



PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Iġisaġvik College signs MOA with the Aleut Community of St. Paul Island to Begin Development of a Satellite Campus.

August 23, 2024

Iġisaġvik College is pleased to announce it has signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Aleut Community of St. Paul Island (ACSPI) Tribal Government, in which the two entities will collaborate to create an Iġisaġvik College satellite campus on St. Paul Island.

The agreement was signed in person by Iġisaġvik College President, Justina Wilhelm, and ACSPI Tribal President, John Wayne Melovidov on July 27, 2024, while Wilhelm was visiting the community, along with Iġisaġvik’s Dean of Administration, Amanda Sialofi. “We’re thrilled to deepen our partnership with the Aleut Community,” said Wilhelm, “Iġisaġvik College’s vision is to build strong communities through education and training. This partnership is a testament to that commitment and our dedication to enhancing state-wide tribal education to Alaska Native communities.”

ACSPI is a federally recognized sovereign Tribe located on St. Paul Island, Alaska, in the Bering Sea. ACSPI and Iġisaġvik have a fruitful history of partnering to provide workforce trainings and courses for members of ACSPI, which began in 2018. The College signed an initial MOA with ACSPI in August of 2022 to initiate a collaboration to increase educational opportunities. A second MOA was signed a year later to foster the promotion of dual credit opportunities for high school students from the community.

ACSPI has an educational facility, the Bering Sea Campus, that offers a mix of K-12 and after-school programming, post-secondary support, and community events. Instructors from the Bering Sea Campus have also developed an Unangam Tunuu language curriculum that has resulted in language programming for K-12, as well as the for-credit ANS 194 Unangam Tunuu course co-hosted by Iġisaġvik that began in 2023. The Bering Sea Research Center, a research facility developed and operating onsite, is also a part of the extended Bering Sea Campus.

John Wayne Melovidov, the President of ACSPI, shared these thoughts about the partnership: “This partnership grew from its original roots based in Tribal values that are symmetrically aligned. The familiarity that exists between those values, beliefs, and ways of learning are present, palpable and profound. As a person who had the fortune to attend a Tribal College, I feel that attending a Tribal institution provides the greatest framework for success and support for Tribal students. Iġisaġvik College embodies foundational Tribal values which are relatable, familiar and meaningful. We believe our Bering Sea Campus, which includes our Bering Sea Research Center, brings substantial value to Iġisaġvik

College and its students and we are looking forward to strengthening and growing our partnership through this agreement.”

Dylan Conduzzi, ACSPI’s Development Director, says, “We’re excited to see that whale tail logo on our wall. We believe this partnership is the right fit for the community, and we believe the Bering Sea Campus is a great fit for Iḷisaġvik College.” Iḷisaġvik College looks forward to its continued, dynamic partnership with ACSPI, which aligns with providing quality Tribal higher education to help fulfill the human resource needs of the North Slope region—home of Iḷisaġvik’s main campus—and the state of Alaska.

About Iḷisaġvik College

Located in Utqiagvik, Alaska, Iḷisaġvik College is a federally recognized Tribal College accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. Iḷisaġvik provides quality post-secondary academic, career and technical education in a learning environment that perpetuates and strengthens Iñupiat culture, language, values, and traditions. Iḷisaġvik College is a public, non-profit organization.

About Aleut Community of St. Paul Tribal Government

The Aleut Community of St. Paul Island Tribal Government is a governmental venue through which the Unangan of St. Paul Island can fulfill their intrinsic rights and responsibilities, and support, recollect, practice, and pass on their culture. The Aleut Government of St. Paul Island Tribal Government promotes, maintains, and protects cultural practices, awareness, preservation, self-governance, and self-determination for the Aleut Community of St. Paul Island.