



**A Guide to Establishing a
Tribally Controlled College or University**

**Prepared by the
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“Is there a limit to the number of tribal colleges that can be developed in the United States? If so, what are the limitations? How many tribal colleges should or will develop? What are the essential characteristics for success? How do tribes evaluate whether or not they have the critical mass to support a college? ...[A]re there alternatives to the tribal college model?”

The answers to the above questions differ from place to place. ...Every tribe lives in a unique environment, and the tribal colleges that have developed to date reflect the uniqueness of the chartering tribes. As tribal communities study whether to start a college, they must consider resources availability, accreditation, and critical mass.

Tribes will continue to want to build tribal colleges for all the same reasons that colleges first developed in the late 1960s and early 1970s. They want to exercise their self-determination, provide job training and community development, and preserve and validate their cultural knowledge, language and world perspectives. However, if they lack the resources and the critical mass to make colleges feasible, there are alternatives for them to consider.”

--Dr. James Shanley, President Ft. Peck Tribal College¹

¹ For complete text of this article, see Shanley, J. (2001, Spring). Assessing community resources & critical mass: Do you have what it takes to start a college? *Tribal College Journal of American Indian Higher Education*, 12(3), 48-51.



What is a Tribal College?

In many ways tribal colleges are unique institutions of higher education that provide relevant and meaningful educational opportunities to tribal and non-tribal members. In addition, tribal colleges and universities build the human and organizational infrastructures that help to strengthen tribal communities. The concepts of sovereignty, self-determination, and tribal control of education are inherent in their approaches to learning that integrate economic, social, political, and wellness development using tribal cultures as critical elements in improving the quality of life for Native peoples.

The Tribally Controlled College or University Assistance Act of 1978 defines a tribal college as “... an institution of higher education which is formally controlled, or has been formally sanctioned, or chartered, by the governing body of an Indian tribe or tribes, except that no more than one such institution shall be recognized with respect to any such tribe...”

Another way to help define a tribal college is to consider the AIHEC membership criteria. AIHEC has four different classes of membership that are mentioned in their bylaws with “regular member” the highest standard form of membership. The bylaws state that regular members shall consist only of tribally-controlled institutions of post-secondary or higher education that:

- (a) are a subdivision of a tribal government or an American Indian, Eskimo, or Alaska Native Community or have been chartered or sanctioned by or have been formally established by a tribal government or an American Indian, Eskimo, or Alaska Native community;
- (b) are governed by an all American Indian , Eskimo, or Alaska Native Board of Directors, regents or trustees, except in those cases where the charter of the tribal college authorizes a majority;
- (c) primarily serve American Indian, Eskimo, or Alaska Native communities;
- (d) have a majority of American Indian, Eskimo, or Alaska Native students;
- (e) have demonstrated that they are fulfilling the goals and purposes for which they were established, sanctioned or chartered and are adhering to an education plan of operation; and

(f) are accredited or a candidate for accreditation by a regional institutional accrediting association recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education²

² See AHEC Membership Handbook for additional information regarding categories of membership. The handbook is available from the AIHEC central office.

Introduction

Overall, the tribal college movement has been successful in meeting local educational needs while focusing on Native languages and cultures. Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) are recognized as critical to economic development in communities and to the survival and renewal of tribal cultures. Students, both young and old, are given access to a higher education that many would not otherwise have, especially at mainstream colleges and universities. Although the tribal college movement has enjoyed success, each college has faced many challenges to their development and growth, as they have worked to build their capacity and infrastructure.

Although many tribes and consortia of tribes have considered establishing tribal colleges, the decision to establish a college should come only after careful and deliberate dialogue, planning and understanding of what it takes to develop, operate, and sustain a successful college over time. It is not easy to establish and maintain a TCU by any means. Strong collective commitment, leadership, funding, building of relationships, and the investment of time and energy are necessary to establish a college. Every tribe has the right to start a TCU, but every tribe does not need a TCU to meet their educational needs. Today, there are mainstream colleges and universities close to tribal communities that are attempting to provide meaningful and relevant education to tribal members. Tribes can also provide, often through their tribal departments of education, meaningful educational opportunities that are relevant to their language and culture.

The purpose of this monograph is to present a flexible process and offer guidance to those interested in the development of a TCU. A process or logic model with five major phases is presented that captures the major considerations in the establishment of a TCU. The intent of this monograph is to present a clear and concise overview of the process of establishing a tribal college. This document also includes links to key resources that provide more in-depth information.

Logic Model for Establishing a Tribally Controlled College or University

Leadership

Phase One: Initial Steps

Initial decision to establish a college and to move forward

Be knowledgeable of the history, mission and purpose of tribal colleges, as well as the history of the tribal college movement

Form an Advisory Board or group to assist with decision-making

Get community / tribal support

Phase Two: Confirm Decision to move forward

Conduct a Feasibility Study to include a Needs Assessment (the needs assessment should indicate the extent to which there is a critical mass to support a college)

Determine availability of resources, including financial support and facilities

Assess key relationships with the tribe, community and local colleges and universities

Reaffirm decision to move forward to establish a college

Contact and inform AIHEC of intent to establish a tribal college

Return to Phase One as needed

Phase Three: Establish the Tribal College

Develop and approve a charter

Develop Articles of Incorporation

Include by-laws and provisions for a governing board

Appoint the governing board

Begin establishing partnerships or articulation agreements with existing colleges and universities

Strengthen relationship with the tribe and communities

Contact AIHEC for technical assistance and support

Return to Phase One and Two as needed

Phase Four: Become Operational

Develop guiding documents, i.e., the philosophy, vision, mission, and goals

Recruit, interview and hire president, faculty and staff

Determine budget

Develop academic program. Recruit students and offer classes

Develop a college strategic plan

Secure location and facilities

Plan toward accreditation and AIHEC membership

Establish working relationship with the tribe, community, and established colleges

Return to Phase One, Two or Three as needed

Phase Five: Continued Growth Sustainability

Follow planning document

Seek stable funding sources and other resources to support existing and future growth in faculty and staff, academics and other programming, and facilities

Seek AIHEC membership. Work toward eligibility for TCCUA and Land Grant Act funding

Work toward and secure accreditation

Sustain and improve working relationships with all stakeholders

Return to Phase One, Two, Three or Four as needed

Sample Process for Establishing a Tribal College or University

The process outlined in the logic model is based on materials from a variety of resources including, but not limited to the Membership Handbook of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC), input from college presidents, a review of the literature on tribal colleges, and a document on developing a tribal college in Oregon found at <http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/ecampus/otc/index.php>. Additional resources are referenced in the text.

Although this guide is meant to assist tribes and tribal communities in establishing tribally controlled institutions of higher education, it is important to note that the process, including the timelines and activities, for developing a tribal college will vary depending upon local tribal and community situations and resources that are available. Given that this is a fluid process, no specific timelines are given.

As noted in the logic model, tribal, community and individual *leadership* is essential at each phase of the process. Without continuous individual and collective community leadership the process to develop a TCU will be difficult if not impossible.

The process below follows the five phases in the logic model presented above. Initial steps to establish a TCU take place during Phase One.

Phase One: Initial Steps

- Discuss the possibility of a tribal college. Become knowledgeable about the tribal college movement, including the history, purposes, benefits, and challenges of tribal colleges. Begin process to determine if there is sufficient need to move forward with the process of establishing a tribal college. Develop initial concept of what the tribal college would look like.
- Establish and convene an advisory board or group
 - Involve the advisory group in the development of a concept for a tribal college outlining what it will “look” like and how it will be operated.
 - Share the concept for establishment of a tribal college with tribal and community leaders
 - Solicit community/tribal input on the overall concept of the college (e.g., is the establishment of a tribal college “desirable or necessary”³).
 - Build community/tribal support
 - Revise the concept as needed.
- Make the initial decision to move forward with the establishment of a tribal college.

³ See Stein, W. (2001, Spring). It starts with a dream... road maps to initiate a tribal college. *Tribal College Journal of American Indian Higher Education*, 12(3), 10-14.

Phase Two: Confirming the Decision to Establish a Tribal College

- Conduct a feasibility study⁴ to determine the need for a tribal college as well as the tribal community's commitment to the establishment and maintenance of such a college. (An example of feasibility study may be found at: www.nebhe.org/info/pdf/programs/ETD/Tribal_College_Feasibility.pdf
See also (<http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/ecampus/otc/index.php>)
 - Conduct a needs assessment as part of the feasibility study
 - Establish need for the college (e.g., will the proposed college address unmet needs in the community?)
 - Define the student population
 - Determine if there is a critical mass of students to support a tribal college
 - Determine if there are existing colleges and universities nearby and how they are serving the community
 - The student body must be primarily composed of American Indian, Eskimo and/or Alaska Natives
 - The study population may include:
 - Those seeking college credits that will transfer to another college as well as those seeking two-year or four-year degrees from the tribal college
 - Those seeking adult education, GEDs, etc.
 - Those seeking continuing education classes
 - Identify existing resources, including financial support and facilities
 - Contact, meet, and develop working relationships with tribal and community leaders as part of the needs assessment.
- Involve the advisory board or group in drafting a mission statement for the college-
 - “A mission statement defines the basic character of an institution, including a brief description of its primary educational programs and their purposes, the students for which they are intended, the geographical area served by the institution and an account of how the institution fits within the broader higher education community.”⁵
 - In some instances, the advisory group may need to obtain a resolution(s) of support from the tribe(s) that is involved in this initiative
 - The mission statement should be developed in collaboration with and supported by the governing board. The mission statement will serve to describe the overall purpose and intent of the college, its primary programs and purposes, the target student population, the geographical areas to be served, and an overview of how the tribal colleges fits into the

⁴ Note that this feasibility study may differ somewhat from the feasibility study required by the Bureau of Indian Affairs in determining eligibility for Tribal College Act Funding.

⁵ Office of Indian Education Programs, Bureau of Indian Affairs. (No Date). Tribal College and University Feasibility Study, 25 CFR §41.7 U.S.C. 41.7.

overall framework of higher education.⁶

- Reaffirm the decision to move forward to establish a tribal college
- Contact AIHEC of your intend to establish a tribal college
- Return to Phase One as needed

Phase Three: Formally Establishing a Tribal College

- Approach the tribe(s) about chartering the college
 - In order to apply for federal funding under the Tribally Controlled Community College Assistance Act, a college must be chartered by the tribal government of an American Indian, Eskimo, or Alaska Native community, or have been chartered or sanctioned by or have been formally established by or a consortium of tribes.
- Draft and obtain approval for the charter and Articles of Incorporation.⁷ The Articles of Incorporation will “...describe how a college will operate as a legal entity of the tribe or community.”⁸
 - Sample items or sections that may be included in the charter include: (1) identification of the chartering tribe(s), (2) official name of the college, (3) definitions of terms used in the charter, (4) explanation of the relationship between the chartering tribe(s) and the college, (5) statement of the purpose/mission of the college, (6) responsibilities of the tribal government(s) of the chartering tribe(s) towards the college, (7) responsibilities and duties of the college, (8) statement regarding acceptable use of college assets/revenues, (9) primary and other locations of the college, (10) rights, roles and responsibilities of enrolled tribal members (of the chartering tribe(s) in the operation and management of the college, (11) composition of the board of directors/trustees of the college, (12) qualifications, terms and conditions for membership on the college’s board of directors/trustees, and when applicable resignation, removal, and/or replacement of board members, (13) compensation of board members, (14) qualifications, terms and conditions regarding the selection, hiring, and when applicable, dismissal of the president of the college, (15) qualifications, terms and conditions regarding the selection, hiring, and when applicable, dismissal of college staff members, (16) requirements for financial reporting to the tribe and board of directors/trustees, (17) statement regarding employment of board members by the college, (18) statement regarding board meetings, (19) awarding of degrees, (20) auditing of financial records of the college, (21) management and control of college finances, (22) statement regarding the development of bylaws, (23) indemnification of college board members in the event of legal proceedings

⁶ The information in this section is drawn from a 2003 document from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Office of Indian Education. Emerging Tribal Institutions of Higher Learning Eligibility Study 25 CFR §41

⁷ Sample items are based on a review of various existing tribal college charters. Interested parties should contact individual tribal colleges directly for sample charters.

⁸ See Stein (2001).

involving the college, (24) the purchase of insurance on behalf of board members, etc. in the event of legal proceedings related to their involvement with the college in an official capacity, (25) statement regarding sovereign immunity of the chartering tribe(s) as relate to the college, (26) provisions regarding amendments to the charter, and (27) provisions for the dissolution of the college and disposition of assets.

- Develop bylaws⁹
 - Bylaws may be used to assist the College in formulating, modifying, and implementing policies, procedures, and practices that govern activities such as educational programs, faculty and student development, and other matters critical to the accomplishment of the mission and goals of the college.¹⁰
 - Sample items or sections that may be included in the bylaws include: (1) legal status of the board of directors/trustees, (2) organization of the board, (3) duties and responsibilities of the board of directors/trustees and members of the board, (4) duties and responsibilities of the president of the college, (5) establishment, as well as roles and responsibilities of various committees of the board (e.g., standing committee, executive committee, special committees), (6) meetings of the board, (7) requirements for board action (e.g., quorum, resolutions, motions, actions without formal meetings), (8) miscellaneous (e.g., adoption of policy, amendments of bylaws, and (9) provisions for avoiding and/or responding to conflicts of interest encountered by board members.
- Appoint governing board
 - Governing boards must be composed of American Indians, Eskimos, or Alaska Natives except in those cases where the charter of the tribal college indicates that a simple majority of board members be American Indian, Eskimo, or Alaska Native.
 - Establish policies and procedures for the board- outlining roles and responsibilities
 - Plan for governance and overall structure of the college
 - Be cognizant of and responsive to the need to maintain healthy relationships between the board, college, community, tribal government, and other agencies and organizations
- Continue to develop and strengthen relationships with the tribe and community so that there is not only tribal support, but also so that the need for the college to have autonomy from the tribal government is recognized and accepted.
- Engage in short and long-range planning
 - As part of the planning process, it is important to estimate current and potential student enrollment as this will play a critical role in determining costs and revenues for the college. Enrollment simulation and planning statistical models

⁹ Sample items are based on a review of various existing tribal college bylaws. Interested parties should contact individual tribal colleges directly for sample bylaws.

¹⁰ Adapted from Chicago State University's College of Health Sciences By-laws. Retrieved September 25, 2006 from <http://www.csu.edu/collegeofhealthsciences/bylaws.htm>

have been recommended to assist in this task.¹¹ A simplified version of this model, includes three steps:

- Environmental scanning- collection of demographic data (e.g., description of area serviced by the college to include age, gender, ethnicity); economic data (e.g., employment statistics, income levels); social and cultural characteristics (e.g., language(s) spoken, literacy rate, high school graduation rates); enrollment rates at other colleges; need for job training; availability of financial resources to assist in payment of costs related to college/training.
- Enrollment Market Forecasting – analysis of data collected to estimate enrollment of members from each of the population groups in the area served by the tribal college. After baseline data is established, enrollment trends can be analyzed.
- Scenario Building- involves an examination of the “projected vision of future events based upon certain cause and effect variables” (Shanley, 2001, p. 50).
 - Include provisions for the collection and analysis of data as required by various agencies and organizations (e.g., IPEDS¹²)
- Begin establishing partnerships and articulation agreements¹³ with existing colleges and universities.
- Begin working with AIHEC to apply for membership in the Consortium and to obtain technical assistance and support
- Notify and begin working with federal agencies such as the Bureau of Indian Affairs; members of Congress, including your Congressional delegation; and state and local agencies such as the state department of education/public instruction, and state board of regents/higher education commission
- Return to Phase One and Two as needed.

Phase Four: Begin Operation of the College

- Develop and begin to articulate to others the tribal college philosophy, vision, mission, and goals. Also develop an organizational structure for the college
- Develop preliminary budget outlining proposed costs and revenues

¹¹ See Shanley, J. (2001, Spring). Assessing community resources and critical mass: Do you have what it takes to start a college? *Tribal College Journal of American Indian Higher Education*, 12(3), 48-51.

¹² IPEDS is an abbreviation for the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System. This system contains data on colleges and universities in the United States. Additional information is available at <http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/>

¹³ A definition of articulation agreements, as well as information on how to establish such agreements can be found at the following websites:

<http://www.montgomerycollege.edu/Departments/studev/articulations.htm#Articulation>,

<http://www.ncccs.cc.nc.us/Articulation/index.html>,

<http://www.lcc.edu/articulation/agreements/>,

http://admissions.css.edu/Transfer/articulation/FDLCC_AA_to_NSQ.shtml

Items to include:

- Facilities
- Telecommunications
- Internet Connectivity
- Operating Budget, including personnel and student-related costs
- Explore all possible sources of funding/revenues. Secure initial funds for the establishment and operation of the college
- Apply for funding from tribal, as well as external funding sources (e.g., federal and state grants, support from foundations, revenues from student tuition and fees)¹⁴
 - Stein (2001) provides the following suggestions for working with potential funders
 - Research potential sources of funding
 - Establish and present the need for requested funds
 - Network with potential funders
 - Send pairs of college representatives to meetings with potential funders
 - Develop effective marketing materials
 - Distribute materials to potential funders that tell the story of the college and the students and communities/tribes it serves
 - Invite funders to visit the college
 - Develop a well written and organized prospectus or proposal
 - Promote and advertise the accomplishments of the college
 - Establish specific goals and apply for funding that aligns with these goals
- Include training (as needed) on applying for, securing and managing grant funds

Note: For additional guidance on budgeting and finance, see the National Association of College and University Business Officers <http://www.nacubo.org/x7.xml>

- Select and hire the president of the college and the administrative team
 - In selecting the president of the college, Stein (2001) recommends the following:
 - Select individuals who demonstrate “...leadership skills,... loyalty to indigenous people and their goals, a history of acting with good character, a background in education or a related field, and willingness to take calculated risks in carrying out the necessary tasks.”
- Develop and plan for delivery of curriculum
 - Identify which courses and academic and/or professional degree programs will be offered
 - Recruit students

¹⁴ According to Shanley (2001), “Tuition and fees normally provide only 10 to 15 percent of the total revenue for operating an institution of higher education” (p. 49). See Shanley, J. (2001, Spring). Assessing community resources & critical mass: Do you have what it takes to start a college? *Tribal College Journal of American Indian Higher Education*, 12(3), 48-51.

- Develop a catalog outlining course offerings, policies and procedures for students, etc.
- If applicable, initiate and establish articulation agreements with neighboring tribal colleges or other institutions of higher education to offer courses, accept transfer credits, share faculty, etc., until the tribal college has sufficient capacity and resources to operate more independently of external colleges and universities
- Develop criteria for the hiring of faculty and staff
 - Recruit and hire faculty and staff
 - According to Stein (2001), in the early years of the college, administrators may serve dual roles, as administrators and faculty in their area(s) of expertise. Part-time instructors are often found living and/or working in the community (e.g., program administrators, lawyers and doctors, elders, keepers of the culture). If part-time faculty are hired, the college will need to provide ongoing support in the development and delivery of course materials and syllabi.
- Secure location and facilities for college
 - Will the college operate at one central location or will there be satellite operations/facilities?
 - If facilities are not available in the early stages of the college, recognize that “learning [can] take place almost anywhere if the instructors and students [are] truly motivated to have class and [aren’t] hung up on where the class[is] being held physically.”¹⁵
 - Ways in which to secure facilities may include: sharing office space with other tribal programs, holding night classes in the local schools, borrowing funds from the tribe to purchase and renovate existing facilities, etc.¹⁶
- Develop a college strategic plan that includes
 - Accreditation
 - Membership in AIHEC
 - Eligibility for the TCCUA
 - Eligibility for the Land Grant Act
- Continue to develop and strengthen relationships with the tribe, community, other colleges and universities, state and federal agencies, Congress, and potential funders.
- Return to Phase One, Two or Three as needed.

Phase Five: Continued Growth and Sustainability

- Implement, revisit and revise the college strategic plan yearly
- Seek stable funding and other resources to support existing and future growth in faculty, staff, academics, other programming and facilities
- Continue to develop and strengthen relationships with the tribe, community, other colleges and universities, federal agencies, and Congress.
- Seek Membership in the American Indian Higher Education Consortium

¹⁵ See Stein (2001).

¹⁶ See Stein (2001).

- Currently, AIHEC recognizes four (4) classes of membership as outlined below¹⁷.
 - Regular
 - Applicant
 - Affiliate
 - Association
- Tribal colleges seeking membership in AIHEC must:
 - Submit a letter to the President of AIHEC at
121 Oronoco Street Alexandria, VA 22314
 - Submit a formal application for membership
 - Schedule and complete a site visit as outlined by AIHEC
- Seek Accreditation (the timeline for accreditation varies from college to college beginning with candidacy status, followed by full accreditation. Achievement of candidacy status enables the college to receive Federal Student Financial Aid¹⁸)
 - Institutional Accreditation is also imperative if students are to qualify for and receive federal financial assistance
 - According to the U.S. Department of Education,¹⁹ accreditation serves a number of functions as outlined below:
 - “Verifying that an institution or program meets established standards;
 - Assisting prospective students in identifying acceptable institutions;
 - Assisting institutions in determining the acceptability of transfer credits;
 - Helping to identify institutions and programs for the investment of public and private funds;
 - Protecting an institution against harmful internal and external pressure;
 - Creating goals for self-improvement of weaker programs and stimulating a general raising of standards among educational institutions;
 - Involving the faculty and staff comprehensively in institutional evaluation and planning;
 - Establishing criteria for professional certification and licensure and for upgrading courses offering such preparation; and
 - Providing one of several considerations used as a basis for determining eligibility for Federal assistance.”
 - Standard procedures for accreditation include²⁰:
 - “**Standards:** The accrediting agency, in collaboration with educational institutions, establishes standards.

¹⁷ Contact AIHEC for upcoming revisions to Membership Handbook

¹⁸ See Shanley (2001).

¹⁹ See “Financial aid for postsecondary students: Accreditation in the United States.” Available at http://www.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/accreditation_pg2.html

²⁰ See “Financial aid for postsecondary students: Accreditation in the United States.” Available at http://www.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/accreditation_pg2.html

- **Self-study:** The institution or program seeking accreditation prepares an in-depth self-evaluation study that measures its performance against the standards established by the accrediting agency.
 - **On-site Evaluation:** A team selected by the accrediting agency visits the institution or program to determine first-hand if the applicant meets the established standards.
 - **Publication:** Upon being satisfied that the applicant meets its standards, the accrediting agency grants accreditation or preaccreditation status and lists the institution or program in an official publication with other similarly accredited or preaccredited institutions or programs.
 - **Monitoring:** The accrediting agency monitors each accredited institution or program throughout the period of accreditation granted to verify that it continues to meet the agency's standards.
 - **Reevaluation:** The accrediting agency periodically reevaluates each institution or program that it lists to ascertain whether continuation of its accredited or preaccredited status is warranted.”
- There are three “basic types of educational accreditation”: (1) institutional, (2) specialized, and (3) programmatic.
- (1) “*Institutional* accreditation normally applies to an entire institution, indicating that each of an institution's parts is contributing to the achievement of the institution's objectives, although not necessarily all at the same level of quality.”
 - (2) “*Specialized or programmatic* accreditation normally applies to programs, departments, or schools that are parts of an institution. The accredited unit may be as large as a college or school within a university or as small as a curriculum within a discipline. Most of the specialized or programmatic accrediting agencies review units within an institution of higher education that is accredited by one of the regional accrediting commissions. However, certain accrediting agencies also accredit professional schools and other specialized or vocational institutions of higher education that are free-standing in their operations. Thus, a “specialized” or “programmatic” accrediting agency may also function in the capacity of an “institutional” accrediting agency. In addition, a number of specialized accrediting agencies accredit educational programs within non-educational settings, such as hospitals.”

○ Links to accrediting agencies are provided below:

- Middle States Association of Colleges and Universities, Commission on Higher Education
<http://www.msche.org/>
 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104
 Telephone: (267) 284–5000

Serves the following areas: Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and several locations abroad

- New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
<http://www.neasc.org/>
209 Burlington Road
Bedford, Massachusetts 01730-1433
Telephone: (781) 271-0022; Fax: (781) 271-0950

Serves the following areas: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont and American/international schools in more than sixty nations around the world

- North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, The Higher Learning Commission
http://www.ncahlc.org/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=113
30 North LaSalle Street, Suite 2400
Chicago, Illinois 60602-2504
Phone: (800) 621-7440 or (312) 263-0456; Fax: (312) 263-7462

Serves the following states: Arkansas, Arizona, Colorado, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, Nebraska, Ohio, Oklahoma, New Mexico, South Dakota, Wisconsin, West Virginia, and Wyoming

- Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
<http://www.nwccu.org/>
060 165th Avenue N.E.
Suite 100
Redmond, WA 98052
Phone: (425) 558-4224; Fax: (425) 376-0596

Serves the following states: Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington

- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges
<http://www.sacscoc.org/>
1866 Southern Lane, Decatur GA. 30033
Phone: (404) 679-4500; Fax: (404) 679-4558

Serves the following states: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia

- Western Association of Colleges and Schools, Accrediting Commission for Schools
<http://www.acswasc.org/>

533 Airport Boulevard, Suite 200
Burlingame, CA 94010-2009
Phone: (650) 696-1060; Fax: (650) 696-1867
Email: mail@acswasc.org

Serves the following areas: California, Hawaii, Pacific Islands, and East Asia

- Seek eligibility for funding under the Tribally Controlled College or University Assistance Act of 1978
 - Conduct a feasibility study as required by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. For additional information on the BIA process for determining eligibility and funding of tribal colleges, contact:

U.S. Dept. of the Interior
Bureau of Indian Education
1849 C Street, NW
Mailstop 3609
Washington, DC 20240

<http://www.oiep.bia.edu/>

- See Tribal College Funding Formula- based on Indian Student Count (ISC) – available from the Bureau of Indian Education
- Seek eligibility for funding under the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994²¹
 - For additional information, see
 - http://www.ascr.usda.gov/faq/faq1994_cr.html
 - <http://www.nasulgc.org/search.asp>
(National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges)
- Continue to develop and strengthen relationships with the tribe, community, other colleges and universities, state and federal agencies, Congress, and potential funders.
- Return to Phase One, Two, Three or Four as needed.

Additional Resources

American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC)
Central Office Staff
(Updated Spring 2007)

[Gerald E. Gipp, Ph. D.](#)

Executive Director

[Carrie Billy, J.D.](#)

Deputy Director

[Jennifer Bloom](#)

Communications/Outreach Manager

[Dan Burns](#)

NSF-TCUP/STEM Program Manager

[Jean Foster](#)

Special Assistant, Grants Oversight
and Strategic Planning

[Meg Goetz](#)

Director of Congressional Relations

[Kay Heatley](#)

Web Development Director

[Robyn Hiestand](#)

Data Collection & Policy Support Analyst

[Al Kuslikis](#)

Project Development Coordinator

[Jay Phillips](#)

Director of Finance and Administration

American Indian Higher Education Consortium
121 Oronoco Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
Phone: 703-838-0400 Fax: 703-838-0388
www.aihec.org

Directory of Tribal Colleges and Universities

[Bay Mills Community College](#)
12214 West Lakeshore Drive
Brimley, Michigan 49715
906-248-3354
Fax 906-248-3351
www.bmcc.edu

[Little Big Horn College](#)
PO Box 370
Crow Agency, Montana 59022
406-638-3100
Fax 406-638-3169
www.lbhc.cc.mt.us

[Blackfeet Community College](#)
PO Box 819
Browning, Montana 59417
406-338-7755
Fax 406-338-3272
www.bfcc.org

[Little Priest Tribal College](#)
PO Box 270
Winnebago, Nebraska 68071
402-878-2380
Fax 402-878-2355
www.lptc.bia.edu

[Cankdeska Cikana Community College](#)
PO Box 269
Fort Totten, North Dakota 58335
701-766-4415
Fax 701-766-4077
<http://www.littlehoop.edu/>

[Nebraska Indian Community College](#)
P.O. Box 428
Macy, Nebraska 68039
402-837-5078
Fax 402-837-4183
<http://www.thenicc.edu/>

[Chief Dull Knife College](#)
PO Box 98
Lame Deer, Montana 59043
406-477-6215
Fax 406-477-6219
<http://www.cdkc.edu/>

[Northwest Indian College](#)
2522 Kwina Road
Bellingham, Washington 98226
360-676-2772
Fax 360-738-0136
<http://www.nwic.edu/>

[College of Menominee Nation](#)
PO Box 1179
Keshena, Wisconsin 54135
715-799-4921
Fax 715-799-1308
<http://www.menominee.edu/>

[Oglala Lakota College](#)
490 Piya Wiconi Road –
PO Box 490
Kyle, South Dakota 57752
605-455-6000
Fax 605-455-2787
<http://www.olc.edu/>

[Comanche Nation College](#)
1608 SW 9th Street
Lawton, OK 73501
580-591-0203
Fax 580-353-7075
<http://www.cnc.cc.ok.us/>

[Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College](#)
2274 Enterprise Drive
Mount Pleasant, MI 48858
989-775-4123
Fax 989-775-4528
<http://www.sagchip.org/tribalcollege/>

[Crownpoint Institute of Technology](#)
PO Box 849
Crownpoint, New Mexico 87313
505-786-4100
Fax 505-786-5644
<http://www.cit.cc.nm.us>

Resource Guide

[Salish Kootenai College](#)
PO Box 117
Pablo, Montana 59855
406-275-4800
Fax 406-275-4801
<http://www.skcc.edu/>

Selected issues of the *Tribal College Journal (TCJ) of American Indian Higher Education*

“How to Build a Dream,” Special Issue of the *Tribal College Journal of American Indian Higher Education*, Volume 12, Issue 3, Spring 2001.

<http://tribalcollegejournal.org/themag/backissues/spring2001/spring2001.html>

Back orders of the *TCJ* may be ordered online at

<https://tribalcollegejournal.org/~tcj/themag/backissue.html>

Selected Books

Benham, M.K., & Stein, W.J. (Eds.). (2003). *The renaissance of American Indian higher education: Capturing the dream*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc: Mahwah, NJ.

Boyer, E.L. (1989). *Tribal colleges: Shaping the future of Native America*. Princeton, NJ: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

Boyer, P. (1997). *Native American colleges: Progress and prospects*. Princeton, NJ: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

Stein, W. J. (1992). *Tribally controlled colleges: Making good medicine*. Peter Lang Publishing. New York, NY.

Stein, W. J. (1999). Tribally controlled colleges. In K.G. Swisher & J.W. Tippeconnic, III (Eds.), *Next steps: Research and practice to advance American Indian education*. ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural and Small Schools: Charleston, WV.

Selected Journal Articles

Amato, S. (1993). The land grant tribal college: Tribally controlled colleges may seek status as land grant institutions. *Tribal College Journal of American Indian Higher Education*, 4(4), 10.

Boyer, P. (2002). Defying the odds: tribal colleges conquer skepticism but still face persistent challenges. *Tribal College Journal*, 14(2), 12-19.

Gagnon, G. O. (2001, Spring). Keeping the tribal colleges tribal. *Tribal College Journal of American Indian Higher Education*, XII (3), 38.

Houser, S. (1991). Building institutions across cultural boundaries. *Tribal College Journal of American Indian Higher Education*, II (3), 14.

Howard, P. (1990). Getting from A.A. to B.A. *Tribal College Journal of American Indian Higher Education*, I (3), 19.

Mohatt, G.V. (1990). Dream and reality: The founding and future of Sinte Gleska College. *Tribal College Journal of American Indian Higher Education*, II (2), 11.

Phillips, J.L. (2005). The political capital of trustees and stakeholder satisfaction at four tribal colleges and universities. *Journal of American Indian Education*, 44(1), 1-28.

**Selected Doctoral Dissertations Grouped by Subject
(1982 to 2006)**

Tribal College Administration and Board of Trustees

Manuelito-Kerkvliet, C. (2005). *Widening the circle: Mentoring and the learning process for American Indian women in tribal college administration (Arizona)*. Dissertation Abstracts International, 66(07). (UMI No. 3181109)

Synopsis: The author's experience of the pressures of being a female president of a tribal college led to a qualitative study using interviews and personal narratives of 15 Indian women leaders. The author found that American Indian women used minimal informal mentoring strategies, and could have benefited from mentoring by other top-level American Indian women.

Phillips, J.L. (2003). *The social capital of trustees and the effectiveness of tribal colleges and universities*. Dissertation Abstracts International, 64(12). (UMI No. 3115577)

Synopsis: This dissertation examined the bonding and bridging characteristics of trustees with the university and Native American communities as they worked to make tribal colleges more effective. A complimentary mixed-method research design was used, which involved interviewing, direct observation and examination of secondary data sources. The author found that the trustees generally had a strong bond with their communities, and that trustees who lacked these bonds were less effective.

Krumm, B.L. (1997). *Leadership roles of American Indian women tribal college presidents*. Dissertation Abstracts International, 58(06). (UMI No. 9736939)

Synopsis: This dissertation relates the experiences of four female tribal college presidents. The researcher used the case study methodology to place tribal college leadership in a context that could be viewed through non-Native views of leadership, particularly situational leadership. The researcher found that participants' tribal affiliations created no barrier for the tribal college they were working with, and that tribal leadership is inseparable from culture.

Becenti, F.D. (1995). *Leadership profiles of tribal college presidents*. Dissertation Abstracts International, 56(06). (UMI No. 9535306)

Synopsis: This dissertation questions the type of leadership behaviors that influence the roles of tribal college presidents, and whether their personal characteristics influence the leadership roles and behaviors they exhibit. Literature reviews and questionnaires were used to explore these questions. The author found no significant difference between self-perceptions of leader characteristics. The author also found that tribal college presidents are often the driving force behind successful tribal colleges.

The History of Tribal Colleges

Raymond, J.H. III. (2005). *A history of American Indian tribal colleges*. Dissertation Abstracts International, 65(11). (UMI No. 3152010)

Synopsis: This is a survey study of the history of tribal colleges and their “dual mission” to merge American Indian philosophies with western designed curriculum. Also included in this dissertation are campus profiles, funding mechanisms, an overview of government involvement, and enrollment and graduation data.

O’Laughlin, J.M. (2003). *The financing of tribal colleges*. Dissertation Abstracts International, 64(04). (UMI No. 3086755)

Synopsis: This dissertation explores the factors leading up to the establishment of the first 34 tribal colleges. The author examined revenues and expenditures for selected tribal colleges. She was particularly interested in any trends or patterns that emerged. These data were then compared to non-Native colleges and universities that were deemed Roughly Comparable. The author found that Tribal colleges were more dependent on federal funds and less on state revenues. In addition, more tribal college funds were spent on student support services.

Stein, W.J. (1988). *A history of the tribally controlled community colleges: 1968-1978*. Dissertation Abstracts International, 49(11). (UMI No. 8902818)

Synopsis: This dissertation explores factors related to the establishment of the first six tribal colleges between 1968 and 1978. Data include college documents and interviews.

Comparisons of Tribal Colleges and Universities and Mainstream Colleges and Universities

Reid, M.B. (2005). *Rural community colleges and the nursing shortage in severely distressed counties*. Dissertation Abstracts International, 66(11). (UMI No. 3196174)

Synopsis: This dissertation examined the impact of community and tribal on the shortage of nurses in economically distressed counties in the U.S. Surveys were conducted in colleges within the Ford Foundation’s Rural Community College Initiative, which was comprised of 18 community colleges and six tribal colleges. The researcher found that the shortage of nursing faculty negatively impacts student enrollments at these colleges, which in turn affects the nursing pipeline that provides nurses for these rural communities.

Nichols, T.J. (2001). *State university-tribal college collaboration: What works, what does not, and why*. Dissertation Abstracts International, 62(11). (UMI No. 3032776)

Synopsis: This dissertation explores the research and design behind a model which illustrates how individual and organizational factors can act as catalysts or barriers to collaboration between state and tribal colleges. The author also developed a conceptual model for how individual and organizations work together across cultures.

Putman, T.E.M. (2000). *Tribal college and university accreditation: A comparative study*. Dissertation Abstracts International, 62(02). (UMI No. 3004340)

Synopsis: This study replicates a 1982 study by Dr. Joe McDonald, which assessed accreditation practices for developing Indian community colleges. The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which the importance of accreditation to tribal colleges has changed over 18 years. The author's findings did not differ significantly from the 1982 study. Overall, college officials recognized the importance and functions of accreditation.

Belgarde, W.L. (1993). *Indian control and the management of dependencies: the case of tribal community colleges*. Dissertation Abstracts International, 54(09). (UMI No. 9404058)

Synopsis: This dissertation examines the relationship tribal colleges have with the external environment. A case study approach was used to analyze data from observations, analysis of written documents and interviews with organizational members. Findings show that financial and legitimacy dependencies influence administrative and academic structure of tribal colleges. However organizational structure at the institutions reflects the Indian communities within which they are embedded.

Tribal College Faculty

Sand, M.H. (2005). *Job satisfaction characteristics of full-time faculty members at Montana tribal colleges*. Dissertation Abstracts International, 66(05). (UMI No. 3175785)

Synopsis: This dissertation involved an analysis of e-mail surveys, administered to full time faculty at seven Montana tribal colleges. Two surveys were administered in 2003 and 2005. The surveys included a series of open ended questions dealing with job satisfaction. The author found that although satisfied, faculty members were likely to leave the tribal college within three years in search of jobs elsewhere.

Shortman, P.V. (1992). *Tribal college teachers' perceptions toward effective staff development practices*. Dissertation Abstracts International, 53(07). (UMI No. 9236902)

Synopsis: The author examined tribal college faculty perceptions of effective staff development. Staff development surveys were analyzed and stratified on three different maturity levels for several factors. The author found that tribal college faculty perceived the importance of using tribal culture as a tool in building self-esteem.

Tribal College Ethics and Policy

Lehmkuhl, D.L. (2000). *A case study of the social-political factors that have affected a selected tribal college*. Dissertation Abstracts International, 61(07). (UMI No. 9978843)

Synopsis: The author examined the social-political factors that affected a particular tribal community college. The study used archival data and interviews of several people identified from the archived data. Descriptive statistics were also used to develop a profile of students, faculty and staff representative of the college. The author found that the number of female students and student grade point averages increased over the years, however, the overall demographic profile of the college has changed little.

Moon, A.K. (1999). *Self-determination through tribal colleges: Rhetoric or reality*. Dissertation Abstracts International, 60(11). (UMI No. 9951140)

Synopsis: The author examined the Tribally Controlled College or University Assistance Act of 1978 and its implementation during 1995-96 academic year. The author conducted a document analysis of primary source material. In addition, interviews were conducted with 35 Dinè College employees and students. The author found that participation and completion of studies at the college enhanced graduates' decision to live on the reservation or join the dominant society. Insufficient funding also hampered this progress. Overall, this study suggests that increased funding would be beneficial to student progress.

Wabaunsee, R.M. (1998). *Accreditation, tribal governments, and the development of governing boards at tribal colleges in Montana and Washington*. Dissertation Abstracts International, 59(10). (UMI No. 99089003)

Synopsis: The author studied the effects of accreditation on tribal college trustees and their relationships with their respective tribal governments. The author used a historic document review of the eight tribal colleges who were applying for accreditation through the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges. Emphasis was placed on the relationship between the tribal college and the tribal councils who chartered them. The author found that it was important for tribal colleges to form good relationships with the tribal government. The author also noted the importance of establishing an effective board.

Pease-Windy Boy, J. (1994). *The Tribally Controlled Community Colleges Act of 1978: An expansion of federal-Indian trust responsibility*. Dissertation Abstracts International, 55(06). (UMI No. 9428997)

Synopsis: The author examined critical factors in the development and enactment of the Tribal College Act.

Badwound, E. (1990). *Leadership and American Indian values: The tribal college dilemma*. Dissertation Abstracts International, 51(09). (UMI No.9104847)

Synopsis: The author examined the struggle of tribal colleges to promote cultural ideals while providing knowledge about mainstream America. This is a qualitative study of how American Indian values influence tribal colleges. Findings indicate that is often difficulty for some colleges to effectively promote tribal culture while responding to the external pressures of accreditation and funding.

Tribal College Students

Machamer, A.M. (2000). *Along the red road: Tribally controlled colleges and student development*. Dissertation Abstracts International, 61(01). (UMI No. 9957824)

Synopsis: The author examines the development and retention of American Indian (AI) students in tribal colleges compared to students in mainstream institutions. The author found that American Indian students enrolled in tribal colleges were very different than American Indian students who attended non-Indian institutions. AI students who attended tribal colleges were less likely to complete a bachelor's degree and to have self reported growth in cognitive development. The author suggests that these differences occurred because of the different types of students attending the two types of institutions.

Urbanski, R.A. (2000). *Factors influencing student college choice at a northeastern Minnesota tribal college*. Dissertation Abstracts International, 61(09). (UMI No. 9989153)

Synopsis: A survey instrument was piloted and distributed to Fond du Lac Tribal college students. The author found that 42% of the student body polled had always known that they would attend college. The results of this study may be useful in student recruitment initiatives.

Conley, F. S. (1997). *The relationship of achievement and academic and support services for under prepared students at tribally controlled college in the United States*. Dissertation Abstracts International, 59, (02). (UMI No. 9824465)

Synopsis: The author attempted to devise frameworks to predict student success and to better meet student needs. The study found that gender, required developmental courses, and financial aid were associated with achievement.

Thompson, A.K. (1995). *A case study of American Indian students at the College of Great Falls*. Dissertation Abstracts International, 56(08). (UMI No. 9541543)

Synopsis: The author examined the extent to which one tribal college is serving its American Indian students. Emphasis was placed on academically successful versus at risk students. The researcher found that there was not enough data to distinguish between these two groups. However, there was sufficient information to assist future programs in addressing student retention.

Martin, J.V. (1993). *Factors influencing Native American persistence and graduation at two-year institution of higher learning*. Dissertation Abstracts International, 54(07). (UMI No. 9327787)

Synopsis: The author examined factors influencing American Indian persistence and graduation at one tribal college. The Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ) was used to study students from the Crow tribe.

Hill, M.J. (1992). *An investigation of learning strategy, selected characteristics, and achievement of tribal college students in Montana*. Dissertation Abstracts International, 53(06). (UMI No. 9230849)

Synopsis: In this study, the Self-knowledge Inventory of Life Long Learning Strategies (SKILLS) instrument was used to test student achievement for 192 students in seven Montana tribal colleges.

Weasel Head, P. (1989). *Learning styles of tribal college Indian students and university Indian students in Montana*. Dissertation Abstracts International, 51(06). (UMI No. 9020234)

Synopsis: The author examined adult learning styles and their relationship to academic achievement. The Canfield Learning Style Inventory instrument was administered to 663 Indian students in seven tribal colleges.

Tribal College Curriculum and Instruction

Atwell, B.A. (1989). *The effect of learning style of Native Americans on achievement in academic subject areas in Montana tribal colleges*. Dissertation Abstracts International, 50(07). (UMI No. 8925778)

Synopsis: The author studied the effects of learning styles. The Canfield Learning Style Inventory was used to analyze 693 students in eight subject areas.

McDonald, J.F. (1982). *An assessment of accreditation practices in developing Indian community colleges compared with non-Indian community colleges in the northwest*. Dissertation Abstracts International, 43(05). (UMI No. 8222535)

Synopsis: The author compared the effects of accreditation between tribal community colleges and non-Indian community colleges. He also examined the current regional accrediting process to determine whether or not it was appropriate for tribal colleges. It was found that accreditation methods varied very little between Indian and non-Indian colleges and the accreditation method were appropriate for tribal college accreditation.

The Role of Culture in Tribal Colleges and Universities

Boyer, S.P. (2003). *Capturing education: The role of culture at a tribally controlled community college*. Available from: Proquest Dissertations and Theses. (AAT 3117830)

Synopsis: The author explored the role of culture in a tribally controlled college, Turtle Mountain Community College, in North Dakota. Interviews were conducted with administrators, faculty, students, and board members.

