

BFCC MAGPIE



MARCH 2026

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ALLEN WALKER NAMED 2026 AIHEC STUDENT OF THE YEAR

Allen Walker has been selected as the 2026 Student of the Year representing Blackfeet Community College through the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) and the American Indian College Fund. This recognition honors students who demonstrate academic excellence, leadership, resilience, and commitment to community.

During his time at BFCC, Walker has shown consistent academic growth across a wide range of subjects while maintaining an outstanding GPA. He approaches his coursework with persistence, curiosity, and balance, building a strong foundation as he transitions from general education into more specialized study.

Beyond academics, Walker's personal growth reflects the strength and resilience encouraged within the Tribal College and University environment. Over the past year, he has demonstrated increased maturity, accountability, and commitment to his education while navigating personal challenges.

Walker is recognized by faculty and peers as an active participant and positive presence on campus. He advocates for himself and others, contributes thoughtfully to classroom dialogue, and demonstrates wisdom and responsibility beyond his years. Walker will be formally recognized at the AIHEC Student Conference, held March 14–18, 2026, in Bismarck. The annual conference brings together students from Tribal Colleges and Universities across the country to celebrate Native student achievement through academic, cultural, and leadership events.

His recognition highlights not only his individual accomplishments, but also the strength and promise of Blackfeet students pursuing higher education while remaining grounded in community values.

"Allen's perseverance, personal growth, and academic accomplishments make him highly deserving of this recognition," said Brad Hall, President of Blackfeet Community College. "He represents the resilience, leadership, and potential we strive to cultivate in every student at BFCC." Blackfeet Community College proudly congratulates Allen Walker on this well-deserved honor.



BRANDI HARWOOD RECEIVES COCA-COLA SCHOLARSHIP FOR THIRD TIME

Brandi Harwood, a student at Blackfeet Community College, has been awarded the Coca-Cola First Generation Scholarship for the third time.

Brandi graduated in May 2025 with an Associate of Science in Health Science and is finishing her Associate of Arts in Piikani Studies and Language. She plans to combine her knowledge of health science with traditional Piikani foods and plants to research their impact on Indigenous health.

"Niitsiniiyii'taki – I am grateful. This scholarship has helped me focus on my goal of combining Health Science with Piikani Studies and showing how our culture and science go hand-in-hand," said Harwood.

The Coca-Cola First Generation Scholarship recognizes first-generation college students attending Tribal Colleges and Universities who demonstrate

leadership, academic excellence, and a commitment to their communities. Receiving this award three times highlights Brandi's consistent dedication to her education and her determination to serve her community through research and cultural knowledge. She will be formally recognized at the AIHEC Student Conference in Bismarck, North Dakota, March 14–18, 2026. Blackfeet Community College

is proud to celebrate Brandi's continued excellence and the dedication she brings to her studies and her community.



BFCC STUDENT SENATE LEADERS ADVOCATE FOR TRIBAL COLLEGES AT NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE SUMMIT

Craig Reece Jr., Student Senate President, and La'Riah Scout, Vice President, represented Blackfeet Community College at the 2026 Legislative Summit hosted by the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) in Washington, D.C..

The AIHEC Legislative Summit, held annually during Tribal Colleges and Universities Week, brings together students, presidents, and leaders from TCUs across the nation to advocate for federal funding and policies that support Tribal higher education. Participants meet directly with members of Congress to share personal stories and present unified priorities that impact Native students and communities.

During meetings with Montana's congressional delegation, Reece had the opportunity to present the three student-led priorities identified by the AIHEC delegation. Speaking directly with U.S. Representative Ryan Zinke, Reece advocated on behalf of Tribal

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College students across Montana, ensuring their voices were represented in conversations about funding and support for TCUs.

"Representing BFCC as Student Senate President was an honorable moment in my education journey," Reece said.

"Advocating for TCUs to Representative Zinke and Senator Tim Sheehy was an intense space to be in. I highly recommend any student interested in becoming a leader for their people to join the Student Senate Club. You learn about other TCUs from the students that go there. It's a really unique opportunity."

Throughout the summit, the students also met with Troy Downing, staff from Senator Steve Daines' office, and staff for Senator Sheehy, reinforcing the importance of continued federal investment in Tribal higher education.

For Scout, the experience marked a deeply personal turning point.

"Representing the Blackfeet Reservation during Tribal Colleges Week at the AIHEC summit in Washington, D.C. was not something I ever imagined for myself," Scout shared. "I was once a high school dropout, weighed down by many barriers and limited by my own fear."

She described gaining confidence after introducing herself to members of Montana's delegation during a constituent coffee event.

"We were there for a reason, and our voices belonged in those rooms," she said. "This trip was monumental for me, not just because I traveled to our nation's capital, but because I stepped into spaces I once believed were not meant for someone like me. And I spoke."

Blackfeet Community College proudly recognizes the leadership demonstrated by Reece and Scout as they advocated for Tribal Colleges and represented the Blackfeet Nation on a national stage.



STUDENTS TAKE INITIATIVE TO BEAUTIFY CAMPUS

On February 12, a group of motivated students gathered to help clean and beautify the campus at Blackfeet Community College. The effort was organized by Student Senate President Craig Reece Jr., who saw a need and took action as the weather began to warm.

"Why I organized campus spring clean up is because the weather is warming up and the trash is out of control," Reece shared. "What motivates me is paying it forward to the students of BFCC as the standing Student Senate President. I got this position to represent the students of BFCC. Clean campus means clean grades."

Reece noted that this is just the beginning. With more clean-up days planned this spring, he also hopes to organize a project to repaint the BFCC rocks beneath the flagpole.

Student leaders and volunteers who joined the effort included Wesley Wells, Justin Ladue, and Alonna Blackweasel. For Ladue, the motivation was deeply personal.

"What made me want to help clean up campus is my love for BCC," Ladue said. "Taking care of the campus is important to me because the campus takes care of me all-around. A clean campus shows that we care. Giving back helps the soul and creates bonds and memorable experiences with pupils and the campus. Aho!"

Together, these students demonstrated leadership through action, setting an example for their peers and the wider community. Their goal is to inspire others – both on campus and throughout the community – to take pride in their surroundings and step up to help care for the spaces they share.



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2026 WORKFORCE EXPO: CONNECTING STUDENTS AND BUSINESSES FOR A STRONGER FUTURE

Save the Date - May 6, 2026

Local businesses are invited to take part in the 2026 Workforce Expo, a dynamic, hands-on career exploration event designed to connect employers with the next generation of skilled professionals.

Hosted by Blackfeet Community College Workforce Development in conjunction with the Blackfeet Tribal Employment Rights Office (TERO), this exciting public event will take place at Browning High School from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Students in grades 7 through 12 will be in attendance.

Why Participate?

The Workforce Expo provides a unique opportunity for businesses to:

- Engage students through interactive, hands-on career activities
- Share information about career pathways and training opportunities
- Recruit future employees and build a pipeline of local talent
- Promote workforce diversity and strengthen community partnerships
- Showcase your industry and inspire the next generation

By participating, your organization helps shape the future workforce while gaining valuable exposure among motivated young learners and community members.

Reserve Your FREE Booth Space at the QR Code Below!

Businesses are encouraged to register early to secure their free space at this impactful community event.

For More Information

Cheryl Madman
 Director of Workforce Development
 Blackfeet Community College
 ☎ (406) 338-5441 ext. 2305
 ✉ cmadman@bfcc.edu

[REGISTER HERE](#)



Teola Bird
 Director of Workforce Development
 Blackfeet Tribal Employment Rights Office
 ☎ (406) 338-7887
 ✉ tbird@blackfeetnation.com

Cinda Pepion
 Blackfeet Tribal Employment Rights Office
 ☎ (406) 338-7887
 ✉ cpepion@blackfeetnation.com

Visit www.bfcc.edu/magpie for additional details.

BLACKFEET COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENT RECEIVES 2025-26 GEORGE M. DENNISON CIVIC ENGAGEMENT SCHOLARSHIP

Our students are on a roll this semester! Josiah Aimsback was named as a recipient of the prestigious 2025-26 George M. Dennison Civic Engagement Scholarship.

The George M. Dennison Civic Engagement Scholarship honors students across Montana who demonstrate exceptional commitment to civic responsibility, community leadership, and public service. Named after former University of Montana President George M. Dennison, the scholarship celebrates students who actively work to strengthen their communities through meaningful engagement and leadership.

What the Scholarship Recognizes

Recipients of the George M. Dennison Civic Engagement Scholarship are selected based on:

- Demonstrated commitment to civic engagement and public service
- Leadership in community-based initiatives
- Meaningful impact on local communities
- Academic achievement and personal integrity
- A clear dedication to improving the lives of others

Students are nominated and evaluated for the depth, sustainability, and measurable impact of their service efforts. The scholarship highlights those who go beyond volunteerism to create lasting community change.

Josiah Aimsback's Community Impact

Josiah exemplifies the spirit of civic engagement through his ongoing service and leadership.

He serves as a shift leader at his local community food bank, where he trains volunteers, manages inventory, and supports seasonal programs such as holiday meal distributions and backpack drives. His leadership ensures that families in need receive consistent and organized support throughout the year. In addition, Josiah participates in the Green Streets Initiative, leading neighborhood clean-up efforts, planting native vegetation, and organizing recycling-awareness events.

Through these activities, he promotes environmental stewardship while encouraging grassroots civic involvement among community members.

His work reflects a deep commitment not only to meeting immediate community needs but also to fostering long-term sustainability and civic responsibility.

Building a Stronger Community

Josiah's recognition through the George M. Dennison Civic Engagement Scholarship highlights the important role students play in strengthening their communities. His dedication embodies the mission of Blackfeet Community College to cultivate leadership, service, and community-centered learning.

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“KSIMSTAI-AHPOTAKAIKS” – THE 7 DOMAINS OF THE BLACKFEET LANGUAGE

Piikani Studies recently hosted a powerful learning event centered on Ksimstai-Ahpotakaiks, translated as “Works with Thinkers,” introducing an innovative project focused on the 7 Domains of the Blackfeet Language.

Rooted in Blackfeet philosophy, the number seven carries deep sacred meaning. It is not simply numerical, but spiritual. Many ancient Blackfeet stories reference the significance of seven, including the story of the Big Dipper, known as Ihkitsikamiiksi. In honoring this sacred understanding, the project identifies seven core domains of society:

- Government
- Education
- Family
- Spirituality
- Media
- Celebration
- Economy



Each domain represents a living space where language, values, and prayer can be intentionally integrated into everyday life.

Language as Living Practice

The 7 Domains project moves beyond classroom instruction. It challenges participants to critically think about how the spirit and principles of the Blackfeet language can be applied within each area of community life. Rather than viewing language as an academic subject alone, this initiative frames it as a living system of knowledge, one that guides leadership, family life, governance, ceremony, and economic development.

Through discussion, reflection, and collaboration, participants explore how language carries worldview, responsibility, and identity.

Project Design & Integration

The long-term vision of the project is to restore and sustain the Blackfeet language and culture as a living, breathing part of community life. The initiative is guided by several key components:

Awareness

The project seeks to expand language visibility beyond the classroom and into public spaces. Normalizing everyday use, through signage, events, and community engagement, promotes pride, belonging, and cultural continuity.

Articulation of Philosophy

The language is framed as deeply connected to ancestral spirit and identity, even described as linked to DNA. Learning the language becomes a process of reconnection and healing, restoring wholeness and addressing historical trauma. This philosophy encourages learners to persist, knowing they are part of a larger legacy.

Holistic Teaching Methods

Instruction incorporates storytelling, cultural protocols, and

community values to maintain authenticity. Language is not taught in isolation, but as part of cultural transmission. This approach supports mental and emotional well-being by reinforcing identity and belonging.

Sustained Community Engagement

The 7 Domains team plans to continue hosting regular sessions, inviting guest speakers, organizing community events, and expanding Piikani class offerings. The goal is steady momentum and inclusive participation – welcoming learners of all levels to take part in language revitalization.

A Community Invitation

The 7 Domains of the Blackfeet Language is more than a project – it is a call to action. By integrating language into Government, Education, Family, Spirituality, Media, Celebration, and Economy, the initiative reinforces that language is not separate from life – it is life.

Through Ksimstai-Ahpotakaiks, participants are working together as thinkers, leaders, and caretakers of the language to ensure that it continues to guide future generations.



DR. BRAD HALL TO TESTIFY BEFORE U.S. HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE

Brad Hall, President of Blackfeet Community College, will testify in Washington, D.C. before the U.S. House Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Subcommittee regarding community college funding.

The hearing will focus on preparing for the future of America's community colleges and advocating for the resources necessary to support student success. In addition to testifying, Dr. Hall is also scheduled to attend meetings with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU). This opportunity reflects BFCC's ongoing commitment to ensuring Tribal Colleges are represented in national discussions on higher education funding and policy.

The hearing begins at 8:30 a.m. MST.

Please scan the QR code to the right with your phone or click on the link to watch the hearing live.

[CLICK HERE](#)



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PKNI 190 STUDENTS CONDUCT EMERGENCY RESPONSE LAB

Students in PKNI 190 – Special Topics: Introduction to Archival Preservation, taught by Aaron Lafromboise, participated in a hands-on emergency response lab on February 5.

Thanks to unseasonably warm weather, the class was able to move outdoors to practice responding to a simulated water emergency. Students worked with three different types of books and a stack of photographs that had been submerged, learning proper techniques for stabilizing and preserving damaged materials.

Throughout the course, students explore Indigenous archives and gain hands-on experience handling archival materials housed in the Medicine Spring Library. The class provides practical skills while deepening understanding of the importance of preserving cultural and historical records.



BUILDING STRONGER SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR THE BLACKFEET NATION

We were pleased to present such a powerful workshop designed to serve as a reliable resource for our Blackfeet Nation. The event began with a morning prayer offered by Melissa Weatherwax, who shared heartfelt words of strength, encouragement, and wisdom with all participants. The welcome address highlighted the importance of hosting this type of change-focused event for producers and community resources within the Blackfeet Nation. The remarks were delivered by USDA Extension Director/Agent Felix Nez,

MEDICINE SPRING LIBRARY EVENTS

- **MARCH 6TH** - CRAFT FRIDAY, LEATHER STAMPING, 9:00AM-3:30PM
- **MARCH 13TH** - CRAFT FRIDAY, BUTTON MAKING, 9:00AM-3:30PM
- **MARCH 16TH-20TH** - CLOSED, SPRING BREAK
- **MARCH 20TH-22ND** - HIDE TANNING WORKSHOP 9:00AM-5:00PM
- **MARCH 26TH** - BOOK CLUB, THE LEGENDARY FRYBREAD DRIVE-IN, 4:30-6:00PM
- **MARCH 28TH** - RIBBON SWEATER WORKSHOP, 10:00AM-4:00PM

alongside Chelsea Pree, USDA Extension Administrator, who both emphasized the need for continued support, education, and collaboration to strengthen local producers and resources. Raised in Montana, Natalie Kerfoot delivered a powerful and impactful QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) Suicide Prevention Training, February 11, 2026 at our Blackfeet Community College. The training equips everyday people with the skills to recognize warning signs, ask the difficult but necessary questions, and connect individuals in crisis to appropriate help and support.

As a certified QPR trainer, Natalie also shared her personal experience and spoke openly about mental health and healing. Her testimony resonated deeply with participants, inspiring them to serve as advocates and trusted resource guides within our communities. She encouraged attendees to continue strengthening support systems and move forward in honoring biocultural diversity as Blackfeet Nation. Our Extension program is grateful to have shared this inspiring individual with the community and looks forward to welcoming her back to present her knowledge and expertise to local schools in Browning, MT and the surrounding areas. If you or someone you know needs immediate help, call/ text 988.



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BFCC INSTRUCTOR RECEIVES GRANT TO STUDY LONG-COVID

Blackfeet Nation, MT – Dianna Arnoux-Whiteman, Science Instructor and Pre-Nursing Advisor at Blackfeet Community College, has been awarded a research grant from the Montana IDeA Networks of Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE) program located at Montana State University to study the long-term effects of COVID-19 on the Blackfeet Reservation.



The project, titled "The Residual Effects of Long-COVID on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation," will examine the prevalence and severity of long-COVID across communities within the reservation. The study aims to identify how many individuals continue to experience lingering symptoms and to raise awareness of the condition locally.

Long-COVID is considered a multi-system condition that can affect the brain, heart, nervous system, and other organs. Common symptoms include fatigue, brain fog, sleep disturbances, depression, and post-exertional symptom flare-ups. Research suggests that approximately 5-10% of people infected with COVID-19 experience ongoing health problems that may interfere with daily activities or employment.

Arnoux-Whiteman brings more than two decades of healthcare experience to the project, having retired in 2017 after 22 years with the Indian Health Service as a Laboratory Supervisor. She now focuses on supporting students pursuing careers in healthcare and improving community health awareness.

The study will be conducted with guidance from Betty Henderson-Matthews, Chair, Math/Science; Natalie Malaterre, Native American Research Centers for Health (NARCH) Grant Coordinator; and the Montana IDeA Networks of Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE) team led by Principle Investigator, Dr. Brian Bothner.

The project has been approved by the Blackfeet Nation Institutional Review Board (BNIRB). Additional information about national long-COVID efforts is available at solvelongcovid.org. Funding is provided by the National Institutes of Health; Montana IDeA Networks of Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE) grant number P20 GM103474.

IMPORTANT DATES

- **MARCH 3:** SOFT SKILLS WORKSHOP - LEARNING CENTER - 2:00PM - 4:00PM
- **MARCH 4:**
 - COMMUNITY ENERGY DAY - STUDENT COMMONS - 8:00AM - 4:00PM
 - CRAFT MAKING - KNOWLEDGE CARRIERS LODGE - 2:00PM - 4:00PM
- **MARCH 6:** BEADING CAPS, RIBBON SKIRTS, & RIBBON SHIRTS - ALL DAY - LEARNING CENTER
- **MARCH 9-13:** COURSE ASSESSMENTS
- **MARCH 11:** CRAFT MAKING - KNOWLEDGE CARRIERS LODGE - 2:00PM - 4:00PM
- **MARCH 16-20:** SPRING BREAK - BFCC CLOSED
- **MARCH 24:**
 - SCHOLARSHIP DAY - LEARNING CENTER - 2:00PM - 4:00PM
 - BELT MAKING - STUDENT COMMONS - 2:00PM - 4:00PM
- **MARCH 25:** ELDERS LUNCH - EAGLE SHIELDS - 11:30AM - 2:30PM
- **MARCH 27:** BEADING GRADUATION CAPS- LEARNING CENTER - 2:00PM - 4:00PM
- **MARCH 31:**
 - EASTER ACTIVITY - ALL OVER BFCC CAMPUS
 - SOUP TUESDAY - KNOWLEDGE CARRIERS LODGE - 12:00PM - 1:00PM

TOP 3 STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

We are thrilled to celebrate the hard work and community spirit shown by our team members this past month. Please join us in recognizing these three outstanding individuals who were nominated for their dedication and exceptional work, in no particular order:

- Felix Nez (East Campus) "Felix has been a driving force behind the East Campus development. His commitment to including students in land grant projects and he is consistently compassionate, respectful approach to student support make him a true asset to our institutional growth."
- Dan Wagner (Staff) "Dan is known by many as a "kind man" and an incredibly steady worker. Dan's focus remains firmly on ensuring our students get the absolute most out of their time at BFCC. His reliability and work ethic provide a wonderful foundation for our campus community."
- Tinsuwella Bird Rattler (Food Pantry) "Tinsuwella demonstrated exceptional initiative this month by stepping in on short notice to restock the food pantry. While other staff were traveling, she ensured that our students' needs were met without interruption. Her "student-first" mindset is an inspiration to us all."

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WORKOUT CENTER HOURS

The Workout Center is open for student use!

Hours:

- Monday–Thursday: 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM
- Monday & Wednesday extended hours: 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Remember to sign in each time you use the Workout Center.

Hours may change based on student schedules.



BFCC WRITING CENTER

The BFCC Writing Center is here to support students at every stage of the writing process, whether you're just getting started or polishing a final draft.

We can help with:

- Writing and revising assignments
- Brainstorming and outlining
- MLA & APA formatting
- Scholarship writing
- Finding quality sources, quoting, and citing
- Cover letters, resumes, presentations, and work emails
- Grant proposals
- Grammar mini-lessons
- Creative writing

Appointments Available:

Monday–Saturday

In-person or virtual

Meet Our Writing Center Faculty:

- Gordon Bennett (In Person)
 - Ashes Chief Building | Mondays–Thursdays, 2:30 – 4:00 PM
- Sabine Brigette (Remote/Online)
 - Tuesdays, Fridays & Saturdays via virtual appointments

Before Your Visit:

- Bring your instructor's assignment instructions
- Be familiar with your instructor's AI policy
- Bring any brainstorming notes or drafts you'd like feedback on

Your Choice on AI:

Use of AI tools is optional. Writing Center staff will never input your work into AI tools without your permission and can fully support you with or without AI.

Make an appointment and strengthen your writing skills today!

HELP SHAPE YOUR BFCC BOOKSTORE!

Take a quick survey to help the BFCC Bookstore improve textbook affordability, availability, and service.

Scan the QR code with your BFCC email to get started and enter our prize drawings!

Thank you for helping us make the bookstore better for everyone!



WWW.BFCC.EDU/BOOKSTORE

NEED HELP WITH MATH?

Meet with Trevor Severn the Math Tutor!

Stop by the South Wind Lodge during tutoring hours for help with:

M065, M098, M121, M151, and M216

Tutoring Schedule:

- Monday & Wednesday: 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM → via Zoom
- Tuesday & Thursday: 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM → In Person, South Wind Lodge
- Friday: 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM → In Person, South Wind Lodge

Contact Email: bfcc.narch@bfcc.edu

Scan the QR code to join Zoom tutoring sessions!

[CLICK HERE](#)



CURRENT STUDENTS: YOUR VOICE MATTERS!

What does the perfect semester look like to YOU?

From dances and pizza nights to snack-filled study sessions, the Student Senate wants to plan events that you'll actually attend.

[CLICK HERE](#)



Take 3 minutes to share your ideas and help shape Spring 2026

EMPLOYMENT AND OPPORTUNITIES

New Team Members

We are excited to welcome new faces to our campus community and to celebrate recent additions to our team. Please join us in welcoming Dan Polk, our Meat Processing Instructor

Open Positions

In addition, Blackfeet Community College is currently hiring!

We have the following open positions:

- Human Services Administrative Assistant
- Information Technology Support Specialist

If you are interested in joining a dynamic team dedicated to education, community, and student success, we encourage you to apply today at www.bfcc.edu/Human-Resource or by scanning the QR Code.

Welcome to our new hires and welcome to the future at Blackfeet Community College!

SCAN CODE OR
[CLICK HERE TO APPLY](#)



NURSING PROGRAM - IMPORTANT FALL 2026 DATES

- Interviews - March 9th & 10th

If you are interested in joining the nursing program or are interested in taking the TEAS test or needing access should contact:

Melissa Gordon

Nursing Simulation/Clinical Education Coordinator

mgordon@bfcc.edu

406-338-5441 Ext. 2916

