

*Women Elder's Nibi/Mni Council [WENMC] Invited to Attend A Presentation On  
Indigenous Program Development.  
At White Earth Tribal & Community College  
November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015*

*Presentation by Sharon Kinnley, Dir. of the Coast Salish Institute at North West Indian College*

**Present:** *Gloria Whitefeather, Judy Fairbanks, Vikky Howard, Wren Walker Robbins, Krystal Littlewolf, Karl Lorenz, and Mark Bellcourt, Terry Janis, Joe LeGarde, Karen Branden, Lenny Fineday, Lorena Vogt, Maggi Adamek, Mark Muller, Cyndi Anderson, and others.*

WEMNC Members joined members of the White Earth Community in welcoming Sharon Kinnley, Greg Mahle, and Lexie Tom of the Lummi Nation to share their journey to develop a unique 4-year Native Studies Leadership degree at North West Indian College [NWIC]. Sharon who is Director of the Coast Salish Institute at NWIC shared their planning process that was guided by the sacred histories, language, and ceremonies of the Lummi people. The intent of the meeting was to provide a discussion of the feasibility of developing a tribally controlled water research center at White Earth.

### **Building On Our Traditions**

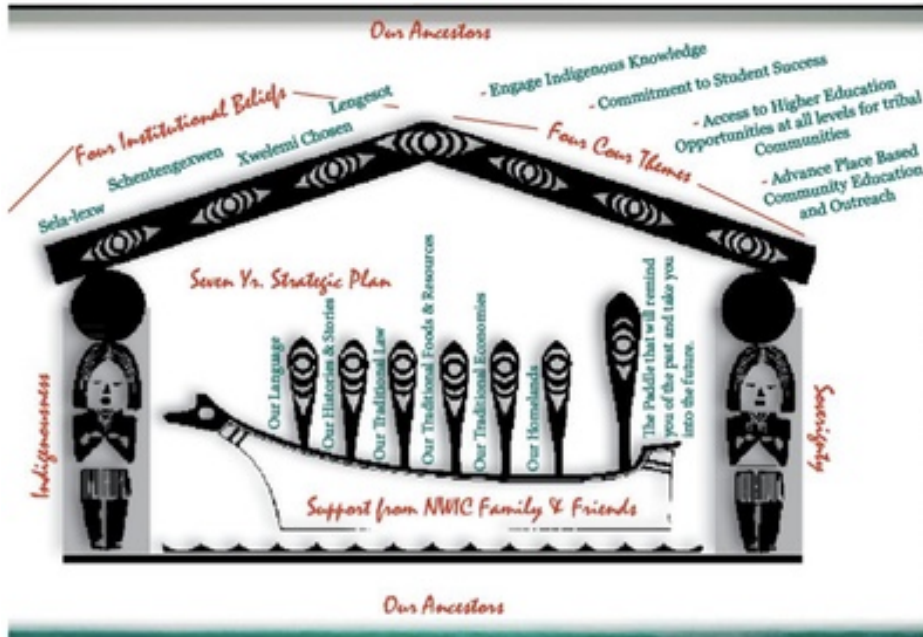


*"If we don't honor our Ancestors, what do we honor?"*

Sharon began by telling us a story of how she was called to a municipal water construction site for a near her reservation because skeletal remains had been discovered. Arriving she found a big hole dug into the ground where construction workers had unearthing a village from long ago. When she looked into the hole she saw the remains of her Ancestor's scattered in the debris. She told us how this experience set a chain of things in motion that would occupy her energies for the next decade making sure her Ancestors remains were reclaimed and treated with dignity.

*This was a leadership story – a story of stepping up and doing the right thing for her Ancestors and her community, and her experience forms a foundation for whatever work she undertakes. Whether recovering her Ancestors and interring into sacred ground, or building an academic program. For her, leadership means reclaiming our communities' cultural sovereignty for the present, and for the future.*

## Indigenous Program Planning



Sharon went on to share a process they used to create their Native Studies Leadership 4-year degree that reflects their

### Vision

*"Our Journey to self-determination is reclaiming our cultural sovereignty for the future"*

*"Traditional knowledge is our canoe, it moves us away from the Western genre that created a false sense of tribal identities."*

*"And toward our original understanding of "who we are." An understanding that is formed by our sacred histories, language, ceremonies and our homelands."*

And is based on the guiding principles of cultural sovereignty and indigeness.

### Indigeness

- Our origin, our stories
- Our inherent rights and responsibilities
- Language- they tell us about ourselves, our environment
- Indigenous knowledge
- Leadership qualities

### Sovereignty

- Protection of our homelands
- Protection of our people
- Acquired rights in law and policy
- Leadership Skills

They defined four specific program outcomes to develop:

1. **Qualities of Leadership** [netse-mot I shqwelowen]
  - Honor
  - Integrity
  - Respect
  - Humility
2. **Skills** [nepeteng]
  - Listening
  - Observation
  - Reflection
  - Critical/Creative thinking
  - Problem Solving
  - Communication
3. **Knowledge** [snepeneq]
  - Inherent Rights
  - Origin
  - Language
  - Histories
  - Homelands
  - Icons
  - Acquired Rights
  - Law
  - Policy
4. **Ideology** [schelangen]
  - Cultural Sovereignty
  - Identity

The design process looked like this:

