



2010 FALL AIHEC BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
TOWN AND COUNTRY RESORT & CONVENTION CENTER – SAN DIEGO, CA
SHEFFIELD-HAMPTON
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2010

Resolution on an American Indian Tribal Education Accrediting Agency

WHEREAS, this nation's 33 American Indian tribally chartered Tribal Colleges and Universities, together with three institutions of higher education established or chartered by the Federal government, collectively comprise the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC);

WHEREAS, Tribal Colleges and Universities were established by their respective Indian tribes to ensure that high quality, culturally-based higher education is accessible to Indian people who were largely excluded from state-supported higher education programs;

WHEREAS, Tribal Colleges and Universities are located in the 15 states within whose geographic boundaries the majority of American Indian reservations and federal Indian trust land lie;

WHEREAS, Tribal Colleges and Universities prepare and educate Indian people from more than 250 federally recognized Indian tribal nations, including all 10 of the largest federally recognized Indian tribes;

WHEREAS, in addition to providing accredited postsecondary education and technical/career education to thousands of Indian people, Tribal Colleges and Universities also provide a wide variety of community-based economic and workforce development programs; community-based support services, programs, and collaborative partnerships with tribes, K-12 education systems and schools, and others; and through their status as 1994 Land Grant Institutions, Tribal Colleges and Universities provide a variety of agriculture, land management and use programs and services;

WHEREAS, education is a high priority for all tribal nations and tribal citizens;

WHEREAS, at present, Tribal Colleges and Universities are primarily accredited through various independent and regional accrediting agencies, which are approved by the U.S. Secretary of Education;

WHEREAS, standards established by said accrediting agencies have been developed primarily for non-Indian serving postsecondary institutions;

WHEREAS, when AIHEC was established in 1973 by the first six Tribal Colleges and Universities, the presidents of these institutions determined as one of AIHEC's goals to be the creation of an accreditation body that would be recognized by federal, tribal, and state governments and which would articulate accreditation standards or a framework for the development of such standards uniquely relevant to Tribal Colleges and Universities;

WHEREAS, Tribal pre-K/12 education programs and schools serving American Indian children also need to address unique cultural and other issues and face problems with proper recognition of their standards and teaching methods;

WHEREAS, Tribal Colleges and Universities and pre-K/12 Tribal schools have become permanent components of the U.S. education system and are capable of developing accreditation standards uniquely applicable to Tribal Colleges and Universities and Tribal pre-K/12 schools, while also meeting general accreditation standards;

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Education has the authority to recognize an accrediting body unique to Tribal Colleges and Universities and Tribal (and other Indian-operated) pre-elementary, elementary, and secondary schools; and

WHEREAS, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act will be discussed and reauthorized during the 111th Congress.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium supports legislation, as necessary, and recognition by the U.S. Secretary of Education of an accrediting agency uniquely qualified to develop, monitor, and assess accreditation standards applicable to Tribal institutions of higher education and pre-K/12 Tribal schools.

CERTIFICATION

As Secretary of the Board of Directors of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium, I hereby certify that the above resolution was approved by the AIHEC Board of Directors, by voice vote with opposition noted, at its meeting held in San Diego, CA, on October 7, 2010.

Robert Martin, Secretary