



AIHEC/TCU Online Learning/Digital Gap Emergency Funding Request **March 17, 2020**

On behalf of the nation's 37 Tribal Colleges and Universities, the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) respectfully requests **\$46.3 million** in emergency funding to help ensure that these place-based, community-anchoring institutions are able to continue offering high quality, culturally relevant, and job-focused educational opportunities to American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/ANs) living in some of the most rural and remote areas of the country. The strategies the TCUs are adopting to move to community-based online learning are compliant with the critically important social distancing requirements associated with the coronavirus pandemic and are designed to ensure the health and safety of AI/AN postsecondary students, their families, and community members. This is important for two critical reasons: many TCU students live in multi-generational homes; and for many Tribes, the language keepers are well over 60 years old. If they are lost to this pandemic, whole tribal cultures will be devastated. Therefore, TCUs propose building their online teaching capacity and delivering courses to students who will access the Internet from remote access points in their community (or in the community nearest to them).

To transition to effective, community-based online course delivery, the 37 TCUs will require:

- (a) Reliable high-speed Internet access -- campus technology and internet speed upgrades and accessible community-based connectivity;
- (b) Instructional delivery and access systems/devices (course/communication tools);
- (c) Faculty professional development to create and maintain quality, engaging online programming; and
- (d) Student computer/online literacy training for adoption of successful online learning strategies.

The following list of items and their associated costs are data-informed estimates largely based on the outcomes of a National Science Foundation-funded comprehensive review of the IT infrastructure of the 37 TCUs comprising the membership of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) (NSF OAC-1655185). Currently, AIHEC is completing this review, which consists of online surveys and technical site visits to all TCUs by a team of national higher education IT professionals. (TCU site visit reports and data available on request.)

TOTAL TCU ONLINE LEARNING/DIGITAL DIVIDE - EMERGENCY FUNDING REQUEST: \$46.3 Million (\$46,295,000)

a. Enhanced Internet Access for students and faculty to teach, learn, and study remotely. TCUs serve rural and remote regions, and the vast majority of students attending several TCUs lack Internet access home. This funding would enable TCUs to install temporary and/or permanent Internet access points on tribal lands and in tribal communities and would support Internet connection speed enhancements at all TCU campuses.

1. Public hot spot locations distributed in locations in tribal communities/lands to optimize student and faculty Internet access close to home. Intended primarily for individuals to conveniently access from their personal vehicles. Some of these hotspot sites will be served by point-to-point wireless, others by DSL or telecom provided Internet.
One-time cost of \$10,000 per location (likely to be multiple sites per tribal college community); Cost x 72 campus locations = \$720K;
 - a. *Recurring cost* of \$1,200/year/location; cost x 72 locations x **10 years** = \$864K
2. Improved Internet access at TCUs, including remote campus sites to provide suitable bandwidth for delivery of online teaching and learning programming. This includes network hardware upgrades to support higher speeds and additional Internet capacity at each location.
One time cost of \$20,000 per location; Cost x 72 campus locations = \$1.44M
 - a. *Recurring cost* of \$40,000 per year; cost x 72 locations x **10 years** = \$14.4M

Subtotal: \$17,424,000 (over 10 years)

b. Instructional delivery and access systems/devices for content delivery. This category includes current-era video conferencing, collaboration and course management tools and devices for students and faculty to produce and access content.

1. License for video conferencing (Zoom, Microsoft Teams, etc)
 - a. *Recurring cost* of \$15,000 per year per TCU; cost x **10 years** = \$150K
2. Enhanced learning management systems for course delivery/management (Canvas, Blackboard, JICS, etc)
One Time cost of \$8,000 per TCU for setup = \$80K
 - a. *Recurring cost* of \$30 per student per year, so a TCU with 430 students would cost 430 x 30 = \$12,900 per year; cost: 12,900 x 10 TCUs x **10 years** = \$1.29M
3. Devices for faculty (Windows laptop with camera plus office tools)
One time cost of \$1,200 each faculty; cost x 300 TCU Faculty = \$360K
Recurring cost of \$100 each faculty; Cost x 300 TCU Faculty = \$30K
4. Devices for students (lower end laptop with camera plus office tools)
One time cost of \$800 each student; cost x 16,000 students = \$12.8M
 - a. *Recurring cost* of \$80 each student; cost x 16,000 students x **10 years** = \$12.8M

Subtotal: \$27,510,000 (over 10 years)

c. TCU Faculty professional development in online course development/delivery.

1. TCU faculty who are skilled at online instruction will be recruited to train and mentor colleagues. Overload time for each 5 TCU faculty @ \$2,500 each = \$12,500/TCU; cost x 37 TCUs = \$463K

2. Engage a team of experts in online course delivery to conduct online train-the-trainer sessions for faculty champions at each TCU. 4 courses @ \$25,000 each = \$100,000 to train all the TCU trainers; total cost = \$100K
3. Overload time for TCU faculty to get trained at each TCU: 5 faculty @ \$2500 each = \$12,500/TCU; total cost x 37 TCUs = \$463K
4. Assistance for curriculum development. Provide an AIHEC-wide "pool" of consultants who are available for mixed-media course materials development. AIHEC-wide consultant pool \$100,000.
5. MOOCs: leverage Massive Open Online Course materials in the public domain. A consultant to work with TCU faculty to assist with implementing TCU MOOCs – and potentially OER - for all TCUs. Cost: \$50,000

Subtotal: \$1,176,000

d. TCU Student computer/online training (primarily for older, non-traditional students) for computer literacy and strategies for successful online learning.

1. TCU faculty will provide short courses on taking online courses for all students new to online instruction. Assume 2 faculty being paid \$2500 overload at each TCU, or 2 x \$2500 = \$5000 per TCU; cost x 37 TCUs = \$185K

Subtotal: \$185,000