fluent in the language now.

"Since I am Ojibwe, it's in my teaching to take care of the Earth," she said. "If I work through the DNR or through the Band of Leech lake, I can achieve those goals."



Eninatig Willow Miller  
LLTC Class of 2017  
TrekNorth Class of 2017

# Leech Lake Tribal College: The Path to Success

This American Indian College Fund article originally appeared in the IMPROVING STUDENT SUCCESS at Tribal Colleges and Universities Aug 31, 2016. By MELANIE WILSON, Director of Assessment & Institutional Research, Leech Lake Tribal College and JOANN STUTE, Faculty, Leech Lake Tribal College

*Gaa'Oziskwaajimekaag Gabe-gikendaasoowigamig (Leech Lake Tribal College) is located on the Leech Lake reservation near Cass Lake in Northern Minnesota. Our mission is to provide quality higher education grounded in Anishinaabe values. Each year we serve approximately 500 students from the Leech Lake and Red Lake reservations and surrounding areas, 89% of whom are Native American. The college was founded in 1990 and at first offered only extension courses in cooperation with nearby universities. Now we are a fully accredited institution with nine associate degree programs and two one-year diploma/certificate programs. In May (2016), we graduated a class of 43 students to add to our total of 535 graduates.*

A report on the demographics of first-year college students in the U.S. states that three-fourths of these students are white, are 18.7 years of age on average, have completed high school within the previous five years, and come primarily from upper or middle-class families (American Council on Education, 2013). In addition, according to this report, 80% never stop out of college (i.e., leave college at any point during the pursuit of their degree) but continue on to earn their degrees. By contrast, the average age of a tribal college student is 30 (National Endowment for Financial Education, 2015). Only 44% are 16-24 years of age; the majority are between 25 and 49, and the remaining 8% are over 50 (American Indian Higher Education Consortium, 2014b). Many of our tribal college students are returning after time away from formalized education. A majority of our students fall into the category of first-generation college students. They share characteristics reported by the Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) report on first-generation students. According to the report, first-generation college students are more likely to be older, have lower incomes, be married and have dependents (National Center for Education Statistics, 2005). At LLTC, our average student age is 28, and 87% of our students receive financial aid (Leech Lake Tribal College, 2015). We do not process student loans, so most of this aid is in the form of Pell grants and scholarships.

One of the biggest challenges our college faces is how to counteract low persistence from fall to spring semesters, low retention from year to year, and low graduation rates. In 2015, the American Institutes for Research reported that Minnesota's high school graduation rate of Indigenous students was 42%, while the state's overall graduation rate was 77% (Midwest Comprehensive Center, 2015). According to a study of first-year college students, Indigenous students have the lowest level of retention after the first year of college (Stewart, Lim, & Kim, 2015).

Hooker and Brand (2010) suggest that the path to college graduation for these first generation students must start early, as early as high school, if possible.



Youth need early opportunities to complete college-level work, navigate college campuses, and understand how the structures, opportunities and demands of higher education differ from those of high school. Academic success behaviors, which include study skills, self-monitoring, and other effective learning habits, as well as social and emotional maturity, are also critical components of college knowledge (p78).

While research tells us that the average first-time freshman in the U.S. is concerned about paying for college, finding an affordable place to live, being successful in their courses, and finding a topic of study that will lead to a job and a satisfying life, Native students are thinking about all of this and more. They often come to college with dependents to support, extended family responsibilities, and transportation issues (American Indian Higher Education Consortium, 2012).

There are currently 37 tribal colleges and universities; several are located in counties listed among the top 10 most impoverished counties in the U.S. (American Indian Higher Education Consortium, 2014b). Since many tribal colleges serve large reservation areas without adequate public transportation and do not offer student housing (American Indian Higher Education Consortium, 2012; His Horse Is Thunder, 2012), the combination of challenges can be overwhelming. Yet students keep coming. They come to college with many of the same fears and hopes and dreams as other students in mainstream institutions. In addition, research has shown that it is common for Native students to pursue education not only for personal development and achievement but also with the vision of giving back to their communities. That is one of the keys to the retention and persistence of Native students. We must help them connect education with the achievement of something greater than themselves, to help them see that education benefits their children, their families, their communities, and their nations. But the responsibility is not all upon them. Tribal colleges must provide educational opportunities grounded in the values of their tribes, in the languages they speak, and in the nations they are working to build.

Collectively, these 37 tribal institutions compose AIHEC, the American Indian Higher Education Consortium, whose vision is to create “strong sovereign nations through excellence in tribal higher education” (American Indian Higher Education Consortium, 2014b). The goal of tribal colleges is to help Indigenous American students overcome their challenges and redress their educational deficits in culturally supportive environments (sovereign nations through excellence in tribal higher education” (American Indian Higher Education Consortium, 2014a).

It is for these reasons that Leech Lake Tribal College tested two connected initiatives to prepare new students during their first semester of college on campus. First, we developed a freshman seminar course, Path to Success. Second, we used this course as a basis for the development of Jumpstart, a two-week, three-credit

course held immediately before school starts. The aim was to prepare students and create cohorts that would provide peer-to-peer support throughout their time at LLTC. One of the benefits of a course such as this is that “students share personal experiences that allow them to become well acquainted with one another. The class itself creates a ‘home’ for the students as they adjust to college” (Allen, 2004), a phenomenon we have observed. Both courses have been through numerous iterations as we evaluate and improve the programs each semester using data on student retention and persistence and student and instructor feedback. The qualitative feedback, especially, has highlighted for us the importance of reaching students on a deeper level through inclusion of



more culturally relevant content.

LLTC is proud to have been a recipient of the Woksape Oyate grant from the American Indian College Fund, which allowed us, over a five-year period and in our own unique way, to improve our retention efforts for first-year students and beyond. The grant was largely focused on retention by improving math and English skills through the establishment of a learning center on campus. Since that time, the learning center has grown and flourished and helped countless students be academically successful through one-on-one peer and professional tutoring. The idea for Path to Success came out of the activities funded through the grant. Path to Success is offered every fall and spring semester, and Jumpstart has been offered every summer since 2013.

In the beginning, we created a one-credit freshman seminar course offered over five weeks three times per week during the first part of the fall semester. Its original goals were simply to familiarize students with the campus and talk about study skills. After the students completed the course, they no longer had that formal support network. Next we took it a step further, and during the summer session, we combined Path to Success with English. The class was separated into two groups. One group took developmental English skills, and the other took English Composition 1. This was a six-week session meeting three hours a day, five days a week. Providing two levels of English enabled us to move students from one English section to another as needed. In the fall of that year we combined Path to Success with developmental English with the idea in mind that students could save Pell money by not having to take developmental English, and we made it a three-credit course continuing throughout the semester. Students’ lifetime eligibility for Federal Pell



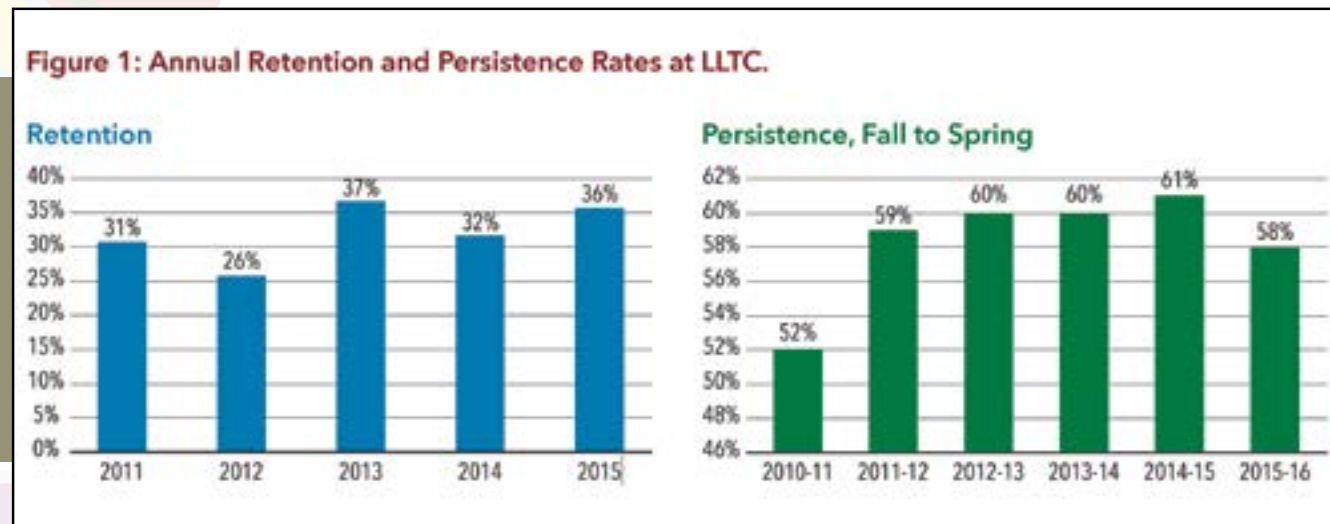
Grants is 12 semesters, about six years (Federal Student Aid, 2016). Developmental courses are paid for with Pell monies but do not contribute credits toward a student’s degree program. A study from the American Association of Community Colleges stated that about 60% of community college students need at least one developmental course (Dembicki, 2012). At tribal colleges the need for developmental courses tends to be significantly higher. In fact, LLTC’s placement test scores showed that more than 90 percent of our students need developmental math and/or English. Adding the developmental reading and writing portion to Path to Success allowed us to meet two needs: we could save the students’ Pell money and extend the course past the first five weeks, allowing us to maintain a more formal level of support throughout the first semester. At the end of the semester, we hired a consultant to evaluate the class to determine if the course was reaching its goals of preparing students to be successful in college and English 101.

The course description included the incorporation of language and culture, and while a lot of good came from this course, a lack of cultural connection was noted. Results of the survey led to many improvements, including: changing the speakers and what they focused on; choosing indigenous authors for reading assignments; looking at aspects of college life, such as time management and wellness, from an indigenous perspective; and examining traditional knowledge with an eye to modern expectations of college students. The class also adopted historical lessons on the boarding school era. We adopted a new book for the reading component of the class, *Two Old Women*. The story recounts an Athabascan legend of two old women surviving alone in the wilderness of Alaska. Students were able to draw parallels between the Athabascan values and beliefs and the seven Anishinaabe values upon which LLTC is founded.



In the next incarnation of Path to Success, we decided to add a pilot - a two-week, full-time, intensive learning experience offered before classes started in the fall. We called it Jumpstart. Our first cohort in 2013 was made up of 22 students from the new men’s and women’s basketball teams. The intention was both to test whether giving students a “jumpstart” on their education resulted in higher success and retention rates and also to give the newly-created basketball teams an opportunity to bond. It had the added benefit of allowing students to complete three credits before the regular semester, so they could take nine credits and still be considered full-time students. This course, while offered in the two weeks prior to fall semester, is considered part of a student’s fall term enrollment because it was held within the 14-day window allowed by the federal financial aid guidelines.

The two-week Jumpstart program began and ended with a drum ceremony, and each day started with a prayer and talking circle with a college elder speaking about a different Anishinaabe value. The standard topics were also covered, and time was set aside for team building activities. The persistence rate for this group was 74% from fall to spring semester of that year. The overall persistence rate that year was 60%. The



first Jumpstart group experienced 71% retention, has had two graduates, and six students were still enrolled in spring 2016.

That year, our overall retention jumped from 26% to 37%. Looking at the data, we didn't know if the apparent success of the Jumpstart program was a by-product of the extra support and camaraderie that the basketball team experienced, or whether we would see similar results with other students. So we looked at the success of the next two Jumpstart cohorts as a comparison. They were only partially made up of basketball players after that first year. If they were successful, too, then we were onto something.

In Fall 2014, the second Jumpstart cohort consisted of 14 students, only four of whom were on the basketball team. This group had 57% persistence from fall to spring semesters and 57% retention. This was considerably lower than the first Jumpstart group and the results were varied. This group had higher retention than the overall school population that year (36%) but lower persistence than the overall school population (61%).

In Fall 2015, we again registered a mixed group of 14 students, six of whom were basketball players. This group had 64% persistence from fall to spring semester compared to the overall persistence rate of 58%. Their retention remains to be determined, but at the end of the Spring 2016 semester, six of the 14 were already registered to come back in the Fall 2016 semester.

In Fall 2015, for the semester-long sections of Path to Success, we increased the course offerings to three sections. We also formally put in place a policy making Path to Success (or Jumpstart) a required course for all incoming freshman within their first two semesters. We had discovered over time that a troubling number of students who had dropped, withdrawn from, or failed the course were waiting until just before graduation then requesting special permission to waive the course. When we made the course mandatory, we had to add sections at different times and on different days to meet the needs of our students. Now, in the fall semester, Sections 1 and 2 are offered three times per week for one hour on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and Section 3 is offered twice a week in the evenings for 90 minutes on Tuesdays and Thursdays. In the spring semester, two sections are offered twice a week. One meets during the day, and the other meets in the evening.

We collected and analyzed data about the time of day the class is held, how often the class meets, the number of students in the class, and the content of the course to determine what effect these might have on grades



and withdrawals. We were able to draw several correlations from the data. The first was a positive relationship between small class sizes and both final grades and the number of withdrawals. Not surprisingly, 15 students or fewer in a class resulted in higher grades and fewer withdrawals. We also found that classes meeting in the evenings have the highest pass rate, followed by afternoon classes, then morning. The last correlation was very surprising. We discovered that when we had added English to the curriculum, we lost students, and grades suffered. Our intentions of saving the students from having to use Pell dollars on developmental English by offering an English component to Path to Success had backfired. In evaluation, we determined that there simply wasn't enough time to include everything a freshman seminar course should have included and adequately cover English skills, too. We were overloading the students, and instead of being supportive, the class just added more work to their course loads. We decided, in the Fall 2015 semester, to bring back developmental English as a separate course and focus Path to Success squarely on what the name suggests: helping students be successful.

Further analysis may show us how to better replicate the success of the basketball teams' Jumpstart in the summer of 2012 and throughout that following year. We have also had our first PSEO (Post-Secondary Enrollment Option) high school students take the Jumpstart course in their junior or senior years to prepare them for taking their first courses, and their experience remains unexamined. These are dual enrollment students from local high schools.

Future plans for Path to Success include introducing a first-year experience textbook and scheduling more tribal college faculty to speak on our different programs of study. With numerous instructors, more emphasis will be placed on a standardized curriculum and assessments. We have also discussed incorporating periodic surveys into the Path to Success curriculum to ensure retention and that we are meeting students' needs. We are continuously improving and learning what it takes to enhance students' persistence and retention rates. A system is being put in place to collect data on why students withdraw, when they dropout, and if they are also withdrawing from other courses at the same time. Whatever changes we do make, one thing will remain the same — our goal so elegantly stated by the American Indian Higher Education Consortium: to preserve Indigenous nations and promote their tribal identities, Indigenous languages, and unique values through culturally sensitive practices and curricula infused with tribal significance (American Indian Higher Education Consortium, 2012).

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# LLTC Students Visit Fort Lewis College Transfer Trip

AICF Blog Post

"It was so helpful to hear about how close the campus life and the town of Durango were. There are so many cool things that happen on campus, added with the events that happen in town, too, including the exposure to food, music, and outdoor recreational activities that you can't get at other schools," LLTC first-year student Anthony DuBois said.



## Minnesota Native High School Students

A college visit isn't only a rite of passage for high school students. Many community college students also visit universities and colleges when they are looking at their next step in their education journey after earning a bachelor's degree. But for the same reason that many Native students living on remote Indian reservations choose to attend a tribal college or university, such as affordability and location, a college visit is often out of reach.

Thanks to the American Indian College Fund's Native Pathways to College Transfer Program, three Native college students attending Leech Lake Tribal College (LLTC) in Cass Lake, Minnesota travelled to Durango, Colorado to visit the Fort Lewis College campus, a private four-year college that offers a tuition-waiver program to American Indian students.

The students' first stop was a campus dining hall with a Native American Center staff member and Fort Lewis alumnus to put them at ease and to learn what to expect. Next they visited the Admission Office to learn about the transfer and admissions process, campus resources, and how the Native American tuition waiver program at the college works. They were also able to see a breakdown of how LLTC courses had previously transferred into Fort Lewis and learn about the active lifestyle of Durango residents, who enjoy 300+ sunny days per year. The campus visit coordinator also arranged a meeting with a professor in the engineering department for a student interested in that program.

The students also enjoyed a campus tour. The weather students visited labs, classrooms, the Student Life

Center, and campus housing to get a feel for campus life. The tour ended on the rooftop of the Student Union overlooking the campus. The students enjoyed their tour, given by a college senior. They felt she gave great insight into campus and community life in Durango. "It was so helpful to hear about how close the campus life and the town of Durango were. There are so many cool things that happen on campus, added with the events that happen in town, too, including the exposure to food, music, and outdoor recreational activities that you can't get at other schools," LLTC first-year student Anthony DuBois said.

After the tour, LLTC students headed to the first floor of the Student Union to visit the Native American Center and meet with the Wanbli Ota student organization. Fort Lewis College has an average of 1200 Native students each semester from more than 150 different tribes and nations. Students learned that Fort Lewis has nine Native student clubs and organizations including American Indian Business Leaders, the Native American Outdoors Club, and Indigenous Feminism Rising.

The LLTC Academic Advisor said one of the most memorable things about the campus visit was seeing so many different Native students around campus. Second year LLTC student Joni Tapio said, "I had never heard of Fort Lewis College before, but getting the chance to see a college that felt a little bit like a tribal college in that it was smaller and had all of these resources for Native students was really inspiring. And when I brought back and shared about what I learned and saw, now other students at LLTC want to go out to Colorado and take advantage of the tuition waiver after they graduate from LLTC."

The students and staff at LLTC are thankful to the American Indian College Fund and Fort Lewis College for the opportunity to learn about options for continuing their education.

# Anwebiwin Niimi'idiwin



## LLTC Anwebiwin Niimi'idiwin (Resting Powwow)

Flower Kingbird, Financial Aid Assistant & Powwow Committee

LLTC's powwow is held every year in the spring. It is a group effort organized by dedicated LLTC staff, students, and community members, many of whom volunteer long hours to make the powwow possible. The powwow is a celebration of New Life, and it brings families and friends together after a long winter. LLTC's powwow is usually the first powwow of the year in Northern Minnesota.

Anwebiwin Niimi'idiwin (Resting Powwow) was originally the idea of a well-respected elder named Benny Tonce. One of Benny's many qualities was his sense of humor. Anyone who has assisted with a powwow knows that organizing a powwow requires a lot of work with very little time to rest, so the name of LLTC's powwow—Anwebiwin Niimi-idiwin—reflects this exhaustion in Benny's humorous way.. Benny's work at the college began when it opened in 1990. Before he passed away in 2009, Benny dedicated the last twenty years of his life to serving the college, mentoring its students, teaching Ojibwe classes, and making sure Anwebiwin Niimi'idiwin happened every spring. Benny was known for his wealth of knowledge of our Anishinaabe language and culture.

Endless amounts of planning go into this huge event. Planning typically begins six month prior, just as winter begins. This year, the powwow was held on April 15. LLTC usually anticipates about one hundred new attendees each year. This year, the powwow had approximately 700 attendees, 300 dancers, and 400 spectators. We are certain Benny would be happy to know it has become such an important community event.



# The Ojibwe Who Slew the Wiindigo

This article originally appeared in the  
Tribal College Journal Volume 28, No. 3 - Spring 2017  
By Bezhigobinesikwe Elaine Fleming

For the Ojibwe, history and legends are passed down orally. There are the stories of Wiindigo, a giant monster, a cannibal, who killed and ate our people. Colonization was our Wiindigo.

Colonization and historical trauma travel together. That trauma is passed down from generation to generation and exhibits itself in the behaviors, both psychological and physiological, of our people today. These aftereffects of historical trauma are called historical loss symptoms. Depression, anger, suicide, dysfunctional parenting, alcohol and drug abuse, unemployment, and diabetes are examples of these loss symptoms.

Long ago, the Ojibwe people were sick. A terrible epidemic was killing them. There was a man called Ode'imin who got sick and died. In death, he traveled west to where it's more beautiful than the sunset. When he got to the river that he would have to cross to the other side, the spirits asked him, "Why are you grieving, Ode'imin?"

He answered, "Because my people are dying." The spirits told Ode'imin that he was to return to the Ojibwe. He was to tell them that their teacher was coming to teach them about minobimaadiziwin, the good life. Their teacher would bring to the Ojibwe their rituals and ceremonies to help them get over the hills in their lives, those sad and traumatic times that all experience.

Over the years, the Ojibwe experienced many traumas. That is the way of the Wiindigo. A story is told of the Wiindigo, running amok amongst our people and killing them. There had been thousands of Ojibwe and many villages before the Wiindigo came. The Wiindigo was killing everyone, so an Ojibwe man challenged Wiindigo to a race. If the Ojibwe man won, the Wiindigo would leave. They raced, and the Ojibwe man lost. After that, the Wiindigo continued killing our people.

Another Ojibwe man had a dream that he could defeat the Wiindigo. In his dream he talked to a grandma



who shared a story. She told the man that she had traveled around to find out who was left. She had gathered the remaining Ojibwe children and took them with her and made them practice running upon a lake, back and forth, all day long, day after day, in preparation for the next race with the Wiindigo. There were 15 children remaining and each time a race occurred, another child died. The grandma would be the last one to race the Wiindigo.

This lake that the Ojibwe children ran upon symbolized their subconscious. They didn't know who they were. Their culture, their language, their rituals and ceremonies had been taken from them through forced removal to new lands and the boarding school experience. Families were fractured. When the children met this Ojibwe man, he asked them what their clans and their names were. They didn't know.

Eventually the Ojibwe man raced the Wiindigo and then its brother. He defeated them. This last Wiindigo begged for mercy from the Ojibwe man who had had the dream. The Ojibwe man knew the Wiindigo to be a liar, and he slew him. Then the Ojibwe man raced around this land and slew the other Wiindigos. The few remaining ran away, it's said to the North. As the story ends, the Ojibwe man with the dream, the vision, gave the Ojibwe children their Ojibwe names, the names by which the universe knows us.

The Wiindigo killed us in many ways and took our land and culture. We continue to pick up those things taken from us by Wiindigo. At Leech Lake Tribal College, we teach that we are people of a nation. We have our own history as a people, our own land base, governance, language, and culture. We are not ethnic minorities.

Once I had a dream. I dreamt of these two old Ojibwe grandmas. They were naked and their dead bodies were hanging from a coat rack in a meeting room with many people. The others were not Ojibwe, and they could not see the two grandmas. I kept trying to get them to see the grandmas, but they just ignored me. That morning when I woke, I took the pipe that I care for outside and I talked to those two old grandmas. I told them that they could go home. I told them that things were okay now and that we were healing; we would take care of things. The grandmas could rest...in that place more beautiful than the sunset.

Bezhigobinesikwe Elaine Fleming is an Ojibwe storyteller, jingle dress dancer, and chair of the Arts and Humanities Department at Leech Lake Tribal College.

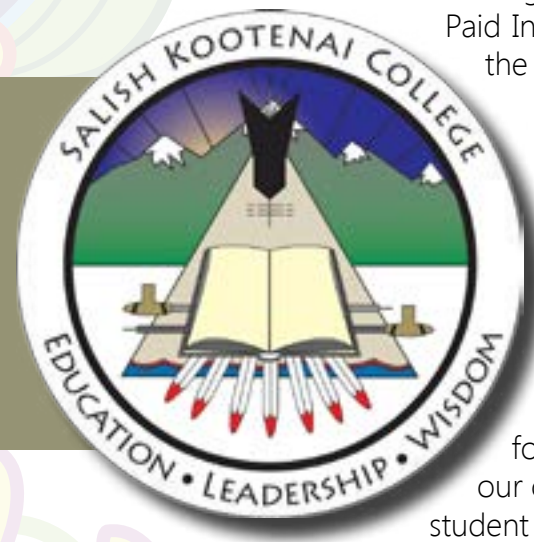


# Project Success

In April, Leech Lake Tribal College was one of twenty-six Tribal Colleges and Universities across the nation chosen to participate in Project Success, a package of over \$200,000 in programs and services designed to promote student persistence and completion. A team of five from LLTC attended the Kickoff Institute in Chicago, Illinois to join the other TCU's to meet with our program partners and coaches, as we prepare to embark on this exciting two and half year journey together.



Project Success was developed through Federal Student Aid (FSA) to support Minority-Serving Institutions and help the schools identify student risk factors affecting graduation, retention, and cohort default rates. All of the programs and services offered are free of cost to the TCU's and are funded through October 2019. Great Lakes Higher Education Guaranty Corporation has offered five programs and services that Leech Lake Tribal College is excited to take-part in: Achieving the Dream, Emergency Aid, the Paid Internship Program, GradReady Online Financial Literacy Training, and the Center for Community College Student Engagement survey tools.



Starting in August 2017 LLTC will be just one of two hundred twenty-six colleges across the nation to participate in Achieving the Dream (ATD), a customized coaching program aimed to increase student performance with comprehensive institutional support. Our ATD data and leadership coaches will help LLTC staff and faculty build a customized roadmap to culturally-based institutional change. ATD coaches have worked with Salish Kootenai College and Dine College to develop their visions of student success with strong cultural foundations. We are very excited about the opportunity to work with our coaches to increase our data driven decision making and improve our student success at LLTC!

Through the Emergency Aid program, Leech Lake Tribal College was awarded \$52,000 to provide emergency grants to low-income students and to help cover the costs of developing and administering the program. The goal is to stop students from dropping out due to unexpected bills, such as car repair or emergency

moving expenses. Great Lakes will provide the student aid grant application, reporting software, and technical assistance to help LLTC establish the Emergency Aid program on our campus to help meet the needs of our students and get them to graduation.

LLTC was awarded \$133,000 to create and expand paid internship opportunities for our students to improve graduation rates and job prospects. A meaningful internship experience will provide LLTC students with relevant workplace skills and networking opportunities that can put their career goals in reach. LLTC will partner with local businesses and organizations to find the perfect fit for our students each semester, providing 12-week paid internships during the fall, spring, and summer. LLTC will make new connections with area businesses and inspire students to explore opportunities and develop their skills.

Great Lakes have already created the LLTC GradReady Online Financial Literacy Training tool to provide students personalized, behavior-changing money management education resources. LLTC students can access the site any time at [www.lltc.gradready.com](http://www.lltc.gradready.com) and Student Services will be providing workshops to utilize the information throughout the school year. Finally, LLTC will be participating in the Student Engagement Surveys and Analysis from the Center for Community College Student Engagement (CCCSE). CCCSE will provide LLTC with assistance in using data to promote improvements in student learning, student success, and completion. This will be accomplished by administering three engagement surveys and participating in a data workshop and convening.

We are so excited by these wonderful opportunities offered to Leech Lake Tribal College through the Great Lakes Higher Education Guaranty Corporation and look forward to growing our vision of student success through improved student persistence and completion!



# 2016-2017 Laker Basketball Season

Brady Fairbanks, Men’s Basketball Coach  
 Tara Goodsky, Women’s Basketball Coach

## Men’s Basketball Team:

The Leech Lake Tribal College Men’s basketball team completed their fourth full season in March after an eventful weekend at the National American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) Tournament. The Lakers Men’s team included local talent from around the Leech Lake Nation as well as a pair of students all the way from Florida. After a grueling pre-season, the Lakers started their season in Lake Region battling the JUCO Division I team back and forth until the end when the Lakers fell to the Royals. The very next night, the Lakers battled Candeska Cikana Community College and got the first win of the year. Over the next few months, the season went up and down for the Men’s team. During this stretch, the Lakers made history with their first wins against Itasca Community College and Hibbing Community College.

The Lakers NIAC Conference schedule started with two tough home wins against a huge Canadian Methodist team. The next week, the Lakers took a road trip to Minneapolis and stole two victories from AFLBS. Each game was back-and-forth until LLTC made late runs to clinch victories. The next three conference games resulted in losses, including an overtime loss to Oak Hills Christian College in their home gym. Two weeks after that loss, the Lakers got their revenge with a 25-point win at home. The Lakers ended the conference season with a 7-5 record and a 3rd place finish.

NIAC playoffs took place in Bemidji, MN at the Oak Hills Christian College. The Lakers Men’s team played Oak Hills the first round of playoffs and won. During the next round, the Lakers were matched up against AFLBS. The game was exciting until the end. AFLBS sank a few free throws to win the game and advance to the championship to play the eventual champions, Trinity Bible College.

The National AIHEC Tournament took place in Rapid City, SD and was hosted by the Oglala Lakota College. The Lakers started off the tournament by winning all three of their pool play games. In the tournament, the Lakers went up against Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish College. The game was tightly called from the beginning, and with only seven players, the Lakers had to be careful. The Lakers finished the game with two eligible players left on the court and only lost by three points. This remarkable effort in the face of adversity marked the end to a great year for the Leech Lake Tribal College Lakers.

Awards: Team MVP- Tristian Keah-Tigh, Academic Excellence Award- Brandon Masten, NIAC Men’s All Conference Tristan Keah-Tigh and Jordan Collins, and NIAC Men’s Honorable Mention- Brian Jad.

## Womens Basketball Team:

The Leech Lake Lady Lakers basketball team had an eventful season, wrapping up the last of their games and tournaments in spring of 2017. For the first time in college history, the Lady Lakers joined the LLTC men’s basketball team in the National Basketball Tournament held at the 2017 AIHEC Conference in Rapid City, South Dakota. The team—including Mariah Reyes, Danica Staples, Tonya Morris, Petra Rodriguez, Selena Bueno, and Joni Tapio—made LLTC proud as they played their best throughout the tournament.

Midway through the season, Tara Goodsky, LLTC’s Outreach Recruiter, graciously joined the team as their new coach. Tara, who is from Bemidji, brings valuable experience as a former basketball player with the Deer River Warriors and Bemidji State University Beavers. Always prioritizing her education, Tara holds a BA in American Indian Studies and a minor in Psychology. She understands her role as a coach goes beyond a simple basketball game, also actively helping student-athletes balance their lives and schoolwork with their passion to play.

At the end of the spring semester, the women’s basketball team was proud to see three of its players graduate. Tifani Ellis, Tonya Morris, and Petra Rodriguez all earned their two-year degrees from LLTC, successfully balancing family, academics, and athletics. Tonya Morris received the team’s Most Valuable Player award for her leadership skills both on and off the basketball court, and returning student Danica Staples received the Academic Excellence Award for her in-class achievements as a student-athlete.

# 12th Annual Leech Lake Tribal College Golf Classic

LLTC Golf Classic Coordinators  
Rebecca Fairbanks and Tammy Erickson

Tianna Country Club in Walker, Minnesota hosted the 12th Annual Leech Lake Tribal College Golf Classic on Friday June 30, 2017. This year's event raised \$39,000 in proceeds. These funds in turn support all LLTC in-house scholarships as well as the LLTC Lakers Athletic Program.

The LLTC Lakers Athletic Program has enriched students' college experiences for four full seasons. Funds from the golf tournament help defray costs throughout the season, supporting travel, uniforms, and participation in the National AIHEC tournament at the end of the year. "This annual fundraiser has helped our athletic program succeed since the beginning of the athletic program, and I look forward to helping out year after year to help make this a huge event for the college," says Men's Basketball Coach Brady Fairbanks.

As in the past, this year's Golf Classic was a huge success thanks to all of the loyal, committed and generous supporters of the Leech Lake Tribal College. The golf tournament had a great turn out with 132 golfers. Participants included our wonderful donors, Tribal Council members, Board of Trustees, community members, college alumni, college employees, and current LLTC students.

This year's winning teams were as follows:

1st Place: Team LLBO DRM #2-Duane Bebeau, Shana Regguinti, Curtis Regguinti and Randy Holthusen

2nd Place: Team LLBO Health Division-Brian Brunelle, Dakotah Brunelle, Bill Brunelle and Matt Rigotski

3rd Place: Team Konami #2-Leroy Fairbanks, Cody Wind, Levi Brown and Scott Jackson

The Leech Lake Tribal College would like to say Miigwech to all our sponsors, participants, and volunteers, especially to Lakeland News and Tianna Country Club. LLTC also extends a Chi-Miigwech to all our event and eagle sponsors: the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, Leech Lake Gaming, Shooting Star Casino, Konami, Everi Cash Access, Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux, Sanford Health, and First National Bank of Bemidji.



12th Annual Leech Lake Tribal College  
**Golf Classic**  
Friday, June 30, 2017

Tianna Country Club 7470 State Highway 34 NW, Walker, MN.

All proceeds from the event will support the Leech Lake Tribal College Scholarships and Athletic Programs, and its mission to provide quality higher education grounded in Anishinaabe values. Be a part of something special, be unique, support the preservation of culture through education.



Preserving Culture Through Education

# LLTC Rocket Team Wins the Spirit Award and Finished in 2<sup>nd</sup> Place

The 8<sup>th</sup> Annual First Nation's Launch High-Powered Rocket Competition in Kenosha, WI

Kelly Nipp, Natural Sciences & Technology Department Chair & Math Instructor  
Eric Kuha, IT Instructor

On April 22, the Leech Lake Tribal College participated in the First Nation's Launch, a High-Powered Rocket Competition in Kenosha, WI. This year's LLTC Rocket Team consisted of Christopher Stauffer, who was the president of LLTC's AISES Chapter and STEM club; Don Defoe, an LLTC IT student; Eric Kuna, LLTC's IT Instructor; and Kelly Nipp, the Rocket Club Faculty Advisor and Natural Sciences & Technology Department Chair. The program is funded by the Wisconsin Space Grant Consortium and is attended by almost 20 teams from tribal colleges and universities from all over.

As specified on the Space Grant Consortium's website at [spacegrant.cathage.edu](http://spacegrant.cathage.edu), the First Nations competition provides quality opportunities to engage with principles of engineering:

The competition requires teams of undergraduate students to conceive, design, fabricate, and compete with high-powered rockets. The restrictions on rocket motors and dimensions are limited so that knowledge, creativity, and imagination of the students are challenged. The end result is a unique aerospace experience for students that provides a great aerospace experience unique to Native American communities.

This year's challenge was to build a stable rocket that would fly straight and spin as little as possible with a minimum (0) "X" Roll Axis, "Y" Pitch Axis and "Z" Yaw Axis. The teams were to monitor this with downward-facing cameras and other instrumentation. Unfortunately, due to technical problems that are still being researched, LLTC's parachutes did not deploy, and the rocket crashed hard during the competition, hitting the ground nose-first at an estimated speed of 300 MPH). The rocket was destroyed on impact, as was its instrumentation and cameras.

Despite this disappointment, the LLTC Rocket Team still managed a second place finish in its category with hopes of taking first next year. The team also won the 2017 First Nation's Launch Spirit Award, which is an award voted on by the other teams and given to the most helpful and friendly team at the competition. The prize this year (awarded by John Herrington, the first Indigenous American astronaut) is a framed photograph of the Viking I launch from 1975. The photograph hung at Mission Control in Houston for over 40 years and is now on display at Leech Lake Tribal College.



Kelly Nipp, Christopher Stauffer, Eric Kuna, and Don Defoe.

## FIRST NATIONS LAUNCH – TRIBAL COMPETITION

|                                          |       |                  |
|------------------------------------------|-------|------------------|
| Northwest Indian College                 | 75.42 | <b>1st Place</b> |
| Leech Lake Tribal Community              | 60.76 | <b>2nd Place</b> |
| College of Menominee Nation              | 58.00 | <b>3rd Place</b> |
| Fort Peck Community College              | 53.33 |                  |
| Comanche Nation College                  | 50.98 |                  |
| Fond du Lac Tribal Community College     | 50.85 |                  |
| Southwest Indian Polytechnic Institute   | 50.43 |                  |
| Little Big Horn College                  | 47.77 |                  |
| Turtle Mountain Community College        | 45.60 |                  |
| Utah State University – Eastern Blanding | 38.78 |                  |

Congratulations to the all the 2017 FNL Winners! A job well done.

# Integrated Residential Builders Program

Rochell "Rocky" Carpenter, Career & Technical Education Department Chair & Carpentry Instructor

Leech Lake Tribal College's innovative two-year Associate of Arts in Integrated Residential Building (IRB) degree launched two years ago. The IRB program incorporates a whole-house systems approach to training. Immersing students in a combination of building science, equipment, and environmental know-how, we can witness to real change in the building industry.

At typical day for LLTC's IRB students begins at 9:00 each morning as students reach into their lockers to gear up with hammers, tapes, chalklines, calculators, solar pathfinders, infrared cameras and manometers. This is not usually the way carpentry happens, but it does when you combine builders, scientific data, resiliency, and creative brainstorming. IRB students genuinely enjoy learning through the program's diverse opportunities, and the best part is that they are all being sought after from employers in the building, solar and energy sectors. Before commencement in May of 2017, all four IRB graduates had received full-time job offers, eventually choosing Concrete Inc. and RREAL Solar to launch their careers.

The IRB program would not be possible without support from the community: Leech Lake's Tribal Employment Rights Organization supplied new tools for our graduates (see photo, L-R: David Headbird, Polly Aitken, Jacob Ellis, Anthony Fair); RREAL Solar provided paid internships (see photo L-R: Polly Aitken, Anthony Fair, David Headbird); Bobcat of Bemidji provided training for Skidsteer operators (see photo: Brian Splettstoesz and Jacob Ellis); Concrete Inc. , Shingobee Builders and the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe provided Insulated Concrete Forms training (see group photo); Shirley Nordrum provided septic system training through U of M Extension (see photo: classroom, group); and Saul Saucedo, local Energy Specialist, provided blower door training (see photo L-R: Polly Aitken, Anthony Fair, Saul Saucedo and David Headbird).



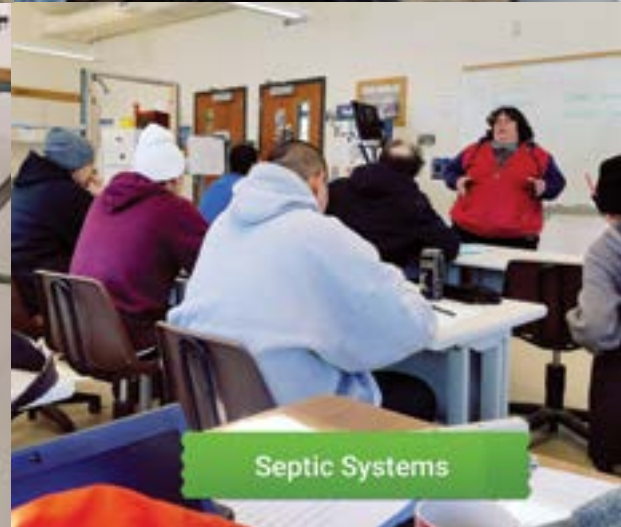
L-R: David Headbird, Polly Aitken, Jacob Ellis, Anthony Fair)



Brian Splettstoesz and Jacob Ellis



Insulated Concrete



Septic Systems



Saul Saucedo, Polly Aitken, Anthony Fair, and David Headbird

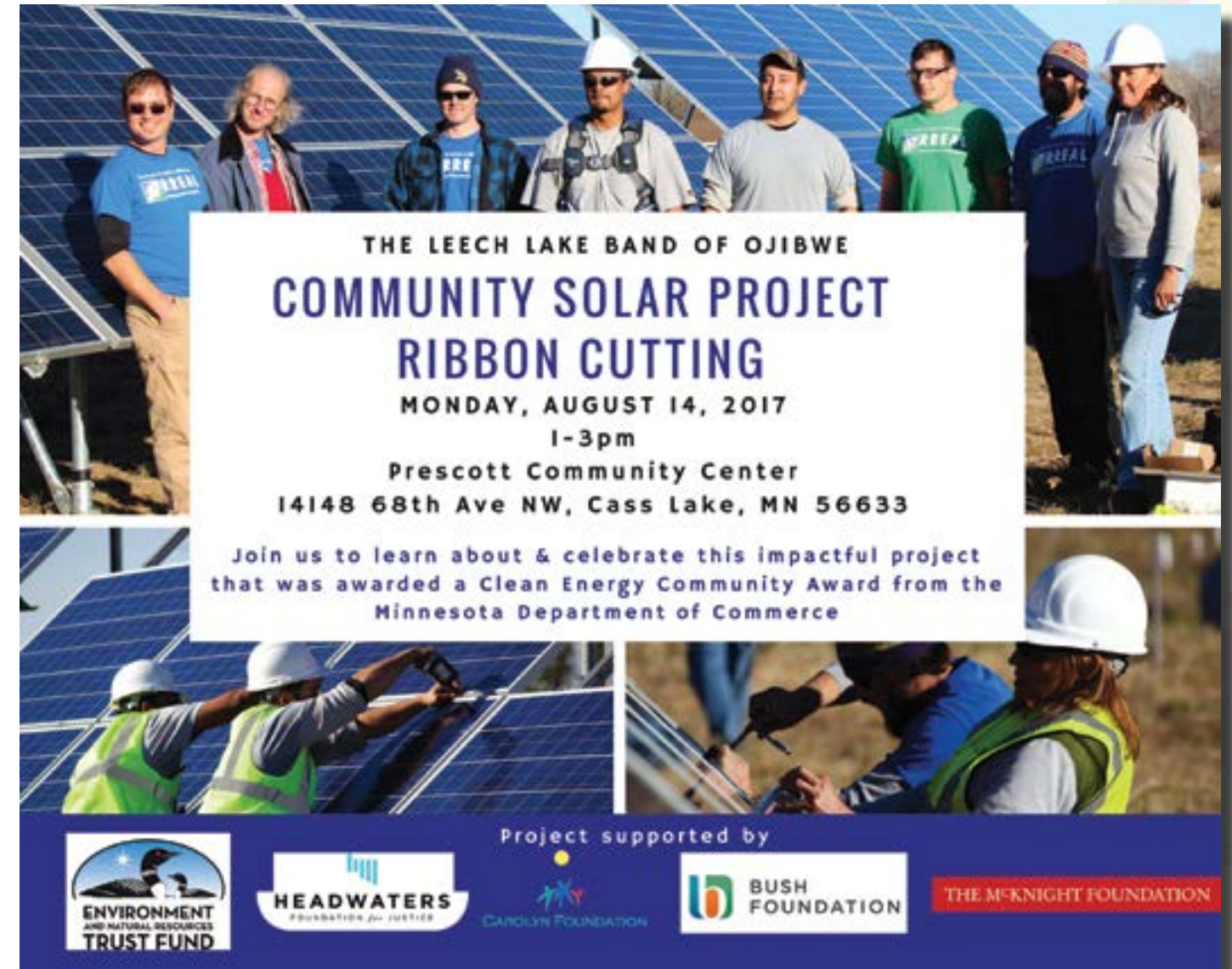


# Rural Renewable Energy Alliance Awarded \$500,000 Grant to Fund Community Solar For Low-Income Energy Assistance on Leech Lake Reservation

PINE RIVER, MN, May 23, 2016 – Backus-based nonprofit Rural Renewable Energy Alliance, or RREAL, has been awarded a grant to fund a 200kW shared solar array in the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe community. Shared solar arrays or community solar gardens are centrally-located solar electric systems that provide energy to participating subscribers off-site. The electricity generated from this community solar garden will be designated to recipients of Minnesota's Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). RREAL will further build local capacity through training Leech Lake Tribal College graduates in solar construction.

Low-income households devote a significantly greater percentage of their income to home energy than the average household. Meanwhile, energy costs are increasing and real household incomes are declining. Currently, energy assistance programs offer temporary relief but don't provide a long-term solution to low-income energy poverty and depend on imported fossil fuels. Utilizing Minnesota solar energy to address energy poverty is innovative, preserves Minnesota's valuable natural resources, and keeps energy dollars recirculating in our Minnesota economy!

Funding for this project was provided by the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund as recommended by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR), and responds to the growing natural resource impacts of using imported fossil fuels to supply Minnesota's low-income energy needs. This will be the first community solar installation on Tribal lands in the country, and will provide a model to individuals around the nation seeking to deploy community solar to benefit low-income people. The system is scheduled to be commissioned this year and next in collaboration with Leech Lake Division of Energy Resources, Leech Lake Energy Assistance Program, Leech Lake Financial Services, Leech Lake Housing Agency, Leech Lake Tribal College, Cass County Economic Development Office, Region 5 Development Commission and with support from the McKnight Foundation, Headwaters Foundation for Justice, LCCMR, and the Initiative Foundation.



"We are thrilled to develop this opportunity at Leech Lake," said LeRoy Staples-Fairbanks, the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe's District III Representative. "This is a way for our tribe to demonstrate good energy policy at tribal, state, and federal levels. The solar garden is a way for us to make clean energy affordable and available to many in our community."

## About RREAL

Making solar power accessible to individuals and communities since 2000, RREAL has delivered solar energy systems benefiting over 425 low-income households. RREAL is a nonprofit solar design-build contractor that installed the first community solar array in Minnesota. RREAL is pioneering the use of solar power to address energy poverty and scaling community solar for community action nationwide.

# Law Enforcement Program

Matt Stiehm, Law Enforcement Program Coordinator

During the past year, LLTC's Law Enforcement program has seen some exciting changes under the leadership of instructor Matt Stiehm. Law Enforcement is a two-year Associate in Applied Science degree that prepares students to enter law enforcement careers immediately after graduation. The program, which is certified by the Minnesota Board of Peace Officer Standards and Training, combines classroom experiences with extensive professional development opportunities to ensure students are both well trained and well connected.

In December of 2016, the program relocated to the Clem Nason Building on LLTC's campus. The new classroom, dedicated to the particular needs of the Law Enforcement program, includes updated technology and space for defensive tactics training. With the addition of this new space, Matt looks forward to being able to host certified skills-based trainings on campus to give students more hands-on experience.

Outside the Clem Nason Building, the Law Enforcement program strives to create enriching opportunities for students to network with potential employers and for local law enforcement employees to update their skills through on-campus trainings. A Law Enforcement career fair held this spring brought fifteen law enforcement and criminal justice agencies to campus, including the Leech Lake Tribal Police, Bemidji Police Department, Minnesota State Patrol, and Minnesota State Department of Corrections.

Some of the Law Enforcement program's most successful offerings have been the professional development trainings offered to students and currently employed law enforcement officers alike. These trainings have brought people from as far away as Oklahoma, the Dakotas, and Illinois to Leech Lake Tribal College. The trainings have included de-escalation techniques for individuals in mental health crises, a SPEAR Use of Force course, and a course in proper use of Tasers. Always leading by example, Law Enforcement instructor Matt Stiehm volunteered to be Tased during this course.



Top: SPEAR Use of Force Course

Middle: Law Enforcement Career Fair

Bottom L: Traffic Accident Report Class

Bottom M & R: Jack the Ripper Presentation





# Bezhigoogahbow Library

Hannah Buckland, Director of Library Services

When the Bezhigoogahbow Library moved in February 2015 from a 900-square-foot room to an 8,000-square-foot building, the new facility included a 400-square-foot room dedicated to housing the Leech Lake Tribal College Archives & Special Collections. Prior to this expansion, college archives were stored in a small closet attached to the former library. The space was far too small, and as a result, library staff were unable to organize the collection well enough to make it publicly accessible.

During the past two and a half years, library staff have worked hard to settle into their new building

and expand library services to include computer classes for adults, summer programming for middle schoolers, and story times for preschoolers. With these public services running, the library can now turn its attention to developing the archive space, focusing first on organization.

With generous support from a Traditional Native Arts Infrastructure grant through the American Indian College Fund, library staff are spending the summer months organizing archival materials—including student artwork, newspapers, Ojibwe language audio recordings, and photographs depicting LLTC's history—and purchasing high quality supplies to ensure materials are preserved. Acid-free boxes and folders will protect college documents from unnecessary exposure to light and dust. Wide steel shelving will provide sturdy surfaces to store and organize materials of all sizes.

This organization process also includes cataloging as many materials as possible. Moving forward, once the archive is organized and the materials are cataloged, library staff can collaborate with LLTC instructors who are interested in bring local history and primary source material into their courses. When students conduct research for class, they are encouraged to think critically about the subject matter at hand; incorporating local resources into their research papers and assignments simultaneously provides students the opportunity to think critically about culture, history, and home.





## Mino-ayaawigamig Wellness Center

Matt Hanson, Wellness Center Director

The Mino-ayaawigamig Wellness Center provides support and advocacy services for students of the LLTC campus and promotes general wellbeing throughout the college. At the Wellness Center, "Wellness" is not solely about physical health. By following a holistic wellness model of mind, body, and spirit, Wellness Center staff encourage and support

individuals while also looking to strengthen the campus community as a whole.

Balancing mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual wellbeing is a process which rarely has simple solutions. Mino-ayaawigamig staff assist students as they navigate their journey on their own terms. Each individual's path is honored, respected, and held confidentially, as staff offer assistance and referrals only as desired. Since each person's story is unique, staff honor every opportunity to be a bridge for restoration as they seek mino-bimaadiziwin (the good life) together. By offering a safe place to be heard, ask questions, and receive relevant services, the Mino-ayaawigamig Wellness Center plays a part in the comprehensive support services network at LLTC.



### Mino-ayaawigamig Highlights:

**Student Parent Support Initiative** - With more than half of LLTC's students pregnant, parenting, or providing care for nondependent children at home, SPSI is a resource for many as they seek to eliminate barriers and advocate for their needs while focusing on their education. Coordinated by Valerie Smith, the program provides a wide variety of support events and services. We are proud to say that 15 of this year's 33 total graduates were a part of the SPSI program!

**Healthy Eating Project** - Though nutritious, indigenous foods were once daily staples in Anishinaabe diets, a host of issues within contemporary life have led many to stray from incorporating them in their most beneficial forms. Each Monday during the school year, we include local, cultural-core foods, such as wild rice, berries, and wild game prepared in a healthier way.

**The Good Life** - Mino-ayaawigamig has been happy to support and host mind body medicine trainings at LLTC, which include many stress-reduction and relaxation techniques.

**Healthy Living** - LLTC was recently awarded a grant to improve signage and encourage more activity on miikana, the school's walking trail.





## LLTC Extension Service & Community Education

Esther Humphrey, Extension & Community Ed Coordinator

Our Community Education Program continues to broaden their classes and expand the variety of subjects taught by local artisans and wisdom keepers. These free gatherings are open to the community and provide quality learning (and teaching) opportunities for all. Led by Esther Humphrey, recent class offerings have included a variety of traditional arts instruction (e.g. creating willow baskets, working with porcupine quills, making cornhusk dolls, etc.), gardening skills (taught within gitigaan, our community garden), and other locally-relevant topics. Typically hosted on the Leech Lake Tribal College campus and surrounding communities, classes are usually held in the evenings or on the weekend to accommodate most people's varied schedules.

From June 2017 through March 2018, these courses will be funded through a Restoration and Preservation of Traditional Native Art Forms Knowledge Grant through the American Indian College Fund. As valuable knowledge holders from Leech Lake are lost daily, many tribal art forms are becoming endangered. Through this grant opportunity, Community Education aims to introduce community members to these endangered art forms while ensuring the stories, teachings, and protocols accompanying these forms are embedded across lesson plans, demonstrations, and relationships.

Several recurring events on the Community Education Program's calendar provide the foundation of its offerings: On the last Sunday of each month, medicine classes and open craft days give participants the opportunity to learn, create, and share ideas with one another. Some of the medicine classes have focused on making oils from plants, meditation, massage, and a critical exploration of the differences between traditional and western medicines. Community Education is always looking for more teachers to share their knowledge; please contact Esther Humphrey at 218-335-4247 with any questions.

# Extension Service & Community Education



# Weather Station at the Leech Lake Tribal College

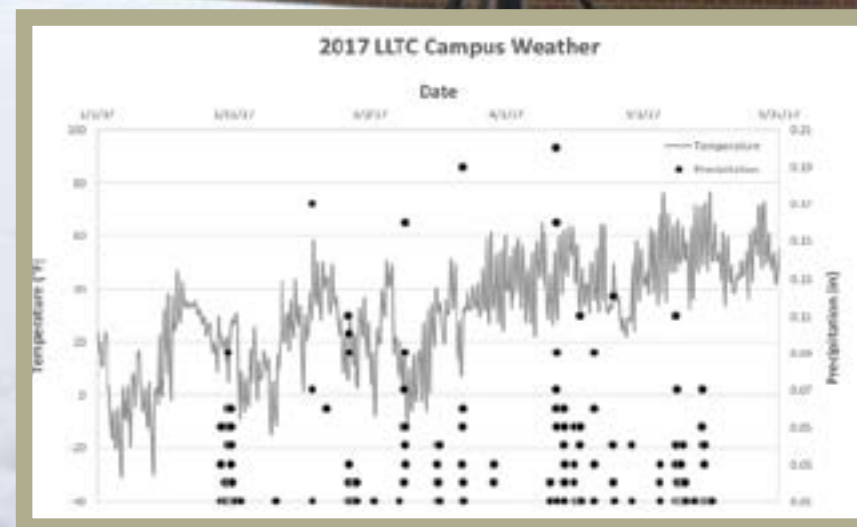
By Melinda Neville, Science Instructor

Leech Lake Tribal College has weather very much like the weather in the rest of northern Minnesota. As the old adage says "If you don't like the weather, wait five minutes. It'll change." We know that weather changes with time, but it also changes with space. It can be raining in Cass Lake, sunny in Inger, and gusty in Boy River, all at the same time. That is why we love our weather station here on the LLTC campus.

The LLTC weather station records temperature, humidity, barometric pressure, precipitation, wind speed, and wind direction. Students use the data in Atmospheric Science class to make a wind rose, a diagram that shows how often wind comes from each direction, and how strong it is on average. Students also can look at large scale weather maps, and compare regional or national data to what we're experiencing here.

When looking at the effects of climate and weather, it is important to understand the variability across the landscape. Many online weather sources don't cover small areas, so having our own weather station means we can record what is actually happening here. LLTC is part of a very large network of 250,000 similar stations. Here, we can see some of the other stations in the area. Having temperature and precipitation measurements from many locations allows us to interpolate data for the whole region.

All of our data is available on our weather page:  
<https://rainwise.net/weather/LLTC56633>





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## Our Mission

Leech Lake Tribal College provides quality higher education grounded in Anishinaabe values.

## Our Vision

To be recognized as a center of academic excellence that advances the Anishinaabe worldview and empowers life-long learners who are fully engaged citizens, stewards, and leaders.



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**NOV. 16, 2017**

<https://givemn.org/organization/leech-lake-tribal-college>