



**AMERICAN INDIAN  
HIGHER EDUCATION  
CONSORTIUM**

- AIHEC is the collective spirit and unifying voice for our nation's Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs).
- There are 35 accredited TCUs and two developing institutions.
- The TCUs are tribally and federally chartered institutions working to strengthen tribal nations and make lasting impacts on the lives of American Indian and Alaska Natives (AI/AN).
- AIHEC provides leadership and influences public policy on AI/AN higher education issues through advocacy, research, and program initiatives.
- AIHEC's strategic plan:
  - Sustain and Grow
  - Inform & Educate
  - Nation Building
  - Engage & Succeed
  - Honor & Ceremony
  - Identity & Sovereignty

<https://www.aihec.org/vision-mission-2/>



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- AIHEC Health Initiatives are educational programs that work hand in hand with TCUs to nurture future healthcare professionals who will empower tribal nations to meet the health needs of their communities.
- AIHEC Health Initiatives support the engagement of TCU students and provide avenues of success in cultivating tribal ownership of the research process and strengthened Tribal communities through innovative health initiatives.
- Activities are driven by student first approaches weaving resiliency, culture, academic equity, and practices that respect Tribal sovereignty and nation building.



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# ***Aseto'ne Network Project***

***Aseto'ne is the process of growth.***

- The AIHEC Aseto'ne Network Project (ANP) is a broad, multi-institutional initiative to coordinate outreach, educational enrichment, mentoring, and personal development activities at the TCUS. This program was designed to help TCU students grow through their journeys in academia and career paths to become researchers knowledgeable of Native perspectives in research.
- The Aseto'ne Virtual Institute provides instruction centered around Indigenous perspectives in health and biomedical research both in academia and as a profession, as well as a course designed around cultural resilience in education and career journeys. The educational journeys include:
  - Smudge Keeper - 1-credit
  - Fire Keeper – 2-credits
  - Medicine Shield – 1-credit
- Other Major Accomplishments:
  - Over 100 instructional videos developed for TCU faculty to use in their classroom.
  - 25 peer and 38 faculty mentors served 170 Aseto'ne Institute participants.
  - 28 Aseto'ne Institute participants attended national health related conferences.



# ***Aseto'ne Network Project***

## ***Goals & Activities***

The ANP is dedicated to nurturing an appreciation of health-related research among TCU students and supporting each student and participant's educational and career journeys. In this way, the ANP is a stepping-stone on the pathway to addressing the critical health and wellness issues confronting Native communities.

- Moving forward the ANP will:
  - Record 20 webinars
  - Produce 4 short course
  - Produce 11 modules
  - Send ten students to a regional or national health/science/research conference.
  - Recruit participants to enroll in the Aseto'ne Virtual Institute.
  - Recruit eight Indigenous mentors to serve the student participants of the Aseto'ne Virtual Institute.

# AIHEC BIRCH PROJECT

## AIHEC's Building Indigenous Research Capacity in Health (BIRCH) Project

- Bolster the health research and education pipeline infrastructure for TCU AI/AN students. We are striving to make TCUs the central hub of research within their communities.
- Advance TCU student skillset through opportunities that incorporate health, Native culture, and Native ways of knowing into healthcare, research education, and career journeys that create a lasting impact on each TCU's community.
- Expand Indigenous research practice at the TCUs.
- Build the pathway for TCUs to become the central hub of health science research for their community.
- Support Tribal Nations asserting full ownership, direction, and control over health research in their communities.
- Empower each Tribal Nation to utilize their research to enhance the health of their people, reduce health disparities, and increase treatment adherence.
- Increase quality of health services provided in a way that considers Native cultures, values, traditions and needs specific to Native communities.

# AIHEC BIRCH PROJECT – Goals & Activities

- AIHEC Health Webinar Series
  - Webinar topics include cultural resilience, epidemics in Indian Country, Indigenous holistic health, community wellness mapping, and others as advised by affiliated stakeholders.
- Annual hybrid Health Sciences Summer Institute
  - Two distinct four-week summer institutes designed for TCU students and TCU faculty.
  - Include two weeks of online education and two weeks of in person education.
- Provide a stipend for TCU students to attend health research conferences and workshops.
  - Provides vast opportunities for networking, presentation skill building, capacity to conduct Indigenous community-based participatory research, and so forth.
- Mentoring activities for TCU faculty.
- Provide information on publications available to TCU faculty.
  - Promote and support TCU faculty research publication.
- Development of college level courses for TCU faculty to use in their classrooms.
- Utilize TCU and AI/AN stakeholders to inform program development and activities.

# AIHEC Health Initiatives Resources



AIHEC Health Initiatives website:

<https://www.aihec.org/health/>



Aseto'ne Digital Library:

<https://webassets.aihec.org/AsetoneResources/Aseto%E2%80%99ne-Intro/Pages/default.aspx>

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