

# Fort Lewis Powwow Circle Constitution

## Article I. Name

The name of this organization shall be Fort Lewis College Powwow Circle (FLPC)

## Article II. Purpose

The purpose of this organization shall be to

1. Provide a welcoming and respectful space for students of all races, ethnicities, genders, and backgrounds to learn about and participate in powwow dancing.
2. Celebrate and honor Indigenous cultures through education, movement, storytelling, and community connection.
3. Create opportunities for cultural learning, physical activity, and emotional healing through traditional practices and social dance participation.
4. Foster relationships between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous students through shared movement, collaboration, and respect.
5. Protect the integrity and cultural boundaries of powwow traditions while offering inclusive access to learning.

## Article III. Membership

### Section 1: Eligibility

Membership shall be open to:

- All current Fort Lewis College students
- Indigenous and non-Indigenous students
- Individuals of all races, ethnicities, genders, gender identities, sexual orientations, abilities, and backgrounds.

No dance or cultural experience is required to join.

## Section 2. Membership Rights

All members may:

- Attend meetings, practices, and educational sessions
- Participate in discussions, workshops, and social dances.
- Hold roles.

## Sections 3: Cultural Boundaries in Participation

To maintain cultural respect:

- All members may learn powwow dance basics and participate in social dances.
- Competitive powwow dancing, sacred teachings, or access to Nation-specific protocols may only be led by individuals with the appropriate cultural background or permission.
- Not all dances, songs, or regalia are open to everyone.
- Members may not present themselves as competitive dancers unless they have been initiated into the circle, have personal or community ties, and/or training from their nation.

## Section 4. Removal of Members

No member may be removed without:

- A respectful discussion
- Conversation circle with roles present
- A majority agreement from the leadership roles.

Harassment, discrimination, cultural disrespect, or violation of the Cultural Respect Agreement may result in review.

#### Article IV. Leadership Roles (Non-elected, Open Participation)

Instead of formal officers, the Powwow Circle uses a shared leadership model. Members may step into roles voluntarily based on interest, capacity, and cultural responsibility.

##### Available Roles

##### 1. Circle Head (President)

- Helps to maintain the energy, respect, and direction of the circle.
- Helps open and close practices
- Facilitates discussions and ensures a positive, inclusive environment.

##### 2. Practice Coordinator

- Helps plan practice times
- Helps choose songs, flow of practice, and lesson structure.
- Supports new members learning dance basics.

##### 3. Cultural Liaison

(must be Indigenous/ connected to powwow culture)

- Helps guide cultural boundaries
- Advises on appropriate dances, teachings, and guest involvement
  - Ensures accuracy and respect in cultural messaging.

#### 4. Communication Coordinator

- Manages messages, announcements, and social media.
  - Helps promote meetings and events
    - Makes flyers or graphics

#### 5. Event Coordinator

- Assists with planning, social dances, gatherings, and collaborations.
- Helps organize things like food, set-up, and works with communication.

#### 6. Logistics and Resource Role

- Helps the circle manage money in a responsible, transparent, and community-focused way.
  - Keeps track of purchases, supplies, and event resources.
  - Helping plan budgets for workshops, practices, or gatherings.
- Assisting with fundraising or donation-based support if the circle chooses.
  - Updating the Circle Keeper and others on available resources.
- Ensuring financial decisions benefit the community and uphold cultural respect.
  - All financial decisions will follow Fort Lewis College policies.

## How Roles work

- No elections.
- No hierarchy.
- Anyone can volunteer for a role.
- Multiple people can share a role if needed.
- Members may rotate roles each semester.
- Roles exist to support the circle, not control it.

This mirrors powwow culture: Everyone contributes, everyone matters.

## Article V. Leadership Selection & Shared Roles

### Section 1. Stepping Into Roles

Leadership roles are filled through self-nomination and circle consent.

The process is as follows:

1. Available roles are shared at the beginning of each semester or as needed.
  2. Any member may express interest in a role by:
    - Speaking during a planning or conversation circle, or
    - Communicating directly with current role holders or the Circle Head.
  3. The circle briefly discusses the roles, responsibilities, and the member's availability.
4. If there are no major concerns, the member steps into the role with the support of the circle.

Circle consent is reached through discussion and mutual understanding rather than voting or campaigning.

## Section 2. Role Expectations & Requirements

All leadership roles share the following expectations:

- Consistent participation and communication
- Respect for cultural boundaries and the Cultural Respect Agreement
- Acting in service of the circle rather than personal recognition

Some roles have additional responsibilities:

- Cultural Liaison: Must be Indigenous and/or have a lived cultural connection to powwow traditions and teachings.
- Logistics and Resource Role: Must follow Fort Lewis College and ASFLC financial policies
- Communication Coordinator: Willingness to manage announcements, flyers, or digital communication (training and collaboration encouraged)

No GPA minimums, popularity measures, or campaigning is required for any role.

## Section 3. Shared Roles

Multiple members may hold the same leadership role at the same time.

Roles may be shared when:

- More than one member is interested
- The workload requires additional support
- Mentorship or learning opportunities are beneficial

Members sharing a role will collaboratively determine how responsibilities are divided and will communicate regularly to ensure clarity and balance.

#### Section 4. Conflict Resolution Within Roles

If confusion or conflict arises within a role:

1. Role holders will first discuss concerns together
2. If needed, a conversation circle may be held with the Circle Head and/or Cultural Liaison present.
3. The goal is understanding, balance, and continued service to the circle

Roles may be adjusted, shared differently, or rotated based on the needs of the community.

#### Section 5. Role Duration & Rotation

Leadership roles are not permanent.

-Member may step down at any time **with communication**

-Roles may rotate mid-semester or between n semesters

-This structure exists to prevent burnout, promote shared learning, and avoid concentration of power.

## Article VI. Meetings

### Section 1. Regular Meetings

Meetings/ practices will be held weekly or biweekly each semester, depending on availability.

### Section 2. Planning Circles

Planning discussions will be held as needed with roles who want to participate. All members are welcome.

## Article VII. Dissolution

If this organization dissolves, any remaining funds or assets shall be transferred to Fort Lewis College or to another student organization with a similar mission, as determined by the ASFLC, and shall not be distributed to individual members.

## Article VIII. Cultural Respect Agreement

All members must agree to the following:

### 1. Respect for Powwow Traditions

-Powwow dancing is cultural and spiritual. I will participate with humility, respect, and openness.

### 2. Cultural Boundaries

I understand that:

- Not all dances or regalia are open to everyone
- Some teachings belong to specific Nations

- Competitive dancing requires cultural grounding and initiation.

I will not participate in closed practices or teachings without invitation or permission.

### 3. Regalia Respect

I will not create or wear sacred regalia without proper cultural ties, guidance, or education.

### 4. Behavior

I will:

- Treat all members with kindness
- Support a judgement-free space
- Avoid cliques, exclusion, or gossip.
- Participate in ways that build community.

### 5. Education First

-This group is for learning, connection, and healing – not just performance or for showing off.

### 6. Accountability

I accept that violating these agreements may require a conversation circle and possible membership review.

Participant Signature : \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant Name (Printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Circle Head Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_