

**FOR RELEASE:** Immediately

**DATE:** April 17, 2017

**CONTACT:** Doris Martinez: (206) 592-4319, [dmartinez@highline.edu](mailto:dmartinez@highline.edu)  
Sara Marie Ortiz: (206) 631-3162, [sara.ortiz@highlineschools.org](mailto:sara.ortiz@highlineschools.org)  
Kari Coglon Cantey: (206) 291-8622, [kcantey@highline.edu](mailto:kcantey@highline.edu)

**Author Sherman Alexie Among Notable Presenters  
During Diversity Celebration**

Free Weeklong Program in 20th Year at Highline College

DES MOINES, Wash. — The public is invited to celebrate and explore diversity and contemporary social justice issues during Unity Through Diversity Week at Highline College, April 24–28, 2017. Among this year’s notable presenters will be Sherman Alexie, a National Book Award winner and New York Times bestselling author.

Alexie, who grew up on the Spokane Indian Reservation, has published 26 books. He also wrote and co-produced the movie “Smoke Signals,” winner of the Audience Award and Filmmakers Trophy at the 1998 Sundance Film Festival.

“Our Highline Public Schools Native Education Program is proud to partner with Highline College on this special event. Alexie’s contributions to the world of arts and letters, the Native community throughout the U.S., and specifically our American Indian and Alaska Native students — members and descendants of modern sovereign tribal nations — are deeply valuable,” said Sara Marie Ortiz, who manages Highline Public Schools’ Native Education Program.

“Alexie provokes, delights, educates and challenges. We hope to do all of this and more with all of our Highline Public Schools Native Education programming. Alexie’s contributions at this event are a culmination and an exemplar of sorts, an expression and reminder of what should *always* be offered and accessed by our amazing creative intellectual Native community — and all our diverse communities — in South King County. *This is just the beginning.*”

Alexie’s April 27 appearance is cosponsored and made possible by Highline Public Schools Native Education Program with additional support provided by the King County Library System and Highline College. (See event details below.)

Now in its 20th year, the free weeklong program looks at the diversity of the south King County community in all forms: race, gender, class, sexual orientation, ability and religion.

United by the theme “Intersections of Humanity: Action at the Crossroads,” Unity Through Diversity Week will include free lectures and workshops by a wide range of guest speakers and campus experts.

Doris Martinez, Highline’s Director of Student Diversity and Inclusion, said that while the community has been talking about diversity, intersectionality and inclusion, it is time to do more.

“We are at a critical point in our history where we must be bold in demanding social change. We hope this week serves as a space to celebrate our diversity and inspire our attendees to take action in their communities,” she said.

For more information, contact Martinez at [dmartinez@highline.edu](mailto:dmartinez@highline.edu) or (206) 592-4319 or visit [highline.edu/unity-2017](http://highline.edu/unity-2017).

### **Event Schedule**

All events are free and open to the public and will be held on the college’s main campus, located midway between Seattle and Tacoma at South 240th Street and Pacific Highway South (Highway 99); address: 2400 S. 240th St., Des Moines, Wash.

For full descriptions of each event, visit [highline.edu/unity-2017](http://highline.edu/unity-2017).

### **Monday, April 24, 2017**

---

**10–11:30 a.m., Building 7**

Workshop presented by Nikkita Oliver: “Telling Our Stories Is Resistance”

**1:30–3 p.m., Building 8**

Workshop presented by Jason Dorsette: “Some Call It a Mystery, I Call It My Identity: A Paradoxical and Intersectional Approach to Race and Gender Identities”

### **Tuesday, April 25, 2017**

---

**9–10:30 a.m., Building 7**

Lecture by Dr. Anthony Ocampo: “The Latinos of Asia: How Filipino-Americans Break the Rules of Race”

### **Wednesday, April 26, 2017**

---

**1:30–3 p.m., Building 7 (English only)**

and

**6:30–8 p.m., Building 7 (Spanish) and Building 8 (English)**

Workshop presented in English by Larissa Garcia, Matt Matera and Alejandra Perez and in Spanish by Maru Mora: “Supporting Undocumented Students and Their Families” / “La guerra en contra de los Inmigrantes Nos defendemos y nos protegemos”

**3–4:30 p.m., Building 7**

Workshop by Dr. Kanoe Nāone: “Who Are Our Leaders? A Native Hawaiian Perspective Contextualized in Traditional and Contemporary Times”

**Thursday, April 27, 2017**

---

**10–11:30 a.m.**, Building 7

Performance by Ernie G.: “Empowerment Comedy Show”

**1:30–3 p.m.**, Building 7

Lecture by Fawzi Belal and Oussama (Sam) Alkhalili: “ISIS, Islam, and Islamophobia”

**7–8 p.m.**, Building 7

Highline Public Schools Native Education Program Presents: Sherman Alexie

A poet, short story writer, novelist and performer, Sherman Alexie has won numerous awards, including the PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction, the PEN/Malamud Award for Short Fiction and the National Book Award for Young People’s Literature. He has published 26 books, including the forthcoming memoir, “You Don’t Have to Say You Love Me.” Alexie grew up on the Spokane Indian Reservation and now lives in Seattle with his family.

Advance and priority seating is for Highline Public Schools and Highline College students and families only, but limited general open seating for the public will be available. Plan on arriving early. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. A private pre-reception for Highline College and Highline Public Schools students and families will be held at 5 p.m. RSVP required. Main presentation will be in Building 7, with overflow seating available in Building 2 where attendees can watch a live stream of the author’s appearance. Highline College students may RSVP for the main event and the private pre-reception by sending an email to [sara.ortiz@highlineschools.org](mailto:sara.ortiz@highlineschools.org).

Alexie’s appearance is cosponsored and made possible by Highline Public Schools Native Education Program with additional support provided by the King County Library System and Highline College.

**Friday, April 28, 2017**

---

**9–10:30 a.m.**, Building 8

Workshop presented by Ardo-Khadra Hersi and Asha Heru: “A People’s Movement: No New Youth Jail and Beyond”

**2–4 p.m.**, Building 8

Workshop presented by Rashad Norris: “Destructions of the Master Plan: Finding Your Voice and Creating Change Through Protest and Boycott”

###

**Attachment:** Photo of Sherman Alexie

*Celebrating its 55th anniversary, Highline College was founded in 1961 as the first community college in King County. With nearly 17,000 annual students and 350,000 alumni, it is one of the*

*state's largest institutions of higher education. The college offers a wide range of academic transfer, professional-technical education and applied bachelor's degree programs. Alumni include former Seattle Mayor Norm Rice, entrepreneur Junki Yoshida and former Washington state poet laureate Sam Green.*