The junior college movement, which evolved into the community college movement, brought about fundamental changes that influenced all of higher education and, indeed, our entire society during the twentieth century.

North Idaho College and other community colleges brought flexibility to a system of higher education that, prior to their inception, had been characterized by social elitism and a narrow, classical perception of who was entitled to benefit from a college education. The community college movement focused its concern on bringing college level educational opportunities to adults at an affordable cost. The relationship between the arts and sciences, and between learning and labor were incorporated in new ways into the mission of post-secondary education.

North Idaho College is Idaho's oldest public community college, having been founded in 1933 as Coeur d'Alene Junior College. It began with a faculty of nine, and held its classes on the third floor of the City Hall. It was financed entirely from public contributions. In 1939, the Idaho Legislature passed the Junior College Act, which gave geographical areas permission to form junior college districts, if they could meet the requirement of $10 million assessed valuation and 800 high school students. In July of 1939, the North Idaho Junior College District was formed encompassing most of Kootenai County. In 1960, the District incorporated the remaining areas of Kootenai County, bringing the District to its present size.

The college serves students from the five northern counties of Idaho. In 1971, the name of the college was changed to North Idaho College in accordance with a law passed by the 41st Idaho Legislature.

Idaho Code, Sections 33-2101 through 33-2144, define Junior College District Law, including the formation of districts, trustees, powers, tuition, bonding, funding, and disposition of funds. Other sections of the code, pertaining to "public agencies," also apply.

Mr. Orrin E. Lee served as the first president of North Idaho College from 1939 to 1944. He was succeeded by Mr. G.O. Kildow who led the college until his death in 1962. Mr. Perry Christianson, who had served as an instructor, and then dean of faculty, assumed the presidency from 1962 until his retirement in 1968. His successor was Mr. Barry Schuler, who served from 1968 to 1986. Dr. C. Robert Bennett was president from 1986
to 1997. Dr. Ronald E. Bell, former president of Shoreline Community College, Shoreline, Washington, served as interim president from mid-1997 to mid-1998. Dr. Michael Burke was appointed president in July 1998 and served until February 2007. Dr. Priscilla J. Bell served as interim president from February 2007 through June 2007. Dr. Bell was appointed president July 1, 2007 and served until her retirement in June 2012. Following Dr. Bell’s retirement, Dr. Joe Dunlap, former president of Spokane Community College was appointed president in July 2012 and served until his retirement in June 2016. Dr. Rick MacLennan, former president of Garrett Community College in western Maryland was appointed as the college’s tenth president in July 2016.

THE COLLEGE TODAY

North Idaho College is a comprehensive community college located on the beautiful shores of Lake Coeur d’Alene. NIC offers degrees and certificates in a wide spectrum of academic transfer, career and technical education, and general education programs. Approximately 6,000 students are enrolled in credit classes and more than 4,400 participate annually in non-credit courses offered by the Workforce Training Center in Post Falls. The college serves a five-county region through regional centers in Bonners Ferry, Kellogg, and Sandpoint, as well as through an extensive array of Internet and interactive video conferencing courses. NIC also plays a key role in the region’s economic development by preparing competent, trained employees for area businesses, industries, and governmental agencies.

NIC offers Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees in various college transfer programs, and Associate of Applied Science degrees and technical certificates in its career and technical education programs. Students obtaining an Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degree can transfer with junior standing to all other Idaho public colleges and universities.

Since 1950, North Idaho College has received unrestricted accreditation from the Northwest Commission of Colleges and Universities. Additional approval and accreditation for specific programs has been granted by the following agencies: The Associate Degree Nursing program is accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN). The Radiography Technology program is accredited by the Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiological Technology (JRCERT). The Medical Assistant program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP/ MAERB). The Pharmacy Technology program is accredited by the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP). The Physical Therapist Assistant program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapist Education (CAPTE).

Revenue for North Idaho College is derived primarily from annual legislative appropriations, property taxes from the local district, and student tuition and fees. The
college also receives gifts, grants, and endowments for scholarships and development from many sources, both public and private, primarily through the North Idaho College Foundation.

NIC subscribes to the philosophy of the comprehensive community college, including an “open-door” admissions policy. To truly reflect its role as a community college, NIC accepts the fundamental responsibility to meet the varying needs of individuals with widely divergent interests and abilities. At the same time, NIC seeks to respond to the needs of area businesses, industries, and governmental agencies by preparing competent, trained employees.