KBOCC: 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), KBOCC 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.

KBOCC: OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

- Emergency Student Aid Total: $398,277.00
- IT Upgrades: New Servers/Switches New wiring
- Safety/Sanitation: New ionic filters throughout our HVAC system
- Professional Development: Doubled the amount of Professional Development for both faculty and staff
- Inflation: We try to get a bid in for a new project and because of inflation, the contractors are increasing their bids weekly.

For the past two years, we have utilized our COVID relief funding to make much needed upgrades to our campus, classrooms, and distance learning platforms. New servers, switches, and fiberoptics are now in place and we have provided laptops and hot spots to our students as needed. Our Child Care Center has been able to offer free day care to our students. Our Faculty and Staff have increased professional development by over 50%.

New Student Support Program Developed during COVID

NEW Student Support Program Developed during COVID: Due to COVID we implemented a new program for our students called Tutor.com This new tutoring resource is amazing. Our students can go online and work with a tutor in real time 24/7. Our students utilizing this tutoring service has more than doubled this semester alone.
**KBOCC: Broadband and IT Challenges**

- Hardware update costs
- Expenses/Policies associated with cybersecurity
- Contracting with a company to do these upgrades – we live in a very rural area and shipping products to our area has been difficult as well as finding a contractor who is available

**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.

**KBOCC: Construction, Maintenance, Rehabilitation**

Some of the challenges we face today were challenging prior to the pandemic. We have older building and because of funding issues have had to postpone much needed maintenance, we currently have four buildings, and all need repairs and upgrades. If we had sufficient funds we could accomplish so much more for our community. For example:

- Support more students and the community through a variety of classes offered
- More space to become a multi-generational HUB

**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.