

The American Indian Higher Education Consortium Announces the Formation of the Tribal College and University Esports League

Alexandria, VA - October 28, 2025 - The American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) announced the formation of the Tribal College and University (TCU) Esports League, which is set to launch in spring 2026. The league will organize and support esports competition between nine founding institutions in the spring and expand over time to include all AIHEC member institutions across the United States.

The AIHEC Cyberinfrastructure (CI) facilitator, Shelly Knight, who organizes the TCU Esports Working Group, stated, "TCU Chief Information Officers, IT directors, and STEM faculty expressed to the AIHEC CI team a desire to build esports programs for recruitment and retention of STEM students. As the future continues to demand a technology-driven workforce, investing in esports at the TCUs provides their students with more experiences to engage with campus technology (ex., high-performing computers, podcast and broadcast equipment, and makerspaces) and online platforms that create communities for athletes and spectators."

Establishing the TCU Esports League was a primary goal of the TCU Esports Working Group, developed and facilitated by the AIHEC CI team (NSF 2334701) in collaboration with the Electronic Gaming Federation (EGF) and Quipu. The TCU Esports League reflects AIHEC's strategic mission to amplify the collective voices of Tribal-led higher education through student activities.

Tyler Schrodtt, the founder and CEO of EGF, who will support the league's development and competitive operations, commented, "In the last 10 years, esports, especially in the world of higher education, has grown immensely and has created incredible opportunities for students through education, scholarship, and competition. EGF is proud to be a small part of this effort by AIHEC and the TCUs that will do so much good for so many students."

Not only has collegiate esports grown exponentially over the last decade, but it has also introduced scholarship-based esports programs at higher education institutions across the United States. As part of the league, each member institution will create an esports program that includes esports teams in different game titles competing against other members, which will be expanded to include broad-ranging education and professional development opportunities. Esports provides a powerful platform to strengthen the TCU campus community and showcase the incredible work of these institutions and their students.

Hai Ng, a founding Director of Quipu who will collaborate with AIHEC and the TCUs to support the league moving forward, stated, "Our mission has always been to utilize the power and the economy of the games and esports industries to strengthen communities, create opportunities, and diversify the economies of Indigenous communities. The launch of the TCU Esports League is a significant step towards a more robust esports industry within Indigenous communities, and

we are proud to assist with continuing to help grow and nurture it.” Quipu and the TCU Esports League share the goal of leveraging esports to build community and create pathways that empower students to pursue STEM and other games industry-related careers.

January 2026 will begin the first season of the TCU Esports League, which will support several game titles with member institutions competing in a regular season, concluding with an in-person championship at the AIHEC Student Conference on March 15-18 in Bismarck, North Dakota. The TCU Esports League represents a significant step for TCUs to engage with the esports industry, which connects communities on a global scale with billions of fans. TCUs and other institutions across the United States are embracing esports as a way to support the evolving needs of their students by creating competitive programs, practical education experience, and classroom instruction that translates into career pathways in esports and across the industry.

Shelly added, “Tribal Nations can benefit from the esports industry through the convergence of storytelling, technology, and fandom to pursue economic growth and digital representation. Launching the TCU Esports League is a step toward increased representation and space for Indigenous peoples to convene, innovate, and apply their inherent talents and abilities, guided by thousands of years of knowledge, to the world of competitive gaming and STEM-related fields.”

To keep up to date with the TCU Esports League before its launch, visit www.egf.gg/tcu-esports.

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[American Indian Higher Education Consortium \(AIHEC\)](#) provides a support network to the nation's accredited Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) and works to influence public policy on American Indian and Alaska Native higher education issues through advocacy, research, and programmatic initiatives; promotes and strengthens Indigenous languages, cultures, communities, lands, and tribal nations; and through its unique position, serves member institutions and emerging TCUs.

[Electronic Gaming Federation \(EGF\)](#) has served the scholastic esports community since its founding in 2015. EGF organizes and produces middle school, high school, and collegiate esports leagues, produces esports content and events, and works directly with schools and partner organizations to help develop esports programs on campuses across the United States.

[Quipu](#) has a mission is to utilize video gaming, competitive gaming, and esports as a vehicle to enhance cultural and societal cohesion, and to create new career and economic opportunities in and across Indigenous Nations and communities. Quipu was formed by a diverse group of academics, entrepreneurs, and esports professionals. Identity, community, and unity through games.