

PLAN OF OPERATION¹
NEZ PERCE TRIBAL HIGHER EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

1. **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of the Nez Perce Tribal Higher Education Scholarship Program is to encourage and financially assist tribal members to seek higher education through available tribal funds. An overall goal is to expand educational opportunities as a means for individual tribal members to reach cultural, economic, and social prosperity and to contribute to protecting and advancing the sovereignty and way of life of the Nez Perce people. Assistance will be awarded on the basis of tribal enrollment, initiative, scholastic rating, and the availability of funds.

2. **AUTHORITY:**

Scholarship assistance shall be budgeted from the Isaac Broncheau Memorial Fund, Nez Perce Tribal Tobacco Tax Revenue Fund, and Bureau of Indian Affairs PL 93-638 Higher Education Scholarship Fund and any other scholarship that may become available. All scholarship funds will be managed collectively as the “**Nez Perce Tribal Higher Education Scholarship Program.**”

The Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee (NPTEC) authorizes the Nez Perce Education Department Manager to fully administer the Nez Perce Tribal Higher Education Scholarship Program. The Education Manager shall receive, review, approve, and process all scholarship applications with the assistance of the Nez Perce Tribal Scholarship Committee that will consist of staff from the tribal Education Department. The Tribal Scholarship Committee will consist of two groups: (1) Application Reviewers: review application, scholarship history, and make funding recommendation to Education Manager, and (2) Administrative Consultation Team: provide input to Education Manager on policy and appeals. The Education Manager will submit a full accounting report of scholarships awards to the NPTEC Human Resources Subcommittee within thirty (30) days of the awards.

The scholarship award shall not annually exceed the following amounts:

- A. **Tribal Scholarship Fund (Isaac Broncheau Memorial, Nez Perce Tribal Gaming Revenue, and Higher Education Scholarship Endowment Funds):** \$3,200 per school year (excluding summer school) for an undergraduate degree and \$6,000 per school year (excluding summer school) for a graduate degree.
- B. **Higher Education Scholarship Fund (BIA PL 93-638):** \$3,120 per school year for undergraduate degrees. Graduate funding is not guaranteed and is based on availability of funding after all undergraduate degrees funding is processed.

¹ NPTEC Resolution, NP 14-259, April 22, 2014

3. ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS:

Scholarships may be granted to enrolled tribal members seeking dual credits in high school and post secondary education:

- A. **Time limits:** Five (5) semesters for a two year degree, ten (10) semesters for a four year degree, six (6) semesters for a Masters degree, and ten (10) semesters for Doctorate/Professional degree.
- B. **Completion of credits to maintain enrollment status:** Members receiving scholarships are required to complete the credits per term for enrollment status they were funded by the Nez Perce Tribe. This includes full-time, three quarters (3/4) time, half (1/2) time, and less than half (1/2) time. See section 9, Probation, Disqualification, and Reinstatement.
- C. **Enrollment status for undergraduates:**
 - Full-time is 12 credits and above, i.e. minimum of 12 credits.
 - Three-quarters (3/4) time is 9-11 credits, i.e. minimum of 9 credits.
 - Half (1/2) time is 6-8 credits, i.e. minimum of 6 credits.
 - Less than half (1/2) time is 1-5 credits. Must complete all credits attempted.
- D. **Enrollment status for graduate students:**

Student must provide documentation from their college Financial Aid Office for the definition of full-time, three quarters (3/4) time, half (1/2) time, and less than half-time for their course of study.
- E. **GPA Requirement:** The student must complete the semester/quarter with a "C" (2.00 GPA) average or higher for the undergraduate degrees and the requirements of the departments for the graduate or doctorate level of study. See section 9, Probation, Disqualification, Reinstatement, for how funding may be reduced or suspended.
- F. **Funding Priority:** Those students who meet their GPA and credit hours requirements will receive top priority for future assistance.
- G. **Vocational-Technical Certificates:** The Nez Perce Tribe will grant assistance for vocational technical certificates or two year degrees at business, technical or trade school.

4. FUNDING

Scholarships will be awarded to students who plan to attend accredited institutions of higher learning.

- A. **Academic Degrees:** Funding is only for a student's 1st Associates, 1st Bachelors, 1st Masters, and 1st Doctorate/Professional. Both Tribal and Higher Education Scholarship Funds support academic degrees (see section 2.B).
- B. **Vocational Technical Degrees:** Funding is only for a student's 1st Vocational Technical Degree from the Tribal Scholarship Fund. The Higher Education Scholarship Fund does not support vocational technical, but rather students are referred to the tribal Adult Education Program.

- C. **Dual Credits:** Funding for dual credits will be coordinated with the student's high school counselor, if there are *no other resources available*.
- D. **Repeat Credits:** Credits previously funded cannot be used to fulfill the enrollment status (full-time, $\frac{3}{4}$ time, $\frac{1}{2}$ time, less than $\frac{1}{2}$ time) for subsequent terms. This could affect the student's level of scholarship award in subsequent semesters.
- E. **Payments:** Tribal Scholarship Fund payments will be made directly to the student. Higher Education Scholarship Fund payments will be made directly to the school's Financial Aid Office.
- F. **After approval, scholarship checks will be issued BY:**
- Fall Quarter/Semester: August 15
 - Winter Quarter/Spring Semester: January 5
 - Spring Quarter: March 5
- G. **Early Check Release:** Special consideration will be given to students who will begin school at an earlier date. One must submit a memo to the Education Manager requesting early check release and outline one's circumstances.
- H. **Funding levels:**
- **Tribal Scholarship Fund (Academic and Vocational Technical)**
 - Undergraduate
 - Full-time: \$1,600/semester, \$1,067/quarter
 - $\frac{3}{4}$ time: \$1,200/semester, \$800/quarter
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ time: \$800/semester, \$534/quarter
 - Less than $\frac{1}{2}$ time: Refer to NPTEC Educational Assistance
 - Graduate
 - Full-time: \$3,000/semester, \$2,000/quarter
 - $\frac{3}{4}$ time: \$2,250/semester, \$1,500/quarter
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ time: \$1,500/semester, \$1,000/quarter
 - Less than $\frac{1}{2}$ time: Refer to NPTEC Educational Assistance
 - **Higher Education Scholarship Fund (Academic Only)**
 - Undergraduate
 - Full-time: \$1,560/semester, \$1,040/quarter
 - $\frac{3}{4}$ time: \$1,170/semester, \$780/quarter
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ time: \$780/semester, \$520/quarter
 - Less than $\frac{1}{2}$ time: Refer to NPTEC Educational Assistance Program
 - Graduate
 - The amount of aid will be determined on availability of funding after all undergraduate applications are funded. No guarantee of funding.
- Dual Credit for High School Students (see 4.C)
 \$130/credit/semester, \$87/credit/quarter
- I. **Vocational-Technical Students** can also apply to the Nez Perce Adult Education Program for a scholarship.

5. APPLICATION

Key application guidelines are as follows:

- A. **Tribal Enrollment:** Each applicant must be an enrolled member of the Nez Perce Tribe and provide a copy of tribal ID or certificate of Indian Blood (CIB).
- B. **References:** Each applicant must confirm three (3) people, who are not related to them, to act as a reference on the student's character, personality, leadership, and scholastic qualities.
- C. **Accredited Schools:** Each applicant must be accepted for enrollment in a state or regionally **accredited** college or university (includes **accredited** online colleges or universities). Trade schools that offer certification are allowed.
- D. **Verification of Other Financial Aid Resources:** Students must provide information on other financial aid resources that they will use to fully fund the cost of attending their college/university or vocational technical program. It is the student's responsibility to submit applications for federal, state, or college aid in a timely manner to ensure funding by the start of the term.
- E. **Submission:** Applications will be submitted to Education Manager.
- F. **Deadlines:**

| | <u>Priority Deadline</u> | <u>Final Deadline</u> |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Fall Quarter/Semester | June 1 | September 15 |
| Winter Quarter/Spring Semester | October 1 | January 15 |
| Spring Quarter | December 1 | March 15 |

- G. **Late Applications:** Applications received after the deadline will be given consideration based on the availability of funds. If funds are available, late applications may result in delayed receipt of funds by student and school.
- H. **Complete Applications Requirement:** Incomplete applications will not be accepted. Request assistance from tribal Education Department staff if one has challenges completing application.
- I. **Current Term Funding Only:** The student must submit the required documents before the semester/quarter they plan to attend an institution of higher learning (see 5.G, "Late"). **Retroactive requests will not be accepted.**
- J. **Student Types:** Continuing students are ones who were funded in the previous term and are working on the same degree program. New students are ones starting a new degree program or continuing a degree program after a break in study. Transfer students are ones who have started a degree program, but are changing institutions of study. Reference Section 3.A, Time limits.
- K. **Required Documents:**
New and transfer student shall submit the following:
 - (1) Completed application form
 - (2) High school transcripts, GED test scores, or latest college transcripts
 - (3) Admission Letter from the institution
 - (4) Class schedule for upcoming term
 - (5) Copy of tribal ID card or CIB
 - (6) Personal letter stating educational goals and future plans

Continuing students submit the following:

- (1) Semester/quarter transcript, must include student name, institution name, semester/quarter, grades and credits completed and attempted
- (2) Course schedule for the next semester/quarter, must include student name, institution name, number of hours registered, schedule of classes
- (3) Degree audit prior to junior (3rd) year
- (4) Electronic Scholarship Renewal prior to start of school year

Items #1 and #2 are submitted after each term for continuing students.

6. SCHOLARSHIP REPAYMENT PLAN:

All students receiving tribal scholarships will be required to sign a certification that they will repay the Nez Perce (reimbursement tracked to the appropriate funding source) the full amount of the scholarship being requested if they do not complete the quarter/semester they are funded, i.e. not complete all credits ("dropout"), or they knowingly provide false information to secure funding. Such certification will be binding and may be executed or canceled according to the academic requirements (section 3) and academic disqualifications (section 9). In cases of an "extreme emergency" that affects a student's ability to complete the semester/quarter, the student will request emergency leave of absence from his or her school and contact the tribal Education Manager.

7. STUDENT TRAVEL

Travel assistance is available for students who are attending school 1,000 miles from their permanent residence. Students must inform the Education Manager at the time of their application for scholarship that they would like consideration for travel assistance. Travel Assistance will not be disbursed until the scholarship has been approved for funding.

Travel assistance will be as follows:

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|-----------------------------------|--|
| Beginning of school year (August) | \$150 (one-way) |
| Christmas break | \$300 (round-trip; full amount contingent on return to school) |
| End of school year (May) | \$150 (one-way) |

8. SUMMER SCHOOL:

Summer school funding will be based on funding availability and proof of need to graduate and complete one's degree. Funding will be based on the same formula as quarter funding.

9. PROBATION, DISQUALIFICATION, AND REINSTATEMENT:

Students must be aware that they are expected to meet the requirements of "Satisfactory Academic Progress" once they receive tribal funding.

A. **Good Standing:** Student must meet the following minimum standards:

- Completion of minimum credits to maintain enrollment status per term, e.g. for full-time status, one must complete a minimum of 12 credits.
- Maintain a minimum of a "C" (2.00 GPA)

B. **Restrictions:** If a student fails to remain in Good Standing, the following restrictions will be made:

GPA

- The first time a student's grade point average (GPA) falls below requirements, the student will be placed on **ACADEMIC PROBATION**.
- The student will be funded for the next term with a letter of Academic Warning sent to the student and placed in the student file.

Credit minimum

- If the student makes the minimum GPA but is below the credit minimum for their enrollment status, they will be placed on **ACADEMIC PROBATION** and allowed one (1) semester/quarter to complete the credit(s) that dropped them below their enrollment status
- Credits previously funded cannot be used to fulfill the enrollment status (full-time, $\frac{3}{4}$ time, $\frac{1}{2}$ time, less than $\frac{1}{2}$ time) for subsequent terms. This could affect the student's level of scholarship award in subsequent semesters.
- Section 6, Scholarship Repayment Plan, will only be in effect if student fails to complete ALL credits at the end of the semester.

C. **Disqualification:**

- Students who have been on **ACADEMIC PROBATION** (for credits or GPA) and fail to meet the minimum requirements the following term will forfeit all tribal scholarship funding and will be on **SUSPENSION**.
- This requirement is consistent with most higher education institutions.
- An exception for GPA disqualification will be given to those individuals who are in "continuing student" status as of 7/1/10. These students will be allowed to follow the Academic Probation guidelines from the previous tribal scholarship Plan of Operation. This allowed two (2) semesters of academic probation.

D. **Reinstatement:**

- The student will be reconsidered only after they have achieved the minimum qualifications:

Removal from Academic Probation

- (1) Complete the credits they have been paid to complete for enrollment status (full-time, $\frac{3}{4}$ time, $\frac{1}{2}$ time, and less than $\frac{1}{2}$ time).
- (2) Maintain a minimum of a 2.0 GPA semester following disqualification.

Removal from Suspension

- (1) A student may have to pay for a semester/quarter with his or her own resources in order to complete credits and reach minimum 2.0 GPA.
- (2) Provide proof of official reinstatement from the college for admission and financial aid.

10. APPEAL PROCESS AND COMPLAINTS

A. Non-appeal issues: NPTEC has determined that the following issues cannot be appealed (all have been in the tribal scholarship policy since 1998):

- Exceeding funding Time Limits (see 3A). Reason: Limited resources for tribal students who have not exceeded time limit.
- Probation or Suspension of funding due to academic standing, i.e. GPA or credit probation (section 9). Reason: This is a requirement of the student's school.
- Funding for a 2nd Associates, 2nd Bachelors, 2nd Masters, 2nd Doctorate/Professional, and 2nd Vocational Technical degree (see 4A). Reason: Limited financial resources needed to support 1st degree students.
- Attendance at a non-accredited school (see 5C). Reason: Need to ensure students are eligible for federal financial aid and that their credits will transfer. Trade schools covered in 5C.
- Retroactive requests (see 5I). Reason: Limited financial resources and application is required before or during the term one is requesting funding (Late application see 5G).
- Credits previously funded (section 9). Reason: Limited financial resources to fund a student to take same class more than once.

B. Academic Probation, Disqualification, and Reinstatement must first go through the process outlined in section 9. See guidelines for scholarship repayment (section 6) and late applications (5G).

C. The following line of authority is established to adequately address funding denial appeals and complaints:

A. Funding denial

- **1st Step:** Write a letter to the Education Department Manager detailing justification to reconsider denial and change to approval. If denial due to an incomplete application, the student may provide item(s) needed.
- **2nd Step:** Education Manager will respond in five (5) business days to set up a personal meeting or phone call to discuss letter and gather more information.
- **3rd Step:** Education Manager will issue a written determination on appeal within five (5) days of meeting or phone call.
- **4th Step:** If the denial stands and the student wants to continue the appeal process, the Tribal Scholarship Committee (Administrative Consultation

Team) will meet to discuss appeal. They will respond in five (5) business days to set up a phone call or meeting. The Education Manager will provide all documentation to the Tribal Scholarship Committee, including the student's file, appeal letter, meeting or phone call notes, and written determination letter. The student can provide any additional documentation as needed.

- **5th Step:** The Tribal Scholarship Committee will issue a written determination on appeal within five (5) days of meeting or phone call with student.
- **6TH Step:** Only NPTEC can waive this Plan of Operation. The Education Manager will arrange a time for the student to talk with NPTEC to present his or her justification for an exception due to any undue hardship. Upon receipt of all evidence provided by the Education Manager, and Tribal Scholarship Committee, NPTEC will make a final decision.

B. Complaints

- **1st step:** Contact the Education Department Manager in person, by phone, or in writing (email, letter). The Manager will work with the student to address the complaint.
- **2nd step:** Complaints needing further review or action will be referred by the Education Manager to the Executive Director.

11. Optional Tribal Student Support Services

Beyond providing scholarship funding, the Nez Perce Tribe acknowledges that some tribal students may be interested in receiving additional student support services to prepare to meet the demands of higher education.

To meet these needs, the Nez Perce Education Department offers the following "Optional Student Support Services" (participation is voluntary):

- A. Academic Advising:** The Nez Perce Adult Education staff has an extensive background in counseling students in the following areas:
- College Readiness
 - Admission and Transcript Fees
 - Financial Aid (e.g. federal, college, tribal, time limits, etc.)
 - Admissions
 - Academic Planning
 - Campus Student Support Services
 - Reinstatement from probation and suspension
 - Computer stations for students for approved academic and vocational technical purposes

Participation in Academic Advising will require submission of additional student information and release of information forms. Adult Education will provide a checklist of requirements.

- B. **Mentoring:** Starting in the 2010-11 school year, the Education Department will pilot a Higher Education Mentoring Program. We will recruit tribal employees with an associate, bachelor, graduate, doctorate, and vocational-technical degrees to act as mentors to current tribal college student mentees. They will primarily maintain occasional communication by email or phone and do campus visits, when geographically possible. The mentor will primarily be an advocate and support person. He or she will not provide counseling, financial support, or transportation.
- C. **High School Outreach:** Education Department staff will coordinate a high school outreach program to visit tribal students who live on or near the Nez Perce reservation. An outreach strategy for out-of-area students will be developed on a case-by-case basis. The focus will be to coordinate dual credit funding with school counselors, prepare high school juniors and seniors to complete scholarships, and network to expand other college readiness activities (e.g. college site visits, entrance exam preparation). The Education staff will also learn more about higher education preparation offered by the school by meeting with the school's Academic Counselor and/or Indian Education Coordinator.
- D. **Education Packets:** By the 2011-12 school year, the Education Department will create a higher education packet for each student which will contain information to help the student reach optimal academic success.
- E. **Email List:** The Education Manager will maintain an email list (e-list) for all Higher Education Scholarship applicants to receive tribal education updates. A student can request to be removed.
- F. **Other Technology:** We will inform the tribal students of any technological advances that the Nez Perce Tribe can use to improve outreach and support services.

12. Degree Incentives:

Incentives for the completion of a degree will be given to each student who has completed their degree programs. The **ONLY** form of verification acceptable to receive these incentives will be the certified diploma.

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|---------------------|-------------------|
| Associates/Vo-Tech: | \$50 |
| Undergraduate: | Pendleton Blanket |
| Master's Level: | \$250.00 |
| Ph.D. Level: | \$500.00 |

13. Supersedes

This Nez Perce Tribal Higher Education Program “Plan of Operation” supersedes any previous policies and resolutions related to Nez Perce tribal scholarship administration.

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