Haskell Indian Nations University: RESPONDING AND ADAPTING TO COVID-19
117th Congress – 2nd Session (March 2022)

Through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) and American Rescue Plan (ARP), Haskell Indian Nations University received urgently needed funding to immediately transition to online learning platforms, modify campuses for health and safety concerns, and address the digital divide challenges in Indian Country. Our students received emergency grants, laptops, tuition assistance, and internet stipends to help them stay enrolled in courses. As we continue to support students during this difficult time and develop a plan to “return to normal,” TCUs need your continued support to address ongoing and increasing needs.

Haskell Indian Nations University
OVERCOMING CHALLENGES
- Students & Faculty have been teaching and learning remotely for over two-years by March 2022. This has affected Haskell students & staff mentally and physically.
- Campus Modifications: Classroom remodels have occurred across the campus to ensure for greater ventilation, and, to follow the CDC guidelines, all meetings are conducted over TEAMS.
- Professional Development: Distance Learning using Learning Management System Blackboard, Ethics and Anti-Harassment Training, Weekly Wednesday Wellness to support students, staff and faculty with Mental Health
- Inflation: Materials needed for building renovation, gas, and food prices have been areas of greatest increase.

Haskell Indian Nations University has been offering 90% of the courses each semester since March of 2020 online. This has been a great hardship to our students from across the United States that selected not to return to campus with limited residential space offered to first-time freshman, new transfer students, and athletes. As the COVID-19 status for Douglas County moves to re-open, so will Haskell, based on the local health departments’ recommendations. Today Haskell Indian Nations University is still in the red status. One residential setting has been set up for COVID-19 isolation/quarantine. As a university we have had a handful of cases; each time residential counselors supported students with meals, needed instructional materials, and wellness checks while in isolation. Haskell Indian Nations University CARES/CRRSAA and ARP team have worked diligently to award students emergency aid on a monthly basis, funded through distance education technology grants.

Haskell Indian Nations University Broadband and IT Challenges
Campus Wiring Project - $1.5 million
OVERVIEW - Project proposes the re-wiring of the entire campus to install new fiber optic cabling, upgrade from current (Category) Cat3 and Cat5, Cat5a network (copper) cabling to Cat6a and Cat7 in all campus buildings, proposed wireless LOS (line of sight) towers, and outdoor athletic/event facilities to improve upon existing network infrastructure and accessibility. Haskell currently has 37 buildings proposed for network cabling upgrade, in addition to four outdoor athletic facilities and three outdoor event areas proposed to receive new, physical network cabling in all identified buildings/facilities, fiber optic cabling as needed, and a secured, wireless mesh network to every building with LOS connectivity encompassing all open areas within the campus borders.
Network Switch Upgrade and Replacement Project - $1.3 million
OVERVIEW - Project plan is to upgrade every managed network switch on the Haskell campus in conjunction with the proposed Campus Wiring Project to increase network speed, availability and security across BIE, Haskell and KanREN networks. Of the current network switches in use, 70% are 15+ years old, out of warranty, no longer in production or supported by Cisco and have been categorized as end of life for more than a decade. With new, replacement switches, this will allow for newer fiber connections, increased network traffic speed and reliability, allow multigigabit technology and sector-specific applications, embedding of Cisco network, intelligent sensors and enforcers, fall within Cisco same-day 24/7 tech support and allow for interoperability with the most recent Cisco Meraki WAPs (wireless access points). Project plans are to order 80-90 Cisco 9300 series, 48-port, managed network switches, with approximately 200 SFP (small form-factor pluggable) ports and all fiber optic and color-coded copper patch cords.

REQUEST: $40 million TCU IT Service Fund
USDA – Rural Utility Service
The ongoing pandemic has exacerbated the digital divide and underscored the lack of broadband access across Indian Country. To address these deficiencies that could leave Indian Country – and AI/AN students – behind the rest of the U.S. for generations, Congress must act to establish a permanent TCU IT Service Fund within the USDA-Rural Utilities Service Program. An annual $40 million set-aside for TCUs, which are 1994 land-grant institutions served by USDA, would help cover rapidly increasing network, connectivity, and equipment costs, maintenance, infrastructure expansion, and IT staffing.

Congress recognized this need in the pandemic and attempted to provide support to TCUs by including them in the new NTIA Tribal Connectivity Broadband program. Unfortunately, due to NTIA’s design of the program, to date, not even one TCU has been awarded direct grants.

Campus Core Network Switch Upgrade and Replacement Project - $1.4 million
OVERVIEW - Legacy IT equipment is widespread on the Haskell Indian Nations University campus, unfortunately many of these legacy devices are vital to the operation of Haskell campus technology. The current core network switch that provides connectivity to the entire campus is a Cisco Catalyst 6509 chassis with copper ports and supervisors. Cisco announced the "retirement" notification of the 6509 core switch in 2010, as the switch was end of sale in November 2006 and end of support November 2011. If this switch ceases to work, Haskell will not have any network connectivity to the campus and due to supply chain issues with all major network switch manufacturers, including Cisco, when the Cisco Catalyst 9400 series chassis containing four, 48-port fiber optic and copper blades, two supervisors and five dual-port power supplies are approved and ordered, it will still be approximately 6-9 months before the equipment will arrive on campus. This project is extremely urgent to the entire Haskell campus.

Campus-wide Tech Refresh - $860,000
OVERVIEW - Industry and DOI recommend regions, agencies and organizations schedule a tech refresh every three years in order for IT equipment such as desktops, laptops, monitors and mobile devices to remain in compliance, under warranty, compatible with the most DOI-approved operating systems and provide adequate performance. Haskell has not had a complete, campus-wide tech refresh in over six years, with a majority of computer systems assigned to Haskell faculty ordered back in 2016 have been out of warranty since 2019. A complete, campus-wide tech refresh would include ordering the following:
- $500,000 - 250 laptops, estimated individual price at $2,000 for staff and faculty;
- $144,000 - 160 desktops, estimated individual price at $900 for all student dorm and academic computer labs;
- $30,000 - 250 docking stations for new laptops
- $150,000 - 500 monitors for dual-screen setup with each new laptop
- $45,000 - 100 IMC mid-size printers for student dorm and academic labs, staff and faculty
- **$869,000** - Total cost for Campus-wide Tech Refresh
Student Information System Replacement - $2.4 million

OVERVIEW - Haskell seeks to research and purchase a new Student Information System (SIS) to replace CAMS (Comprehensive Academic Management System). CAMS is an antiquated system whose ownership has changed several times within the past few years causing a lack of stability in regard to training, system updates and module/reporting customizations for Haskell departments. The search and selection of a new software-as-a-service (SaaS) environment will provide products and applications with mobile-friendly solutions, automation of daily business duties and serve as a platform for the creation of custom application programming interfaces (APIs) combined with a user-friendly dashboard for students, faculty and staff in the following areas: Student portal, financial aid, retention, e-learning (Distance Ed), recruitment, finance, analytics and communications. Current work is being conducted to create an SOW (Statement of Work) in preparation to present for the IT Investment Governance Board (ITIGB) later in the Spring of 2022.

REQUEST: $3.2 billion TCU Construction Fund
DOI – Bureau of Indian Education

A July 2021 AIHEC survey of TCUs revealed many chronic unmet facilities and infrastructure needs, including lack of student and faculty housing, inadequate classroom space, insufficient libraries, and outdated laboratories.

- TCU deferred maintenance/rehabilitation: $400 million (total)
- TCU completion of master plans: $2.7 billion (total)
- TCU operation and maintenance: $20 million (annual, recurring need)

AIHEC strongly urges Congress to fund dedicated TCU facilities programs through DOI-BIE to modernize current facilities and build safer 21st century campuses.

Haskell Indian Nations University: Construction, Maintenance, Rehabilitation ($15 Million spent to-date)

Haskell Indian Nations University has forty-one structures on campus, with twelve buildings on the National Register of Historic Places and another five eligible for the Register. Our oldest building Hiawatha is one hundred and twenty-four years old. The newest building on campus was built in 2002. We face challenges in maintaining the buildings as many of the buildings aren’t designed for current usage. The buildings’ electrical infrastructure is not designed to carry the loads necessary to operate all the computers, lights, appliances that are in modern buildings. Many buildings have older outdated mechanical systems and no outside air ventilation. Several buildings still have cast iron piping that is very old and deteriorating. Several buildings lack adequate fire alarm systems and/or sprinkler systems. Buildings in many cases do not meet ADA disability requirements. Roadways and sidewalks are deteriorating and need replacement. We have one thousand three hundred and thirty-eight deferred maintenance work orders awaiting funding.

- Loading dock at American Horse Warehouse – crumbling and needed to accept deliveries for campus.
- Cast iron piping removed and replaced in Minoka – Stools and sinks dumping into crawl space from deteriorated piping.
- The Hiawatha building needs to be renovated for use – it has been closed for over 20 years, and campus needs a multipurpose space for meetings, conferences and distance learning.
- Renovation of Minoka – the building was originally a dormitory and needs complete renovation or demolition.
Annalise Guthrie is a first-generation college student and Tsalagi (Cherokee Nation) citizen within the Anigilohi (Long Hair Clan). She graduated from Haskell Indian Nations University in the Spring of 2020 with a Bachelor’s in Environmental Science. Most recently, Guthrie received the prestigious 2021 National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship (NSF GRFP). Guthrie will use the award to complete a doctoral program in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology under Dr. Sharon Billings at the University of Kansas. Guthries’ research will focus on biogeochemistry and soil ecology. As an undergraduate, Guthrie received the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Educational Partnership Program Scholarship, which enabled her to conduct ocean-related research in Washington DC and Alaska. She was also an EPA Haskell Tribal eco Ambassador and, upon graduation from Haskell, was selected as a National Institutes of Health Postbaccalaureate Research Education Program (PREP) Scholar.

In Her Words:

“Anthropogenic, or human caused, climate change is governing the future of indigenous culture and the places they inhabit. For me, being successful in my graduate research exceeds academic or career ambitions but is an inherent and personal responsibility regarding the welfare of indigenous people. As an indigenous scholar, I have an obligation to prepare for and assume a leadership role within ecological sciences and my community.”

-Annalise Guthrie