

## Minority Serving Institutions: Northwest Indian College



### Problem Statement

Although many Native American tribes have legal rights to harvest and responsibility for managing marine resources, few Native Americans have degrees in marine scientific or technical fields.

### Critical Factors

- In 1997, American universities awarded 600 Ph.Ds in scientific and engineering fields; only two went to Native Americans.
- Forty percent of minorities who earn undergraduate degrees earn them at institutions that have traditionally served minority communities, but only one tribal college—the Northwest Indian College (NWIC) in Bellingham, Washington—has a marine and aquaculture program.
- The NWIC currently has only eight full-time science and natural resources faculty. The Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC) has over 100 scientists with advanced degrees, many of them with teaching experience.
- The NWFSC has launched a Minority Serving Institution Tribal initiative to assist in the education and research training of Native Americans.
- The NWFSC and the NWIC will use the Northwest Indian College's distant learning network to share environmental and marine educational programs with Native Americans throughout the United States.

### The Initiative

The NWFSC's Tribal initiative is designed to increase the number of Native Americans with strong scientific and technical training and, ultimately, to increase the number of Native Americans employed by the federal government in scientific and technical positions.

Under the initiative, NWFSC staff will teach courses and serve as graduate advisors at the Northwest Indian College. Center staff will also consult and advise students working on projects that involve fisheries, computer science, and habitat management. The Center will help the Northwest Indian College establish environmental entrepreneurship certification programs in aquaculture studies and in recovery plan compliance and effectiveness. Finally, the Center will provide internships for Northwest Indian College students both in Seattle and at field stations throughout the Northwest.

The Center and the Northwest Indian College will jointly establish video conferencing capabilities and web-based mechanisms for data exchange. They will also jointly develop multi-media education and outreach materials.

### Key Players

Science Directorate (SD), NWFSC

Northwest Indian College

American Indian Higher Education Consortium

Heritage College

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