

## Transfer Student Balances Schoolwork, Culture

by Edmund Frazier Myer

Nisqually tribal member, Anthony Choke, 23, who majored in business with an emphasis on entrepreneurship and change, said that he has grown during his two years at WSU by becoming more diverse, outgoing, and independent.

He first noticed how much of a college town Pullman truly is. He really noticed that, compared to his community college, there were a lot more people in his age group. Although there were many more people in his demographic, Choke said it was a challenge to face the, "new environment."

The town and the population was a lot bigger than what he was used to back in Rochester, Wash., and it took an adjustment period for him to get used to interacting with people from various backgrounds.

Choke was on a full scholarship from his tribe, and during his time at WSU, Choke shared aspects of his cultural background by teaching cedar weaving twice during the school year. He will continue to show others his family's traditions this summer at WSU's Native Youth Exploring Higher Education youth camp.

He first heard about the Native Center from Native Program's outreach, and then again on his tours of campus. When he came on a tour the center was in the CUB, but it was moved down to Cleveland Hall by the time Choke arrived for his first semester. He said the center is a "very warming" atmosphere.

On top of the heavy workload his major entailed, Choke also balanced playing on the club rugby team, meeting fraternity requirements, and finding social time. He managed his busy schedule by getting things done early. He liked to start working by 9 a.m., so he could have his evenings clear.

He said that due to his community college experience and the education he gained for his associate's degree, leaving his reservation and community wasn't that challenging – or at least not as challenging as it would be for a freshman right out of high school who is leaving for the first time.

"Since I already had two years of higher education under my belt, I already I felt like I know what to do, and how to do it, and achieve it," Choke said.

Throughout college, he has learned ways to work through his issues with course work. He said that whenever he has trouble with a class, or struggles with exams, he just pushes through it and makes up for it in different areas of the class.

Other challenges Choked faced in his time in Pullman was living on his own and away from his parents, since he still lived at home during community college.

"When you get older, your parents aren't going to be there for you all the time," Choke said. "So, you just have to be more responsible for yourself."

He said that his advice for a Native American student who is weighing the pursuit of higher education is to try their best and apply. He would encourage them to not think of it as a "hardship," but to think of it as "empowerment for them, and empowerment for our people."



*Anthony Choke (2nd from left) with other 2017 WSU graduates (l-r) Zach Clark (Squaxin Island), Frazier Myer (Chehalis), and John Reichel (Cowlitz).*