



2009–2010
AIHEC AIMS FACT BOOK
Tribal Colleges and Universities Report

*Sharing Our Stories—
Strengthening Our Nations
Through Tribal Education*





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Front cover: New nursing graduate, Sinte Gleska University. Photo courtesy of Carol Good Shield.

2009–2010
AIHEC AIMS FACT BOOK

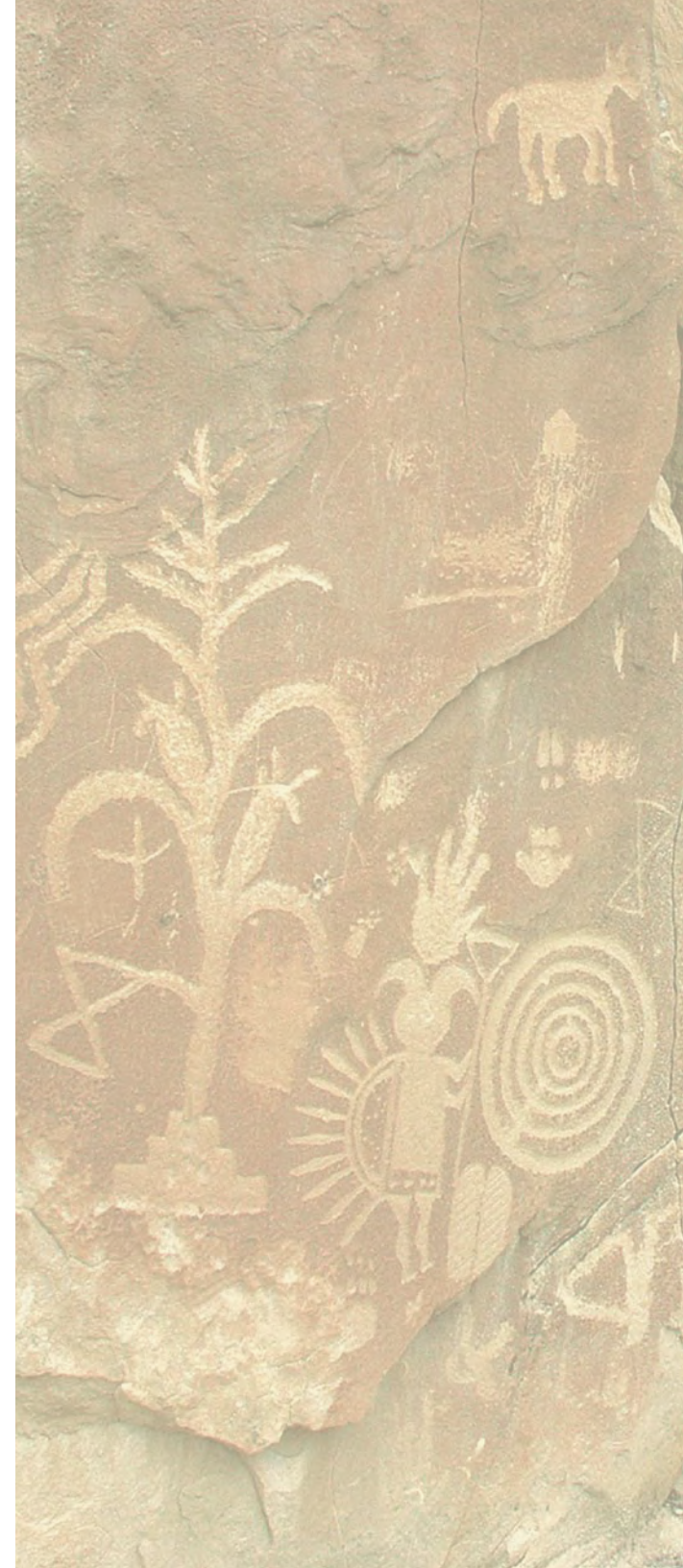
Tribal Colleges and Universities Report

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May 2012

American Indian Higher Education Consortium

American Indian Measures for Success





AIHEC 2010 Student Conference in Phoenix, AZ, Cankdeska Cikana Community College. Photo courtesy of Stuart Young.

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AIHEC is the collective spirit and unifying voice of our nation's Tribal Colleges and Universities. AIHEC provides leadership and influences public policy on American Indian higher education issues through advocacy, research, and program initiatives; promotes and strengthens Indigenous languages, cultures, communities, and tribal nations; and through its unique position, serves member institutions and emerging Tribal Colleges and Universities.

Leech Lake Tribal College: Protecting Our Land

Water Quality Lab

At Leech Lake Tribal College (LLTC, Cass Lake, MN), faculty and student researchers are addressing critical cultural and environmental issues. In January 2009, science instructor Steve Smith (Anishinaabe) joined the tribal college's faculty, bringing with him extensive experience in water quality research and directing research projects. He also directed student research in the tribal college's STAR (Successful Transition to and Academic Rigor in Post-secondary Education) project. Now, Smith is putting his knowledge and experience toward the development of a state-of-the-art water quality lab on campus—a facility that will fill the void created when the tribe's water quality lab closed its doors.

Wild Rice

Recently, the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture awarded LLTC a grant to conduct wild rice research ("A Comparative Analysis of Isolated Inland Wild Rice Lake") on the Leech Lake Reservation. Directed by members of LLTC's science faculty, this research involves tribal college students and Native students from local high schools. Wild rice is an important part of Ojibwa cultural identity, and its health and production has been threatened by environmental pollution and delayed enforcement of water quality standards.



Saving Nations

Savings Nations—that is the core goal of 37¹ Tribal Colleges and Universities, which collectively are the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC). Distinct from mainstream colleges and universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) offer postsecondary education that is uniquely tribal, with culturally relevant curricula and research embedded in a wide range of certificate and degree programs. The educational approach of TCUs is founded upon Native values and languages. In addition to focusing on individual students, TCUs support extended family and community education services.

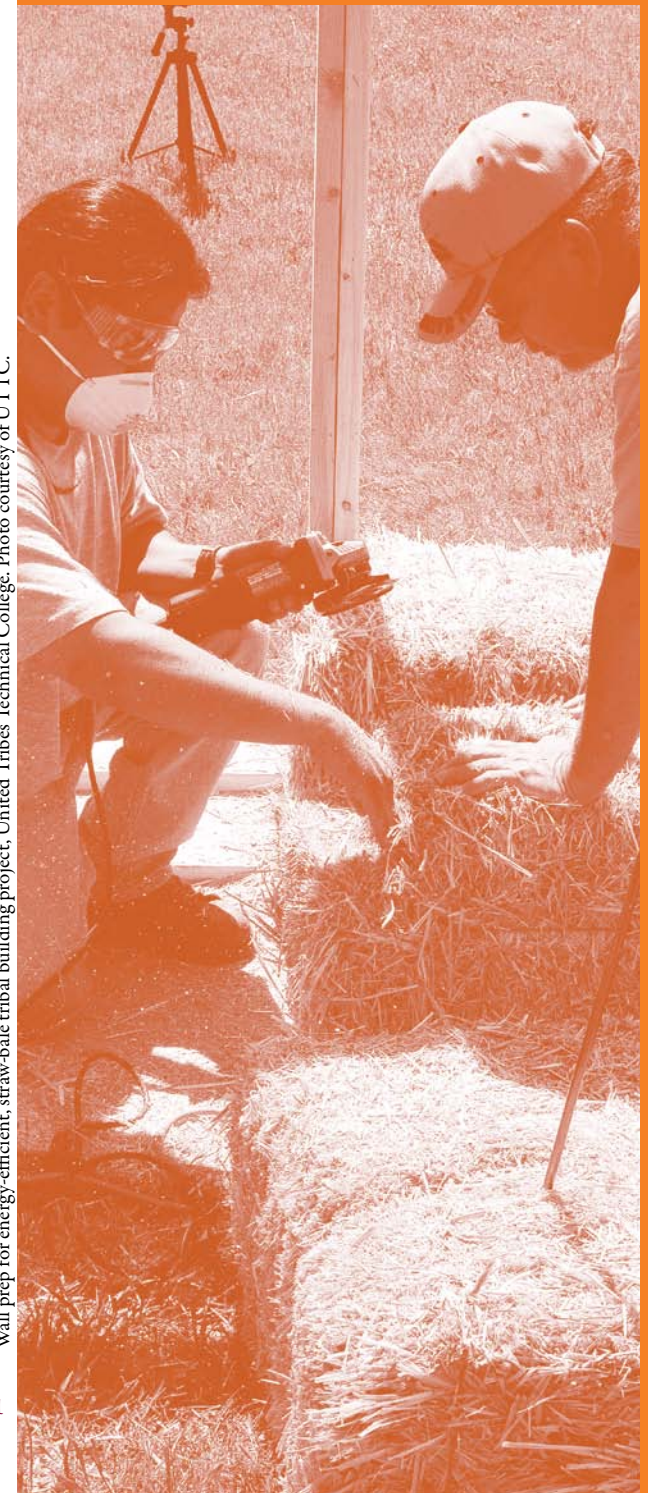
To better evaluate the transformative nature of TCUs—and measure their impact and effectiveness in a way most relevant to their communities, their Nations, and their funders—AIHEC members developed the American Indian Measures for Success (AIHEC AIMS) data collection initiative in 2004. All TCUs participate in this comprehensive initiative each year.



Instructor Steve Smith and student Bryan Vail taking lake bottom samples, Leech Lake Tribal College. Photo courtesy of Mark Lewer.

¹The data included in this report is from 36 TCUs. The newest tribal college, Red Lake Nation College (Red Lake, MN), joined AIHEC in fall 2011.

Tribal Colleges and Universities



Wall prep for energy-efficient, straw-bale tribal building project, United Tribes Technical College. Photo courtesy of UTTC.

Initially, AIHEC AIMS was supported through a grant from the Lumina Foundation for Education. Today, support comes from the federal Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), the American Indian College Fund, AIHEC, and the TCUs themselves. AIHEC AIMS helps build capacity in data collection and accountability at TCUs and in doing so strengthens the ability of TCUs to measure success, build the foundation for systemic program change, and ultimately increase the participation and success of American Indian students in higher education.

Within this report, AIHEC uses data collected through AIHEC AIMS to highlight aspects of this unique sector of American higher education. Using data collected from academic year (AY) 2003–04 to AY 2009–10, this report describes historical trends and the current status of TCU enrollment, education costs and funding, and curricula. This year's report also highlights challenges and successes at TCUs, discusses innovative academic and community-based programs, and shares the perspectives of alumni who continue to contribute to the vitality of TCUs today.

Our Journey

Four decades ago, the Tribal College Movement began as a way to increase the educational attainment rates of American Indians in the United States. In 1968, the Navajo Nation opened the first TCU in Tsaile, AZ, Navajo Community College. Founders of the tribal college, which is now Diné College, recognized the need for a postsecondary education option centered on Navajo culture. Soon after, TCUs were chartered in California, North Dakota, and South Dakota. Today, there are 37 TCUs operating more than 75 sites in 15 states and one TCU in Canada. All told, TCUs cover 80 percent of Indian Country in the United States.

Navajo culture class, Diné College. Photo courtesy of Edward McCombs.



In fall 2010, TCUs served 19,070 full- and part-time academic students from more than 250 federally recognized tribes; they also reached nearly 47,000 more community members through community-based education and support programs. The colleges vary in size (from fewer than 50 students to more than 2,000), focus (liberal arts, technical skills, and sciences), and location (woodlands, desert, frozen tundra, rural reservation, and urban). Tribal identity is at the core of each TCU, and all TCUs share larger missions to strengthen and preserve tribal sovereignty, culture, and language and to serve their communities.

TCUs offer many services in a nurturing, holistic, and uniquely tribal environment that focus on helping retain students until graduation. Some of these services include personal and career counseling, mentoring, tutoring, wellness programs, child care and family support, lending of laptops, low- or no-cost textbooks, and transportation and housing assistance. TCUs accept and honor all students, wherever they are in terms of academic preparedness. Through instruction and support grounded in tribal values and individual respect, the tribal colleges foster graduates who are committed to giving back to their communities and tribal nations.

The majority of faculty, teaching staff, and administrators at TCUs hold master's or doctoral degrees. Dedicated faculty and staff often serve double-duty as counselors and mentors in addition to their teaching and administrative roles. Faculty members at TCUs are also engaged in research in many areas including Native language and culture, hydrology, molecular cell biology, archaeology, entomology, community health, environmental science, aerospace engineering, and advanced manufacturing processes.

Like most small, community-based colleges, TCUs rely upon adjunct faculty members. But according to a 2003 survey published by the American Indian College Fund, TCU adjunct faculty are more engaged with their students and

institutions than those teaching at mainstream community colleges (Voorhees, 2003). TCU faculty members guide student research projects, serve as mentors, participate in community activities, and provide many other forms of support to students, their families, and community members.

In total, the United States-based TCUs that comprise AIHEC offer 358 apprenticeship, diploma, certificate, and degree programs in 36 major disciplines. During the 2009–2010 academic year, all TCUs offered associate's degree programs, 11 offered bachelor's degree programs, and two offered master's degree programs. TCUs continue to expand and develop new programs and departments that meet the needs of their students and tribal nations.

Many of the TCUs support distance learning. This includes offering online courses that allow students who live in remote areas or lack transportation to further their education, as well as partnerships that involve state-of-the-art hybrid learning environments. Most TCUs engage in partnerships with a range of agencies and organizations including tribal governments, mainstream universities, U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the National Science Foundation, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and others. These partnerships allow TCUs to support applied, tribal- and community-relevant research and education programs that focus on issues such as climate change, sustainable agriculture, water quality, wildlife population dynamics, and diabetes prevention.

Fort Peck Community College: Bridging the Distance

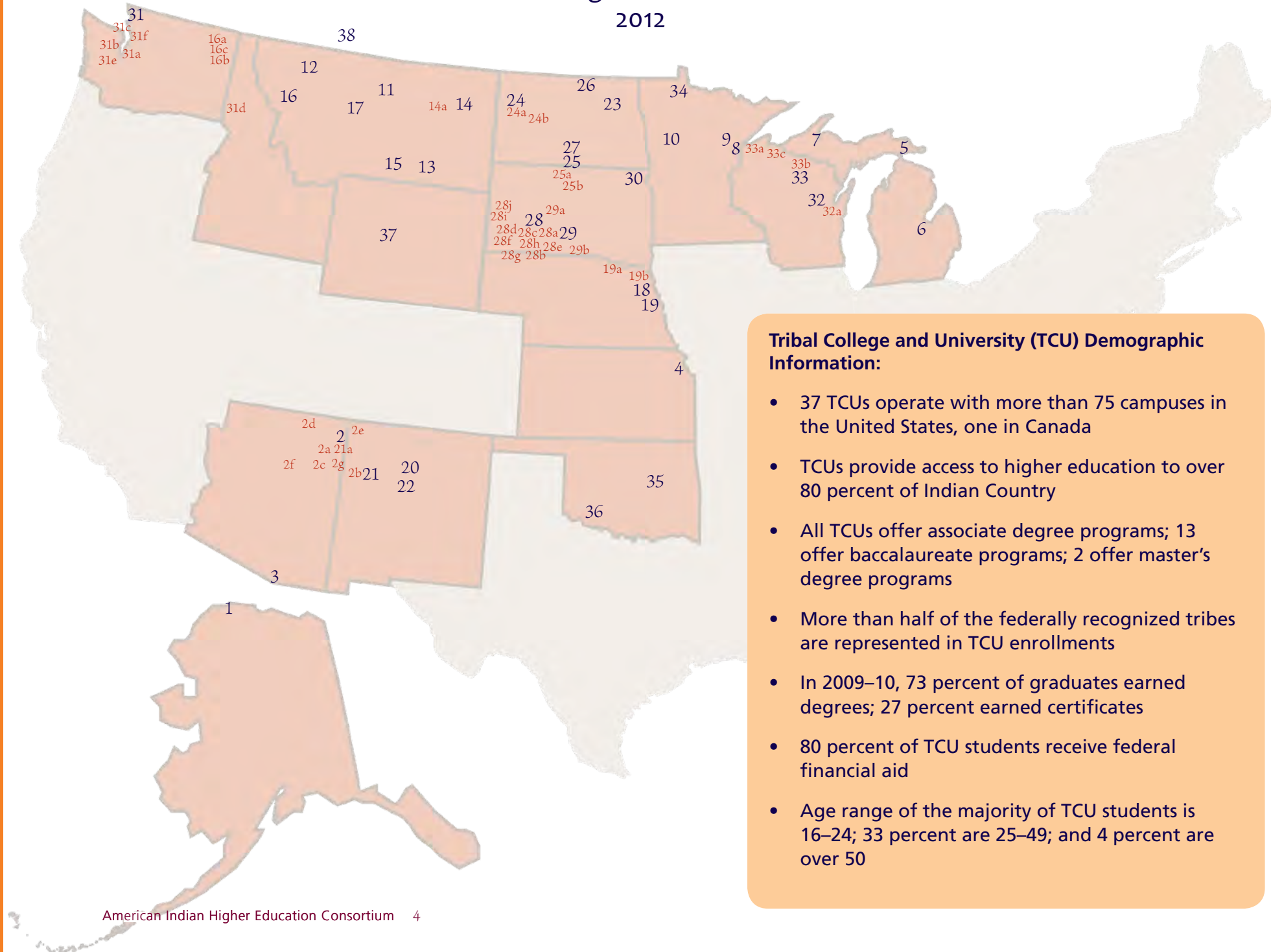


Twilia Stafne Bear Cub (Assiniboine) always knew she wanted to become a teacher. That desire to teach intensified when she realized there was a shortage of American Indian teachers on her own reservation. It was not until her children were in school, however, that she could finish her own education. Thanks to Fort Peck Community College (FPCC, Poplar, MT) and its distance learning program, Bear Cub only needed to be on campus for a few summer courses, and then only for six weeks at a time. This meant she did not have to leave behind her family and way of life to pursue her dream of becoming a teacher. At FPCC, Bear Cub earned her associate's degree in education, then earned a bachelor's degree from Rocky Mountain College and an endorsement in special education with a master's degree in special education from Montana State University Billings. Today, she teaches at Poplar Middle School on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation. Thanks to the tribal college, she was able to pursue an education and her dreams, stay close to her family—and inspire the next generation of Native students.

"If you love what you are doing, you never have to work another day in your life." This is Twilia Bear Cub's motto, this is what she lives.

Tribal Colleges and Universities

2012



Tribal College and University (TCU) Demographic Information:

- 37 TCUs operate with more than 75 campuses in the United States, one in Canada
- TCUs provide access to higher education to over 80 percent of Indian Country
- All TCUs offer associate degree programs; 13 offer baccalaureate programs; 2 offer master's degree programs
- More than half of the federally recognized tribes are represented in TCU enrollments
- In 2009–10, 73 percent of graduates earned degrees; 27 percent earned certificates
- 80 percent of TCU students receive federal financial aid
- Age range of the majority of TCU students is 16–24; 33 percent are 25–49; and 4 percent are over 50

AIHEC ACCREDITED MEMBERS

Alaska

- 1 **Ilisagvik College**, Barrow, AK

Arizona

- 2 **Diné College**, Tsaile, AZ
 - 2a Chinle, AZ
 - 2b Crownpoint, NM
 - 2c Ganado, AZ
 - 2d Kayenta, AZ
 - 2e Shiprock, NM
 - 2f Tuba City, AZ
 - 2g Window Rock, AZ

- 3 **Tohono O'odham Community College**, Sells, AZ

Kansas

- 4 **Haskell Indian Nations University**, Lawrence, KS

Michigan

- 5 **Bay Mills Community College**, Brimley, MI
- 6 **Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College**, Mount Pleasant, MI
- 7 **Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College**, Baraga, MI

Minnesota

- 8 **Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College**, Cloquet, MN
- 9 **Leech Lake Tribal College**, Cass Lake, MN
- 10 **White Earth Tribal and Community College**, Mahanomen, MN

Montana

- 11 **Aaniiih Nakoda College** (formerly Fort Belknap College), Harlem, MT
- 12 **Blackfeet Community College**, Browning, MT
- 13 **Chief Dull Knife College**, Lame Deer, MT
- 14 **Fort Peck Community College**, Poplar, MT
 - 14a Wolf Point, MT
- 15 **Little Big Horn College**, Crow Agency, MT
- 16 **Salish Kootenai College**, Pablo, MT
 - 16a Colville, WA
 - 16b Spokane, WA
 - 16c Wellpinit, WA
- 17 **Stone Child College**, Box Elder, MT

Nebraska

- 18 **Little Priest Tribal College**, Winnebago, NE
- 19 **Nebraska Indian Community College**, Macy, NE
 - 19a Niobrara, NE
 - 19b South Sioux City, NE

New Mexico

- 20 **Institute of American Indian Arts**, Santa Fe, NM
- 21 **Navajo Technical College**, Crownpoint, NM
 - 20a Chinle, AZ

- 22 **Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute**, Albuquerque, NM

North Dakota

- 23 **Cankdeska Cikana Community College**, Fort Totten, ND
- 24 **Fort Berthold Community College**, New Town, ND
 - 24a Mandaree, ND
 - 24b White Shield, ND
- 25 **Sitting Bull College**, Fort Yates, ND
 - 25a McLaughlin, SD
 - 25b Mobridge, SD

- 26 **Turtle Mountain Community College**, Belcourt, ND

- 27 **United Tribes Technical College**, Bismarck, ND

South Dakota

- 28 **Oglala Lakota College**, Kyle, SD
 - 28a Allen, SD
 - 28b Batesland, SD
 - 28c Eagle Butte, SD
 - 28d Manderson, SD
 - 28e Martin, SD
 - 28f Oglala, SD
 - 28g Pine Ridge, SD
 - 28h Porcupine, SD
 - 28i Rapid City, SD
 - 28j Wanblee, SD

- 29 **Sinte Gleska University**, Mission, SD
 - 29a Lower Brule, SD
 - 29b Marty, SD

- 30 **Sisseton Wahpeton College**, Sisseton, SD

Washington

- 31 **Northwest Indian College**, Bellingham, WA
 - 31a Auburn, WA
 - 31b Kingston, WA
 - 31c La Conner, WA
 - 31d Lapwai, ID
 - 31e Olympia, WA
 - 31f Tulalip, WA

Wisconsin

- 32 **College of Menominee Nation**, Keshena, WI
 - 32a Green Bay, WI
- 33 **Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College**, Hayward, WI
 - 33a Hertel WI
 - 33b Lac du Flambeau, WI
 - 33c Washburn, WI

AIHEC ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Minnesota

- 34 **Red Lake Nation College**, Red Lake, MN

Oklahoma

- 35 **College of the Muscogee Nation**, Okmulgee, OK
- 36 **Comanche Nation College**, Lawton, OK

Wyoming

- 37 **Wind River Tribal College**, Ethete, WY

AIHEC INTERNATIONAL MEMBER

- 38 **Red Crow Community College**, Alberta, Canada



Chemistry students cooking up a storm, Diné College.
Photo courtesy of Edward McCombs.

Tribal Colleges and Universities

Celebrating Our Identity

The history of the tribe as seen through the eyes of a tribal member tells a different story than what they find in textbooks. The tribal pride that is nurtured inspires the student to leadership and instills the self-determination needed to reach their educational goals. They begin to understand that education is much more than just what is learned in textbooks. They learn the responsibility of living the seven teachings. The significance of the culture in the education and experience of students is not something you can put a number on. It is, however, reflected in the self-identity and pride that staff and faculty can see as the student begins to understand the impact that generational trauma and colonization has had on the tribe.

—Wannetta Bennett, former president, White Earth Tribal and Community College

By incorporating tradition, culture, and Indigenous languages into their curricula, TCUs are unique in American higher education. Not only that, but TCUs preserve, teach, and use Indigenous languages that might otherwise disappear.

“Although most college courses facilitate academic growth, I believe courses in traditional culture, language, history, creative writing, English and art help harness our creative energies together with the ancient wisdom, which are our legacies,” says Gloria Emerson, a Navajo visual artist and poet. “Sometimes we forget the gift we all carry. . . . These tools are essential in our paths of self-discovery and support tentative steps up the ladder to self-actualization. With them, we move from ego to community to tribe and beyond.” (*Tribal College Journal*, 2010).

Perhaps the most obvious influence of tradition, culture, and language at TCUs is reflected in the expansion of American Indian Studies degree programs available to students. In 2003–04,

19 TCUs offered programs in American Indian studies or American Indian languages. By 2009–10, 28 TCUs offered degree and certificate programs, including 26 with associate’s and four with bachelor’s degree programs. Enrollment in American Indian Studies programs has doubled since fall 2003.

In addition to offering American Indian studies degree programs, TCUs play critical roles in preserving tribal traditions, culture, and language. “Families were responsible in the past,” says Dr. Cynthia Lindquist, president of Cankdeska Cikana Community College (Fort Totten, ND), “however, much was lost in the assimilation efforts, and the institution must now take a lead role in assisting to develop, implement, and refine [our] culture by archiving our elders’ knowledge and creating curriculum to perpetuate societal norms of the past.”

- Before culturally knowledgeable elders pass on, Aaniiih Nakoda College (formerly Fort Belknap College, in Harlem, MT) is working to preserve and put into practice elder knowledge by documenting interviews through film and audio recording. This knowledge of language and history is incorporated into the Aani and Nakoda culture courses.
- Elders work with many of the TCUs, including Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College (Hayward, WI), Stone Child College (Box Elder, MT), Sisseton Wahpeton College (Sisseton, SD), Tohono O’odham Community College (Sells, AZ), and Wind River Tribal College (Fort Washakie, WY). Elders teach classes or workshops in language, traditional crafts, and history; provide guidance and counseling; pray with and for students; and translate materials. With funding from the state of Montana’s Tribal Histories Project, students and faculty at Chief Dull Knife College (Lame Deer, MT) wrote *We, the Northern Cheyenne People: Our Land,*

Our History, Our Culture after conducting in-depth research of historical documents pertaining to the Northern Cheyenne Tribe. Stone Child College published *The History of the Chippewa Cree of Rocky Boy’s Indian Reservation*, a book now used by elementary and high schools on the Rocky Boy Indian Reservation.

- Blackfeet Community College (BCC, Browning, MT) allows K-12 teachers to earn continuing education units for renewal of their teaching certificates. The tribal college offers Blackfeet language classes at various sites around the reservation and state of Montana; it also broadcasts the language on local television stations and the local cable network. BCC offers Blackfeet history courses online and uses the Polycom live stream television system to deliver courses to the University of Montana and Salish Kootenai College (Pablo, MT).
- Iilisagvik College (Barrow, AK) teaches Inupiaq language courses in villages throughout the North Slope using Skype and is testing the use of Elluminate for its distance delivery programs. The Inupiaq Studies staff is also assisting in the development of a Rosetta Stone language program to supplement their Inupiaq language courses. The Student Services department employs a cultural affairs specialist who brings students to local Inupiaq dances, potlucks, and subsistence-related events centered on bowhead whaling.
- United Tribes Technical College (Bismarck, ND) provides cultural programming for the entire family. The Child Development Center and K–8 school on campus incorporate Native culture into the classroom and reward students who demonstrate Lakota values in their behavior.



Head Start graduation ceremony, Oglala Lakota College. Photo courtesy of Marilyn Pourier.

Bay Mills Community College and Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College: Preserving Language



Both Bay Mills Community College (BMCC, Brimley, MI) and Saginaw

Chippewa Tribal College (SCTC, Mount Pleasant, MI) received an award from the American Indian College Fund's Woksape Oyate: Wisdom of the People Initiative to strengthen their Native American studies programs and develop comprehensive Ojibwa language programs.

In summer 2005, BMCC initiated a new language program, which had one goal: to produce new speakers of Ojibwa, a complex and descriptive language. In the Nishnaabemwin Pane Immersion Program, instructors speak only Ojibwa. Students speak Ojibwa once they have learned to hear and understand and are comfortable speaking. The program has been well-received and requested by a number of tribal communities. Instructors also integrate culture into the language lessons. Classes are not taught by rote memorization, but rather via a dynamic and practical method that relies upon social and cultural contexts, storytelling, skits, and word games.

Efforts to promote, preserve, and teach Indigenous language, culture, and history are the essence of SCTC's mission and are vital to tribal sovereignty and the survival of the people. The culturally relevant education and experiences that students receive at SCTC empower them as learners, enrich their lives, and shape their futures. This learning environment creates awareness and appreciation of the unique Anishinaabek culture, heritage, and language. It also augments commitment to personal social accountability and responsibilities, perpetuating informed and knowledgeable community citizens. Students develop a sense of dignity and pride, give back to their communities, and develop a healthy outlook on higher education. Currently, SCTC is looking to emulate BMCC's program model.

TCUs also work to preserve tradition, language, and culture by integrating language into early childhood programs and working with local elementary and secondary schools to integrate language and cultural studies into their curricula.

Several TCUs have initiated programs to ensure that tribes' youngest members learn their Native languages. Most TCUs are active with their local school systems, often via teacher education or professional development programs as well as policy and planning efforts with local education officials. Such projects exist at Cankdeska Cikana Community College, College of Menominee Nation (Keshena, WI), Oglala Lakota College (Kyle, SD), and all seven TCUs in Montana.

- Recently, Oglala Lakota College, which runs the Porcupine Head Start/Early Head Start program, embarked on immersion instruction in Lakota for its youngest enrollees. To reinforce the preschoolers' language skills, the tribal college offers a 12-hour immersion course for parents and others wanting to learn the Lakota language.
- In 2008, the College of Menominee Nation's education program began training, certifying, and recertifying teachers, focusing in particular on helping teachers integrate the Menominee language and culture into classroom curricula. These efforts have been aided by a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Native Americans (ANA).
- In 2008, Chief Dull Knife College facilitated the first education summit on the Northern Cheyenne reservation. The summit brought together leaders from the tribe and local education agencies, creating "The Circle of Schools" which focused

Tribal Colleges and Universities

on reviewing reservation-wide educational goals, promoting collaboration, and enhancing educational opportunities from preschool to the college level.

- With a new ANA language planning grant for its Cree Language Nest Planning Project, Stone Child College is creating a Cree language curriculum and will implement a Cree language immersion classroom for newborns through age three. The second phase of the project will begin with the opening of the Language Nest Classroom. There, babies will be immersed in Cree language for eight hours each day. Stone Child College's children will be the next generation of fluent Cree speakers—and represent the tribe's greatest opportunity to preserve and maintain the Cree language.

The uniqueness of Tribal Colleges and Universities stems from the cultures of the tribes who founded them. A solid cultural education shapes the experiences and lives of TCU students and is crucial to their learning process.

We may be a small percentage of the United States' general population, but we have made and will continue to make significant contributions. Our students learn the value of their culture and learn that there are many benefits society in general has received from the Native culture. The other side of this is that the non-tribal students get an understanding of tribal culture and gain a respect they would never have received anywhere else. This does a lot to improve relations within our greater community, which dramatically improves our tribal students' self-confidence.

—Michael Parish, president, Bay Mills Community College



Lake collection in environmental science class, Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College.
Photo courtesy of SCTC.



Wind turbine reduces college operating costs, Sisseton Wahpeton College. Photo courtesy of SWC.

Protecting Our Land

Place is fundamental to tribal cultures. Land, water, and air are part of all Indian people and help define who we are. For this reason, respect for the environment and sustainable practices are embedded within the curricula and programs of TCUs. For example, students seeking associate's degrees at College of Menominee Nation (CMN) conduct green audits of local businesses and organizations. According to Beau Mitchell (Chippewa-Cree), CMN sustainability coordinator, a group of students recently helped a nearby restaurant evaluate its waste and water usage and then develop a template for conducting green audits.

"The College of Menominee Nation has built its curriculum around these concepts and values," says President S. Verna Fowler. "At the core [of the curriculum] are respect for the land, water and air; partnership with other creatures of earth; and a way of living and working that achieves a balance between use and replenishment of all resources." This commitment to sustaining our lands and environment is vital to the work of all the TCUs.

While students learn about and practice environmental stewardship, the ethic of sustainability also encompasses how TCUs develop and expand their facilities and campuses.

- In 2008, Turtle Mountain Community College (Belcourt, ND) broke ground on its new 14,000 square foot career and technical education facility. Courses will focus on building homes within the community that are both sustainable and affordable. On its main campus, the tribal college has erected a wind turbine that supplies the main campus with about 50 percent of its power.
- Blackfeet Community College (BCC) completed construction and opened its science and math

building, the first tribal building in the United States and the first educational building in Montana to receive Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) platinum certification. The facility, built with a \$6 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education under the federal College Cost Reduction and Access Act, is designed to reflect Blackfeet cultural values and traditions, including responsible use of resources, respect for the earth, and harmony with the local climate. Shortly after BCC's facility opened, Little Big Horn College (Crow Agency, MT) opened its 30,000 square foot Health and Wellness Center, the nation's second tribal LEED platinum certified building and now the largest.

- Over the past two years, Sisseton Wahpeton College has remodeled older areas of its campus to improve energy efficiency, replacing old windows with more efficient models, adding insulation to non-insulated areas, and replacing the propane HVAC system with newer electrical units. Geothermal heating also has been incorporated into the campus. Two new wind turbines reduce the college's operating costs while contributing to the well-being of the environment by reducing the use of fossil fuels.

TCUs do not add or expand programs or facilities without careful consideration of community need and environmental impact. As Mitchell explains: "If we are thinking about a new building project or even expanding, we really ask ourselves tough questions: 'How are we going to offset the carbon emissions associated with new facilities? What will the impact on community be? What about the additional cost of heating and cooling?' These are all questions we think about."

Tribal Colleges and Universities

Sitting Bull College: College Awareness

Each year, Sitting Bull College (SBC, Fort Yates, ND) hosts hundreds of junior high and high school students from across the Standing Rock Reservation for College Awareness Day events. College Awareness, a program sponsored by U.S. Department of Education in association with the South Dakota Department of Indian Education, encourages junior high and high school students to pursue college careers. Students participate in hands-on activities, tour the tribal college's new campus, and are treated to lunch. SBC faculty and staff facilitate dozens of breakout sessions on topics including Free Application for Federal Student Aid, mathematics, nursing, environmental sciences, biology, chemistry, Native American studies, teacher education, horsemanship, criminal justice, and human services.

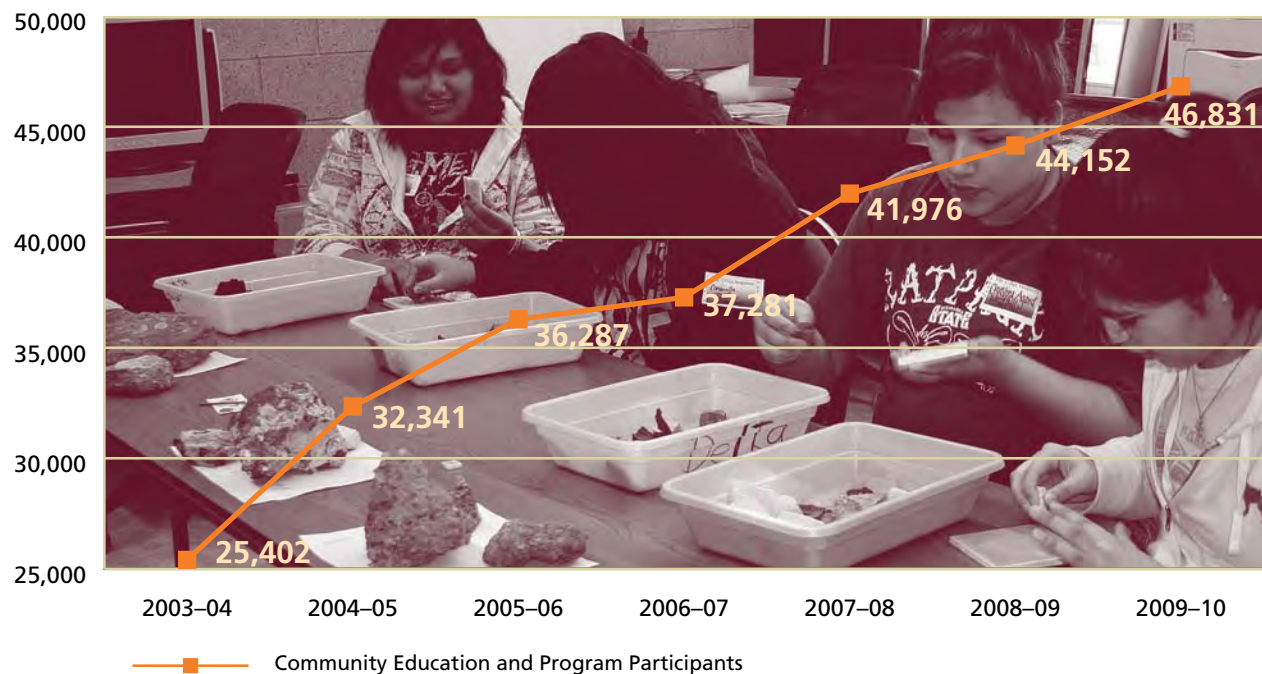


Strengthening Community

Tribal Colleges and Universities serve thousands of academic, degree-seeking students. By offering community education and outreach programs, TCUs reach many thousands more of all ages. These programs include after school reading programs, language instruction, farming and gardening classes, firefighter certification, computer literacy courses, Upward Bound, health and wellness classes, leadership development programs, academic readiness classes, adult and family literacy events, entrepreneurship courses, and many more. Participation in these programs has grown over the past seven years by 84 percent.

All TCUs offer crucial services to community residents; these include programs for elementary and secondary school students such as after school programs and camps and for adults such as General Equivalency Diploma (GED) and other skills training. In addition, TCUs host cultural activities; support tribal governments and social services; and administer health and wellness programs, employment counseling, and entrepreneurial programs. The tribal colleges estimate that more than 46,830 community residents, including 6,650 non-Indians, participated in such programs and services in 2009–10. Oftentimes, TCUs also provide the only library

Community Education and Program Participants, Fall 2003 through Fall 2010



College Awareness Day event, Sitting Bull College. Photo courtesy of Resource Development, SBC.

services in their communities. Examples of community outreach include:

- Library facilities at TCUs often serve as tribal archives by collecting documents and records, recording oral histories from tribal elders, and displaying and preserving artwork and other artifacts. At Diné College the Moses-Donner Collection of Indian Materials contains 12,000 volumes related to American Indians, particularly the Navajo and Southwest tribes. The library's collection includes a significant amount of gray literature not available elsewhere.
- The library at Ilisagvik College serves patrons across 89,000 square miles of the North Slope and connects villages that are difficult to reach.



Ilisagvik College library. Photo courtesy of IC.



Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College students participate with the Future Peace Leaders Law Enforcement Education Program grant.
Photo courtesy of FDLTCC.

- In 2008, Sisseton Wahpeton College set up a wireless system that covers a large portion of the reservation, thereby enhancing communication in this rural area.
- Because so many students have family responsibilities, TCUs often operate on-campus daycare facilities for children of students; many of these facilities are also open to nonstudents. In 2009–10, 20 colleges operated childcare centers or Head Start programs. Little Big Horn College partnered with the tribe and a local daycare to open a center on campus for the children of students. The financial burden of childcare is lessened with a co-pay based on income, and parents can visit with their children between classes.



Lakota language speakers, Oglala Lakota College.
Photo courtesy of Marilyn Pourier.

Tribal Colleges and Universities



Stone Child College: Strengthening Community



When John Murie (Chippewa Cree) was a young boy attending Rocky Boy Elementary School in Box Elder, MT, people recognized his talent for art. Throughout high school, his distinctive artwork won several awards. With financial assistance from the Chippewa Cree Tribal scholarship program, administered by Stone Child College (SCC), after Murie graduated from high school, he attended the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, NM. There, he attended classes with other Native students—in any given year, more than 100 different tribes from across the United States are represented on campus—and was exposed to many different artistic traditions. After graduating with his associate's degree in art in 1996, he returned to the Rocky Boy Indian Reservation and worked at the local casino.

Then, in 2007, when SCC began its Woksape Oyate Program—funded by the American Indian College Fund, the “Wisdom of the People” grant initiative that offered scholarships to students who agree to teach once they have completed their degrees—Murie was encouraged to return to college to earn a bachelor's degree and teach art at SCC. In 2010, he did just that, earning his bachelor's degree and moving on to teach art full time at SCC. As a result, the intellectual capital of SCC and the entire Chippewa Cree Tribe has increased. No longer do artistic tribal members need to venture hundreds of miles for an education. Now, they can remain with their families and learn from the best—at home.

Academic, Degree-Seeking Enrollment

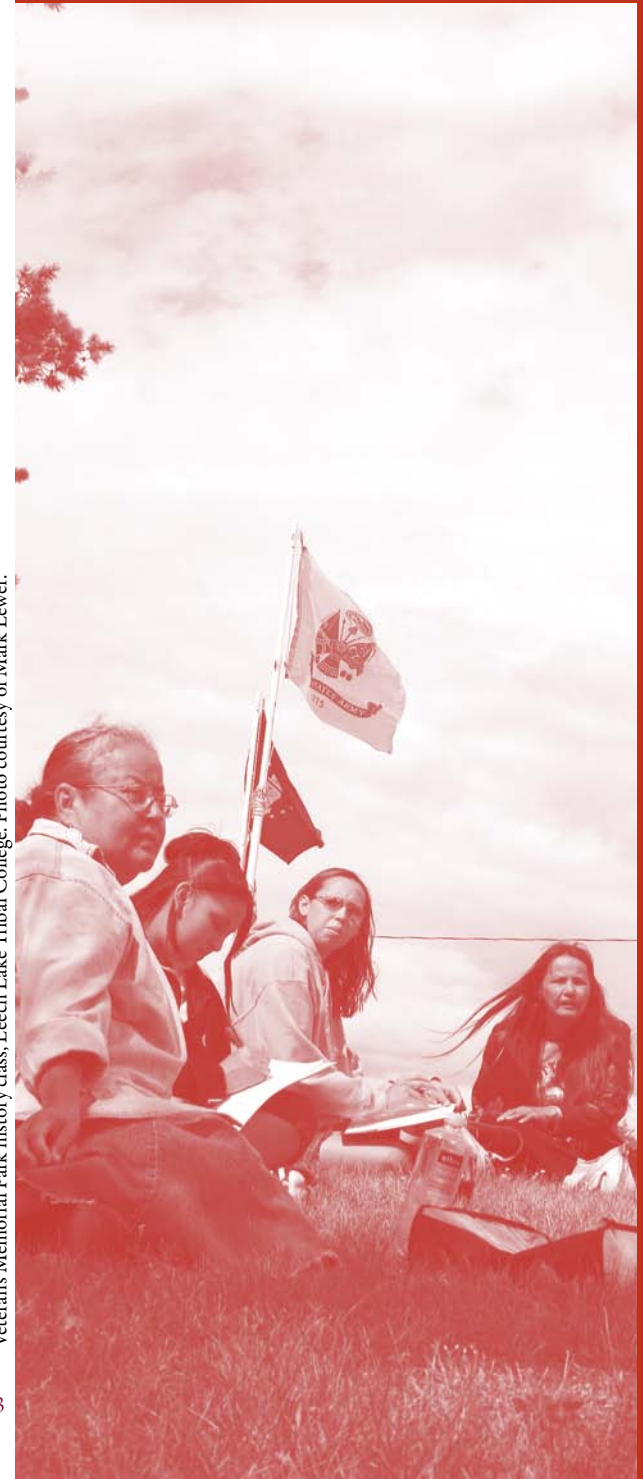
Tribal Colleges and Universities were impacted particularly hard by the recent recession, and many students on reservations are having to forego a postsecondary education. As Little Big Horn College President David Yarlott explains, “When times get a little tougher, our students withdraw and go to work.”

And yet, thanks to innovative recruitment practices, greater attention to retention and the student learning environment, and ever-evolving programs of study, TCUs continue to thrive. At the beginning of the AIHEC AIMS project in 2003–04, a total of 17,190 students were enrolled in TCUs. Overall TCU enrollment waned slightly with the economic challenges facing the nation, but by 2009–10, enrollment had reached a record 19,070 students—an 11 percent increase.

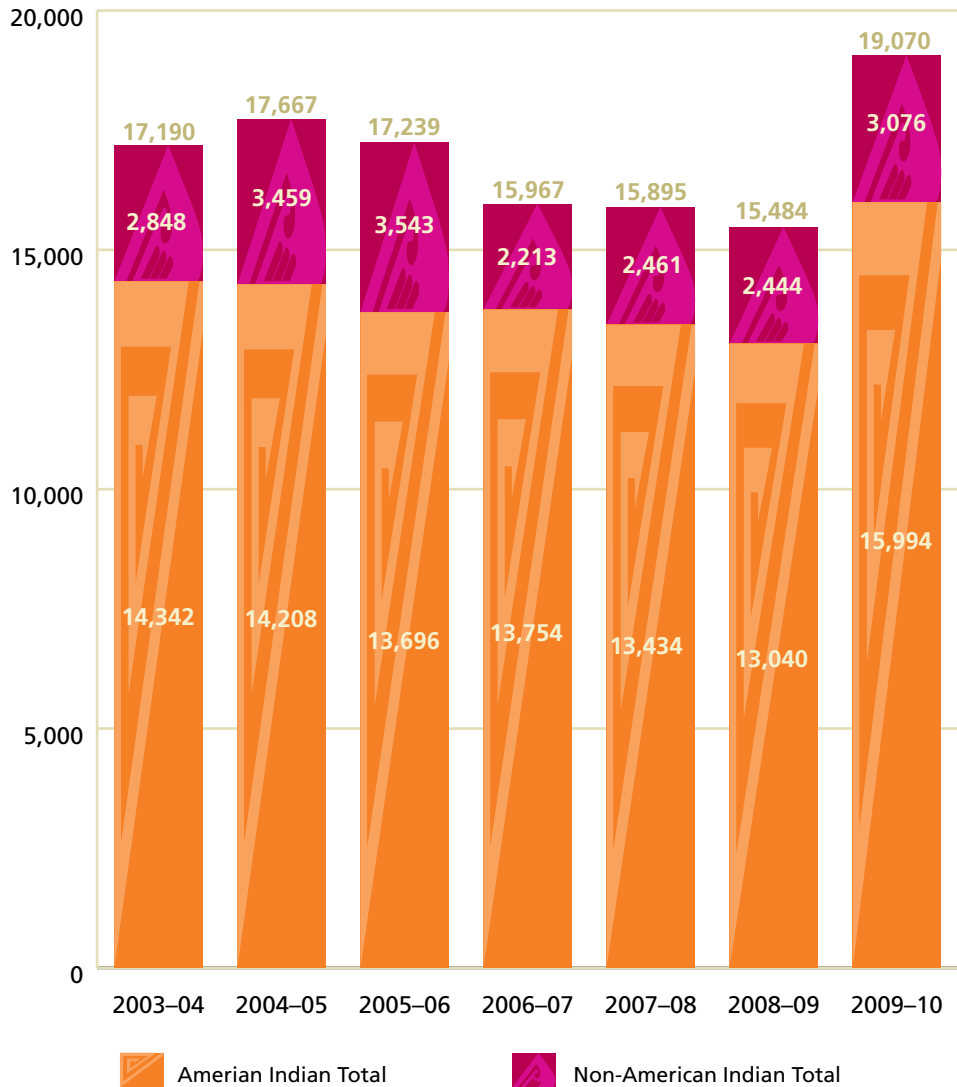


Computer Help Learning Center, Leech Lake Tribal College.
Photo courtesy of Mark Lewer.

Veteran's Memorial Park history class, Leech Lake Tribal College. Photo courtesy of Mark Lewer.



Academic Enrollment, Fall 2003 through Fall 2010



Mama graduated, Diné College. Photo courtesy of Edward McCombs.

TCUs range in size, with the smallest institutions enrolling fewer than 50 academic, degree-seeking students, and some of the more established colleges serving 1,000 students or more. In 2009–10, seven TCUs served fewer than 200 students; 18 enrolled between 200 and 599 students; and 11 registered 600 or more students.

Twelve tribal colleges experienced significant enrollment growth—30 percent or more—between 2003–04 and 2009–10. These include: Comanche Nation College (Lawton, OK), Aaniiih Nakoda College, the Institute of American Indian Arts, Leech Lake Tribal College, Little Priest Tribal College (Winnebago, NE), Navajo Technical College (Crownpoint, NM), Oglala Lakota College, Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College, Sitting Bull College, Tohono O'odham Community College, White Earth Tribal and Community College (Mahnomen, MN), and Wind River Tribal College.

From 2003–04 to 2009–10, non-Indian enrollment at TCUs grew by 8 percent, from 2,848 to 3,076 degree-seeking students. In comparison, degree-seeking American Indian student enrollment increased by 12 percent, from 14,342 in 2003–04 to a total of 15,994 in 2009–10.

In 2003–04, female students enrolled in TCUs accounted for two-thirds (67%) of all students. By 2009–10, the percentage of female students had dropped to 63 percent, as the number of male students increased. Men attending on a full-time basis demonstrated the greatest subgroup increases from 2003–04 to 2009–10: their numbers increased by 37 percent for American Indian men and 46 percent for non-Indian men. This increase is due to recruitment efforts, as well as retention programs designed to encourage and support male students attending TCUs. Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe Community College offers a Men's Talking Circle which provides male

2009 Miss Diné College. Photo courtesy of Edward McCombs.

Academic Degree-Seeking Enrollment 2009–2010

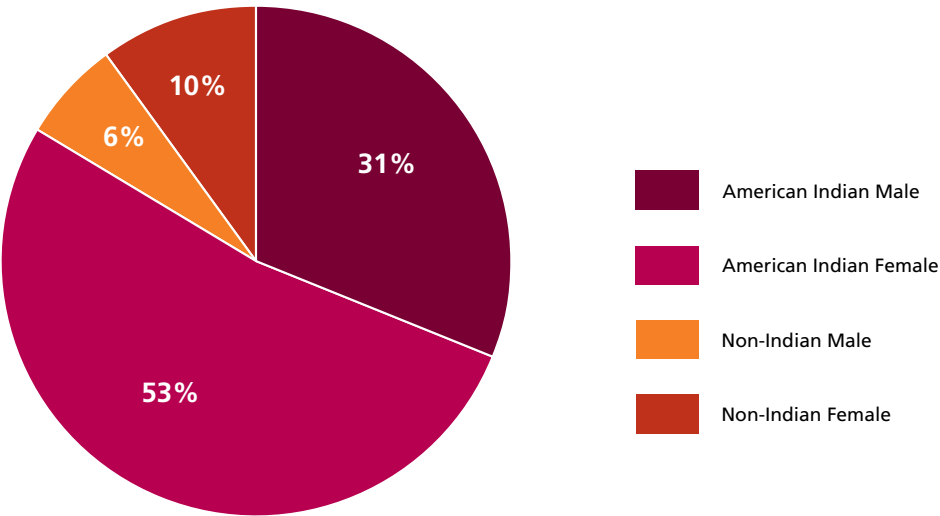
State Total TCU Students	Tribal Colleges and Universities	Students
ALASKA (1 TCU—226 Students)	Ilisagvik College	226
ARIZONA (2 TCUs—2,242 Students)	Diné College	1,996
	Tohono O'odham Community College	246
KANSAS (1 TCU—1,059 Students)	Haskell Indian Nations University	1,059
MICHIGAN (3 TCUs—724 Students)	Bay Mills Community College	563
	Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College	43
	Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College	118
MINNESOTA (3 TCUs—1,519 Students)	Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College	1,170
	Leech Lake Tribal College	233
	White Earth Tribal and Community College	116
MONTANA (7 TCUs—3,530 Students)	Aaniiih Nakoda College (formerly Fort Belknap College)	293
	Blackfeet Community College	535
	Chief Dull Knife College	474
	Fort Peck Community College	531
	Little Big Horn College	265
	Salish Kootenai College	1,207
NEBRASKA (2 TCUs—290 Students)	Stone Child College	225
	Little Priest Tribal College	161
	Nebraska Indian Community College	129
NEW MEXICO (3 TCUs—1,836 Students)	Institute of American Indian Arts	255
	Navajo Technical College	945
	Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute	636
NORTH DAKOTA (5 TCUs—2,186 Students)	Cankdeska Cikana Community College	242
	Fort Berthold Community College	313
	Sitting Bull College	446
	Turtle Mountain Community College	726
	United Tribes Technical College	459
OKLAHOMA (2 TCUs—320 Students)	College of the Muscogee Nation	200
	Comanche Nation College	100
SOUTH DAKOTA (3 TCUs—3,095 Students)	Oglala Lakota College	1,945
	Sinte Gleska University	913
	Sisseton Wahpeton College	237
WASHINGTON (1 TCU—689 Students)	Northwest Indian College	689
WISCONSIN (2 TCUs—1,174 Students)	College of Menominee Nation	606
	Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College	568
WYOMING (1 TCU—180 Students)	Wind River Tribal College	180

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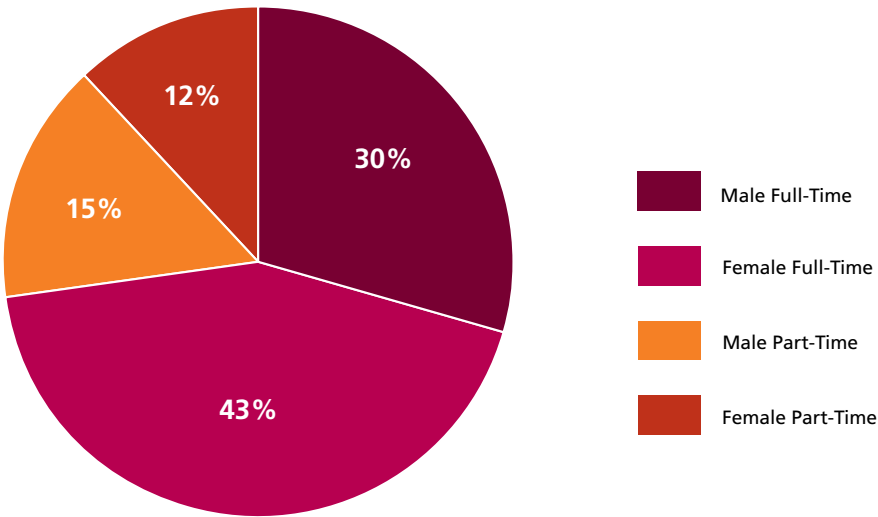
students a place to share their challenges and successes with one another. There are similar support networks throughout the TCU system, including at Cankdeska Cikana Community College, Fort Peck Community College, and Leech Lake Tribal College.

Staying close to home and contributing to their communities are two powerful motivating factors for American Indian students attending TCUs. These colleges provide many services to help students stay in school and complete their studies, including transportation, child care, academic and career counseling, internships, and tutoring.

Enrollment by Gender and Ethnicity, 2009–2010

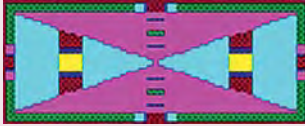


Enrollment by Gender and Status, 2009–2010



Oglala Lakota College graduates. Photo courtesy of OLC.

Big Horn College: Preparing for the Future



Brooke Stevenson (whose Crow name is “One with Good Fortune”) gave birth to a son during her sophomore year of high school—and was determined to complete high school with her classmates. Two years later in 2008, she graduated from high school, ranking eighth in her senior class of 104 students. Out of her very large extended family, only three of her relatives—an aunt, a cousin, and her sister—had earned college degrees. Following in her older sister’s footsteps, Stevenson decided to become a registered nurse. She attended Little Big Horn College (LBHC), where she could remain close to her family and have access to childcare for her young son.

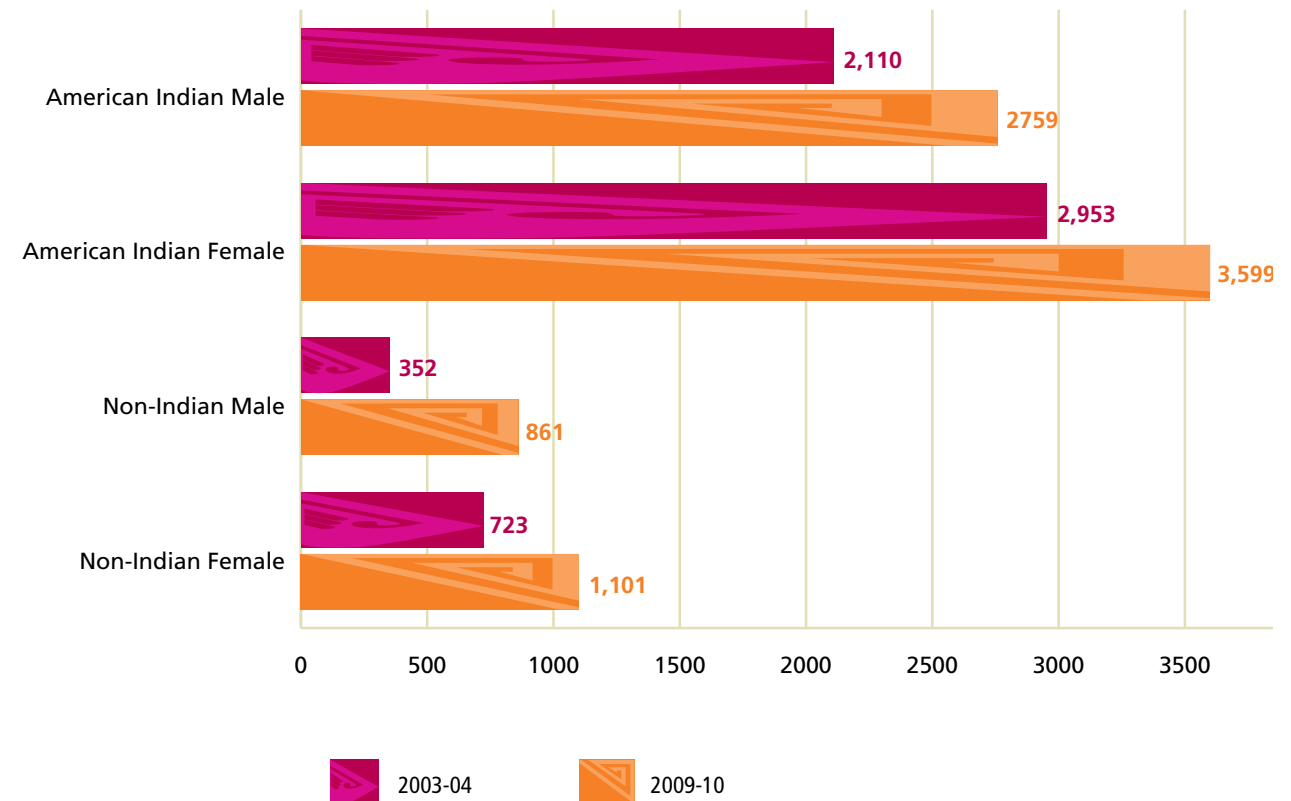
At LBHC, she joined the Student Leadership Program, performed research related to the detection of radon in homes on the Crow reservation, and educated community members about the health risks of radon exposure. Having a child at a young age, Stevenson says that finishing college was critical to creating a better life for herself and her child. In May 2010, she graduated from LBHC—then immediately enrolled in fall semester courses related to her interest in health issues. Currently, she is enrolled in the nursing program at the University of North Dakota.

First-Time TCU Students

The number of first-time students enrolled at TCUs has increased significantly in recent years. Over the past seven years, total enrollment of first-time students has increased by 36 percent. During this period, American Indian enrollment rose by 26 percent and non-Indian enrollment by 83 percent. TCUs have amplified their recruitment efforts and continued

to develop improved facilities for both teaching and research. In just one year, between 2008–09 and 2009–10, first-time enrollment soared by 21 percent. Three-fifths (60%) of all first-time TCU students attended on a full-time basis. Full-time attendance was much more likely among American Indian students, 66 percent of whom enrolled full-time—compared with only 42 percent of non-Indian students.

First-Time Entering Students by Ethnicity and Gender, 2003–2010



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While TCUs continue to serve a large number of nontraditional college students, those enrolling for the first time are starting to more closely resemble “traditional” college students. (Traditional college students are typically identified as non-married students who are recent high school graduates, attend college full-time, and are between the ages of 16 and 24.)

Sixty-nine percent of the first-time TCU students were high school graduates, and another 20 percent had earned a GED. Four percent of first-time students were dual-enrolled in both high school and college-level courses. This percentage will likely grow over time as more TCUs establish dual credit programs.

First-Time TCU Students, Fall 2009

American Indian: 76%

Full-time: 60%

Female: 57%

American Indian Female: 43%

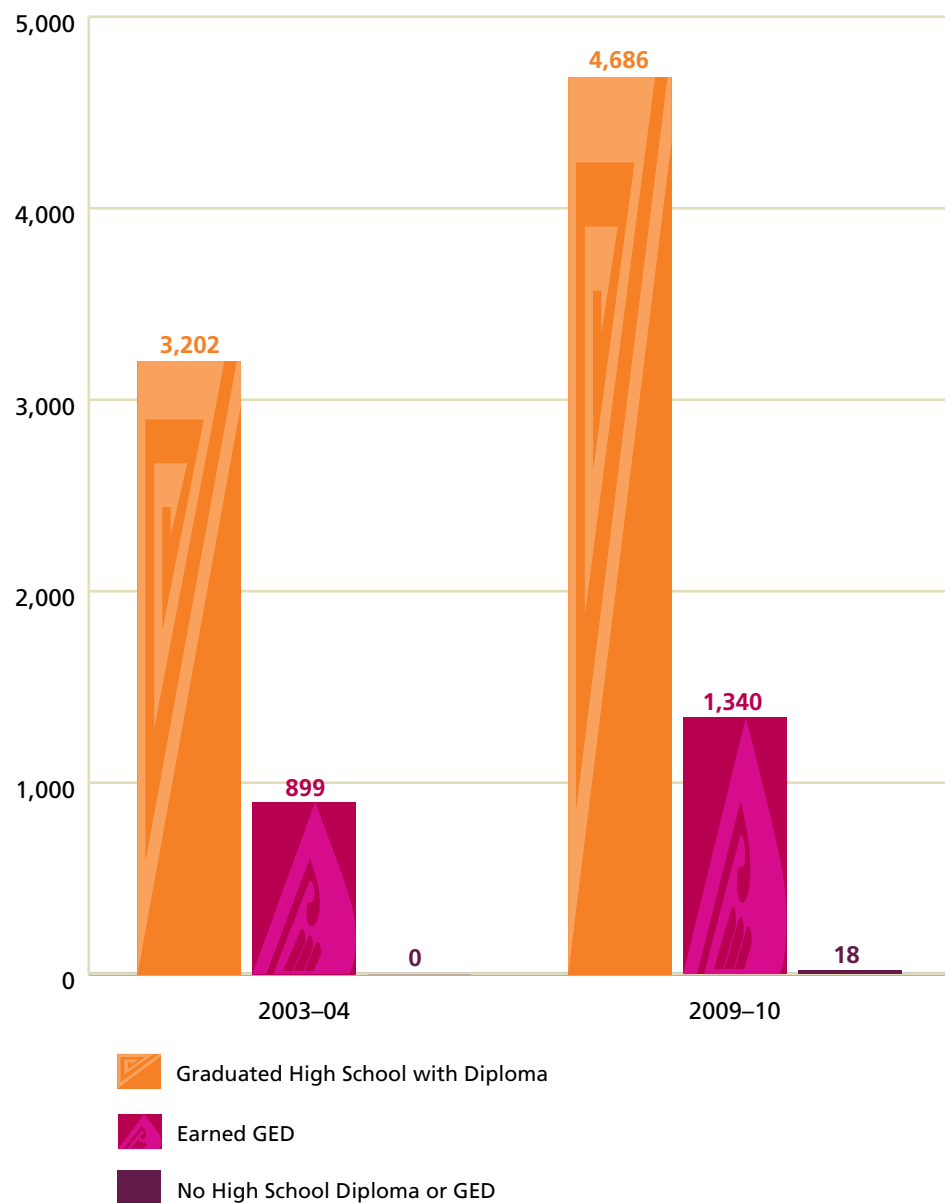
Graduated High School with Diploma: 69%

Single with No Dependents: 64%

First Generation: 62%

Reside on Reservation: 75%

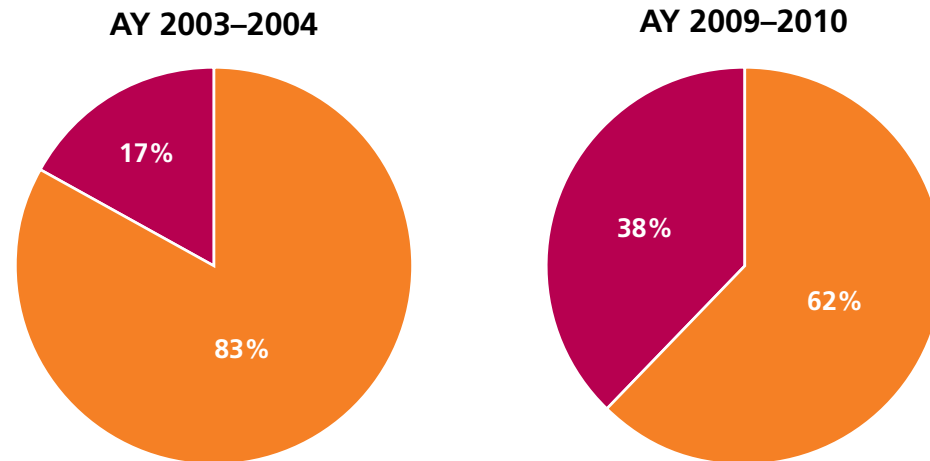
Pre-College Preparation



In AY 2009–10, 60 percent of first-time students at TCUs were between the ages of 16 and 24. TCUs continue to draw older students as well: 21 percent of first-time students are between the ages of 25 and 34, and 13 percent are between 35 and 49. Among first-time students at TCUs, 64 percent are single with no children, and another seven percent are married with no children.

The percentage of first-generation students has dropped **21 percent** over seven years. This means these new students are not the first in their families to attend college. This is an exciting development for TCUs: for the first time, multiple generations of students from the same family are pursuing education at TCUs. There are even instances of three generations of students attending college simultaneously, as noted by a student of Northwest Indian College (Bellingham, WA) who attended with her aunt and grandmother. Many other young students have parents, aunts, or uncles who attended a TCU two decades ago.

First-Generation Shift, AY 2003–2004 to AY 2009–2010



Elder graduating, Northwest Indian College. Photo courtesy of NWIC.

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Developmental Education

A great number of Leech Lake Tribal College students testify that during their K-12 education, they were placed in special education classes—an unfortunate reality for many Native students which leads to low self-esteem, limited preparedness for the rigors of college academics, and a sense of shame for not being more aware of their Native language and culture. While attending the tribal college, however, Native students discover they are intelligent, highly capable individuals, who—once they have learned their language and history—develop a sense of pride and dignity in being Indian. They also develop the confidence to compete with students from mainstream institutions in public speaking, pursuing national and international scholarship and internship opportunities, and in becoming leaders in their various communities.

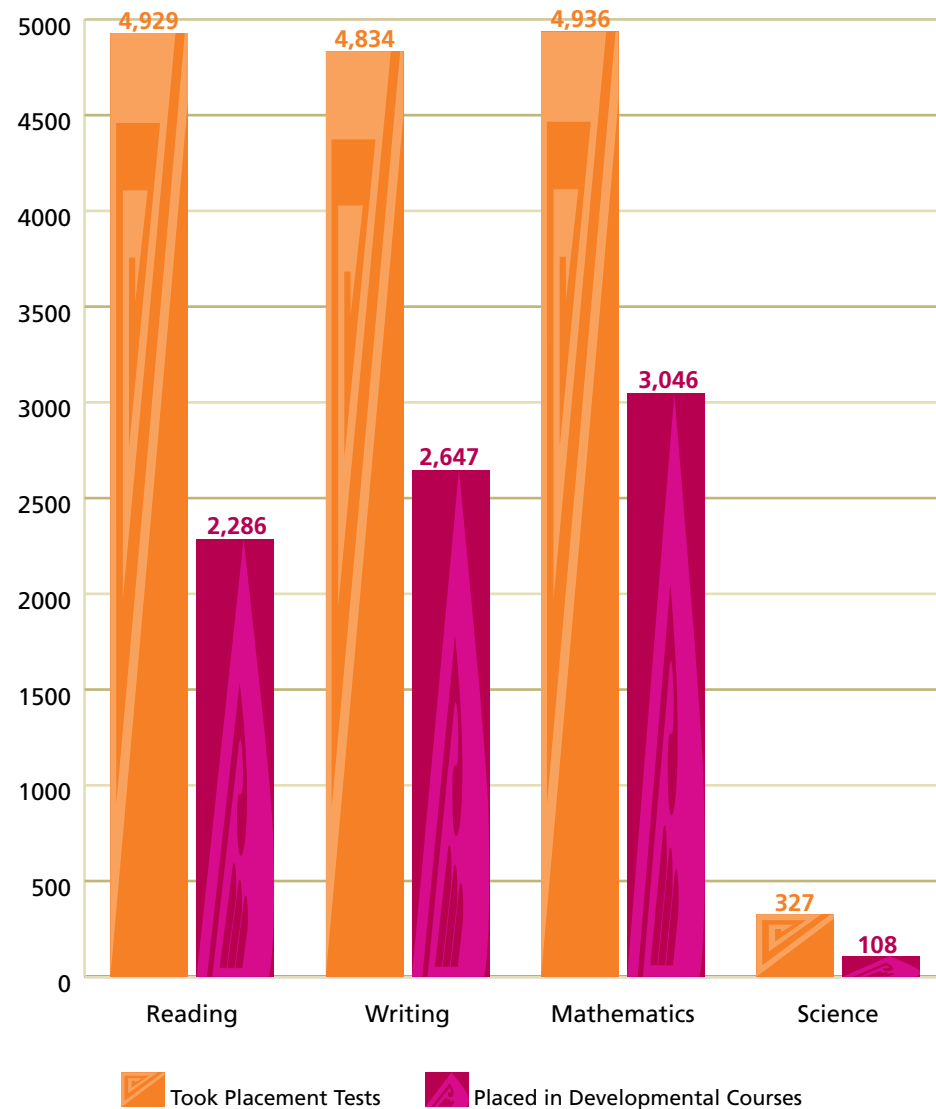
—Ginny Carney (Cherokee), president, Leech Lake Tribal College

The need for developmental education is great at TCUs. Students often enter college lacking the necessary skills to succeed in college-level courses. This means that extensive resources must be dedicated to raising their skill levels as rapidly as possible.

First-time students at TCUs are most likely to struggle with mathematics. Placement tests show that 62 percent of students in 2009–10 demonstrated the need for developmental mathematics course. The numbers are lower for other subjects: 55 percent of those who took the writing placement test, 33 percent of those who took the science placement test, and 46 percent of those who took reading placement test needed developmental education.

Recognizing that students face challenges such as a lack of financial resources, long commutes, and child/elder responsibilities, TCUs have made a concerted effort to

Placement Tests and Enrollment in Developmental Courses for First-Time Entering Students, Fall 2009



Science placement tests are used by only four TCUs.

improve course completion. (Course completion means that students earn a grade of C or higher). Raising course completion rates is especially important for students enrolled in developmental courses, because failure or dropout at that level prevents students from taking college-level work; it also impacts their financial aid eligibility. Over the past seven years, TCUs have experienced increased success in this arena. In developmental writing, math, and science, the percentage of completions has increased, and the percentage of withdrawals has decreased. Developmental science experienced the greatest successes in completion (from 43% to 68%) and withdrawals (from 38% to 21%) between 2003–04 and 2009–10.

While enrollment in academic core and vocational core courses has risen by 26 percent and 16 percent, respectively, the percentage of students completing those courses has dropped, and student withdrawals from the courses have increased. These changing statistics are most likely due to the increased number of students enrolled in the courses and, as more and more TCUs deploy electronic enterprise and data management systems, more accurate, date-specific reporting.

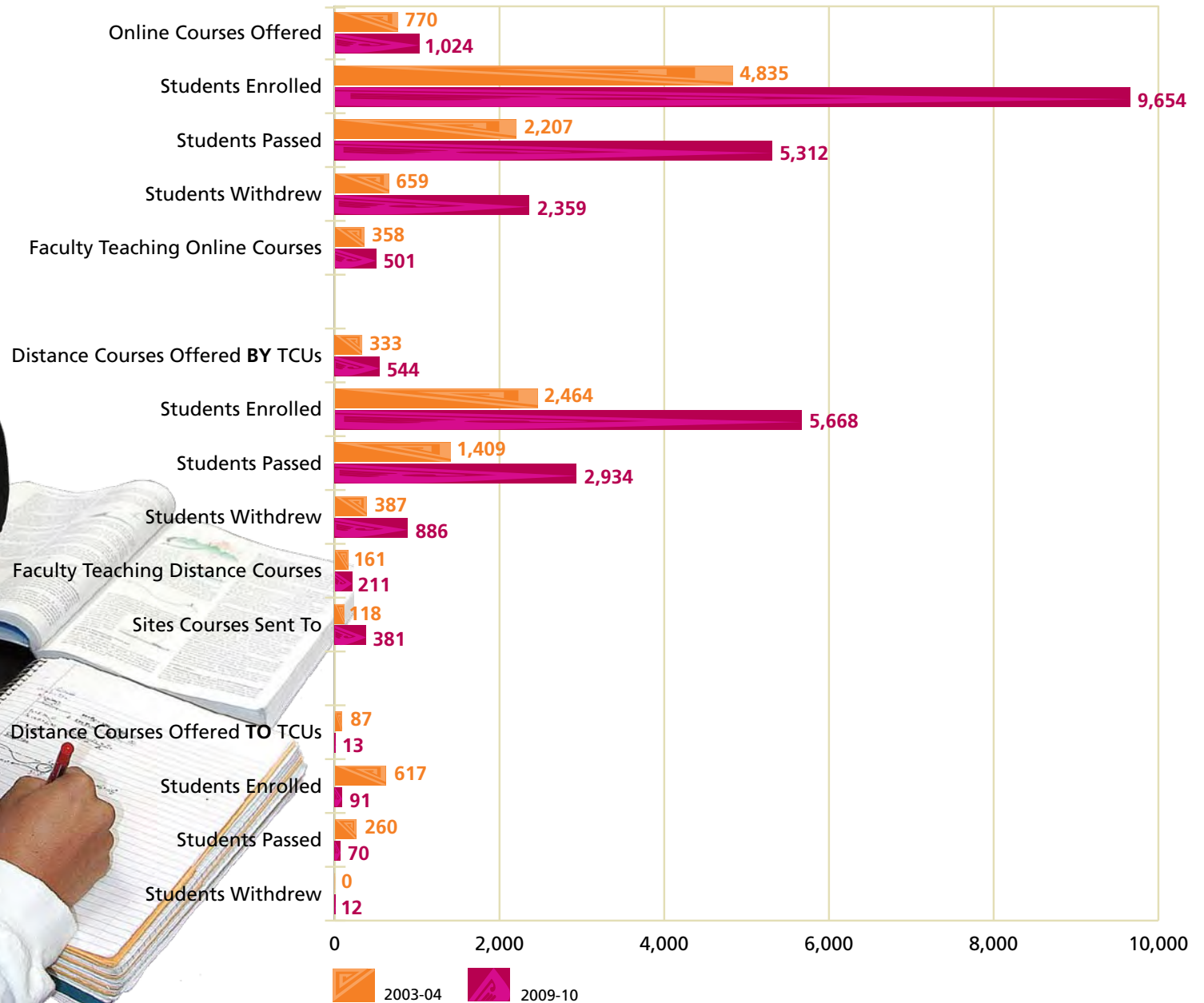
Over the past several years, TCUs have increased the number of online and distance courses available to students. These courses are not typical of mainstream online courses that students access from home. Rather, these courses are offered at specific sites throughout the reservation where students receive one-on-one support services and face-to-face encouragement. Such courses allow students living in remote areas access to classes and study materials in a supportive environment. Hybrid courses, such as those offered at Bay Mills Community College, allow students to split their time evenly between online learning and face-to-face instruction. Over the past seven years, demand has driven a 33 percent increase in the number of online courses offered and a 63 percent increase in distance courses offered by TCUs.

Core/Developmental Course Changes in Enrollment, Completion, Withdrawal: 2003–2004 to 2009–2010

	Enrollment Change 2003–04 to 2009–10 (percent)	Percent of Students Who Completed 2009–10	Completion Change 2003–04 to 2009–10 (percentage points)	Percent of Students Who Withdrew 2009–10	Withdrawal Change 2003–04 to 2009–10 (percentage points)
Academic Core	26%	61%	-1.2	21%	0.9
English Composition I & II	17%	59%	-1.3	22%	2.2
Communications	29%	67%	-2.6	19%	2.0
College Algebra	36%	55%	-3.4	25%	2.2
Introduction to Computers	10%	58%	-1.5	19%	-1.9
Native American Studies	42%	67%	0.6	19%	-0.6
Vocational Core	16%	56%	-1.2	21%	1.0
English Composition I & II	-6%	53%	2.0	23%	-0.1
Communications	17%	67%	-3.4	22%	3.2
General Mathematics	20%	57%	6.3	18%	-1.5
Introduction to Computers	70%	50%	-6.4	21%	4.9
Native American Studies	10%	59%	-9.0	21%	1.9
Developmental	27%	61%	3.4	24%	-1.2
Reading	62%	62%	-0.4	25%	2.2
Writing	15%	63%	4.7	20%	-4.2
Mathematics	24%	59%	3.6	24%	-0.5
Science	-2%	68%	25.5	21%	-17

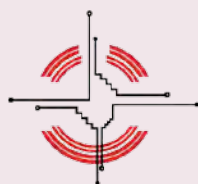
Engineering student and faculty, Salisk Kootenai College. Photo courtesy of DJ Pretty On Top.

Online and Distance Course Enrollment and Successful Completion



Student preparing a class assignment, Diné College.
Photo courtesy of Edward McCombs.

Navajo Technical College: Helping GED Students Excel



Navajo Technical College (NTC) has long offered an Adult Basic Education and General Equivalency Diploma (ABE/GED) to address the needs of Navajos lacking high school diplomas. After experiencing considerable challenges, in 2007 the program was thoroughly evaluated and completely reorganized. A new director and staff were hired and significant program improvements were made. That effort paid off two years later when the state of New Mexico named the NTC program one of six programs of excellence in the state. Not only did the reforms dramatically expand the student body, they also led to increased graduation rates. The program also launched an innovative and highly successful initiative that placed GED students into advanced placement college courses. In the past, few GED students completing the program continued on to a certificate or degree program. Now, more and more students are continuing their educational careers after earning their GED diplomas.

Wind River Tribal College



When elder Alvena Oldman was invited to speak at student orientation at Wind River Tribal College (WRTC) on the importance of Arapaho language and culture, she explained that she had been to college, but never completed her degree because of employment and family issues. With only one semester left to complete, she enrolled at WRTC at age 69. When Oldman completed her degree, graduating with a degree in Indian Studies and Arapaho Language, she became one of the tribe's ceremonial elders and supervisor for the Arapaho Language Immersion School.

Institute of American Indian Arts



Orlando White (Diné) graduated from the Institute of American Indian Arts in 2007 with a bachelor of fine arts degree in creative writing, then continued his studies at Brown University, where he earned a master of fine arts degree in literary arts. In February 2009, White's first book of poetry, *Bone Light*, was published by Red Hen, an independent literary press. White credits the IAIA creative writing program and its faculty for shaping his direction as a poet and artist. Today, White works as a creative writing instructor at Diné College in Tsaile, AZ, encouraging other Navajo students to pursue their educations and follow their literary dreams.

Trends in Degree Disciplines

The 36 Tribal Colleges and Universities offered 225 degree programs in 2009–10 and an additional 132 certificates, diploma, and various apprenticeship programs.

American Indian Studies (American Indian studies and languages)

A total of 28 TCUs offer American Indian studies and American Indian languages degree programs. American Indian studies programs grew 101 percent between 2003 and 2009.

Business (accounting and business)

Business programs have experienced increased enrollment and remain one of the most popular programs, enrolling 11 percent of all TCU students.

Education (professional and paraprofessional)

A total of 29 TCUs offer early and elementary education and child development programs, and 21 TCUs also have childcare facilities or early childhood learning centers on campus.

Liberal Arts (art, English, individualized programs, and liberal arts)

Nearly a quarter of all students (22%) are enrolled in liberal arts programs.

Health (health careers, human services, and nursing)

Health programs have experienced significant growth in enrollment (65%) over the past seven years.

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)

STEM programs, excluding computer science and technology, experienced explosive enrollment growth—92 percent—over the past seven years. However, computer science and technology were the only undergraduate TCU programs to experience

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declining enrollment between fall 2003 and fall 2009, down 10 percent.

Social Science (social science, history, psychology, and political science)

Although only eight TCUs offer these programs, social science programs have experienced the greatest growth (243%).

Vocational/Career Programs (automotive, building trades, office administration, paralegal, corrections/law enforcement, and hospitality)

Vocational and career programs open doors into employment immediately following graduation or act as a stepping stone onto the next level of study. Twenty-seven TCUs offer vocational programs, and 12 percent of degree-seeking students are enrolled in vocational programs.



Welding class, Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College. Photo courtesy of KBOCC.

Nursing Program at College of Menominee Nation: Filling a Critical Need



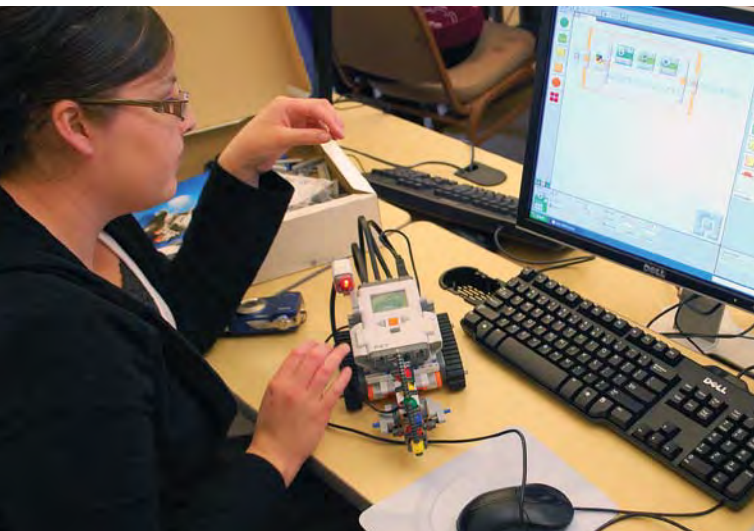
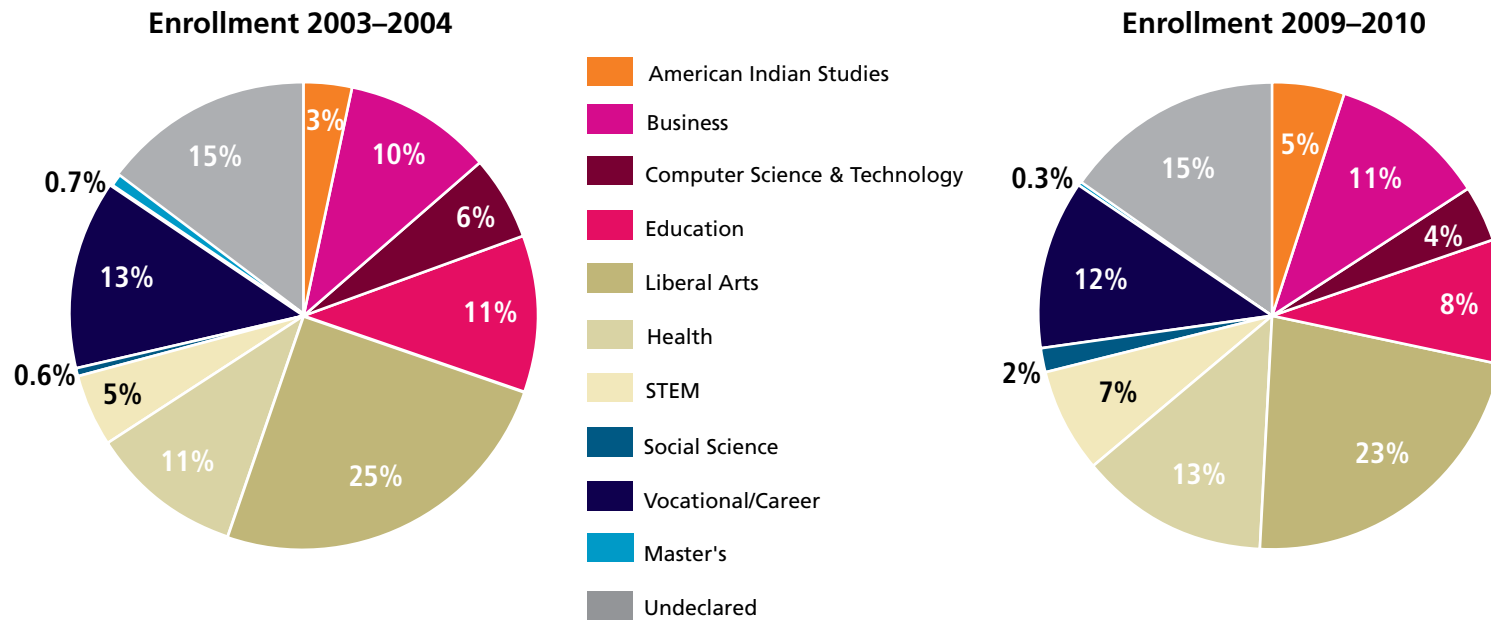
During the 2008–09 academic year, the College of Menominee Nation (CMN) launched a new associate’s degree in nursing (ADN) program with 30 students—and demonstrated a remarkable retention rate of 87 percent at the end of the spring term. By year’s end, the ADN program had admitted another 17 nursing students with several more applications pending. CMN also received approval for a U.S. Department of Labor grant to fund a new program in practical nursing at the tribal college’s Oneida/Green Bay campus. The grant included funding for state-of-the-art medical simulation equipment for the college’s nursing labs. The entry-level Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) is a cooperative program between CMN and Northcentral Technical College. Typically, CNA graduates find strong employment opportunities in the community, and their certification also serves as a prerequisite for admission to the ADN program. Nearly 10 percent of CMN’s degree-seeking students are enrolled in the nursing programs.

Ilisagvik College Business Programs: Native Economy on the North Slope



As the Internet guides isolated communities into the modern world, knowledge of business management and accounting has become increasingly important to the economic survival of Native village governments, village and regional corporations, and Native-owned small businesses in Alaska. In spring 2009, the business program at Ilisagvik College awarded 16 certificates and four associate’s degrees. The impact of graduates is widespread: Some are currently employed full-time in the accounting and administrative offices of the local tribal government, village corporation, and municipal government. Two business graduates were each awarded a \$24,000 grant from the Alaska Growth Capital Start-Up Grant program, four tourism businesses were developed as a result of Ilisagvik College’s small business development program, including one successful entrepreneur who now teaches about ecotourism.

Degree Program Enrollment, 2003–2010



Student working on robotics, Little Big Horn College. Photo courtesy of LBHC.

Introduction to Biology lab, Fort Peck Community College. Photo courtesy of Clint Whitmer.



Turtle Mountain Community College



In many Native cultures, the term “Three Sisters” refers to corn, beans, and squash.

Traditional stories show that to thrive and produce food, these “sisters” must remain together. In that way, Native farmers planted all three seeds in a single mound. Turtle Mountain Community College (TMCC) has three sisters—but of a different variety.

These three sisters—Annette Hamley, Jessica Azure, and Leah Azure—traveled together through the TMCC teacher education program and graduated with bachelor’s degrees in elementary education. They now teach at Turtle Mountain Community Elementary School, and two serve as supervisors for TMCC seniors in teacher education as they complete their student teaching requirements.

Not only has the teacher education program at TMCC successfully generated skilled, culturally responsive teachers to serve Native students on the Turtle Mountain Reservation, but these graduates are giving back to their alma mater by supporting future TMCC teacher education graduates. According to the principal of Turtle Mountain Elementary School, TMCC elementary education graduates are better prepared than those who graduate from the state university. As the “three sisters” show, tribal colleges produce outstanding teachers who graduate with skills not available at mainstream institutions.

College of Menominee Nation



Marcus Denny, a member of a Menominee drum group Midnight Express, spends summer, weekends and semester breaks at powwows and making recordings. This Iraq War veteran also spends hours in classrooms at Menominee Tribal School and Gresham Community School preparing to become a classroom teacher. Students respond well to Denny, who strives to make social studies fun and relevant to Indian students. For example, he encourages sixth grade students to learn about treaties by engaging in role playing. Denny will be part of the first student teacher group from the College of Menominee Nation Teacher Education Program—and will contribute to his tribe as part of the next generation of tribal leaders.

Degree Completion: Preparing a Native Workforce to Strengthen Tribal Nations

Each year, TCUs send thousands of American Indians into the workforce with professional degrees and certificates. Between 2003 and 2010, the number of degrees earned annually at TCUs grew by 16 percent. The number of associate’s and bachelor’s degrees awarded rose by 18 and 15 percent, respectively, over the seven-year period, while the number of certificates earned rose by 22 percent. The number of master’s degrees awarded by the two TCUs with graduate programs fell by half due to funding and priority shifts. With more TCUs offering four-year degree programs, bachelor’s degree graduation rates are expected to increase significantly in the next few years. American Indians earned the bulk of the degrees: 82 percent of the associate’s degrees and 89 percent of the bachelor’s degrees granted by TCUs.

Women continue to earn the majority of degrees at TCUs. Over the three-year period between 2007–08 and 2009–10, all but one of the master’s degrees awarded were earned by women. In addition, 72 percent of all bachelor’s degrees and 66 percent of all associate’s degrees were earned by women in 2009–10. Men demonstrated modest gains in completions (4% overall).

Given the “nontraditional” composition of many TCU student populations, “traditional” measures such as graduation rates do not fully depict the successes at these colleges. For example, administrators at Oglala Lakota College (OLC) note that a longer timeframe is necessary to examine graduation rates (also known as time-to-degree) at TCUs.

Typically, researchers compile graduation rates for colleges by calculating the number of students who complete an associate’s degree in four years or the number of students who complete a bachelor’s degree in six years. OLC officials believe that the challenges facing TCU students often expand

time-to-degree well beyond these timeframes. For example, in the spring of 2008, nine students graduated with associate of applied science degrees; 75 percent of those students required additional years to complete their degrees. Similarly, 75 percent of the 43 students who earned bachelor's degree required additional time to complete their degrees.

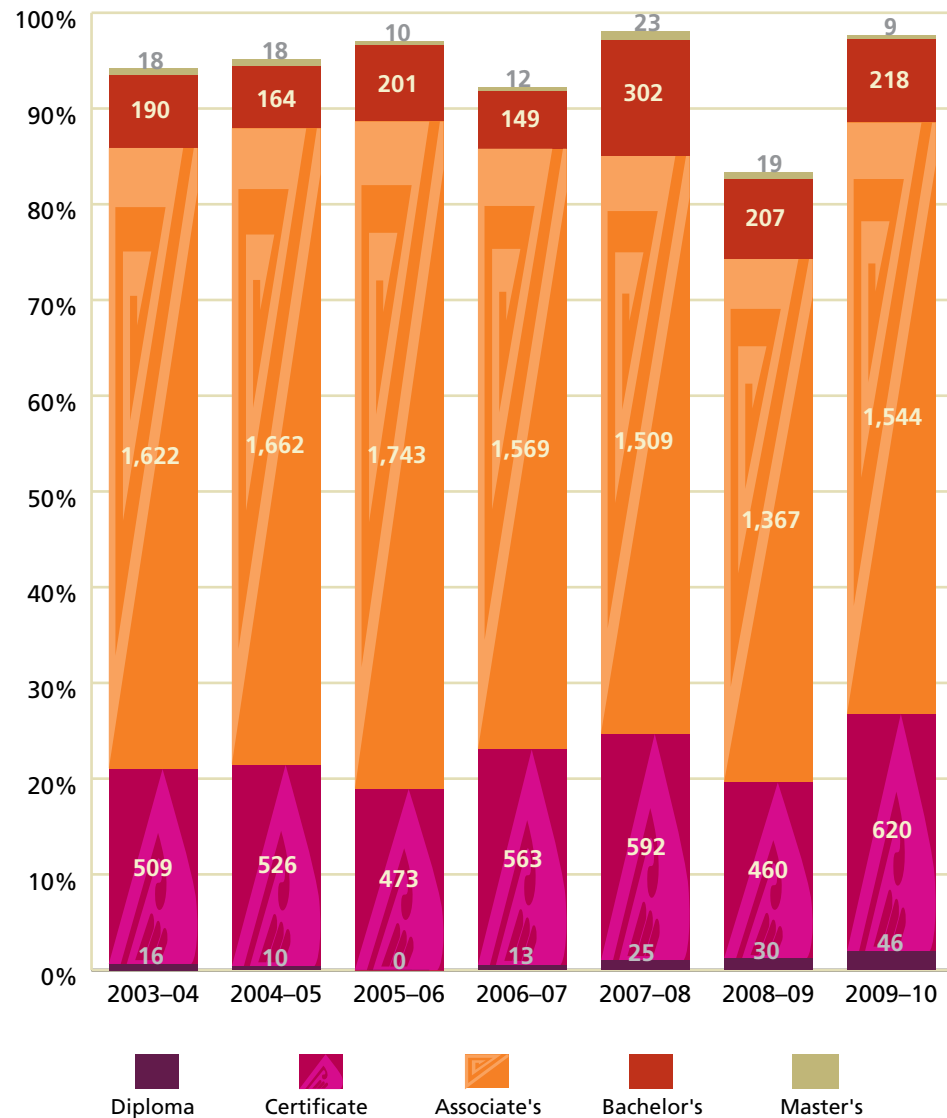
David Yarlott, president of Little Big Horn College, notes that financial aid eligibility may also affect graduation rates. "Sometimes, our students come in unprepared for college work. They use up quite a bit of their Pell [Grant eligibility] taking developmental courses, so we might encourage them to transfer without a degree so they'll still have some of their Pell [Grant] for attending the four-year college," he says. "We'd like to have those increased degree numbers, but we have to think of our students' needs first."

Over the past few years, more TCUs are working with state systems to more accurately record and credit completed degrees.



Electrical line workers during the summer of 2010, Fort Peck Community College. Photo courtesy of FPCC.

Program Completion, 2009–2010



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Financial Aid

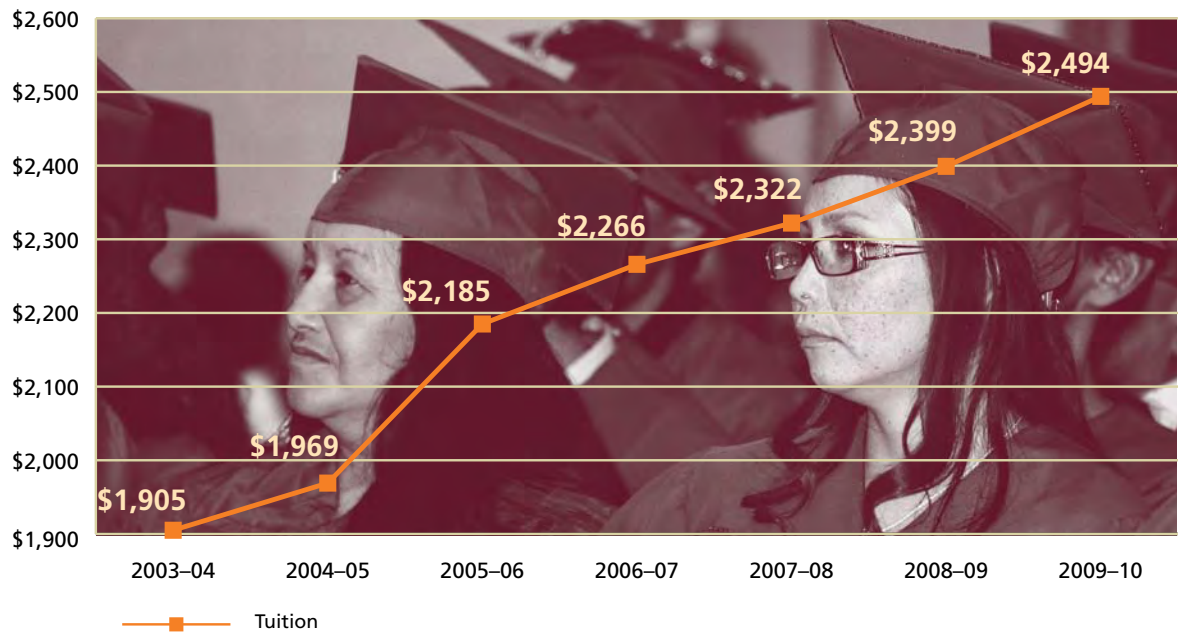
Among first-time entering students at TCUs, their average annual income is only \$17,744, making low tuition and financial aid absolutely essential to attending and succeeding in higher education. TCUs generally do not participate in the federal student loan program and instead focus on keeping tuition and fees as low as possible and identifying types of aid that do not require repayment. In fact, tuition rates at TCUs are the lowest in the nation, averaging about \$100 per credit or about \$2,500 per academic year, making a two- or four-year degree at a TCU one of the best values available anywhere.² Factoring in tuition, fees, books, transportation, room and board, supplies, and other personal expenses, the total cost to students of attending a TCU averages \$13,000 per year.

TCUs work hard to educate students and their families about the financial aid process and opportunities, and the number of students receiving aid is high. In 2009–10, 76 percent of all TCU students received Pell Grants. Most students also receive other forms of aid, such as the Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant, state scholarships and grants, academic competitiveness grants, federal and state work study programs, and tribal scholarships. In total, nearly \$83 million in financial aid was provided in 2009–10 to TCU students.

TCU students also receive tremendous support from the American Indian College Fund, a sister organization that AIHEC founded in the 1990s to raise scholarship funding for

²Two institutions—Haskell Indian Nations University (HINU, Lawrence, KS) and Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI, Albuquerque, NM)—do not charge any tuition. As federally-owned and operated institutions, HINU and SIPI have traditionally been tuition-free and are open only to enrolled members of federally recognized tribes. These are the only TCUs that do not charge tuition and are open only to Native students. They were not included in the calculation of average TCU tuition rates.

Average Full-Time Undergraduate Tuition 2003–2010



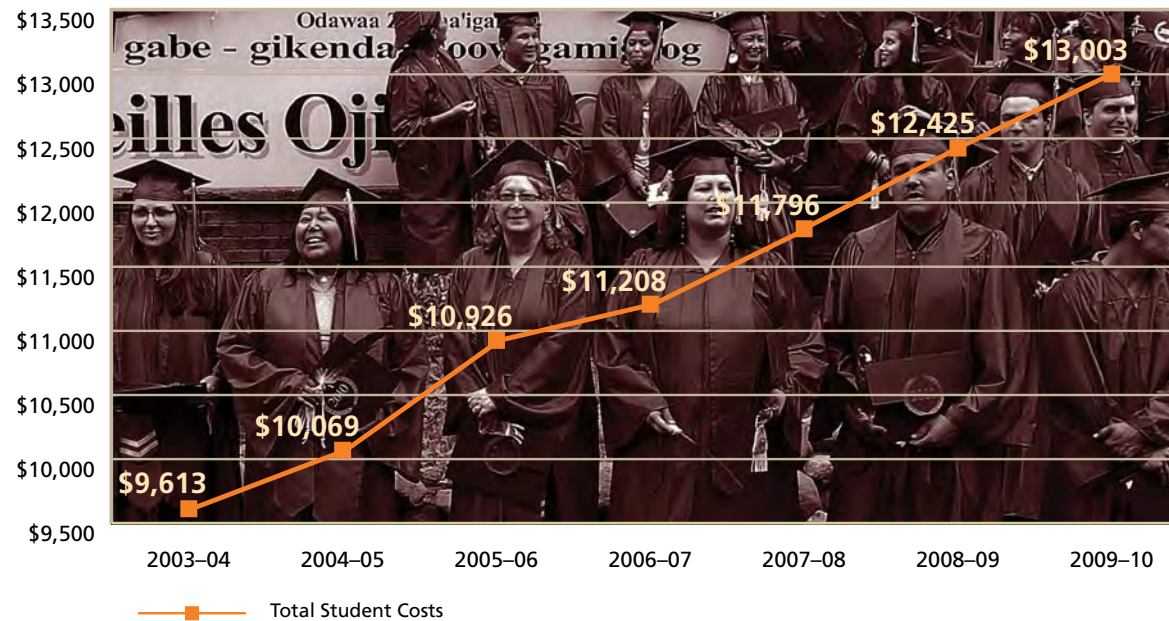
Bay Mills Community College graduates. Photo courtesy of Renee Potts.

TCU students. By 2009–10, more than 3,500 TCU students received a total of \$4,090,050 in vitally needed scholarship funding from the American Indian College Fund.

Although it is at a significant cost to the already under-resourced institutions, all TCUs are also called upon to give tuition waivers and discounts to students. This is because the amount of aid available, although significant, is inadequate to meet the needs of students and families living on reservations where poverty is high and unemployment rates range from 50–70 percent or higher. Compounding the situation, many students have already used up their financial aid eligibility

while attending—but not completing—programs at other institutions. Without the waivers and discounts, which totaled nearly \$1.3 million in 2009–10, completing higher education would be impossible. Despite the cost to the institution, TCUs opt for making higher education a reality for as many students as possible, with the goal of ensuring that more community members will leave the tribal college equipped with the technical and critical inquiry skills needed to secure jobs, help build reservation economies, and strengthen their tribal nations.

Average Total Full-Time Undergraduate Student Costs for Academic Year, 2003–04 to 2009–10



Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College graduates. Photo courtesy of Terrell Boettcher, News Editor, Sawyer County Record.

To help offset the costs to the tribal colleges and sustain their programs, one of AIHEC's key goals is to achieve full funding for TCU institutional operations. Treaty obligations and the federal Trust Responsibility make funding for institutional operations at TCUs a responsibility of the United States government.

However, the tribal colleges are currently funded at only \$5,235 per full-time Indian student (they receive no funding for non-Indian students) under their primary authority, the Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities Assistance

Act. The Act authorizes funding at \$8,000 per Indian student annually, and AIHEC's collective goal is to secure commitments by the Administration and the Congress to appropriate TCU funding at the level and in the manner authorized: \$8,000 per full-time Indian student. To achieve this, TCUs would need an increase of less than \$30 million, for a total of \$94.4 million in funding for the upcoming fiscal year (FY2013). This request is modest: currently, the Administration requests and Congress appropriates over \$200 million annually to operate Howard University (exclusive of

its medical school), the only other minority serving institution that receives its institutional operating funds from the federal government. Howard University's federal support amounts to over \$19,000 per student. In contrast, the majority of TCUs are currently receiving only \$5,235 per Indian student.



Bull rider at the Diné College rodeo. Photo courtesy of Edward McCombs.



2010 graduates, Diné College. Photo courtesy of Edward McCombs.

Sources and Amount of Financial Aid

Sources		2003–2004	2008–2010
American Indian College Fund Scholarship	Dollar Amount	\$3,389,490	\$4,090,050
	Number of Recipients	3,153	3,514
Federal Pell Grants	Dollar Amount	\$22,712,588	\$48,940,055
	Number of Recipients	6,559	13,984
Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant	Dollar Amount	\$142,668	\$786,916
	Number of Recipients	373	2,175
State Scholarships/Grants	Dollar Amount	\$947,585	\$3,940,317
	Number of Recipients	714	3,907
Academic Competitiveness Grant	Dollar Amount	\$0	\$124,034
	Number of Recipients	0	173
School-to-Work	Dollar Amount	\$494,750	\$479,668
	Number of Recipients	55	55
Tribal Scholarships	Dollar Amount	\$5,231,513	\$13,878,564
	Number of Recipients	2,585	6,333
Tuition Waiver/Discount	Dollar Amount	\$199,122	\$1,283,212
	Number of Recipients	279	1,132
Other Scholarships	Dollar Amount	\$856,791	\$7,267,423
	Number of Recipients	1,064	5,799
Federal College Work Study	Dollar Amount	\$294,193	\$820,432
	Number of Recipients	215	600
State Work Study	Dollar Amount	\$75,418	\$196,070
	Number of Recipients	116	136
Institutional Work Study	Dollar Amount	\$555,717	\$1,015,511
	Number of Recipients	446	601

Outrigger canoe races, Northwest Indian College. Photo courtesy of NWIC.

Blackfeet Community College



Blackfeet Community College (BCC) promotes learning not only for its students, but also for its employees. At BCC, 90 percent of its employees are Blackfeet tribal members. Through a grant from the American Indian College Fund's Woksape Oyate: Wisdom of the People initiative, funded by the Lilly Endowment, Inc., BCC helps its employees earn higher education degrees. Through this program, five employees completed their master's degrees; eight continue work on master's degrees; three continue work on their bachelor's degrees; and one continues work on a doctorate degree. The pursuit of advanced degrees by support staff—not only faculty—helps to ensure that BCC provides the best possible education for its students. Their efforts to attain the higher/terminal degrees needed to offer accredited upper division courses also help the tribal college move toward providing bachelor's degree programs at BCC for the benefit of local community members who may not otherwise have the resources necessary to access such programs.

TCU Faculty and Administration

The importance of American Indian faculty and staff as role models for TCU students cannot be overstated. At Little Big Horn College, more than 40 percent of the employees are alumni—including Dr. David Yarlott, the tribal college's president. "Community members and students see tribal members working in these positions, and they know that those faculty and staff members understand what they are going through, because [the faculty and staff] went through the same academic rigors," says Yarlott. "There are role models scattered throughout the institution."

The excellent faculty and staff members who work at tribal colleges are responsible for the successes TCUs experience in educating community members. TCU faculty and staff are essential to the cultural preservation and educational goals of TCUs, and in the past five years, every TCU has increased the number of American Indian staff and faculty employed.

- At Diné College, the Center for Diné Teacher Education (CDTE) and Center for Diné Studies (CDS) programs both promote, preserve, and teach Indigenous language, culture, and history. The goal of the CDTE bachelor's degree program is to produce teachers who are fluent speakers and writers of the Diné language and knowledgeable of Diné culture, traditions, and history. CDS faculty soon plan to offer new bachelor's degree programs in Diné Cultural Studies and Diné Language. Currently, CDS and CDTE offer 44 courses dedicated to promoting, preserving, and teaching Indigenous language, culture, and history.
- Leech Lake Tribal College is making a special effort to recruit and train young Anishinaabe students to step into those positions being vacated by aging instructors. When one of its longtime instructors

passed away in 2009, the tribal college hired two young Anishinaabe alumni to teach Ojibwe language courses, as well as the History of Anishinaabe Music and Dance class. Another LLTC graduate serves as director of the Niigaane Ojibwemowin Immersion School for grades K-6. In October 2009, Niigaane Ojibwemowin was awarded the National Indian Education Association's Cultural Freedom Award, an award that recognizes organizations whose "extraordinary and courageous work celebrates the right to freedom of Native language, culture, and educational excellence."

- Faculty at Tohono O'odham Community College incorporate O'odham ways into the classroom with innovative methods. For example, the math instructor uses the intricate baskets, which are part of Tohono O'odham culture and tradition, as a way to teach complex mathematical concepts. Using these and other culturally relevant objects and ideas helps students overcome anxiety over math, fills classrooms each semester, and prepares students for higher level math courses.

TCUs are working hard to fulfill their commitment to strengthening their tribal nations, in part by creating and employing positive tribal role models. In fact, the number of American Indian faculty nearly doubled between 2003–04 and 2009–10, growing from 491 in 2003–04 to 809 in 2009–10. Overall, American Indians comprise 43 percent of full-time faculty and 46 percent of all faculty at TCUs. Seventy-one percent of TCU administrators are American Indian.

Similar to other institutions of higher education, TCUs have begun to rely more heavily on adjunct faculty. Between 2003–04 and 2009–10, TCUs added more than 500 faculty

Sharing Our Story



Math instructor Ronnie Sands and student Daniel Roberts play in the faculty versus student stickball game, College of the Muscogee Nation. Photo courtesy of Crystal Bowles.

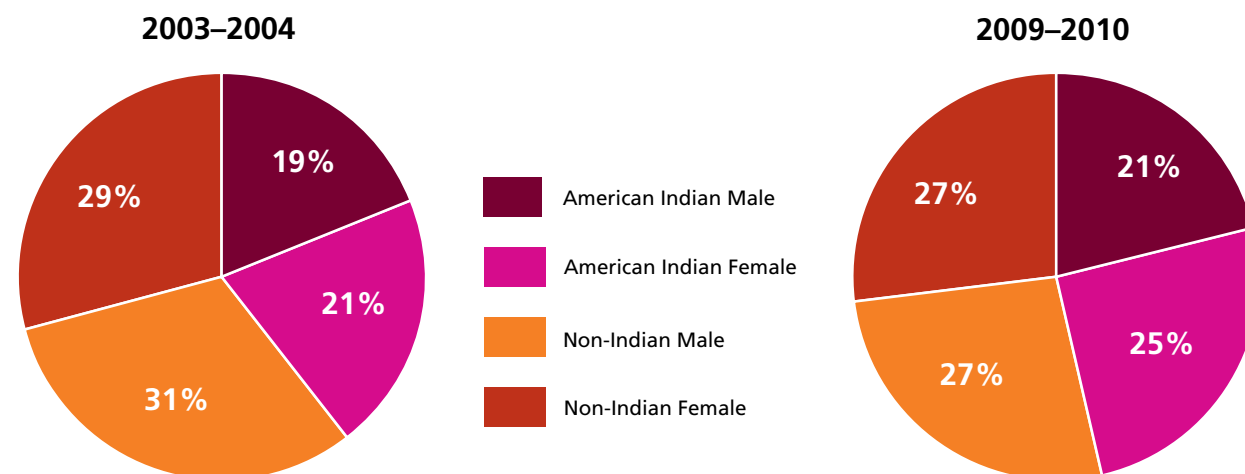
members, most of whom were adjunct. (Over the seven year period, adjunct faculty grew by 58 percent, well more than double the 24 percent growth in full-time faculty.) Given the financial challenges all higher education institutions face, it is not surprising that TCUs have hired more adjunct faculty in recent years. This has affected the overall makeup of TCU faculty. In 2003–04, there was an even split between full-time and part-time faculty. By 2009–10, full-time faculty slipped to 44 percent of the total, with adjuncts making up 56 percent of total TCU faculty.

As a majority of the new administrative hires from 2003–04 to 2009–10 were women, the percentage of female administrators increased from 54 percent to 60 percent. Overall, between 2003–04 and 2009–10, the number of TCU administrators grew 58 percent from 288 to 454, which is not surprising given the number of new TCU degree and community-based programs. Unlike faculty patterns, most of the administrators hired are full-time (99%).



Instructor Dr. Nader Vadiiee (*front row, second from right*) with ROPE group, Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute. Photo courtesy of Orlando Skidmore.

TCU Faculty Ethnicity and Gender

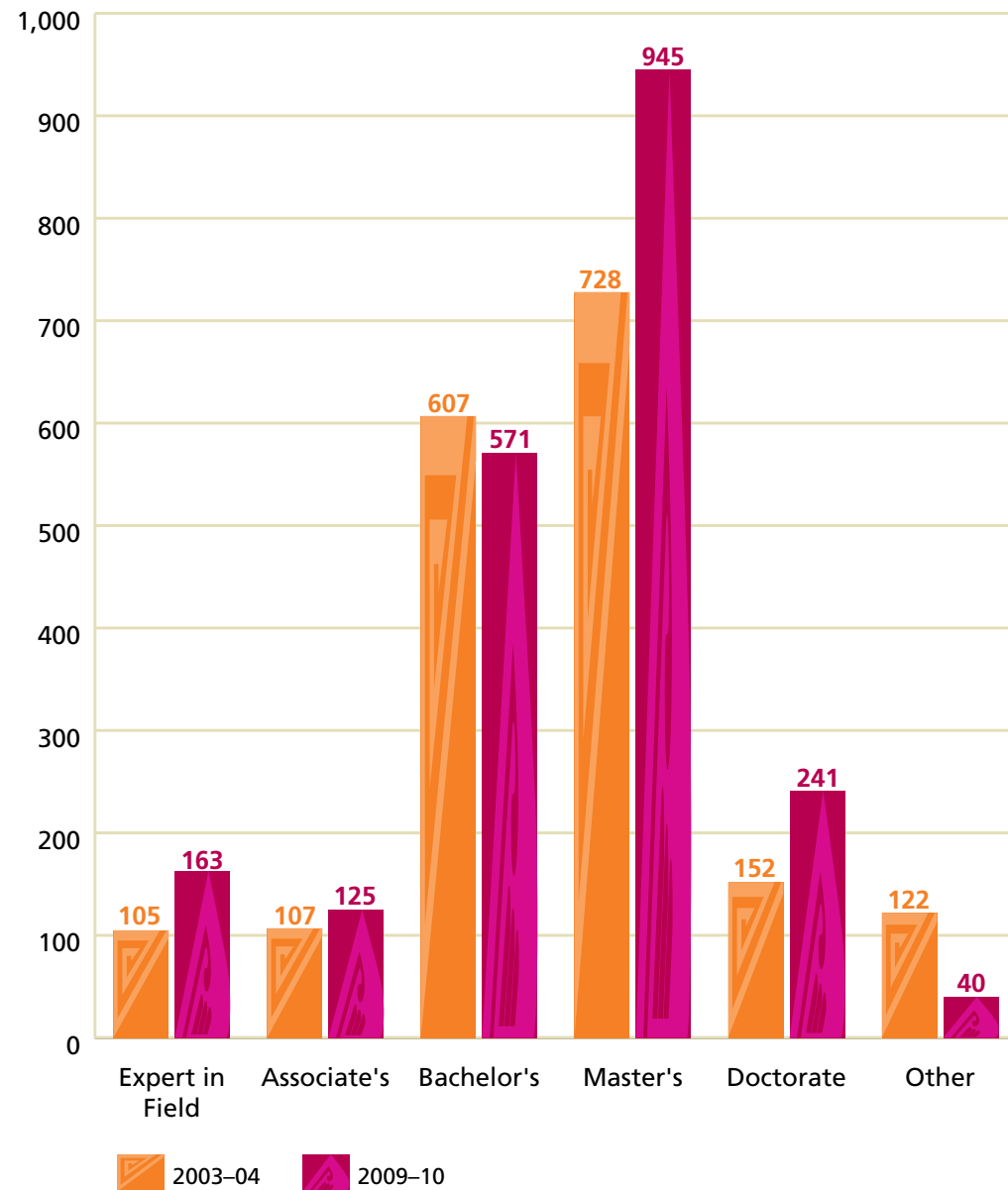


Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute



In 2009, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education named Dr. Nader Vadiee, engineering faculty at Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI), New Mexico Professor of the Year. Vadiee was one of 38 state winners selected from more than 300 instructors nationwide. At SIPI, Vadiee established state-of-the-art learning facilities and curricula to educate future engineers who can compete in the 21st century global workforce. Beyond that, Vadiee has also created project-based learning opportunities in which students at nearby Bernalillo High School—where 50 percent of the student body is American Indian—partner with SIPI students and engineering graduate students at the University of New Mexico and New Mexico Technical College to design projects such as wind turbines, electric bicycle charging stations, and robotic kits for the statewide RoboRave competition. Thanks to Vadiee, SIPI graduates are equipped with the academic and practical skills to successfully transfer to four-year institutions and complete their bachelor's degrees.

Faculty Education Levels





Student Angela Larney preparing for stomp dance demonstration, College of the Muscogee Nation. Photo courtesy of Crystal Bowles.

Natives Saving Nations

Many TCU alumni return to their communities to work, but graduates can also be found across the nation. Five individuals whose lives benefited from their experiences at a TCU and who, in turn, work to preserve sovereignty, protect land, strengthen community, and celebrate the unique identity of American Indians are:

Dr. Manley Begay (Navajo)



Director of the Native Nations Institute for Leadership, Management, and Policy at the University of Arizona and graduate of Navajo Community College (now Diné College);

Beau Mitchell (Chippewa-Cree)



Sustainability coordinator for College of Menominee Nation and graduate of Stone Child College;

Photo courtesy of Dale Kakkak, CMN.

Rose Simpson (Santa Clara Pueblo)



Artist, earned a master's degree from Rhode Island School of Design, and bachelor's degree from the Institute of American Indian Arts;

Terry Tatsey (Blackfeet)



Director of U.S. Department of Agriculture and vocational education programs at Blackfeet Community College, attended Haskell Indian Junior College (now Haskell Indian Nations University);

Dr. David Yarlott, Jr. (Crow)



President of Little Big Horn College and chair of the AIHEC Board of Directors, graduate of Little Big Horn College.

Photo courtesy of LBHC.

In many instances, TCU graduates began their studies at mainstream institutions. For his part, Dr. David Yarlott, president of Little Big Horn College, enrolled at the University of Montana Western in Dillon, MT, immediately after graduation from high school. "I only lasted about a month," he says. "It was just so different, and I believe I was the only Native student there." Homesick, he left Dillon, then spent a year attending Montana Tech in Butte, MT. There, a back injury cut his studies short. When Little Big Horn College opened its doors in 1980, Yarlott was one of the tribal college's first 30 students. Little Big Horn College, he says, "felt like home."

When Dr. Manley Begay began his college career at Northern Arizona University (NAU) in the 1970s, activism was more important to him than academics. "In 1972, the Native political resurgence and AIM (American Indian Movement) were very strong, and there was a wave of Red power sentiment," he says, "and along with that, you had the Black power movement, part of the civil rights movement, all under this climate of social change. There was just too much to get involved in and, as a result, I didn't do so well at NAU."

When he returned home to the Navajo Nation, the campus for Navajo Community College (now Diné College) was nearly completed. His mother and grandmother encouraged him to enroll. "My grandmother emphasized that education was important, even though she did not know what college was really like," he says. "She would say, 'Go and learn what

Student in computer science class, Diné College. Photo courtesy of DC.



Success Stories

you need to learn and not lose yourself in it. Get the tools and ammunition you need to fight the battles that need to be fought.' And it ended up being one of the best decisions I ever made."

Attending the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA) seemed almost predetermined for Rose Simpson. Her grandmother and mother attended the tribal college, and because she had shown artistic promise at a very young age, she was recruited by IAIA in high school. But she resisted. "I felt like I was in a state of revolt," she says. "I didn't want to go to a school that was uniracial."

Instead, she attended the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, where she studied flamenco dancing and double majored in creative writing and studio art. "There was something lacking," she says, adding that she found herself encouraging other Native students to consider IAIA, telling them, "You need to find a place that can foster your creative voice, find a place where you do fit in." Eventually, she followed her own advice and transferred to IAIA, earning a bachelor of fine arts degree in 2007.

One reason she resisted going to IAIA right after high school, she says, is that she "felt that there are old values there; and they do not apply to today's society, or they don't meet the needs for new philosophies of learning." At IAIA, she became involved in student government and took a leadership position to work toward improving those circumstances. She took special interest in addressing the alcohol

and drug problem in the college community and her own community.

Still, it wasn't always easy. "There were times when I wanted to give up, and I asked, 'How does this apply to me? How does this apply to the abuse and hardships my immediate family

deals with? How can this heal our people?' It can be a struggle to find the relationship between western education and the Indigenous person. But it is all about gaining perspective and the tools to change," she says. "I wish more people in my tribe would see that."



United Pueblo club, Haskell Indian Nations University. Photo courtesy of HINU.

A Strong Foundation

Begay says he appreciated the emphasis on Navajo studies, which is the foundation for Diné College: “Without this unique environment, its students would not be as successful as they are,” he says. “It is all about strengthening self-esteem, building identity, developing a sense of self and cultural values. When you are more comfortable with yourself, you are more engaged in how you look at the world.” He is encouraged to see more TCU graduates, adding that he believes they “have a strong cultural background that gives them a solid sense of self.”

Yarlott notes that Little Big Horn College has experienced the same challenge most community colleges face: building the tribal college’s reputation. “We’re still fighting against a stereotype. Even within our own community, they tend to bypass us,” he says. “As a two-year institution, we are not always viewed as a real college.” Experience changes that, however: “Once students come through our doors, they realize they should have started here, that we do offer really good programs. We find if they transfer out from Little Big Horn College, they are much more successful than they would have been if they went directly [to a non-tribal college.]”

Mitchell says that his studies at Stone Child College had a “huge influence” on him. In particular, his science instructor, Doug Crebs, influenced his decision to study soil and water. In fact, it led to his decision to concentrate his capstone project on a small pond experiencing eutrophication on the Rocky Boy Reservation. Mitchell built on his foundation at Stone Child College by conducting research on tribal waters in the Missouri River Basin for the environmental group Native Waters—which led him to his current position at the College of Menominee Nation.

Core values prominently displayed on campus, Comanche Nation College.
Photo courtesy of Paula Lemons.





Eddie F. Mouss, a Registrar's Honor Roll student and 2009 graduate, is the first College of the Muscogee Nation graduate to earn an AAS in Gaming simultaneously becoming the first graduate to earn this degree within the state of Oklahoma. Photo courtesy of Crystal Bowles.

Lifelong Learning

Attending a TCU is often the first step in a lifelong journey of education. A report published by the American Indian College Fund stated that half (47%) of TCU graduates were enrolled in a college or university. This is true for the individuals highlighted here, whose attendance at a tribal college or university inspired their interest in postsecondary education and led to a lifelong affinity for learning.

After earning an associate's degree in 1975, Begay continued following the advice of his mother and grandmother—going on to earn a bachelor's degree from the University of Arizona, master's degrees in education from Brigham Young University and Harvard University Graduate School of Education, and a doctorate in education from Harvard University.

The Institute of American Indian Arts helped Simpson in many ways. "I made connections that are incredibly valuable," she says, "but I would like to get a glimpse of the broader arts community and then explain what is good about that and how it applies to us." She completed her master's in fine arts from Rhode Island School of Design in 2011. "I see getting my education as a tool for healing, not a tool for perpetuating assimilation," she says. "I would like to go back and teach, maybe at a high school or start my own tribal college in northern New Mexico. I have a sense of cultural responsibility, a need to bring my experience back to where I came from."

Although Yarlott had already completed his doctoral studies, it bothered him that as the president of Little Big Horn College, he had not earned a degree there. He had attended the tribal college on a part-time basis from 1980 to 1987 while working full time for the Bureau of Indian Affairs Division of Forestry, but he left without completing his associate's degree.

In 1998, Yarlott returned to Little Big Horn College to teach a business course, then became the tribal college's president in 2002. "I felt uncomfortable that I was not a graduate, so in

2005, I got my transcripts together to figure out what I needed [to complete an associate's degree program,]" he says. Lacking one course in Crow language, he worked out an independent

study project with the professor and earned his degree in 2006—walking across the stage to accept his diploma with the rest of his students.



Teacher education students in science lab, College of Menominee Nation. Photo courtesy of Dale Kakkak.

Success Stories

Personal Relationships and a Sense of Family

State colleges and universities often intimidate Native students, notes Yarlott. One lecture class at Montana State University (MSU) had more than 700 students in an auditorium, he says, but after attending Little Big Horn College (LBHC), he was better prepared for his studies at a four-year university. “I had a strong foundation, a work ethic in terms of studying,” he says, “and I had that confidence that comes from having one-on-one interaction with our instructors.”

Looking back at his time studying at Stone Child College (SCC), Mitchell recalls: “People know you, they know what you’re capable of and they hold you to a high standard.” Mitchell earned his associate’s degree in general science from SCC in 1998, then went on to study at MSU and then the University of Wisconsin at Green Bay. “At a big university, you’re just a face in the crowd. It is easy to get lost,” he says. “No one is going to continuously remind you to keep your eyes on the prize like they did at SCC.”

Mitchell says that after he left SCC to attend MSU it was a challenge to be so far from home. “And I cut loose. I went a little wild,” he says. “Now I try to advise students to balance their social life with their studies.”

“When you are at a tribal college, there is a connection you have with the place, with your land, and you’re comfortable,” he adds. “You have family who are on the faculty and staff who are going to keep tabs on you.” While he appreciated the resources—including labs and facilities—and the international diversity at the state universities he attended, he was uncomfortable there.

All of the TCU alumni featured here spoke of how family relationships drew them to postsecondary education and reinforced their goals once they were there. For instance, after attending LBHC for many years, Yarlott moved to Bozeman, MT, to be closer to his wife. She convinced him to go to MSU, where he earned his bachelor’s, master’s, and doctorate degrees.

After studying business administration at Haskell Indian Nations University and managing his family’s cattle and horse ranch in Montana for a dozen years, in 1994, Tatsey joined the faculty at Blackfeet Community College (BCC). “My parents and other relatives were involved in the formation of the college. The college wanted to establish an associate of applied science degree program in natural resource management, so I worked with tribal representatives, BIA officials, and state agencies to get it started,” he says. “I basically did a stakeholders survey to find out what knowledge and skills they thought a technician should have and created the program around that.”

Tatsey laughs when he recalls that he had planned to work at the tribal college for one year. But then he was recruited into the facilities committee—“where we looked at the long-term growth of the campus, doing some visioning and dreaming of what we wanted the campus to look like,” he says. “That has been a very rewarding experience.”

When TCUs earned federal land grant status in 1994, it only seemed natural that Tatsey would be involved. He became BCC’s land grant coordinator and has been active in land grant issues at the national level, serving on the policy board of directors of the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities’ Board of Agriculture Assembly. “I was working on the community perspective here, and that ended up being a trail to the national level,” he says, “where I was always looking out for the [TCUs’] interests.”



Tribal Colleges and Universities provide a rich tapestry of the American Indian experience, as well as a vital pathway to the future. While the nation’s economic realities limited the growth in enrollment and degrees for some institutions, most TCUs experienced gains from 2003–04 to 2009–10.

Beyond enrollment and degree statistics, TCUs provide substantial benefits to their remote reservation communities. They act as stewards for the environment, as evidenced by the growing number of green programs. They foster greater community through outreach programs. And they enrich the lives of their students.


“Cultural knowledge provides a vehicle to learn one’s place in the world, how culture manifests in everyday life, and how culture can promote healthier people, communities, and nations,” says Dr. Lionel Bordeaux, president of Sinte Gleska University. “The students are able to develop an understanding and pride in their heritage, which is essential to their self esteem and achievement levels.”

The foundation of culture and tradition makes the Tribal Colleges and Universities unique in their missions and is an invaluable strength in providing high quality education and successful outcomes.

Dante Wise Spirit on the shoulder of his father, UTTC student Lonnie (Standing Rock), United Tribes Technical College. Photo courtesy of Dennis J. Neumann, *United Tribes News*.



Student Jeremy Peaches, Haskell Indian Nations University. Photo courtesy of HINU.



We may be a small percentage of the United States' general population, but we have made and will continue to make significant contributions. Our students learn the value of their culture and learn that there are many benefits society in general has received from the Native culture. The other side of this is that the non-tribal students get an understanding of tribal culture and gain a respect they would never have received anywhere else. This does a lot to improve relations within our greater community, which dramatically improves our tribal students' self-confidence.

—Michael Parish, president, Bay Mills
Community College

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Head Start teacher, Gerrald Black Bear Jr., Sinte Gleska University.
Photo courtesy of Christain Glawe.



*Sovereign Nations Through Excellence
In Tribal Higher Education*

Back cover: Powwow, Cankdeska Cikana Community College. Photo courtesy of Shieleen Omen.





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