Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College
117th Congress – 2nd Session (March 2022)

SCTC—committed to creating confident community members ready to continue their educational journey or enter the workforce with knowledge and pride!

Through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) and American Rescue Plan (ARP), Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College received urgently needed funding to transition immediately 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.

The Covid funds assisted students to meet their basic needs as well as educational needs. This included reimbursements for food, utilities, internet costs, food and gas. Additionally, the college was able to purchase course text books for all students. The college purchased ZOOM memberships for faculty, staff, and governing board. This provided the faculty and students continued academic engagement, allowed virtual meetings with students and administrative staff, and allowed for frequent meetings with staff and the governing body to maintain the daily updates and discuss changes regarding Covid’s impact. The college hired two cleaners who sanitize high traffic areas and classrooms after every class session. The funds also allowed the college to employ a professional cleaning company to come in weekly and sanitize all offices, classrooms, and public areas. The funds were used to purchase plexiglass partitions for instructors and students for face-to-face course delivery. IT classroom upgrades include: whiteboard webcams; lectern webcams;
upgraded document cameras; motorized classroom cameras; ceiling microphone array; and wireless lavaliere microphones. To ensure social distancing in the classroom the college was able to lease an additional building to provide a larger classroom to accommodate the high-enrollment Native American Studies classes. SCTC also used the funds to contract with Delta College for 30 hours of faculty professional development to enhance skills in the delivery of online education. While the funds are available, the college plans to provide financial assistance to lessen the student financial struggles.

SAGINAW CHIPPEWA TRIBAL COLLEGE: Student Highlight
Jacquenette Mandoka

Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College has selected Jacquenette Mandoka as the American Indian College Fund student of the Year.
Staff and faculty highly recommend Ms. Mandoka as she is an individual who is involved in the tribal community and works as an intern at the college. Jacqui has demonstrated that working, helping her father, and involvement in the community has not impacted her academic abilities. It is evident that Ms. Mandoka is determined to receive a degree from SCTC and graduate in May 2022.
Jacqui states the biggest challenge to overcome was the death of multiple family members. The emotions and stress made it difficult to stay on track to finish out her last semester. Jacqui’s goal after graduation is to gain employment in the tribal community helping others. Jacqui currently volunteers organizing and cooking at a local camp meeting held each summer. Jacqui has been on the Dean’s list and continues to excel in all areas of her life.

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.
Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College: Broadband and IT Challenges
(Identified 2019-NSF Cyber infrastructure Study)
- Salaries for qualified staff to monitor and maintain IT system
- Two IT staff members for the college
- Wi-Fi network is not encrypted or authenticated
- No Network Management System
- No full-time IT instructors

PRE-PANDEMIC MONTHLY INTERNET COSTS (2019) AND SPEEDS:
- $440
- 100 MBPS

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.

REQUEST:
- Updated science labs
- Expanded computer classrooms
- Larger classrooms to accommodate larger classes
- Designated space for the library
- College would be in one building

Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College is housed in four leased buildings. Constraints of funding do not allow the college to put up a permanent sign. The college has acreage donated by the Saginaw Chippewa Tribe, however, no funds for construction are available.

Recently the college has obtained an older building that housed a neighboring community college. While the building is more conducive to be a learning community, it is also in need of renovation funds to bring it up to code.
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