

BFCC MAGPIE



FEBRUARY 2025

WWW.BFCC.EDU



LISA AIMSBACK, TAYEN ENGLAND, AND KANE GILHAM



USDA EXTENSION MEMBERS CHELSEE PREE, KANE GILHAM, DUSTIN LOUIS, CANDACE STILL SMOKING, & FELIX NEZ

TOP NEWS

BFCC DELEGATION ADVOCATES IN D.C.

Join us in cheering on Lisa Aimsback, Tayen England, and Kane Gilham as they represent BFCC in Washington, D.C.! They'll be advocating for Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) and their vital role in Indigenous education, community growth, and sovereignty.

While in D.C., they will meet with policymakers to discuss funding, resources, and opportunities that support Indigenous students and strengthen our institution. Their voices will help shape the future of TCUs and higher education for Native communities.

To learn more about BFCC's key priorities, visit our website.

BFCC WINS NATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY AND FOOD SOVEREIGNTY INITIATIVE

Blackfeet Community College (BFCC) has been selected as a Phase 1 winner in the U.S. Department of Energy's American-Made Tribal College and University (TCU) Energy and Food Sovereignty Nexus Prize. This national competition supports student-led teams in developing innovative projects that integrate renewable energy with food sovereignty initiatives.

BFCC's winning project, SAPOO Land Energy, was developed by an outstanding team of students: Rihanna Many White Horses, Riley Bird Rattler, Candace Still Smoking, and Kristy Augare. Their efforts were supported by Felix Nez, USDA Extension Director, and Ron Lahr, BFCC Facilities, who provided technical guidance.

As a Phase 1 winner, BFCC has received a \$40,000 cash prize and will advance to Phase 2a, where teams compete for an additional \$75,000 to further develop their projects. The competition will culminate in Phase 3, where final projects will be showcased, with top teams earning up to \$75,000 in additional funding.

This achievement highlights the dedication of BFCC students and faculty in advancing sustainable solutions that strengthen Indigenous food systems and energy independence. Congratulations to our team on this incredible accomplishment!

For more information on our renewable energy and food sovereignty initiatives, visit our website www.bfcc.edu or contact Felix Nez (406)338-5441 ext. 2764 or email felix.n@bfcc.edu

BFCC MAKING HEADLINES: CHANGING LIVES & STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES

Blackfeet Community College (BFCC) is making waves in a powerful series of articles featured in the Missoulian, showcasing the vital role Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) play in transforming lives, strengthening local economies, and preserving Indigenous culture. One article highlights BFCC graduate Gwynne White Quills, whose inspiring journey reflects how TCUs empower students to achieve their goals while staying connected to their communities. Another piece sheds light on the chronic underfunding of TCUs and the ongoing fight for equitable resources. These institutions are more than just schools—they are pillars of economic growth, cultural preservation, and opportunity for Native communities.

You can read more about the impact of TCUs and the challenges they face in the Missoulian.

BFCC MAGPIE



FEBRUARY 2025

WWW.BFCC.EDU

BFCC USDA EXTENSION PROGRAM INTERNSHIP 2024: STUDENT RESEARCH AND LEADERSHIP AT FALCON CONFERENCE

BFCC USDA Extension Program interns recently showcased their research and leadership at the 2024 First American Land-Grant Consortium (FALCON) Conference. The event featured oral and poster presentations from BFCC students, highlighting their work in food sovereignty, land management, and environmental education.

Student Presentations & Research Topics

- Amskapi Piikani Food Sovereignty Strategic Introduction
 - Presented by Dustin Louis
 - This initiative provides student training, research, and development opportunities while fostering leadership with Blackfeet producers. The goal is to enhance community food services through meat processing and a deeper understanding of Piikani land resources.
- Choosing Our Future in Relation to Iinii (Buffalo) Land Management
 - Presented by Kane Gillham (Student Senate Treasurer)
 - This project explores the critical role of grazing production and soil management in building a sustainable agricultural system. These factors impact ecosystem health and agricultural productivity, ensuring a balanced relationship between buffalo and land management.
- Pikunii Food Forest Project
 - Presented by Candace StillSmoking
 - This food sovereignty initiative centers around traditional food forests and the nutritional benefits they have provided since the beginning of Blackfeet creation stories. The project aims to revitalize and integrate these traditional food sources into modern practices.
- BFCC Interpretative Trail: Environmental Education Through Blackfeet Stories
 - Presented by Dakota Norunner (Student Senate President)
 - The BFCC interpretative trail is designed to foster intergenerational learning by providing a platform for elders to share their wisdom and cultural knowledge. Visitors will experience environmental education from an Indigenous perspective, enriching their understanding of Blackfeet traditions.
- Equity Program: Achieving Cultural Identity Through Experiential Learning
 - Presented by Marcus Buckley
 - This initiative emphasizes hands-on learning to strengthen cultural identity among students and the broader community, ensuring that traditional knowledge is preserved and applied in contemporary education.

BFCC is proud of the dedication and hard work these students have demonstrated. Their commitment to research and community engagement highlights the importance of integrating traditional knowledge with modern education.

For more information on the USDA Extension Program and internship opportunities, contact the BFCC USDA Extension Office.

Felix Nez
406.338.5441 ext. 2764
felix.n@bfcc.edu

Chelsee Pree
406.338.5441 ext. 2768
23chelsee.p@bfcc.edu

BFCC PROVIDES FREE STRESS-RELIEF MESSAGES FOR STAFF & FACULTY

BFCC recognizes the importance of mental and physical well-being, especially for its hardworking staff and faculty. To support their wellness, Mental Health Support Specialist Toni Running Fisher arranged free therapeutic massages, offering a much-needed moment of relaxation and rejuvenation.

The massages were provided by Kamila Lasota Stranz, LMT, a licensed massage therapist dedicated to promoting healing through touch. This initiative aimed to help staff and faculty release stress, improve circulation, and restore balance, ultimately enhancing their overall well-being and productivity.

Massage therapy is known to offer numerous benefits, including:

- ✦ Reducing muscle tension and physical discomfort
- ✦ Lowering stress and anxiety levels
- ✦ Promoting relaxation and mental clarity
- ✦ Boosting overall mood and well-being

BFCC remains committed to fostering a healthy work environment by providing resources and opportunities for self-care. Thank you to Toni Running Fisher and Kamila Lasota Stranz for prioritizing the well-being of our faculty and staff!

Stay tuned for more wellness initiatives, and remember to take time for yourself—you deserve it!



Gerald Last Star receiving a gift from Toni Running Fisher, given to each participant.



Kamila Lasota Stranz, LMT providing staff with a rejuvenating massage.



Kane Gillham, Dustin Louis, Felix Nez, Dakota NoRunner, Candace StillSmoking at the FALCON Conference.



Candace StillSmoking



Kane Gillham

BFCC MAGPIE



FEBRUARY 2025

WWW.BFCC.EDU

CARING FOR OUR ELDERS: BFCC KICKS OFF SPRING ELDER LUNCH SERIES

BFCC in partnership of Blackfeet Domestic Violence Program, welcomed community elders to the first Elder Lunch of the spring semester this January in the BFCC Student Commons. Elders gathered to enjoy a warm meal while also receiving essential health screenings as part of BFCC's ongoing commitment to community wellness.

BFCC nursing students Caroline McEvers, Octavia Williamson, and Francine Wildgun partnered with the Community Health Representatives (CHR) program to provide blood pressure checks, blood glucose testing for diabetes, weight assessments, and other routine health evaluations. These screenings are essential because we want to care for the wellness of our elders, ensuring they have access to important health insights and support.

The next Elder Lunch will take place on February 19th from 11:30 AM to 2:00 PM at Eagle Shields. In addition to a nutritious meal, elders will have the opportunity to explore essential oils and their benefits.

BFCC is honored to host these gatherings, creating a space where elders receive both nourishment and care.



Caroline McEvers, Octavia Williamson, and Francine Wildgun.



CHR staff Brenda Mehta and Crystal St. Goddard offering diabetes screening.



Dr. Brad Hall

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES AT BFCC

Taking care of mental and emotional health is essential for the overall success of Blackfeet Community College employees and students. During times of uncertainty—especially when legislative actions may lead to concerns that impact well-being—having access to support services is critical.

To support the BFCC community, mental health support services are available on campus and provided by:

- Toni Running Fisher, BFCC Mental Health Support Specialist
- Located in the Beaver Painted Lodge - Enrollment Services Area
- Phone: (406) 338-5441 EXT 2211
- Email/Zoom: toni.rf@bfcc.edu

Available Services

Students and employees can schedule one-on-one consultation sessions with Toni Running Fisher to address their mental and emotional health needs.

To further promote wellness, here are some realistic mindfulness techniques that can help reduce stress and manage negative thoughts and emotions.

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction

Practicing mindfulness can help reduce stress, negativity, and emotional overwhelm. Mindfulness is the practice of being fully present in the moment and aware of your surroundings.

Techniques to Reduce Stress

1. Bring your mind into the present moment using the five senses—sight, smell, hearing, taste, and physical sensation.
2. Engage in relaxation techniques:
 - Place both feet firmly on the ground (whether sitting or standing).
 - Roll your shoulders back to open up your chest and lungs.
 - Relax body tension from head to toe.
 - Practice deep, controlled breathing: Inhale through the nose for a count of four, then exhale through the mouth for the same count, increasing the duration with each breath.
3. Focus on the task at hand and apply yourself fully.

Techniques to Manage Negative Thoughts & Emotions

1. Achieve a mindful state by grounding yourself in the present.
2. Recognize that your basic needs are being met (air, water, food, shelter, safety, etc.).
3. Identify and define the negative thought in real-time, placing it in the context of the present moment.
4. Conduct a reality check based on factual information, assessing the present and future separately.
5. Reframe the negative thought to reflect a realistic and constructive perspective.

Mental health is just as important as physical health. If you or someone you know could benefit from support, reach out and take advantage of the resources available at BFCC. You are not alone.



Tana Fleury with Blackfeet Domestic Violence Program offers door prizes, pictured winner Dan Wagner.



Quana Oldchief with Blackfeet Domestic Violence program and Laura Gervais mingle with lunch guests.

BFCC MAGPIE



FEBRUARY 2025

WWW.BFCC.EDU

33RD ANNUAL BEAR RIVER COMMEMORATION

On January 24th, Blackfeet Community College hosted the 33rd Bear River Commemoration in the Student Commons, bringing together over 130 attendees for a powerful gathering of remembrance, healing, and cultural pride. This year's commemoration was the largest in recent years, reaffirming the importance of coming together to honor our history and strength as a community.

The event featured esteemed authors Carol Murray, Lea Whitford, Dr. Ester Tailfeathers, and Mark Ratledge, who shared insights into their upcoming works, offering perspectives on history, identity, and resilience. The Brave Dog Society enriched the commemoration with songs and dances, grounding the gathering in tradition and reinforcing the spirit of unity.

Adding to the day's significance, Toni Runningfisher provided a powerful visual demonstration of healing, illustrating the many cultural components that help us move forward. Attendees also enjoyed a spirited hand drum contest and a best-dressed contest, celebrating the beauty of our traditions. A social dance brought everyone together, filling the space with joy and connection.

With visitors from De La Salle School, Buffalo Hide Academy, and Crystal Creek, the event was a true reflection of collective remembrance and strength. Over 100 people were served a meal as we gathered in unity, reinforcing the importance of acknowledging our past while embracing the path forward. The Bear River Commemoration continues to grow, ensuring that this history is honored and that our traditions remain a source of resilience for generations to come.



Mark Ratledge



Emcee Jesse Desrosier and Leland Lukin



Toni Runningfisher



Dr. Ester Tailfeathers



John Murray



Carol Murray

BFCC MAGPIE



FEBRUARY 2025

WWW.BFCC.EDU

PIIKANI STUDIES HOSTS FIRST HIDE TANNING CLASS IN OVER 25 YEARS

From January 28th to February 1st, Piikani Studies proudly hosted its first hide tanning class in more than two decades, marking a significant moment in the preservation of Blackfeet culture. This workshop was the first of its kind since 1999, when renowned cultural educator Beverly Hungry Wolf led a demonstration, making this new initiative an important step forward in revitalizing this ancestral tradition.

The class was led by Napi Wadsworth, a third-generation hide tanner from the Blood Tribe, who shared his expertise and guided students through the intricate process of scraping, brain tanning, and smoking hides to create beautiful, durable buckskin. The hands-on experience offered not only technical skills but also a deep, meaningful connection to Blackfeet heritage and the practice of self-sustainability.

Building on this success, Piikani Studies plans to host a series of future hide tanning workshops. Students who have completed the workshops will have the opportunity to pass on their knowledge and teach the next generation, ensuring that this vital cultural tradition is preserved and continues to thrive within the Blackfeet community.

These workshops are designed to empower individuals, foster self-sustainability, and strengthen ties to our cultural roots, ultimately enriching the community as a whole. For information on future Hide Tanning Workshops, please visit our website www.bfcc.edu or contact Treyace Yellowowl at 18treyace.yo@bfcc.edu.

Stay tuned for future workshops and join us in celebrating and preserving the rich traditions of the Blackfeet people! Interested in other Piikani Studies courses? Contact Helen Augare 406-338-5441 ext. 2760 or email helen_augare@bfcc.edu.



Brandon Fish, Wyatt Wippert, TJay Osborne, and Kristy Augare



Napi Wadsworth, Leigh Malatare, Lorna North Peigan, & William Gladstone.



Napi Wadsworth instructing as Tanya Ward, Schur & Wyatt Wippert watch. TJay Osborne and Gerald Ellenwood.



TJay Osborne, Kyle Kraf, & Candace StillSmoking.



Michelle Boyce, Kyle Kraf, Candace SillSmoking, Napi Wadsworth, TJay Osborne, Melisa Trombley, & Sheldon Carlson.



BFCC MAGPIE



FEBRUARY 2025

WWW.BFCC.EDU

TO PLACE AN ARTICLE IN THE BFCC MAGPIE
PLEASE CONTACT PAULA BREMNER
PBREMNER@BFCC.EDU

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES AT BFCC

Taking care of mental and emotional health is essential for the overall success of Blackfeet Community College employees and students. During times of uncertainty—especially when legislative actions may lead to concerns that impact well-being—having access to support services is critical.

To support the BFCC community, mental health support services are available on campus and provided by:

- Toni Running Fisher, BFCC Mental Health Support Specialist
- Located in the Beaver Painted Lodge - Enrollment Services Area
- Phone: (406) 338-5441 EXT 2211
- Email/Zoom: toni.rf@bfcc.edu

Available Services

Students and employees can schedule one-on-one consultation sessions with Toni Running Fisher to address their mental and emotional health needs.

To further promote wellness, here are some realistic mindfulness techniques that can help reduce stress and manage negative thoughts and emotions.

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction

Practicing mindfulness can help reduce stress, negativity, and emotional overwhelm. Mindfulness is the practice of being fully present in the moment and aware of your surroundings.

Techniques to Reduce Stress

1. Bring your mind into the present moment using the five senses—sight, smell, hearing, taste, and physical sensation.
2. Engage in relaxation techniques:
 - o Place both feet firmly on the ground (whether sitting or standing).
 - o Roll your shoulders back to open up your chest and lungs.
 - o Relax body tension from head to toe.
 - o Practice deep, controlled breathing: Inhale through the nose for a count of four, then exhale through the mouth for the same count, increasing the duration with each breath.
3. Focus on the task at hand and apply yourself fully.

Techniques to Manage Negative Thoughts & Emotions

1. Achieve a mindful state by grounding yourself in the present.
2. Recognize that your basic needs are being met (air, water, food, shelter, safety, etc.).
3. Identify and define the negative thought in real-time, placing it in the context of the present moment.
4. Conduct a reality check based on factual information, assessing the present and future separately.
5. Reframe the negative thought to reflect a realistic and constructive perspective.

Mental health is just as important as physical health. If you or someone you know could benefit from support, reach out and take advantage of the resources available at BFCC. You are not alone.

IMPORTANT DATES!

- **FEBRUARY 10TH:** WEAR SCHOOL COLORS DAY
- **FEBRUARY 11TH:**
 - o WEAR WARM OR CRAZY SOCKS DAY
 - o LAST DAY TO DROP A CLASS WITHOUT A GRADE
 - o VALENTINE SOCIAL DANCE - STUDENT COMMONS - 2:00PM-4:00PM
- **FEBRUARY 12TH:**
 - o WEAR TIE DYE DAY
 - o RESEARCH COUNCIL MEETING (PRESENTATION BY LISA AIMSBACK) - MEDICINE SPRING LIBRARY CONFERENCE ROOM - 1:00PM
- **FEBRUARY 13TH:** WEAR YOUR FAVORITE SPORTS TEAM
- **FEBRUARY 14TH:** WEAR RED DAY
- **FEBRUARY 17TH:** ALL CHIEF'S DAY (BFCC CLOSED)
- **FEBRUARY 20TH:** PELL & SCHOLARSHIP REFUND DAY
- **FEBRUARY 27TH:** PELL & SCHOLARSHIP REFUND DAY
- **FEBRUARY 28TH:** BHEP APPLICATIONS DUE

ONGOING ACTIVITIES

- **TUESDAYS:** SOUP TUESDAY - KNOWLEDGE CARRIERS ROOM
- **WEDNESDAYS:** CRAFT WEDNESDAYS - KNOWLEDGE CARRIERS ROOM - 2:00PM - 4:00PM
- **FRIDAYS:** CRAFT FRIDAYS - MEDICINE SPRING LIBRARY - ALL DAY
- **EVERYDAY:** WORKOUT ROOM OPEN

BFCC Writing Center

WE CAN HELP WITH:

- WRITING & REVISING ASSIGNMENTS
- BRAINSTORMING & OUTLINING
- MLA & APA FORMATTING
- SCHOLARSHIP WRITING
- FINDING QUALITY SOURCES, QUOTING, CITING
- COVER LETTERS, RESUMES, PRESENTATIONS & WORK EMAILS
- GRANT PROPOSALS
- GRAMMAR MINI-LESSONS
- CREATIVE WRITING

Make an appointment today!
M-F times - in-person or virtual
EMAIL: SABINE.B@BFCC.EDU
to work with one of us:

GORDON BENNETT, ASHES CHIEF BLDG.
LIBERAL STUDIES FACULTY
GORDON@BFCC.EDU | M & W IN PERSON APPTS.
FAV. BOOK: EAST OF EDEN

HOLLY GALBREATH-HENKEL, BPL 134
LIBERAL STUDIES ADMIN. ASST.
HOLLY@BFCC.EDU | EMAIL FOR QUESTIONS:
406-338-5441, EXT. 2286
FAV. BOOK: THE HUNTER PRATER SERIES (READ ALL OF THEM MANY TIMES OVER)

SABINE BRIGGETTE, REMOTE/ONLINE
LIBERAL STUDIES FACULTY
SABINE@BFCC.EDU | M-WEST VIRTUAL APPTS.
FAV. BOOK: CHARLOTTE'S WEB

BLACKFEET COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Native American Research Centers for Health
Culture As Medicine

OKI ALL BFCC STUDENTS, STAFF & FACULTY!
PLEASE JOIN US FOR OUR FEBRUARY RESEARCH COUNCIL MEETING. OUR GUEST SPEAKER: LISA AIMSBACK

REFRESHMENTS WILL BE PROVIDED

WHEN?
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12 @ 1:00PM

WHERE?
MEDICINE SPRING LIBRARY CONFERENCE ROOM

ZOOM LINK:
[HTTPS://US02WEB.ZOOM.US/J/82939769393?pwd=4DNQMKVSMI6EUWQ5HLPVXSKG4AFHAI](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82939769393?pwd=4DNQMKVSMI6EUWQ5HLPVXSKG4AFHAI)

JANUARY BLACKFEET WORDS OF THE MONTH:

- BLIZZARD IN THE EARLY SPRING - MAAKAI'PII
- MOUSE - KANAISKIINAA
- CAR - AKSISTOMAHKOMAHKAA

VALENTINES SPIRIT WEEK

WEEK OF FEBRUARY 10TH-14TH

- Prize Drawings for Participants!
- Take a drawing of yourself at BFCC on dress-up day and email it to 16lisa.a@bfcc.edu to receive 1 entry into the drawing.
- Take a picture with a Student Senate member and email it to receive 2 entries.
- Drawings will be held on Friday in the Student Commons.



Sponsored by Student Senate

MONDAY
SHOW LOVE FOR BFCC
Wear school colors blue/white

TUESDAY
WARM OR CRAZY SOCKS
Wear your favorite socks

WEDNESDAY
PEACE AND LOVE DAY
Wear tie dye

THURSDAY
SPORTS TEAM CRUSH
Show love for your favorite sports team

FRIDAY
BE KIND WEAR RED
find the hearts and leave a message for someone special

PREP CLASS
TUESDAYS & THURSDAYS
4:30PM-6:30PM

LOCATED IN THE BEAVER PAINTED LODGE RM 138

BEGINNING FEBRUARY 6TH 2025 THRU MAY 16TH 2025

CONTACT FOR PREP:
SADEE LITTLEPLUME
406-845-3634
LPSA@BFCC.EDU

HISET INFORMATION CONTACT:
CHERYL MADMAN
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR
406-338-5441 EXT. 2305
CMADMAN@BFCC.EDU

TESTING DATES & TIMES
TUESDAYS & THURSDAYS: 4-7PM
WEDNESDAYS: 4-6PM

CONTACT FOR TESTING
JOSEPH RUTHERFORD
406-338-5441 EXT. 2702
JOSEPHR@BFCC.EDU

*YOU MUST REGISTER 24 HOURS PRIOR TO TESTING
CHECK WEBSITE FOR DATE CHANGES & AVAILABILITY*

REGISTER ONLINE
WWW.HISET.ORG

LOCATED IN BPL RM 136