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INDIAN EDUCATION SERIES: EXAMINING HIGHER EDUCATION FOR AMERICAN INDIAN STUDENTS

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES SENATE

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INDIAN EDUCATION SERIES: EXAMINING HIGHER EDUCATION FOR AMERICAN INDIAN STUDENTS

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11, 2014

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:30 p.m. in room 628, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Jon Tester, Chairman of the Committee, presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JON TESTER, U.S. SENATOR FROM MONTANA

The CHAIRMAN. I will call the Committee to order.

The purpose of this oversight hearing today on Indian higher education is to receive testimony that will help us evaluate Federal programs for Native college students and identify what legislative or administrative changes are needed. This hearing is timely as the Senate is considering legislation on student loan repayment.

There is no doubt that Indian higher education has come a long way over the past 30 years. Native enrollment in colleges and universities has more than doubled, and so has the number of degrees earned. However, American Indians are still less likely to attend a four-year institution than other U.S. ethnic groups. Native graduation and persistent rates are also disproportionately low.

Our dialogue today builds on the three hearings the Committee has held this year on Indian Education. And as many of you know, a major challenge with Indian higher education has to do with pre-college factors. We are not just talking about low scores on college admissions tests or low completion of high school course requirements. The fact is that we are losing a good portion of Indian students before they graduate from high school. And that has to do with a lack of qualified Native educators, lack of culturally-relevant curriculum, poverty, family challenges. These are all issues the Committee will be looking at in coming weeks and months as we identify a path forward. Because it is my belief that all Native children should have the option of going to college. It is clearly not the case right now.

Today we will look superficially at what kind of support Native college students are receiving and what improvements need to be made. First, we will hear from the Department of Education, which is responsible for providing grants to Native-serving post-secondary

institutions. Many of those are non-tribal institutions which are attended by about 90 percent of the American Indian students.

The Department is also responsible for carrying out the President's executive order on strengthening tribal colleges and universities.

We will receive testimony from others, including Evergreen State College, which Senator Cantwell talked about a moment ago. We will also hear from the American Indian College Fund and the American Indian Graduate Center. I would like to extend a special welcome to Billie Jo Kipp, who is President of the Blackfeet Community College up in Blackfeet Country, which is one of the seven tribal colleges from my home State of Montana.

Across this Country, there are about 37 tribal colleges and universities serving about 30,000 Native students. I have long believed that tribal colleges are integral and essential to the communities. They prepare students to succeed in a wide range of careers. They provide access to higher education for many people in remote locations who otherwise would not be able to afford to attend college.

So I am looking forward to hearing recommendations for ways that we can help them continue to do great work and improve upon that work. With that, I want to thank our witnesses for joining us today and turn it over to Senator Barrasso for his opening statement.

STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN BARRASSO,
U.S. SENATOR FROM WYOMING

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing. I appreciate all the comments you made. We need to examine today higher education for Indian students. Education is a significant pathway to success. For many Indian students, the opportunities may be few, the challenges may be many. According to the Department of Education, fewer than 13 percent of American Indian and Alaska Natives earned a college degree compared to 28 percent of other populations. The 13 percent figure needs to change, so I will look forward to hearing from our witnesses on improving higher education opportunities.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Barrasso.

Do any of the other members have opening statements?

Senator Udall. I have a short opening statement.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Udall.

STATEMENT OF HON. TOM UDALL,
U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW MEXICO

Senator UDALL. Thank you, Chairman Tester.

And Chairman Tester, I want to thank you for these important hearings on Indian education. I think this is a very important discussion to have. We clearly have a trust responsibility to support opportunities for Native Americans and Alaska Natives.

Education, it seems to me, is the key for tribal leadership, for healthy communities and for economic prosperity. We need to do all we can for strong tribal schools and for Indian students to move forward into college and the graduate level and in public and private schools. Higher education is one of the best investments we

can make as a Nation in our future and also an investment by students and their families. This is really a commitment of time, of hard work and money.

We know the challenges. Half of Indian students drop out of high school. Today's hearing will focus on higher education. But I am glad the Committee, under the Chairman's leadership, is looking across the educational spectrum to increase success for students at all levels. TCUs are chronically underfunded, but they are rising to the challenge by increasing the number and type of degrees they offer by developing more programs to prepare Native American students to be teachers, health care providers, engineers and business leaders. They are doing all they can and we need to do all we can to help them.

I have introduced the BUILD Act, a bill to improve tribal education, including reauthorization of the Esther Martinez Act, strengthening language and culturally-based learning and better funding for tribal schools. I have also supported legislation introduced by Senator Tester and I am pleased to work together to make these bills as strong as possible.

Resources are scarce and needs are great. Higher education should offer the best value, the best opportunity and the best investments, so that all our students, Indian and non-Indian, can take full advantage of that, so that it is truly a ladder up for economic development, for jobs and career opportunities and with and for tribal communities.

I would also like to welcome Mr. Melvin Monette from New Mexico. I see Melvin out there in the audience. I know he is on the second panel. Mr. Monette is a member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians. He directs the graduate fellowship and special programs at the American Indian Graduate Center in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Mr. Monette is a strong advocate in finding and networking resources for American Indian and Alaska Native students and families in higher education. He serves on the board of the National Indian Education Association and founded the National Coalition of Advancement of Natives in Higher Education. He has also served as an ambassador of the Gates Millennium Scholars program and lead trainer. Mr. Monette has a B.S. in elementary education and an M.S. in educational leadership from the University of North Dakota.

I would like to say a word about the American Indian Graduate Center. Not everyone may know about this great organization. AIGC is the oldest and largest provider of graduate and professional student scholarship services in the United States. The AIGC also administers the Gates Millennium Scholar Program for American Indians and Alaska Natives.

We talk about the importance of developing capacity for leadership in governance, both for tribes and others. This is the core value of the AIGC, and they are doing great work.

Welcome, Mr. Monette, and thank you and all the panelists for coming today. I have other pressing business, so I am going to try to be back here for as much testimony as possible. But I really thank you, Chairman Tester, and Vice Chairman Barrasso, for pushing out on higher education.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Udall.

Senator Murkowski?

**STATEMENT OF HON. LISA MURKOWSKI,
U.S. SENATOR FROM ALASKA**

Senator MURKOWSKI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Just very briefly, Senator Heitkamp and I are working to advance the proposition of the Native Children's Commission focused on those factors that are holding back our Native American and Alaska Native children. When I think about the successes that I see in my State with Alaska Native children and how they have moved on, going beyond the multitude of risk factors that face them, I can cite almost exclusively to the education opportunities that have been made available to them.

In the past 40 some odd years, we have seen a real transition in Alaska, as the strength of our Native corporations has come on and as students have opportunities presented to them for scholarships to attend college. As we all know, the daunting cost of a college education can be something that for many children, and most particularly minorities and our Native American kids and our Alaska Native kids, college was just not something that they could even consider because of the costs associated. So what we are seeing is truly a new generation, a young generation of young people that are coming back to the State, having been educated outside or attending the institutions within the State of Alaska, whether it is the University of Alaska system, whether it is Ilisagvik College up in Barrow.

But having the opportunity for an even footing, because they now have the ability to afford that higher education. We are seeing the difference in our young Native leadership. It is transformative. So when I think about the ways that we can bring our kids out, leave those risk factors as much as possible behind, it is going to be through education. So I appreciate the focus that you are giving this today, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Murkowski.

Senator Johnson?

**STATEMENT OF HON. TIM JOHNSON,
U.S. SENATOR FROM SOUTH DAKOTA**

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Chairman Tester, for holding this important hearing to examine higher education for Native American students. I would like to give a very warm welcome to a fellow South Dakotan, Cheryl Crazy Bull, President of the American Indian College Fund. Your hard work, Cheryl, for Native American students has been outstanding throughout the years, and I thank you for sharing your testimony with us today.

All too often, the Federal Government comes up short in meetings its treaty responsibilities to provide Native education. Our education for Native Americans must be available to those who are qualified to attend, not just those who can afford to attend. Statistics have shown that there is a grave disparity between Native and non-Native students. Native students are more likely to be first generation students and are less likely to graduate. We must increase our support of Native American students in their endeavors to achieve the next level of education for those investing in their

own futures and for those investing in the prosperity of their tribes.

I hope that today's hearing will find solutions to ensure that Native students are being provided with the additional support to pursue higher education. I look forward to the testimony today. Thank you again, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Johnson. I would now like to welcome our first panel, which consists of Jamienne Studley. Jamienne is the Deputy Under Secretary of the Department of Education. It is good to have you here. We will try to hold you to five minutes on your verbal testimony. Your entire written testimony will be a part of the record.

Thanks for being here.

STATEMENT OF JAMIENNE STUDLEY, DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Ms. STUDLEY. Thank you very much and good afternoon, Chairman Tester, Senator Barrasso and Committee members. My name is Jamienne Studley and I am Deputy Under Secretary at the U.S. Department of Education.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify today about the Administration's work to expand education opportunities and to approve outcomes for American Indian and Alaska Native students in higher education. This is an important issue for the Nation and for this Administration and we welcome your attention.

Indeed, the President will make his second trip to Indian country this Friday, visiting the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in North Dakota to announce additional steps to support education and employment. As you know, the President established the White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native Education, which is housed in the Department of Education's Office of the Under Secretary. Among its functions are enhancing opportunities for AI/AN students to learn their Native languages, cultures, histories and to help students prepare for college and careers, just along the lines you have all mentioned.

With respect to post-secondary education, the Initiative promotes education reforms that have shown success at enabling AI/AN students to acquire a rigorous and well-rounded education, to increase their access to support services, to reduce dropout rates and to increase college completion and access by strengthening the capacity of post-secondary institutions , including tribal colleges and universities.

So how well are AI/AN students doing in high school to become prepared for college? According to the Census Bureau's American Community Survey, AI/AN students dropped out of high school at more than twice the rate for White students in 2011. We know that AI/AN students tend to have less access to rigorous course work in high school, compared to other racial and ethnic groups. That is not their fault. That is the situation that we collectively have offered them.

What about outcomes for those beyond high school? According to 2013 Census Bureau data, 60 percent of Asians and 40 percent of White 25 to 29 year olds hold baccalaureate degrees, compared with just 17 percent of AI/AN young adults. To accomplish the

President's goal to be first in the world in college graduation, we estimate that we need an additional 112,000 AI/AN students to complete college by 2020, and we need to help them.

Some of the Department's programs specifically serve AI/AN students. The Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities Program provides $53 million in funding to support 68 projects across 13 states, serving 19,000 students, with funds supporting academic and faculty development, teacher preparation, outreach and counseling services and facilities improvements.

The Strengthening Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian-serving Institutions program also provides grants, in this case to eligible institutions of higher education, to enable them to enhance their ability to serve these populations. In fiscal year 2014, $26.5 million will support 30 grants and 14 new awards.

It is important to note that about 90 percent of AI/AN post-secondary students attend institutions of higher education that are not tribally controlled. These include Native American-serving nontribal institutions, to which Congress provided $7.8 million in fiscal year 2014, through a program that will support 19 grants, each averaging about $400,000.

We also have a special program for tribally-controlled post-secondary career and technical institutions that supports the Navajo Technical University in New Mexico and United Tribes Technical College in North Dakota. These institutions are eligible for a share of almost $8 million.

I have invested a good part of my career advocating and working for individuals to help increase their access to education, to ensure that they can succeed. What truly makes a difference is the ability to pursue higher education. College has long represented the surest route to opportunity. But high costs stymie many students. And we know that nearly half of all students who begin college will never finish.

I am particularly proud of the work this Administration is doing to make college more affordable, accessible, performance-oriented and centered on better informed student decisions. We want to make clear, transparent information on college performance readily available through tools like the College Scorecard and Financial Aid Shopping Sheet.

We fought for higher Pell Grant funding and increased the Pell maximum award by more than $900 to a total of $5,730, providing grants to an additional 3 million students. The number of AI/AN students receiving Pell grants increased from about 63,000 in 2008–2009 to more than 112,000 in 2011–2012. And we are helping more borrowers manage their debt through the Pay As You Earn proposal that caps student loan payments at 10 percent of monthly income.

We appreciate your support for the First In The World Fund in this fiscal year, 2014. And we have done a great deal of outreach to tribal colleges and other minority-serving institutions to encourage their applications in this first round, which includes a setaside of up to $20 million for minority-serving institutions in total.

In the fiscal year 2015 budget, we have requested a number of initiatives to help tribal colleges, Native-serving institutions and others receive support through the College Success Grants for Mi-

nority-Serving Institutions and the College Opportunity and Graduation bonus program. With higher education more important than ever for our shared future, we must continue to improve college completion for the AI/AN community. As Secretary Duncan said in his commencement remarks just this weekend at Salish-Kootenai College in Montana, this is essential for maximizing individual opportunity, community leadership and national economic prosperity.

We thank you for holding this hearing. I have read the other witnesses' prepared remarks that were available in advance and I will stay as long as I can to hear them. I would be happy to answer any questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Studley follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JAMIENNE STUDLEY, DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Good afternoon Chairman Tester, Senator Barrasso, and Committee members. My name is Jamienne Studley and I am the Deputy Under Secretary at the U.S. Department of Education (ED). The Under Secretary's office coordinates policies and programs related to postsecondary education, career and technical education, adult education, and federal student aid, as well as the six White House Initiatives, including the White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native Education (WHIAIANE or "Initiative"). I appreciate the opportunity to testify today about the work the Administration is doing to expand educational opportunities and improve outcomes for American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) students in higher education.

Increasing Partnerships with Tribes, States, and the Private Sector to Improve Native Student Achievement

This Administration has taken important steps to support tribal self-determination and to strengthen and honor the Federal Government's government-to-government relationship with tribal nations. To reaffirm these commitments, the President issued Executive Order 13592 on December 2, 2011, which established the WHIAIANE. The mission of the Initiative is to expand educational opportunities and improve educational outcomes for AI/AN students. This includes enhancing opportunities for AI/AN students to learn their Native languages, cultures, and histories, and to receive an education that prepares them for college, careers, and tribal citizenship and leadership.

The Initiative works with tribes, Federal agencies, states, and the private sector to advance these goals. With respect to postsecondary education, the Initiative works to:

- Help ensure that schools meet the unique cultural, educational, and language needs of AI/AN students;
- Implement and expand evidence-based strategies that provide AI/AN students with a rigorous and well-rounded education;
- Increase access to support services that prepare AI/AN students for college, careers, and civic involvement;
- Reduce student dropout rates and help more AI/AN students complete high school prepared for college and careers; and
- Increase college access and completion by strengthening the capacity of postsecondary institutions, including tribal colleges and universities (TCUs).

American Indian/Alaska Native Students and Higher Education

Data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) indicate that AI/AN students are less prepared than other subgroups for college and careers. According to American Community Survey, AI/AN students dropped out of high school at more than twice the rate for white students in 2011; in fact, among 16- to 24-year-olds born in the United States, AI/AN youth had the highest dropout rate of any racial/ethnic group. [1]

Furthermore, NCES Common Core Data indicates that, while the average public high school graduation rate for all students has increased six points, from approxi-

[1] *http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d13/tables/dt13—219.80.asp*

mately 75 percent in 2007–2008 to 81 percent in 2011–2012, the high school graduation rate for AI/AN students over the same period increased by only four points, from 64 to 68 percent.

Additionally, according to ED's Civil Rights Data College (CRDC), AI/AN students have less access to rigorous mathematics and science coursework in high school compared to other race/ethnicity groups. In 2011–2012, only 47 percent of AI/AN students attended public high schools where the full range of mathematics and science courses were offered. In contrast, the percentage of the other race/ethnicity groups that had access to the full range of mathematics and science courses ranged from 57 percent to 81 percent.

Also, based on the CRDC, in 2011–2012, AI/AN students represented 1 percent of high school students and 1 percent of students enrolled in an AP course and taking an AP exam, but only 0.5 percent of students receiving a qualifying score of 3 or above on an AP exam. In contrast, white and Asian students combined represented 59 percent of high school enrollment, but 69 percent of students taking AP courses, 72 percent of students taking AP exams, and 80 percent of students receiving a qualifying score on an AP exam.

And on nationally representative achievement tests, the gaps separating AI/AN students from non-AI/AN students have not closed and, disappointingly, have mostly widened between 2005 and 2011.

Beyond high school, AI/AN young adults also lag behind their white peers in educational attainment. According to 2013 Census Bureau data, 60 percent of Asian and 40 percent of White 25- to 29-year-olds held baccalaureate degrees, compared with just 17 percent of AI/AN young adults.[2] Across all degree-granting institutions, AI/AN enrollment increased from 76,000 to 196,000 students from 1976 to 2010; however, AI/AN enrollment dropped to 173,000 by 2012. These students accounted for only 1 percent of the total enrollment during those years.

AI/AN students did earn nearly twice as many bachelor's degrees in 2012 as in 2002, and nearly three times as many master's degrees. At the doctoral level, according to the National Science Foundation's Survey of Earned Doctorates, AI/AN students represented 1.2 percent of the U.S. population in 2012 but earned just 0.3 percent of the doctorates awarded. They are the only minority group that did not increase their share of doctorates earned over the past two decades.

These statistics make it clear that more must be done to expand and improve educational opportunities and outcomes for AI/AN students.

ED Programs that Support AI/AN Students

The Administration is working with institutions of higher education, both tribally controlled and non-tribally controlled, to meet President Obama's goal to be first in the world in college graduation rates by 2020.

Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities Program

There are currently 34 tribally controlled colleges and universities (TCUs) that serve approximately 19,000 students. These institutions fulfill a unique role in AI/AN communities by providing a quality academic experience while also protecting and teaching tribal cultures, histories, and languages. By combining personal attention with cultural relevance, TCUs have become increasingly important in helping ensure educational access and achievement for AI/AN students, especially for those living on or near reservations.

The President's fiscal year 2015 budget request would provide a total of $53 million for the Title III Strengthening Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities program—$25.2 million in discretionary funding and $27.8 million in mandatory funding. This funding, authorized under the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA), would provide $53 million in funding to support 68 projects across 13 states.

Historically, the TCUs program has had a significant impact on several schools. For example, at Chief Dull Knife College, located on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation in southeastern Montana, the programmatic funding has allowed the college to provide professional development opportunities for its faculty and staff and has a 100 percent faculty retention rate over the past three years. From 2008–2012, placement of students in higher-level math classes increased by more than 20 percent, and the completion rate for developmental skill classes increased to 70 percent. The college, like many tribal colleges, has also implemented Native language activities as part of the curriculum. Cheyenne language courses are being offered in a

[2] This same data show a similar lag for African American (20 percent) and Hispanic (16 percent) young adults.

four-course series, and the college also provides summer Cheyenne-language immersion experiences for youth in the surrounding communities.

And Aaniiih Nakoda College, located on the Fort Belknap Reservation in Harlem, Montana, has used HEA Title III grant funds to develop a new campus-wide retention plan. Student retention rates have increased by more than 10 percent reaching a record high 65 percent for the fall 2012 first-time, full-time student cohort.

Strengthening Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions Program

The Strengthening Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian-serving Institutions (ANNH) program, also authorized under Title III of the HEA, provides grants to eligible institutions of higher education to enable them to improve and expand their capacity to serve Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians. Institutions may use these grants to plan, develop, or implement activities that promise to strengthen the institution.

In fiscal year 2014, $12.6 million in discretionary funding and $13.9 million in mandatory funding will support a total of 30 grants to ANNH institutions, including 14 new awards expected to be made in fiscal year 2014. The fiscal year 2015 budget request is the same as the 2014 level.

For example, at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks—Northwest, the ANNH grant has allowed the university to have a well-connected student support services team that has expanded their presence in the communities in which it serves. Additionally, the university is setting up locally relevant sequenced courses that lead to defined outcomes, which are created with the participation and support of each of the communities and its members. Finally, the school has created a master plan for its facilities that will guide maintenance and renovation goals, future planning considerations, and make the campus more cohesive and energy efficient.

Native American-Serving Nontribal Institutions

90 percent of AI/AN postsecondary students attend institutions of higher education that are not tribally controlled. These include Native American-Serving Nontribal Institutions (NASNTIs), in which the student body must be at least 10 percent Native American. The NASNTI program, also authorized under Title III of the HEA, provides grants and assistance to enable these institutions to improve and expand their capacity to serve AI/ANs and low-income individuals by engaging in such activities as:

- Expanding dual enrollment opportunities;
- Developing adult education to increase the number of AI/AN students who obtain high school diplomas;
- Improving academic and student services to support student success and retention;
- Improving the effective use of technology in academic environments; and
- Increasing the number of AI/AN students who pursue advanced degrees.

In fiscal year 2014, Congress appropriated $3.1 million in discretionary funding and $4.7 million in mandatory funding for this program. These funds will support 19 continuation grants each averaging approximately $400,000. The President has requested similar funds for fiscal year 2015.

For example, Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College has used its NASNTI grant to introduce the "Native Ways of Knowing" pedagogy into three specific degree programs and to develop those programs for online delivery. Ninety-nine percent of students receiving support services related to the curriculum identified those services as "helpful or very helpful." And over 55 percent of the AI/AN low-income students earned a 2.0 GPA or better.

Another example is Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado, which educates AI/AN students tuition-free. With students from 120 different tribes, Native Americans make up close to 30 percent of the student population. To address the difficulty many students experience when transitioning from high school to college, Fort Lewis has used its NASNTI grant to add a specialized learning community for incoming freshmen that provides peer and elder mentoring and tutoring, and creates a supportive community for the students. This type of intensive programming has effectively used the grant to improve Native student retention. The grant has also enabled Fort Lewis to enhance its STEM program. Its newly accredited engineering program has resulted in AI/AN enrollment surges.

Together, TCUs and NASNTIs have far-reaching impacts in the communities they serve. These institutions provide effective paths to academic achievement and degree completion for AI/AN students. These institutions also often serve as powerful engines of economic development, contributing to employment, raising incomes, and

directly and indirectly supporting other forms of economic growth within tribal communities. Because many of these colleges are in rural and underserved communities, this contribution is especially important.

Tribally Controlled Postsecondary Career and Technical Institutions Program

The Tribally Controlled Postsecondary Career and Technical Institutions Program (TCPCTIP), authorized under Section 117(c) of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, provides funds to eligible institutions for expenses that are associated with capital expenditures, maintenance and operation of programs, expansion and improvement of educational offerings and student support services, including tuition, books, childcare, job placement counseling, transportation, and specialized tools and uniforms that are required for students to fully participate in career-technical education programs.

Any tribally controlled postsecondary career and technical institution that does not receive Federal support under the Tribally Controlled College or University Assistance Act of 1978 or the Navajo Community College Act is eligible to apply. Currently, ED supports two institutions under the program, Navajo Technical University in New Mexico and United Tribes Technical College in North Dakota. These two schools would each be eligible for a share of the $7.7 million in proposed FY 15 funding. If their budget requests exceed the total appropriation, ED is required to apply a specific statutory method for calculating annual allocations that is based, in part, on student counts.

Federal TRIO Program

In fiscal year 2013, ED awarded a total of $4.6 million to support 18 Federal TRIO Program (TRIO) projects, authorized under Title IV of the HEA, at Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities to serve 3,637 AI/AN students. TRIO is a collection of programs that provide outreach and support to help low-income and first generation college students, as well as students with disabilities, progress through the academic pipeline from middle school to post baccalaureate programs. These 18 projects support activities under the Student Support Services Program ($3.4 million to fund 14 projects); the Talent Search Program ($518,652 to fund two projects); and the Upward Bound Program ($649,900 to fund two projects). In addition, a total of $815,657 was awarded to support three TRIO projects at Tribal Agencies to serve 1,813 students. These three projects support activities under the Talent Search Program. In fiscal year 2014, TRIO grantees that demonstrate substantial progress in achieving the goals of their project are expected to receive continuation awards.

New Budget Proposals to Expand Access and Completion

The Federal Government's special responsibility to tribes obligates it to help improve AI/AN postsecondary educational attainment. Higher education has long represented the surest route to the middle-class, but high costs are pricing out many students, and we know that nearly half of all students who begin college never finish.

The 2015 budget request for higher education programs supports the President's 2020 college attainment goal and includes a number of new initiatives to improve affordability, quality, and success in postsecondary education, for which TCUs would be eligible to apply. These include:

- $75 million for a First in the World fund that would make competitive awards to institutions of higher education to encourage innovative approaches to improve college attainment and make higher education more affordable;
- $75 million for College Success Grants for Minority-Serving Institutions (including NASNTIs) and Historically Black Colleges and Universities that would be made available through competitive grants to support implementation of sustainable strategies for reducing costs and improving outcomes for students; and
- $647 million in mandatory funding for the College Opportunity and Graduation Bonus program that would reward colleges that successfully enroll and graduate a significant number of low- and moderate-income students on time and to encourage all institutions to improve performance.

TCUs are eligible for funds in States that would get grants under the Administration's proposed $4 billion State Higher Education Performance Fund to support, reform, and improve the performance of their public higher education systems.

In addition, the Administration has taken a number of steps to address the challenge of keeping college affordable and accessible for all students, including AI/AN students. These efforts include:

- Since taking office, President Obama has fought for higher Pell Grant funding, and, with the help of Congress has increased the Pell maximum award to

$5,730 and provided grants to an additional 3 million students. Under current projections, the 2015 level would support Pell Grant awards to 8.9 million students. Pell Grants are the largest source of grant aid, with approximately 41 percent of all undergraduates receiving a Pell Grant.

- The Administration has also sought ways to help borrowers manage their debt through the "Pay-as-You-Earn" proposal that caps student loan payments at 10 percent of a borrower's monthly income. The President's FY 2015 budget would extend this proposal to all student borrowers.
- ED has developed a number of new tools for HEA Title IV degree-granting institutions (including TCUs, NASNTIs, and ANNHs), such as the College Scorecard and the Financial Aid Shopping Sheet, to help students and families make informed choices about college. In addition, the President's new college ratings system will provide information about access, affordability, and outcomes at postsecondary institutions. The college ratings system will be available to students and families for the 2015–2016 school year.

Conclusion

The Administration, tribal nations, Congress, postsecondary institutions, states, and the private sector must all work together to keep college affordable, accessible, and available to all students. AI/AN students around the country benefit from this commitment. At a time when higher education is more important than ever for our shared future, the nation must continue to invest resources to improve college completion for the AI/AN community. This is essential for maximizing both individual opportunity and our collective economic prosperity.

The Administration remains committed to working with tribes and supporting TCUs to ensure that all AI/AN students have high-quality educational experiences that prepare them for careers and productive lives.

Thank you for holding this hearing. I look forward to working with the Committee to improve higher education opportunities and outcomes for AI/AN students. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

The CHAIRMAN. Thanks, I appreciate your presentation.

The special programs for Indian children activity for the Department of Education has seen an approximate 5 percent decrease in funding since 2010. These are special programs for Indian children. Located within this activity is professional development programs, which is composed of an American Indian teacher course and an American Indian administrator course.

These programs seek to recruit and retain effective teachers and administrators for schools with large Native populations. If the Department is aware through its own national assessment of educational progress of the significant disparities that face American Indian students, how can this decrease be justified?

Ms. STUDLEY. I have to admit that I am not specifically familiar with that change.

The CHAIRMAN. That is fine.

Ms. STUDLEY. I would be happy to get back to you with some details about that. Obviously teacher preparation and the specialized preparation of Native American and Alaska Native teachers is important to us. But within the constraints of the budget, we had tough decisions to make. I will find out more about that.

The CHAIRMAN. I would appreciate that. Part of the problem is, if the studies show that we need certain things within our education and we decrease funding, unless there is a reason for it, that is why I asked you the question, if we are talking budget priorities, I would think this would be a pretty high priority. But I will let you get back to me.

Ms. STUDLEY. Future preparation is clearly tremendously important. Let me find out about that specifically.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. I want to talk about per student funding disparities that exist between minority-serving institutions. It seems that per-student funding at tribal colleges and universities are at the lowest as far as funding. I am not going to argue that you take away any benefits from any other minority-serving institutions. But shouldn't they all be at the same level?

Let me give you an example. Blackfeet Community College, we have Billie Jo Kipp here today, $5,850 per student. Howard University here in D.C., the Federal Government provides almost $22,000 per student. Now, I am not saying you should cut the folks here at Howard. But I am wondering why there is such a big disparity between those two minority-serving institutions.

Ms. STUDLEY. We clearly would like to increase support for education across the board and increase our investment in a wide range of institutions. If you look at the Pell allocation, you would find that tribal colleges and universities are particularly on the high end of Pell support for students at the tribal colleges.

Across the spectrum of the many institutions we have, some of that funding is for research-based programs and different kinds of institutions, community colleges, four-year programs, career and technical programs, and research universities receive different kinds of funding from different agencies. So the Pell Grant program has seen tremendous increases and the tribal colleges and universities have among the highest Pell receipts because their students, as we recognize, are particularly needy.

Some of the dollars that you are talking about are dollars from research-based programs and from other agencies for different purposes. What we would like to do is improve the resources and the ability to support education in all of these schools, including certainly the ones attended by AI/AN students.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. I think we will have our staff dig into that a little more, to see if the Pell actually makes up the difference.

Ms. STUDLEY. I don't assert that Pell closes that gap. But it is one program where the resources are targeted to undergraduate students with substantial need. It travels with those students to tribal colleges. There are other programs that they do not participate in. We recognize those differences.

The CHAIRMAN. Before I turn it over to Senator Barrasso, I would just say that the reason we have had a series of hearings on education, whether it is preschool, or whether it is higher education is because poverty is rampant in Indian Country, in my neck of the woods. I think the only way you get out of that is with education. If college affordability becomes an issue these folks are not going to be able to achieve what all they can be. There has to be accountability in the process, make no mistake about that. But the fact is if we are going to break poverty in Indian Country, the foundation is education, in my opinion. You don't need to comment on that.

Senator Barrasso?

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate your line of questioning and appreciate what we are trying to accomplish here.

It is interesting, according to the written testimony of Cheryl Crazy Bull, a witness on the next panel, issues of academic readi-

ness are a big part of this. The big compound that many challenges Indian students face in college. So I want to ask you a little about that. Her testimony notes low college preparedness levels, so that 74 percent of Native youth require remedial math instruction, 50 percent require remedial reading or writing instruction. How is the Department of Education coordinating with the Bureau of Indian Education and local public schools to address these academic readiness issues?

Ms. STUDLEY. We certainly agree that a great deal more has to be done to help students graduate ready for college and career. And the preparation that you describe is one of the biggest challenges in meeting our goals of increasing national college completion.

The Department has issued a blueprint for the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. It would include increased standards, better measurements of student learning and an accountability system based, in part, on academic growth of students. Teacher allocation and assuring that teachers who are effective teach the students who need them most, including the students whom you describe. That is a critically important component of bridging successfully between high school and college. Right now, far too much of our effort is spent thinking about college remediation. If we can more effectively prepare students in high school through teacher availability, programs like TRIO and Gear Up, other student supports, and then with the wider set of resources beyond the schoolhouse that you talked about in terms of income and community supports, the better we will do at having people begin college able to actually do college level work and then continue to completion.

So there is a partnership that we need to have between the K–12 schools and colleges to be ready. It hinges on teachers, on availability of quality academic programs. We are very much attentive to the fact that this all begins at the preschool level. Many of the deficiencies that people experience in high school did not begin there, they started much earlier. So the proposals that we have made for early childhood education are meant to begin that continuum on a stronger base, to improve high school preparation in math and other subjects as you described.

And then avoid the problem of students who complete high school thinking they are ready for college when, in fact, they are not prepared for college, even work.

Senator BARRASSO. It seems you do want to get them set up for success, so when they show up for college they are taking advantage of every opportunity instead of feeling that they are sinking.

Ms. STUDLEY. Right. Some of the colleges that you will hear from shortly already speak about programs like dual enrollment. The colleges are participating in one of the strategies that seems to be helpful in beginning exposure to college-level work and the demands of college and the feeling that you are, in fact, on a pathway to college. There is some reason to think that is a way to have people make a smoother and better prepared transition. I applaud them for participating in those programs.

Senator BARRASSO. One of the disturbing facts that comes out is the 2012 Department of Education report on college graduation rates noted that Native American graduation rates were the lowest

since 2007. On the other hand, the rates of other populations seems to be trending upward. So I am curious what the Department is doing to reverse this decline that we are seeing in Native American college graduation rates.

Ms. STUDLEY. The numbers that we are looking at actually indicate an improvement for AI/AN students, but at a slower pace than we would like to see or than some of the other populations. So there is good news about the degree accomplishments of AI/AN students. It is just not as good as we would all want to see it be.

We think that our focus on preschool and K–12 supports are part of the pathway and the way to accelerate rates, and by improving teacher effectiveness so that people are on track to keep moving, would all be very important. Pell supports and repayment options would give people the encouragement to go to colleges that would be useful and effective for them. We are also working on a number of strategies to identify and address the kinds of things that keep people who begin college from being among the successful completers. Putting it positively, there are lots of interesting, beyond experiments, practices going on at schools to help people develop more effective study habits to stay with a program, to track persistence and identify people who are at risk of not completing, whether it is for financial or family reasons, academic reasons, incorporation into the community of the school that they are attending, and trying to recognize that having somebody start college is not a guarantee of success. There is a lot we may be able to do in student supports that will help people who want to go on and complete a degree to actually do that.

And also to smooth the transition between community colleges and bachelor's degree programs. That is a place where for too many Americans, but especially for AI/AN students, where that transition needs to be better supported. We need to be clear that people can take the work they have done to the next academic level so they can move smoothly toward the completion of a bachelor's degree if that is their objective. So there are a lot of ways we are looking at increasing even further those accomplishments.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Franken?

STATEMENT OF HON. AL FRANKEN,
U.S. SENATOR FROM MINNESOTA

Senator FRANKEN. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am glad that Co-Chairman Barrasso is talking about college readiness. I am glad that you responded by saying we have to go to the preschool. Everything that you mentioned just brings up something for me. I am sure this works for you too. You talked about study habits, housing. Housing on our reservations——

Ms. STUDLEY. Transportation, getting to school and college.

Senator FRANKEN. And let's go back just a second to housing. If you don't have housing and families end up living together and somebody in one of the families has an addiction or there is domestic violence, you are perpetuating these. One, the kids are exposed to it, they are witnessing it. I am so glad that Senator Murkowski and Senator Heitkamp are looking at this children's study.

We have so much to do. Where are we doing early childhood education? I know that on White Earth in Minnesota we are doing it.

We are not doing enough of any of these things, are we, is the answer, right?

Ms. STUDLEY. And we are not doing it systematically enough. And sometimes it is the students who need it most who don't have the access to it.

Senator FRANKEN. Of course. And during the sequester, we saw Indian schools particularly hit. So I just don't think we are doing right by our original citizens.

Then you get to college. A few months ago I met with Dr. Don Day, who is the President of Leech Lake Tribal College in Cass Lake, Minnesota. He told me one of his biggest challenges is just finding adequate operational funding for a school. In fact, the legislation authorizing funding for tribal colleges authorizes $8,000 for each Native American student. But the actual funding for the most recent academic year was only about $5,600 per student, which is 30 percent below the authorized level.

My question is, can we at least appropriate the authorized level? How do we do that?

Ms. STUDLEY. I think the question is for you and your colleagues, who have the appropriation authority. We certainly can see that the lack of those funds constrains these hard-working colleges.

Senator FRANKEN. You have the right answer.

[Laughter.]

Senator FRANKEN. I think we have to do that. The President has to ask for this, too, in those budgets. We don't have budgets, we don't get from the White House when it makes budgets, we have Deputy Secretary Washburn come here and not be able to really defend the budgets that were sent here when it comes to school reconstruction. I have kids in Leech Lake, again, that are in the Bug-O–Nay-Ge-Shig School which is a pole barn. Since I have been here, since the day I got here, I have been trying to get that place reconstructed. Because when the wind blows more than 40 miles an hour, they have to leave because it is not safe. This winter, it got down to 30 below zero with the wind blowing. And the kids had to leave the school and run 400 yards for other shelter. We need to fund school reconstruction. We need everything you pointed, every direction you pointed to, the answer to Senator Barrasso's question is somewhere we are failing, I believe.

These questions are hard enough without the proper funding. But I really am disappointed every time, I mean, yes, we in Congress make the appropriations, but also when we get the budget from the White House, I find that incredibly disappointing.

I do like what you are talking about with college alignment, high school alignment with college. I really believe that we have to be preparing our kids for college as you said in early childhood. But we have to be thinking about careers. And one of the things I have been trying to do is meet the skills gap. I just met today with people in construction, contractors who have a skills gap in their business now, just like in manufacturing, just like in IT. We have to be able to also tell our kids, yes, you can go to college, yes, you can go to law school, yes, you can go to medical school. I want American Indian kids having that dream. I also want them to know that they can go to two-year community technical college and get a job

and get a good, middle class job. And that they don't necessarily have to go through a four-year school. It is not for everyone.

Ms. STUDLEY. I agree. If I could just mention, as I have traveled the country I have heard many references to welding and to the fast pace at which welding students get out of school and are put right to work because the jobs are there. And I was very pleased to see in the testimony that will follow me that there are programs at some of these colleges that recognize those labor market needs and are offering successful welding programs.

So I think it is important that students have the options based on their skills and also that their schools are able to provide for that.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Murkowski.

Senator MURKOWSKI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is important, as we are talking about barriers to success with Native American children, Alaska native children, you think about things like transportation as you have mentioned, and housing, as Senator Franken has mentioned. Then there are also some things that are less tangible. I know at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, we have effectively a program where the Native students who come from a very, very small village are just overwhelmed by being in a mid-size town. Fairbanks is not big by anybody's standards.

But it is extraordinarily intimidating in being in that college setting. Just getting comfortable in a system can be a struggle. Initially the thought was, you just integrate everybody and move them in. But we lost a lot of our young people who said, it is just too intimidating. So now we are looking at other models as to how we can put them in a situation and experience that does not prohibit them from achieving success.

I wanted to talk about a couple of different regulations that we are seeing within the department that I have been made aware could actually be an impediment to our Native American students. One is limiting financial aid eligibility based on the time it takes a student to earn their degree. So if you have, as Senator Barrasso has mentioned, you have Native American students that when they come to college, they need a level of remediation that just takes some time. So they can be working hard to get their skills up, but it is taking them longer than the financial aid eligibility package will allow them. So they get up to speed and then they run out of financial aid before they can complete the college.

What is the Administration doing to address this aspect of aid?

Ms. STUDLEY. We are working as hard as we can to avoid the problem in the first place, to assure that people are prepared or that the remediation is as swift a process as possible, so that people don't run into those limits at the far end. The financial aid timetables, they don't expect that a pupil must complete a two-year degree within two years, or a four-year degree within four years. Those are old fashioned terms now. They have some leeway, recognizing that it takes some students more time, even if they are attempting to go to school on a full-time basis. While it is a tough balance to strike, we think it is important that both the student and the school know that they need to make headway. Our efforts go into high school readiness, the transitional programs, and shar-

ing the word about what makes for a good and effective remediation program.

There is a great deal of effort, some of it coming out of the White House summit this past winter, about improving remediation programs. There are ways to teach math and statistics that are much easier for a lot of students than some of the traditional ways they have been taught.

Senator MURKOWSKI. Let me ask you this, if I can interrupt. I have another question as well. Are we tracking how many minority students might be dropping out, those that have to go through the remediation, who got financial aid, then the financial aid clock runs and they drop out? I think it would be interesting to know what we are looking at, at numbers. I don't know if you have that, but if that is something you could look at I would certainly be curious.

Ms. STUDLEY. I will look at that too and how we are tracking, whether we know anything about how those patterns work now and as it goes forward.

Senator MURKOWSKI. Let me ask also about the dual enrollment programs. You mentioned this. I had a meeting just last week with a provost from the University of Alaska. I was made aware that we got regulations now that require a student to make satisfactory academic progress to retain financial aid eligibility, okay. But now that is being applied to students who attend college through the dual enrollment programs.

So again, you have a situation here where we are going to encourage our Native American students, we want to put them in a safe place where hopefully they can learn from their mistakes, they will learn better time management skills, they will learn better study habits. But it seems to me you are going to be in a situation again where you are encouraging the dual enrollment, which I am all over, but you have a cutoff where things are not lining up to allow that student to go fully through the system in coordination with the financial aid eligibility.

So it is something that, again, was brought to us as an issue where you really have an unintended consequence at play here with some of your minority students, just those students that we would want to encourage to be part of this dual enrollment to get their feet on the ground. And then the financial aid is pulled out. So I would ask you to look at that if you have not already.

Ms. STUDLEY. We certainly can. One of the challenges of incorporating these new methods of instruction and these new hybrid models and so forth is to connect them with the existing student aid regulations, which are there for a reason, but we have to work hard to make them adaptable to new circumstances. We are doing things like an experimental sites program to look at situations where we can relieve regulatory burdens in order to allow new processes to go forward. We will look at that particular question and see if it is creating a pinch for those students.

Senator MURKOWSKI. Mr. Chairman, I would think that in light of the just devastating statistics that we have with our Native American students that this would be an area where the Department, through their regulations, could work administratively to perhaps make sure that things measure up between the financial aid and the ability to access that and as we are trying to get these

students really safely integrated into a system so it doesn't fail them.

The CHAIRMAN. I agree. Senator Johnson?

Senator JOHNSON. I appreciated learning about the successes at Chief Dull Knife College in regard to the implementation of Native language education in the classroom. Is data being collected to understand the role that Native language has in retention rates?

Ms. STUDLEY. That is an interesting question. I don't know if we have looked at it specifically. Clearly we know that things that engage students in the curriculum, that make them feel at home at college and when there is something that they want to learn and want to continue learning, are important. I am not familiar with whether we or the colleges have specifically looked at whether that increases retention. I hope it does. Let me see if we can amplify that.

Senator JOHNSON. Will you look into that?

Ms. STUDLEY. Yes, absolutely, sir.

Senator JOHNSON. I was pleased to learn that three times as many masters degrees were awarded in Native students in 2012 than in 2002. What contributed to this sharp increase and what degrees were most sought by Native students?

Ms. STUDLEY. I don't know the degrees off hand. We were also very pleased to see that. I imagine it is a number of forces ranging from the institutions themselves seeking these students, the preparation that they had from the colleges that they attended. We can let you know what fields they were in. I believe that teaching was one of the fields for growing masters degrees, which would be a tribute to the very programs that we began with.

But let me let you know how those break down.

Senator JOHNSON. As you know, in December of 2011, President Obama signed an executive order calling for a two-part four-year plan in which Federal agencies focused on expanding education opportunities and improving outcomes for Native American students. What progress has been made thus far at the Department of Education regarding the President's order?

Ms. STUDLEY. In February, following that, the President's Inter-Agency Working Group on Indian Education brought together 29 Federal agencies to implement that executive order. The development of those plans is underway but has indeed not been fully realized at this point.

One of the things that we realized was that the request for the plans was made perhaps too informally and we are in the process of making a much clearer request for the two-part, four-year plans with more specific guidelines and a clearer delivery date. We expect to have that clearer guidance go out this summer and to have consultations on the draft agency plans by this winter.

Senator JOHNSON. Very good. You highlight that Native student achievement test scores have not improved when compared to non-Native students. What measures has the Department of Education taken to address this issue?

Ms. STUDLEY. Much of this work is at the elementary and secondary level. I know that you have had and will have again hearings on those particular issues. But as we work to distribute teachers who are capable of helping students reach satisfactory edu-

cational achievement levels, we hope that will be part of the solution. We also believe that States aligning curriculum with the tests these students will take will give them better signals about what they are going to be tested on and help them be better prepared to do well on those exams. But it is a tremendous challenge and it is one of the many markers that we look at to show that we still have quite a ways to go.

Senator JOHNSON. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Heitkamp.

STATEMENT OF HON. HEIDI HEITKAMP,
U.S. SENATOR FROM NORTH DAKOTA

Senator HEITKAMP. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is so incredibly frustrating, as I sit here and listen. Chairman Tester has started these hearings with early childhood, and you can see it building and building. As we go through each one of these steps, I think we get more and more frustrated, because we don't really see a plan to change outcomes.

And if we keep doing what we have always done and maybe tweak it around the edges, we are going to always get this result. So where is the dramatic change? I am hoping we will see some of that from the President. When he comes to North Dakota we are going to welcome him and he is going to spend some time with our children there.

I just want to tell a little story. I think it is probably a story here a lot of folks here know. It is about the two fishermen fishing away and all of a sudden the baby is in the water. They rescue the baby and this goes on quite a bit. Pretty soon the river is full of children. The one who is in the water rescuing the babies and handing them ashore walks away. And the one in the water saw the one in the water walk away. And the one on the shore said, you can't quit, we have these children. He said, you don't understand. I am walking upstream to stop people from throwing them in.

So at what point do we walk upstream and really change outcomes? I listen and I agree with you, better teachers, more accountability and what the elementary principals who were here a couple of weeks ago would have said is, where are my resources? You tell me where to find those teachers. You tell me where I find that accountability. All you are going to do is blame me and then you talk to the early childhood folks and they say, we can't do this without better institutions in prenatal, we can't do this without better health care, we can't do this without a better economy.

And I guess I just want to impress upon everyone who is involved in Indian education, yes, it is the way forward. But we have to recognize that instead of trying to fit all of our great ideas within programs, we have to start thinking about what kids need. And they need, as Senator Franken said, they need a good home. You know what? They don't have that in Indian Country. They need a family that is loving and supportive and not stressed with poverty. Guess what? A lot of them don't have that in Indian Country.

So I hope that as we look at strategies on improving educational attainment for Native American children we broaden our scope and understand that that process really is un achievable unless we

really do take a comprehensive community support for the change that we need.

With that said, I would tell you, I have met brilliant, and I agree with you and Senator Murkowski and a lot of people here, there are great kids who are coming out of the university systems, a lot of them have interned in my office. I see great hope there. If we really talk to those kids and say, look what a great job we have done, we are ignoring the 95 that fell through the cracks.

So what I really would like to ask is, what within your responsibility, how often do you have conversations about changing outcomes based on a holistic, community-wide, family-wide support?

Ms. STUDLEY. There are lots of different ways I could come at your question. One is that we think about how we can shift resources to the schools that are actually achieving results for the lowest income students. This would certainly put a focus on those schools that are serving Alaska Native and American Indian students.

Having schools be very clear with us in their reporting would allow us to provide more resources to those that are successfully graduating more AI/AN students from college or making progress toward increased graduation. These are the places that have shown us that they know how to improve results and where we can have hope that, if they have a little bit more to work with, they can reach more students or produce outcomes more consistently.

So, as you said, there are ways to look at outcomes but also to put resources behind it so we allocate them to the places doing the hardest job that we know about in American higher education that are taking people to completion.

Another is working with other agencies. As I mentioned, these plans are not just ours alone. There are 29 Federal agencies, at the very least, whose work affects the opportunity and ability of Native Americans and Alaska Natives, who have the resources, whether it is safety or health care or food and nutrition. Or the education that you can benefit from only if you actually have those in the first place. So part of it is interagency.

We are also looking at ways that communities can, or we can help communities that want to come together, through the school superintendent, college leaders, in this case tribal leaders, philanthropy, faith-based organizations, think about how we can make those partnerships better. The Administration is looking at how we can support those kinds of partnerships so that all the people who play a part in stronger communities and therefore in increased college success can benefit from what others are doing in other communities, from our smallest communities in rural neighborhoods to the large cities, where a number of these students are also educated.

So we are trying all of those approaches, interagency, institutional rewards for the successes that we see to help give those places the help that they need, and helping communities learn internally from each other and then from successful community partnerships. I think you are right on track.

The CHAIRMAN. There will be questions that will be presented to you that you will need to answer for the record.

I would just say that first of all, I want to thank you for being here today and want to thank you for your testimony and for answering questions. I really do hope that the Department really puts some priority on the challenges that are out there in Indian Country and across the board, too. This is the Indian Affairs Committee, so it is Indian Country.

The challenges are great, the opportunities are greater. I think that if we are able to think outside the box and work with some of the people on the next panel and others, we can come to solutions. I applaud your staying for the next panel. I think that is very, very good. Hopefully it won't put you in too much time difficulties.

With that, we will just say thank you and we will start the second panel.

Ms. STUDLEY. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. I would now like to ask our second panel to come forward. Our witnesses include Dr. Billie Jo Kipp, who is the President of Blackfeet Community College in Browning, Montana. They have a nice campus, very nice. Next we will hear from Ms. Cheryl Crazy Bull, President of the American Indian College Fund in Denver, Colorado. We will then turn to Dr. Thomas Purce, President of the Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington. Finally, we will hear from Melvin Monette, Director of Graduate Fellowships at the American Indian Graduate Center in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

I want to welcome all of you. I would remind you it is five minutes, there are four of you. We are going to have some questions and I don't know what kind of time constraints Senator Heitkamp is under, but if you can keep it to five minutes, we would appreciate it, knowing that your entire written testimony will be a part of the official record. We will start with you, Billie Jo. Thank you for being here.

STATEMENT OF BILLIE JO KIPP, PRESIDENT, BLACKFEET COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Ms. KIPP. Mr. Chairman, I am Billie Jo Kipp, President of Blackfeet Community College in Browning, Montana. I ask that my full statement be included in this hearing's record.

On behalf of my college and the Nation's 36 other tribal colleges and universities, which are collectively the American Indian Higher Education Consortium, thank you for this opportunity to speak on tribal higher education. I thank the Committee, and you in particular, Mr. Chairman, for your ongoing support which enables TCUs to serve more than 88,000 American Indians and Alaska Natives each year through academic and community programs at more than 75 sites in 16 States.

Mr. Chairman, the Federal Government's modest investment in tribal colleges is yielding a tremendous return. In Montana, the investment in tribal colleges is powerful. Half of all Native students in higher education in our State attend our seven TCUs, with the largest percentage, 13 percent, at BCC. Most Native students enrolled in Montana's State universities are likely there because of a tribal college.

This Committee has heard the challenges facing Indian Country: poverty, broken social services, dysfunctional governments and more. These challenges are serious, but not insurmountable. They do not define us. Hope defines us. It is ability to look back, to draw from our stories, our songs, our history and our language to build a better world on our own land. Tribal colleges are transforming this vision into reality.

BCC, along with all the tribal colleges, takes up in a few pitiful dollars and shapes them into opportunity for educational success, healthier lives, revitalized languages and safer environments for our people. At BCC, we have established early childhood and elementary education programs at the associate level to begin building a workforce of Blackfeet teachers, because our children learn best when they have teachers who look like them. All TCUs are committed to growing more Native teachers.

Half of all Native special ed teachers in Montana today are SKC graduates. BCC and SKC could enroll 40 to 50 American Indian teacher aides in four-year elementary ed degree programs if we had funding to provide scholarships and expand our capacity. But the key Federal resource for tribal teacher development in the Office of Indian Education has been on a downward funding trend almost since it was reestablished in 2000. BCC has not received a grant through that program for years. But still we find ways to encourage success, including developing a behavioral health training program for K–12 teacher aides on our reservation, so they can help address challenges facing our children.

BCC and other Montana TCUs are leading Indian Country in our commitment to sustainable environment. BCC built the first Platinum LEEDS certified building in Indian Country. Little Bighorn College followed us, building the largest. Both buildings house vital community-based programs. Today they are the only Platinum LEEDS certified buildings in Indian Country.

Unfortunately, a few years ago the President and Congress eliminated the very modest eight HUD TCU program which had provided seed money that we leveraged with other financing to construct these buildings. HUD TCUP was a $5 million program annually, which we leveraged ten to one to build wellness centers, computer labs, Head Start Centers and libraries for our communities.

You have been to our communities. You have seen the tremendous need. Please help us restore this program.

In workforce development, BCC has developed stackable nursing programs. We just graduated our largest group of American Indian LPNs. Soon we will offer an accredited RN program.

We also have an innovative behavioral health aide program and are partnering with the University of Montana on a social work degree program. Soon BCC hopes to join SKC and Oglala Lakota College as the Nation's top producers of American Indian RNs and social workers.

Again, we are achieving these goals with little support from key Federal agencies. TCU proposals to HRSA and other agencies are turned down year after year. We cannot compete with major universities. Within the larger Federal health workforce training programs, we need and deserve a specific setaside for all tribal workforce training. Tribal colleges are academic institutions and student

success and completion are key. These are challenges, because more than 70 percent of our students require developmental education.

The CHAIRMAN. I would ask that you wrap up.

Ms. KIPP. Still, the overall retention rate has improved 32 percent. Again, the funding is the disparity. You have mentioned it. It is $22,000 for Howard, compared to $5,800 for the tribal colleges. With our treaties in one hand, the U.S. Constitution in the other, and the hope of our Nation in our hearts, we ask your commitment to work with us to address longstanding inequities and make a proven investment in tribal higher education. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Kipp follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF BILLIE JO KIPP, PRESIDENT, BLACKFEET COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the Committee, my name is Billie Jo Kipp. I am a member the Blackfeet tribe, President of Blackfeet Community College in Browning, Montana, and a member of the Board of Directors of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC). On behalf of my institution, Blackfeet Community College, and the 36 other Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) in the U.S. that compose AIHEC, thank you for inviting me to testify at this hearing examining higher education for American Indian students.

It is an honor to speak with the members of this Committee about Tribal Colleges and the work we are doing to transform Indian Country. We are also grateful to have the opportunity to thank you in person, Chairman Tester, for your tremendous work on behalf of the seven tribal communities in Montana and all Native people.

My statement touches on three topics: The Tribal College Movement in general; the accomplishments and challenges of TCUs in bring high-quality, culturally appropriate higher education opportunities to our students and outreach programs to our communities; and some recommendations that will help us address our collective mission of improving the lives of our students through higher education and moving American Indians toward self-sufficiency. I submit this written statement for the Hearing Record.

Background: The Tribal College Movement

Mr. Chairman, you and many of the members of this Committee know the Tribal Colleges well. Perhaps no other Members of Congress know better our challenges: as some of the most poorly funded institutions of higher education in the country, our struggle is a daily one. Yet, you also know of our considerable successes, from our work to build self-esteem and change the life and future of our students through nurturing educational environments that are culturally based and uniquely relevant to our students, to our efforts to build stronger and more prosperous Tribal nations through the restoration of our languages, community outreach programs and applied research on issues relevant to our land and our people, workforce training in fields critical to our reservation communities, and community-centered economic development and entrepreneurial programs.

Tribal Colleges and Universities are a vital and essential component of American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) education. Currently, 37 TCUs operate more than 75 campuses and sites in 16 states, within whose geographic boundaries 80 percent of all American Indian reservations and federal Indian trust land lie. We serve students from well over 250 federally recognized tribes, 80 percent of whom receive federal financial aid. In total, TCUs annually serve about 88,000 AIs/ANs through a wide variety of academic and community-based programs. In Montana, 50 percent of all American Indians enrolled in higher education attend one of seven TCUs in our state, and a full 13 percent are students of Blackfeet Community College. In fact, according to all available statistics on American Indians enrolled in federally recognized Indian tribes and currently engaged in higher education nationally, more than 50 percent attend TCUs. [1]

TCUs are public institutions accredited by independent, regional accreditation agencies and like all U.S. institutions of higher education must periodically undergo

[1] This statistic excludes self-reporting, which despite having been shown in studies to be unreliable, is the measure used by the Department of Education's White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native Education.

stringent performance reviews to retain their accreditation status. Currently, all TCUs offer associate degrees; 13 TCUs offer multiple bachelor's degrees, and five TCUs offer master's degrees. Each TCU is committed to improving the lives of its students through higher education and to moving American Indians toward self-sufficiency.

Tribal colleges are public institutions of higher education and, as such, student access and success are core goals. These present real challenges, because more than 70 percent of our students require developmental education in mathematics, and more than half need remedial work in reading and writing. Still, the overall TCU retention rate has improved 32 percent in eight years and our graduation rate is up 17 percent. TCUs have achieved this through first year experience programs, integrating academics with student support, and putting research in the classroom. Yet, while our retention and completion rates have improved, our operations funding has not.

Tribal Colleges are first and foremost academic institutions, but because of the number of challenges facing Indian Country—high unemployment, poorly developed economies, poor health status, and lack of stable community infrastructures, our colleges are called upon to do much more than provide higher education services. TCUs often run entrepreneurial and business development centers; many TCUs are the primary GED/Hi SET or other HS equivalency program and Adult Basic Education provider on our reservations, and most if not all TCUs provide a variety of evening, weekend training and para-professional programs for tribal employees, BIA and IHS staff, K–12 schools, tribal courts and justice system staff, and many others. TCUs run day care centers and Head Start programs, health nutrition education programs, community gardens, and often, the community library and tribal museum or archives.

Perhaps most important, Blackfeet Community College and all of the TCUs are actively and aggressively working to preserve and sustain their own tribal language and culture. All TCUs offer Native language courses. In some cases, the tribal language would have been completely lost if not for the local Tribal College. Turtle Mountain Community College in Belcourt, North Dakota, was established primarily for this purpose, and over the years, its success in writing and revitalizing the Turtle Mountain Chippewa language has been remarkable. Aaniiih Nakoda College in Montana runs a K–6 language immersion school, right on campus. At the White Clay Immersion School, children learn the White Clay language and culture in addition to subjects they would routinely study at any other school.

Many TCUs offer unique associate and bachelor degree programs, as well as in-service training, in elementary education. At the TCUs, teacher education programs follow cultural protocols and emphasize the use of Native language in everyday instruction.

Tribal Colleges have advanced American Indian higher education significantly since we first began in the late 1960s/early 1970s. Yet despite these advances funding for TCUs remains grossly inadequate:

(1) Tribal Colleges are not state institutions, and consequently, we receive little or no state funding. In fact, very few states provide support for the non-Indian state residents attending TCUs, which account for about 20 percent of all Tribal College students. However, if these same students attended a state institution, the state would be required to provide the institution with operational support for them. This is something we are trying to rectify through education and public policy change at the state and local level.

(2) The tribal governments that chartered Tribal Colleges are not among the handful of enormously wealthy gaming tribes located near major urban areas that one reads about in the mass media. Rather, they are some of the poorest governments in the nation.

(3) Finally, the Federal Government, despite its trust responsibility and treaty obligations, has never fully funded our primary institutional operations source, the Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities Assistance Act. Today, the Act is appropriated at about $5,850 per full time Indian Student, which after over 30 years is still only about 73 percent of the level authorized by Congress to operate these institutions.

Faced with ever rising costs of day-to-day operations, to continue to thrive and expand as community-based educational institutions, TCUs must stabilize, sustain, and increase our basic operational funding. Through tools such as AIHEC's comprehensive data collection initiative, AIHEC AIMS, which includes more than 120 quantitative and qualitative indictors on which all TCUs report annually, we hope to better educate the public, lawmakers, and federal officials about the cost-effective

success of our institutions. Through opportunities such as this, we hope to share with the Congress and others how we are helping to meet the challenges facing our tribal nations.

Accomplishments and Challenges

Since our inception, Blackfeet Community College—like all TCUs—has taken hope and a pitifully few dollars, and shaped them into opportunity: opportunity for success throughout the education continuum, early childhood to college; healthier lifestyles; more prosperous communities; revitalized languages; and safer environments for all of our people. We make all of this possible as holistic tribal institutions of higher education, but over the past several years, changes in federal policy and funding priorities have made our work even more difficult.

The Education Continuum:

Head Start: With the reauthorization of the Head Start program in the mid-1990s, Congress imposed new performance and professional competency requirements. Specifically, at least 50 percent of Head Start teachers nation-wide were to have a baccalaureate or advanced degree in early childhood education or a baccalaureate or advanced degree in any subject and coursework equivalent to a major relating to early childhood education with experience teaching preschool-age children, and 50 percent of all teacher assistants were to have had an associate's degree or enrolled in an associate's program. While the department may be prepared to declare that this nationwide goal has been achieved, far less than half of Head Start teachers in the American Indian/Alaska Native Head Start Program area hold an associate's or bachelor's degree. Indian children deserve the best, and the TCUs are ideal catalysts for preparing Indian Head Start teachers so that they might offer these children the Head Start programs they deserve. Until the mid-2000s, the TCU-Head Start program helped TCUs build capacity in early childhood education and provided scholarships and stipends for Indian Head Start teachers and teacher's aides to enroll in TCU early childhood programs. Unfortunately, the program was eliminated despite the great need to expand educational opportunities for Head Start teachers and aides.

Teacher Preparation: Of the 34 accredited TCUs, 29 offer early childhood and elementary education associate's degrees and 10 TCUs have their own elementary education bachelor's degree programs. In fact, education program students represent 10 percent of all declared majors at TCUs and in 2011–12; 10 percent of all certificates and degrees earned at TCUs were in education. Growth in the American Indian teacher workforce is critically important because we know that children learn best and are more likely to graduate high school and attend college when they have teachers with whom they can relate—teachers who look like them.

TCUs are committed to building a Native-speaking teacher workforce, and all TCU elementary education programs stress culturally and developmentally appropriate pedagogy and embed community values and tribal culture in the content. Their strategies are working. For example, half of all the Native special education teachers in Montana graduated from Salish Kootenai College. At Blackfeet Community College students who decide to major in Blackfeet language or Blackfeet studies are strongly encouraged to apply for the Class 7 Teaching License through Montana's Office of Public Instruction office. Today, BCC and SKC could easily enroll 40–50 American Indian teacher aides in elementary education bachelor's degree programs if we had funding to provide scholarships and expand our capacity. But the key federal funding source for tribal teacher development, operated by the Department of Education's Office of Indian Education, has been on a downward funding trend almost since it was re-established in 2000.

BCC has not received a grant through the program for several years. Still, we continue to encourage success, including developing a behavioral health training program for K–12 teacher's aides on our reservation, so they can recognize and help address fundamental challenges facing our little ones. We need your help, Mr. Chairman, to reinforce the TCUs' role in American Indian teacher preparation and increase the number of TCUs able to participate in the grant program designed to build an American Indian Teacher/Administrator Corps.

Dual Credit: American Indian youth have the highest high school drop-out rates in the nation. Research tells us that keeping students engaged and setting achievable goals and realistic expectations are keys to completion. For this reason, nearly all of the TCUs are currently engage in dual credit programs that are designed to keep American Indian high school students engaged in school, to graduate, and to pursue higher education goals. All of these programs are offered at little or no cost for the students and high schools. The TCUs—without any compensation from states or the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE)—offer this service at our expense

because we know it is one very effective way to help save our American Indian children. It gives them a path to a better future and opens a world of opportunity.

TCUs will continue to offer these life-changing and life-saving programs, but over the past few years, we have been urging the BIE and various states to work with us to expand these programs and level the playing field.

Improve Native Workforce Opportunity: Re-establish the TCU Adult Basic Ed/GED Training Program: In the mid-1990s Congress eliminated a modest set-aside within the Adult Basic Education block grant program that funded vitally needed TCU GED and ABE training programs. Now, all federal funding goes to the states, which rarely—and minimally—fund tribal GED programs. Despite the absence of dedicated funding, TCUs must find a way, often using already insufficient institutional operating funds, to continue to provide adult basic education classes for those American Indians that the present K–12 Indian education system has failed. Before many individuals can even begin the course work needed to learn a productive skill, they first must earn a GED. The new GED exam, which was instituted in January 2014, has a much stronger focus on mathematics. As noted earlier, placement tests for TCU-entering students reveal a tremendous need for math remediation. Additionally, the new GED test is fully computerized. While younger GED seekers may be comfortable with computer-based testing, older citizens may not be. These factors indicate a continuing and growing need for adult basic educational programs and GED preparation on Indian reservations. TCUs must have sufficient and stable funding to continue to provide these essential services and to ensure their communities' residents have the same chances to succeed as others throughout the country. American Indians have the highest high school drop-out rates, highest unemployment, and highest poverty rates in the nation. With the launch of the new GED, the need for this modest program (ED–OVAE) is even more critical. The fix is simple, no-cost, and life-changing.

Egregious Funding Inequities: Despite a proven return on investment, trust responsibility, and binding treaty obligations, Tribal Colleges have never been adequately funded by the federal government. The Tribally Controlled Colleges & Universities Assistance Act of 1978 authorizes $8,000/Indian Student (ISC) for TCUs' operating budgets, but TCUs currently are receiving only $5,850/Indian student. The president requests and Congress appropriates over $200 million annually to operate Howard University (HU), the only other Minority Serving Institution that receives federal operating funds. HU's federal operating funding is almost $22,000/student. HU needs this funding—so do TCUs.

Congress designated TCUs as land-grant institutions in 1994. Our USDA partnership is important because as American Indians, land is central to who we are. We are people of a place. Yet, the TCU (1994) land-grant programs are absurdly small compared to other land-grants, even though some of the reservations served by 1994 institutions are larger than several states. Here are the numbers for FY 2014:

Program	TCUS (1994s)—34	States (1862s)	HBCUs (1890s)—17
Extension (community outreach)	$4.4 million—competitive	$300 million—formula	$43.9 million
AG/land Research (basic, applied)	$1.8 million	$243.7 million	$52.5 million ($1M minimum)
FERTEP, CYFAR, McIntire-Stennis	NO	YES	YES

In addition to the basic funding inequity, the 1862 and 1890 land-grant institutions are eligible to compete for millions of dollars in funding from seven additional programs known as Smith-Lever 3(d) programs, including a Federal Recognized Tribes Extension Program and a Children, Youth and Families at Risk initiative, in which the 1994 Tribal College land-grants are barred from participation. Consistent with the philosophy of exclusion, the 1994 institutions also are barred from participating in the McIntire-Stennis Forestry program. This is particularly problematic in Montana, because Salish Kootenai College—which has the only 4-year forestry degree program among the TCUs—is shut out of this vital program despite the tremendous need for applied research on tribal forests. Some people do not like to hear about these disparities. Yet, these are the facts.

The negative funding impact for Tribal colleges and our students is compounded in that we are already being disproportionately impacted by ongoing efforts to reduce the federal budget deficit and control federal spending. The FY 2011 Continuing Resolution eliminated all of the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) community-based programs, including a critically needed TCU–HUD facilities program. Through this modest but vital pro-

gram, TCUs were able to maximize leveraging potential, often 10-to-1, securing far greater non-HUD funding to construct and equip Head Start and early childhood centers; student and community computer laboratories and public libraries; and student and faculty housing in rural and remote communities where few and sometimes none of these facilities existed.

Important STEM programs, administered by the National Science Foundation and NASA were also cut, and for the first time since the NSF program was established in FY 2001, no new TCU–STEM awards were made in FY 2011. While NSF–TCUP grants resumed in FY 2012, a year of grant opportunity was lost. Additionally, TCUs and their students suffer the realities of cuts to programs such as GEAR–UP, TRIO, SEOG, and are seriously impacted by the new highly restrictive Pell Grant eligibility criteria more profoundly than mainstream institutions of higher education, which can realize economies of scale due to large endowments, alternative funding sources, including the ability to charge higher tuition rates and enroll more financially stable students, and access to affluent alumni. The loss of opportunities that cuts to DoEd, HUD, NSF, and NASA programs represent to TCUs, is magnified by cuts to workforce development programs within the Department of Labor, nursing and allied health professions tuition forgiveness and scholarship programs operated by the Department of Health and Human Services, and an important TCU-based nutrition education program planned by USDA. Combined, these cuts strike at the most economically disadvantaged and health-challenged Americans.

Mr. Chairman, the issues I have outlined demonstrate that the educational challenges we face are systemic. Studies, pilot projects, short-lived funding strategies have led us to some viable, cost-effective, and proven solutions. What will it take to move forward? It will take two things: First, a commitment to act—a commitment to move beyond talk and toward a common vision for Strong Tribal Nations through Excellence in Tribal Higher Education. Second, it will take resources, albeit modest, to make an investment in proven strategies for success. What will Congress and the nation get for the modest investments outlined below? I can guarantee a rate of return on your investment of at least 14.3 percent. According to an independent analysis by the American Association of Community Colleges, the nation's community colleges—which includes all tribal colleges—yield a return of $5.80 for every dollar spent (or a 14.3 percent rate of return), for academic programs alone. For TCUs, this accounts for about one-third of all of our students, so an investment in TCUs should yield an even higher return.

Recommendations

Recommendation One: Revive the TCU-Head Start Partnership program by directing the Head Start Bureau to designate a minimum of $7 million of the $8.86 billion recommended for Head Start Programs in the FY 2015 Budget, to the TCU-Head Start Partnership program, to revive this vital partnership and ensure that this program can continue and expand so that all TCUs have the opportunity to participate in the TCU-Head Start partnership program and help in achieving the goals of Head Start for children in Indian Country.

Recommendation Two: Specifically and clearly reinforce the lead role of TCUs in American Indian Teacher Preparation by increasing the required partnerships with a TCU in applying for American Indian Teacher/Administrator Corps professional development grants designed to increase the number of American Indian teachers and administrators serving their reservation communities and provide a minimum of $10,000,000 to fund these critically needed competitive awarded grants.

Recommendation Three: Re-establish a TCU Adult Basic Education competitive grants program. TCUs recommend that a minimum of $8,000,000 of the funds appropriated annually for the Adult Education and Family Literacy grants be made available to make competitive awards to TCUs to help meet the growing demand for adult basic education and remediation program services on their respective reservations.

Recommendation Four: Congress should direct the Bureau of Indian Education to develop and fund a mechanism to reimburse and expand dual credit programs for BIE high school students attending TCUs; and to the extent possible, Congress should encourage states to reimburse TCUs for dual credit courses, just as they do every other public institution of higher education in their state.

Recommendation Five: Adopt a 5–Year Plan to Address Long-term TCU Inequalities in Federal Programs. We need a commitment to establishing a process, beginning in the FY2015 Budget/Appropriations cycle, that: (1) identifies current funding inequities faced by TCUs in federal programs; and (2) works steadily to rectify them. As a first step, we urge the Committee to specifically question the Depart-

ment of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture on these inequities and their efforts to address them.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, we recognize and greatly appreciate you as a strong proponent of the Tribal Colleges and Universities. And now more than ever, we need your help. The time for studies, commissions, and talk is past. We all know the problems. TCUs have solutions. We have created tribal institutions that are sound and stable; that have a high return on investment; and that have the power to transform Indian Country. We ask that you and the members of this committee work with us to find viable ways of achieving our fair funding goals so that we may continue to bring access and excellence to our students and the communities we serve.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

We have two votes at 4 o'clock. I want to get through this panel before we have to leave. I want to hear what Mr. Monette has to say.

Go ahead, Cheryl.

STATEMENT OF CHERYL CRAZY BULL, PRESIDENT/CEO, AMERICAN INDIAN COLLEGE FUND

Ms. CRAZY BULL. Good afternoon, Chairman Tester and honorable Senators. My name is Cheryl Crazy Bull. I am the President and CEO of the American Indian College Fund.

The mission of the fund is to support programs and operations of this Nation's tribal colleges and universities and to provide scholarships for access and success for tribal college students and for a limited number of Native students attending mainstream institutions. Our support is made possible through the generous contributions of individuals, foundations and corporations, because we bring private sector resources to tribal colleges and universities and their students.

You are already aware of the significant gap in participation in higher education by Native people. A contributing factor is the funding for financial aid for these students. The average income of first-time entering students at TCUs is $15,262. The average cost of a TCU education is $13,800. Only one in 20 of the fund scholarship applicants can afford to go to college without financial aid.

Nationally, 36 percent of students receive Pell, but at tribal colleges, the average is 80 percent and in some cases as high as 90 percent. The gap between the average cost of $13,800 and a maximum Pell award of $5,645 is $8,155 of unmet need.

I also want to note that the Pell grant participation is not a substitute for adequate Federal operational funding of the TCUs. I also want to note that only two TCUs participate in Federal loan programs. As TCUs have grown 23 percent in the last five years, this gap will continue to be a significant issue.

Our institutions are rural and technologically isolated. Transportation remains a huge concern. Fifty-nine percent of TCU students are first generation students, and our students continue to combat significant social and educational issues, such as generational poverty and unemployment.

The college fund has a major role in supporting access and success. In 2013, we provided over 6,000 scholarships averaging $1,403 through 226 different scholarship programs. In the last 25 years, we have given approximately $78 million out in nearly 100,000 scholarships.

We were recently selected, along with the American Indian Graduate Center, to administer the Cobell Education Scholarship Fund. The first meeting with the Cobell board of trustees will be next week, and we expect to begin distributing scholarships this fall.

Our road map for tribal higher education through the college fund is to support strategies that help us achieve what other national organizations and the President have supported, which is a 60 percent post-secondary credentialing or degree completion among the population served by our tribal colleges. At the American Indian College Fund, we support early childhood education in K–12 programs associated with the tribal colleges, create opportunities for access in meaningful post-secondary education experiences that support persistence and completion of our students, which leads to gainful employment.

We need our tribal colleges to remain open, to be financially viable and to grow as institutions. So we need your continued support for full funding of tribal colleges and their students, for the support of adult and remedial education, to support child care and expanded student support services, all within your domain as the Senate Committee, in order for us to have our shared dream of prosperity come true. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Crazy Bull follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CHERYL CRAZY BULL, PRESIDENT/CEO, AMERICAN INDIAN COLLEGE FUND

Introduction

Greetings. I am Cheryl Crazy Bull, a citizen of the Sicangu Lakota Oyate from the Rosebud Reservation of South Dakota and the President and CEO of the American Indian College Fund. Thank you for inviting me here today to talk to you about the financial needs of American Indian and Alaska Native students when seeking a higher education at tribal colleges and universities (TCUs).

About the American Indian College Fund

The American Indian College Fund (the College Fund) is a non-stock corporation with tax-exempt status pursuant to Internal Revenue Service Code Section 501(c)(3). The College Fund was established 25 years ago by the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) with the mission to provide scholarships to American Indian and Alaskan Native students seeking a higher education and to support tribal colleges and universities that are located on or near Indian reservations. Tribal colleges and universities, also known as TCUs, are located on or near Indian reservations to provide Native people with access to an affordable, culturally sensitive, quality higher education.

Native and Tribal College Student Profile

Nationwide, Native youth face some of the lowest high school graduation rates. American Indian/Alaska Native educational attainment rates are the lowest of all ethnic and racial groups. Less than 13 percent of American Indian and Alaska Natives earned a college degree as compared to 28 percent of other racial groups *(U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics)*.

The reason for low higher education attainment amongst Native people may be due in part to poverty, making financial assistance critical for Native student success. The average income of first-time entering TCU students is $15,262, contrasted with the average cost of a TCU education at $13,800 (of which the average annual tuition cost of $2,964 is included) *(Source: AIHEC)*. Studies of American Indian College Fund scholarship applicants show that only 1 in 20 can afford to attend college without financial assistance. *(Source: American Indian College Fund)*. This should be no surprise based on the economic profile of our students' communities. Seven of the 10 poorest counties in the United States have a TCU, and on TCU reservations unemployment rates are generally greater than 50 percent. *(Source: AIHEC)*.

Tribal college students' participation in the federal Pell Grant program is also an excellent indicator of financial need. As you know, only the neediest students are

eligible for Pell Grants. Students attending tribal colleges demonstrate very high need by the high percentage of students who receive Pell Grants at tribal colleges. The national average for all students receiving Pell Grants at all schools in academic year 2012–2013 was 36 percent *(Source: College Board)*. Tribal colleges have a much higher percentage of students who receive Pell Grants, with approximately 80 percent of TCU students receiving Pell Grants. The number is even higher at some tribal colleges with more than 90 percent of their student body receiving Pell Grants *(Source: AIHEC)*.

Pell Grants help fill some of the gap for tribal college students, but it is not enough. The maximum Pell Grant amount per academic year is $5,645. With an average cost of TCU education at $13,800, that leaves an average of $8,155 in unmet need. Unfortunately, only two TCUs participate in the federal student loan program, leaving that need unfilled for most Native students *(Source: AIHEC)*.

Despite inadequate and inequitable federal funding for TCUs (tribal colleges are the most poorly funded institutions of higher learning in the United States compared to historically black colleges and universities and state land-grant institutions) TCUs themselves help to bridge the need gap by writing off an average of $100,000 in uncollectable tuition costs annually. *(Source: AIHEC)*.

With so much unmet student need for funding and the trend TCUs are seeing in enrollment growth by 23 percent over the past five years as more students see a higher education as a path to self-subsistence and a better life, the need will only increase. *(Source: AIHEC)*. Scholarships and programmatic support for the TCUs are the way to match that need. Unmet need will only result in fewer students and lost opportunities for Native people to become self-sufficient, providing better lives for themselves, their families, and opportunities for their entire communities.

Non-Financial Profile of Native Students Attending Tribal Colleges

In addition to growing up and living in areas burdened with disproportionate rates of poverty, tribal college students also face other unique challenges which can interfere with their ability to obtain a higher education.

Many tribal college students travel staggering distances to attend college. The average commute for a tribal college student is 30–100 miles one way *(Source: AIHEC)*. And in rural reservation communities, there is often no transportation system in place. When living in poverty, a car (or money for gas) is another cost that makes attending college impossible without financial assistance. Distance learning might help fill the gap for students with transportation challenges, but low bandwidth in many reservation communities and the fact that so many Native people do not have computers in the home make this unrealistic at present for many students and potential students. (According to the *Federal Communications Commission* in 2011, American Indian tribes could be the most underserved group of Americans in the country, with only 68 percent having access to telephones and less than 10 percent to broadband. According to the FCC, the actual percentage, based on anecdotal evidence, may be even lower, at just 5 to 8 percent. By comparison, approximately 65 percent of all Americans use broadband.)

Tribal college students also have family commitments that create financial need, such as children they care for, or elders. Although this has become less of a concern as more students entering TCUs are younger, it is always an issue in Native communities, where extended families often live together. For the academic year 2011–2012, twenty-nine percent of first-time TCU students were between the ages of 25 and 34, with 27 percent between the ages of 18 and 21, 18 percent between the ages of 35 and 49, 17 percent between the ages of 22–24, 7 percent between the ages of 50–64, 1 percent between the ages of 15–17, and 1 percent age 65 and greater. *(Source: AIHEC)*. In addition, 59 percent of all students (and 52 percent of first-time entering students) at tribal colleges are the first in their families to attend college. *(Source: AIHEC)*.

Tribal colleges are open admission institutions, no student is turned away. This means that anywhere from a few to dozens of students from the rural communities located on or near reservations attend TCUs. As a result, tribal colleges serve a unique role as rural education providers throughout many states in the Upper Midwest, Great Plains and in the Southwest.

Tribal college students' financial need is compounded by the social issues they are confronted with, including the lack of role models, identity and self-esteem issues rooted in historical trauma, generational poverty and unemployment, and continued oppression.

These issues are in turn compounded by issues of academic readiness and lack of modern services in schools and Native communities, including low college preparedness levels of Native youth (74 percent require remedial math instruction and 50 percent requiring remedial reading or writing), and inadequate funding for Title

III student support services, and the lack or scarcity of college counselors and 21st century counseling programs available to high school students in Native communities. *(Source: AIHEC).*

How the American Indian College Fund Helps Fill the Gap

The American Indian College Fund is the largest private provider of scholarships to American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) students in the United States. We attempt to fill the need gap by providing desperately needed scholarships to tribal college students. We provide scholarships by fundraising with private donors, including individuals, corporations, and foundations who generously support our mission.

In order to qualify for a scholarship with the American Indian College Fund, students must meet the following minimum criteria: have U.S. citizenship; be enrolled in an accredited tribal college or university; be enrolled full-time enrollment is required for the Full Circle Scholarship Program, but not for the TCU Scholarship Program; be registered as a member of a federal or state recognized tribe, or a descendant of at least one grandparent or parent who is an enrolled tribal member (Alaska Natives may also use Native Corporation membership); submit a completed on-line application; and have a minimum cumulative grade point average of a 2.0 for the Full Circle Scholarship Program (there is no grade point average requirement for the TCU Scholarship Program).

In the academic year 2012–13 the American Indian College Fund funded 3831American Indian and Alaska Native students with an average scholarship of $1,403 per recipient. The College Fund administered 226 scholarship programs that year. In sum total, in our 25 years the American Indian College Fund has provided nearly 100,000 scholarships totaling $78,000,000. *(Source: American Indian College Fund)*.

The total number of applications the American Indian College Fund received for both Full Circle and TCU Scholarships since 2010 is as follows *(Source: American Indian College Fund):*

Year	Full Circle program tribal college apps	Full Circle program non-tribal college apps	Full Circle program total apps	TCU program apps	Total apps submitted	Unduplicated count of recipients
09–10	313	69	382	5056	5438	3484
10–11	525	500	1025	4957	5982	3529
11–12	467	658	1125	5314	6439	4218
12–13	1228	1452	2680	5900	8580	3831
13–14	1874	2296	4170	5462	9632	n/a
14–15	2040	2806	4846	n/a	n/a	n/a

(2014–2015 data current as of June 1, 2014)

While the main focus of the College Fund is to support tribal college students, we also provide scholarships to AIAN students at public and private colleges all across the nation. In the last 5 years 660 non-tribal college students have received scholarship awards totaling over $8,400,000.

The Cobell Education Scholarship Fund

In addition to providing scholarships through our partnerships with private donors, the American Indian College Fund was named by the U.S. Department of the Interior and the plaintiffs of *Cobell v. Salazar* to administer the Cobell Education Scholarship Fund. Graduate student scholarships will comprise 20 percent of the annual awards, and the American Indian Graduate Center (AIGC) of Albuquerque, New Mexico, was named by the U.S. Department of the Interior and the plaintiffs to distribute the graduate student scholarships.

The scholarship was created as part of the $3.4 billion Cobell settlement (IndianTrust.com) through the vision and leadership of the late Elouise Cobell, a member of the Blackfeet Nation in Montana, who initiated a class action lawsuit in 1996 on behalf of American Indians whose trust land funds had been mismanaged by the federal government on behalf of individual Indian land owners for decades. Before her passing, Cobell, the lead plaintiff in the case, said the set-aside of funds from the settlement for a higher education would "mean a great deal. . .to the Indian youth whose dreams for a better life including the possibility of one day attending college can now be realized."

The implementation agreement between the American Indian College Fund, the Department of the Interior, and the plaintiffs was signed in March 2014.

To qualify for the scholarships, under the terms of the settlement agreement, students must meet the following criteria: Be an enrolled member of a federally recognized tribe or a direct descendant of a federally recognized tribe and be attending an accredited post-secondary vocational education at a vocational institution and is seeking a certificate in a career program; or an accredited four-year degree-granting public or private university and seeking an undergraduate degree; or an accredited public or private institution and seeking a graduate degree.

A Board of Trustees has been named to manage the Cobell Education Scholarship Fund. The first board meeting is scheduled June 17, 2014, to be held in Denver, Colorado. Members of the Board of Trustees include: Carla Fredericks, Three Affiliated Tribes, American Indian College Fund representative; Turk Cobell, Blackfeet, plaintiffs' representative; Alex Pearl, Chickasaw; plaintiffs' representative; Pam Agoyo, Cochiti, Kewa, Ohkay Owingeh Pueblos; Department of Interior representative; and Jean O'Brien, White Earth Ojibwe, Department of Interior representative.

The American Indian College Fund received an initial payment of nearly $580,000 on April 22, 2014. Most of this payment will seed administration of the Cobell Education Scholarship Fund and the operations costs of the Cobell board of trustees. We hope to receive a second payment to fund fall scholarships, and we will begin the full scholarship cycle after fall 2014. Establishing an endowment will be part of those efforts pending board of trustees' approval.

A web site has been created for the Cobell Education Scholarship Fund at www.ccobellscholarships.org where individuals can read news about the settlement and the scholarship fund, link to application portals for the scholarship, review the audited financials of the American Indian College Fund, and read information about student scholars after scholarships begin distribution.

Road Map for the Future

As we see the numbers of Native students enrolling at tribal colleges increasing, there is a growing need for scholarships and funding for programs at the tribal colleges that impact student success—while the unmet need continues for current tribal college students.

The American Indian College Fund's plan for the future is simple: we want to educate 60 percent of American Indian and Alaska Native people served by our tribal colleges and universities by 2025. With an educated American Indian and Alaska Native citizenry dedicated to working for change in their communities, we can transform Indian Country from a landscape of desperation to places of aspiration, inspiration, and imagination. This transformation contributes to a better America, one where equity and social justice thrive, and where diversity and identity are valued.

The American Indian College Fund will implement a four-step plan to provide students with financial access to a post-secondary education and to support tribal college programs and initiatives focused on student support so tribal college students succeed to positively impact their families and their communities. In the past 25 years the American Indian College Fund has distributed approximately $76,000,000 to support TCU capacity-building and student success efforts at the tribal colleges. Funding is also needed in this arena to ensure student success.

Step one of the plan includes funding the following programs to prepare students for future success. Students in grades kindergarten-fifth grade: early childhood education; Science, Technology, Education, and Mathematics (STEM) programs and initiatives; literacy; and Native language and cultural immersion. Students in sixth-twelfth grade: STEM programs and initiatives; leadership and mentoring; cultural education programs; learning labs; tutoring, study skills, and career planning; and bridge programs including early college programs.

Step two of the plan includes providing access to post-secondary education, including career and skills advising; GED preparation; college readiness and academic preparedness; financial support to make postsecondary education affordable; and building partnerships with high schools and community resources.

Step three is to provide meaningful higher learning opportunities, including academic, career, and technical education programs for a variety of career paths and skill levels; integrating technology as a resource for student learning and institutional advancement of student success; cultural integration and place-based educational strategies, including Native language; apprenticeships and internships; initiatives to support student adaptation to higher education for success; mentoring programs; leadership programs; fellowships and faculty development; development of candidates for future professional education; accreditation support; and partnerships and collaboration with private entities for supportive, cutting-edge learning opportunities.

Step four is to provide support for meaningful employment for tribal college graduates. Programs include counseling and support for new or first-time employment; career advancement planning; career centers; job search workshops and support; leadership programs; mentoring; and follow-up with tribal college alumni to assess program impact.

As we move forward into our next 25 years, the College Fund will strategically bring private sector dollars to the tribal colleges and their students to support all areas of institutional development and community outreach. The trust responsibility of the federal government to provide equitable and high quality educational access and success for AIAN is essential. We support the goals of AIHEC and the tribal colleges to develop greater federal funding to support tribal college student success in the following areas, particularly if sequestration is re-instituted: (1) federal funding for TCU operations so they can remain open and keep tuition low to provide student access to a higher education; (2) funding for GED/ABE programs so students can complete high school and continue their educations (on average, less than 50 percent of Native students graduate from high school each year in the seven states with the highest percentage of American Indian and Alaska Native students, according to *The Civil Rights Project*); (3) funding for day care centers at the TCUs (which are currently subsidized by about $250,000/year); and (4) funding for TCU student support services that directly impact student success, retention, and graduation rates.

Thank you for the opportunity to share testimony about the scholarships and program support for tribal colleges and their students.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Cheryl.

Dr. Purce?

STATEMENT OF THOMAS "LES" PURCE, PRESIDENT, EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE

Dr. PURCE. As a four-year interdisciplinary liberal arts college, Evergreen has been a leader in the advancement of higher education for American Indian students since the 1970s. Evergreen works on a government-to-government basis with tribes to jointly develop programs that respond to the needs of tribal people in the Northwest.

Our longhouse, our house of welcome, is an educational cultural center that was built in cooperation with our Native tribes and one of the first public buildings in the United States with that mission.

Evergreen offers three distinctive academic programs: a masters of public administration in tribal governance which began in 2002, which focuses on structures, processes and issues specific to tribal governments, preparing students for a wide range of jobs in tribal, Federal, State and local government. Evergreen's MPA program is the first degree program in this discipline. Our program has served as a model for other programs that are developing in the United States.

Second, our Native American and World Indigenous People Studies program on our Evergreen campus works to apply indigenous perspectives to Native studies and examines the effect of rural American social values and structures on Native history and contemporary life. The curriculum focuses on vitality and diversity of Native nations and respects the values of indigenous knowledge.

Third, our undergraduate Reservation Based Community Determined program is designed for place-bound students in reservations in their communities. This program has been reservation based from the beginning with most classes held on the reservations in western Washington. By design, the program's curriculum is guided by suggestions from tribal leaders, tribal education staff,

and other tribal specialists to ensure that the program's content addresses significant issues in Indian Country.

Our work and leadership in the advancement of higher education for Native American students is an evolving part of the college. We have named a special assistant to the President for tribal government relations to further strengthen the government-to-government relations between Evergreen, tribes in the United States and particularly in the Pacific Northwest.

Evergreen is also building future opportunities through an effort to expand our Longhouse Education Center. The college is embarking on a phase two plan to support the expansion and development of an indigenous arts campus and a launching of a masters in fine arts in indigenous arts.

In summary, the decisions we make today will have implications long into the future. Now is the time at which, we like to say at Evergreen, we must all dig deep and ensure that there is a national commitment to advancing higher education for American Indian students today and for the generations to come. We must make an investment to ensure that American Indian students have access to higher education, have resources necessary to be successful and that they graduate with the skills and credentials they need to make a difference for their communities and for their families.

The stakes are too high. We live in an increasingly complex world. And the tribal leaders are challenged to respond to the real impact of climate change and other threats to the environment, to treaty sovereignty and other challenges. At the same time, there are unprecedented opportunities through a variety of the kinds of economic development, changing technology, and the fastest growing demographic, Native youth. Well-educated tribal members can help negotiate the changing train on behalf of their communities.

The landscape in higher education is changing quickly and dramatically. The students in higher education and those who are at our doorstep are more diverse racially, ethnically and financially. If the United States is to be a competitive global Nation, we must make sure that each student is able to reach back and pull up the next generation.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Purce follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THOMAS "LES" PURCE, PRESIDENT, EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE

Chairman Tester, Vice Chairman Barrasso, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify this afternoon about higher education for American Indian students.

My name is Les Purce, and I am the President of The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington. Since opening our doors in 1971, Evergreen has established a national reputation for leadership in developing innovative interdisciplinary, collaborative and team-taught academic programs. We have a vibrant undergraduate program, three graduate programs, and public service centers that constitute a unique academic setting. Evergreen, the smallest public, baccalaureate institution in Washington with nearly 4,400 students, values a student-centered learning environment, a link between theory and practice, and a multicultural community of diverse faculty, students and staff working together.

The vibrancy and leadership of Evergreen is clearly illustrated in the College's unparalleled combination of academic and public service programs, designed in partnership with Northwest tribes, to make a lasting impact on education in Indian

Country. Since the 1970s, with the founding of the College, Evergreen has been a leader in the advancement of higher education for American Indian students. The College today embraces its Native student community of 6.1 percent—which is more than twice the proportion of 2.5 percent Native student across all public four-year colleges in Washington. An astounding 11.9 percent of all Evergreen graduate students are Native American, compared to only 2.2 percent of graduate students attending public universities statewide. The college's faculty is 6.5 percent Native, as are 4.7 percent of the College's noninstructional staff.

Evergreen's focuses on access to higher education for American Indian student goes hand in hand with our commitment to student success. American Indian undergraduate students experience an 81 percent fall-tofall retention rate, which is nearly identical to the College's 82 percent retention rate for undergraduates overall.

As stated by Bill Frank, Jr. (Nisqually), former member of the Evergreen Board of Trustees, "Evergreen is an institution of education that conveys the lessons of the past to the leaders of tomorrow. Through Native American and World Indigenous Peoples Studies, Evergreen transcends the limits of education to reach out to people of all backgrounds and beliefs."

Evergreen's Native American Academic and Public Service Programs: Our History and the Present

Our work and commitment to institutionalize the importance of advancing higher education for Native American students in partnership with tribal governments began in the early 1970s when the College was founded. In keeping with Washington State's Centennial Accord, Evergreen works on a government-to-government basis with tribes to jointly develop programs that respond to the needs of tribal people in the Northwest. Together these programs enable the college to continue and expand upon its history of responding, in partnership, to the educational needs of indigenous peoples.

Evergreen's "House of Welcome" Longhouse and Education and Cultural Center was the first building of its kind on a public campus in the United States. Over the last forty years the Longhouse has provided service and hospitality to students, the College, and the surrounding Native communities. The Longhouse has created a home and community base for artists and arts organizations throughout the United States and around the Pacific Rim. Its mission is to promote indigenous arts and cultures through education, cultural preservation, creative expression and economic development through the Native Artists Grants Programs, Native Artist Gatherings, Native Art Sales and Exhibitions, Artist-in-Resident Program, Northwest Heritage Program and International Indigenous Artists Exchange Program. Today the Longhouse manages a database of more than 2,000 indigenous artists, art organizations and arts supporters from four countries: the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

The spirit of the Longhouse is recreated on campus each day through dedicated outreach in response to the needs of indigenous peoples attending Evergreen. First Peoples Advising Services provides support to assist students in achieving their academic and personal goals through comprehensive academic, social and personal advising, referrals to campus and community resources and community-building educational events.

Evergreen offers three distinct academic programs. The Master of Public Administration (MPA) in Tribal Governance, which began in 2002, focuses on structures, processes and issues specific to tribal governments, preparing students for a wide range of jobs in tribal, federal, state and local governments and nonprofit organizations. Evergreen's MPA program is the first degree-granting program in this discipline and our program has been modeled by others, such as the University of Minnesota at Duluth.

The Native American and World Indigenous Peoples (NAWIPS) studies, an on-campus undergraduate program, applies indigenous perspectives to Native Studies and examines the effects of European/American social values and structures on Native history and contemporary life. NAWIPS curriculum focuses on the vitality and diversity of Native nations, and respects the value of indigenous knowledge. It examines the global effects of colonialism, the unique treaty relationships between tribal nations and settler governments, political decolonization and cultural revitalization in the contemporary era, and the responsibilities of non-Native neighbors and allies in this process. NAWIPS programs focus on the indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest, the Americas and the world.

The undergraduate Reservation Based Community Determined program is designed for place-bound students who are deeply connected to tribal communities. The program has been "reservation-based" from the beginning with most classes

held on Indian reservations in western Washington. By design, the program curriculum is guided by suggestions from tribal leaders, tribal education staff, and other tribal specialists (for example, Indian Child Welfare workers), to ensure that program content addresses significant community issues. Hundreds of students have earned their degrees through this program and gone on to graduate school and various positions in tribal government, social services, education, and other fields.

In addition to these programs, students at Evergreen can work with Native American faculty throughout the undergraduate curriculum (such as in the Expressive Arts), and in graduate programs such as the Master of Environmental Studies (MES) and Master in Teaching (MIT) programs. In all Evergreen programs, Native American students, community members and tribes have a dedicated place in higher education, and easy access to technology and research services.

Evergreen's academic and public service work is enhanced through specific efforts to develop culturally relevant curriculum and teaching resources in the form of case studies on key issues in Indian Country. In partnership with the Northwest Indian College, Salish Kootenai College, and Grays Harbor College, Evergreen initiated in 2006 the Enduring Legacies Native Case Initiative. The goal is to develop and widely disseminate culturally relevant curriculum and teaching. This initiative is supported through the Lumina Foundation for Education, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the National Science Foundation.

The Future

Our work and leadership in the advancement of higher education for Native American students is not yet done, but an evolving part of the College's identity. As the College continues to deepen our relationship with Native American communities we have named a Special Assistant to the President for Tribal Government Relations to further strengthen the government-to-government relationships between Evergreen and tribes in the United States, with particular emphasis on the Pacific Northwest. In collaboration with The Evergreen State College administration, the Longhouse, the Native Programs at Evergreen, and tribes, this position provides leadership in formulating and strengthening tribal relationships, initiatives and collaborative partnerships at Evergreen through strategic planning and support for Native initiatives and programs at Evergreen.

Evergreen is also building future opportunities through efforts to expand the Longhouse Education and Cultural Center. The College is embarking on Phase II of a $7 million capital campaign to support new program development and growth through the development of an Indigenous Arts Campus and the launch of a Masters of Fine Arts in Indigenous Art.

The Longhouse is currently in the process of continuing the design and development of a one of a kind indigenous arts campus where the art-making facilities and the surrounding campus are based on indigenous architectural design and cultural concepts. Collaboratively planned with Native artists, art scholars, tribal representatives, elected officials and art service organizations, the facility will allow the Longhouse to continue to serve as the focal point for coordination and administration of the new arts campus.

The Longhouse, with support from the Ford Foundation, has secured $1 million to build two of the four envisioned art studios on Evergreen's campus. The first, a carving studio in the shape of a replica longhouse, opened in 2012. The second, a fiber arts studio, is expected to open in 2016 and will pay tribute to the long-standing relationships among Salish and Maori peoples.

The Indigenous Arts Campus will provide a series of spaces to foster vibrant culturally interconnected art-making for indigenous peoples along the Pacific Rim. The new facilities will allow Evergreen and the Longhouse to leverage the networks and creative potential of the Longhouse's successful intergenerational programs, connect programmatically with the initiatives of surrounding tribes, and provide the opportunity for artists to work in media not readily available to them at home while being mentored by master artists from around the world. This vision will have far reaching economic and cultural impacts for artists, tribes and numerous rural communities by fostering significant professional development of emerging artists and opening new markets for their work.

Evergreen's Longhouse is also in the early stages of developing the first Masters of Fine Arts in Indigenous Arts in the United States. The program, to be launched for the 2016–2017 academic year, would provide an arts education that is grounded in indigenous cultural values, protocols, practices and forms of knowledge. In particular the degree would develop innovative, student-centered approaches to Indigenous Arts practice within a culturally affirming educational setting; affirm the expertise and academic authority of indigenous artists and scholars; and strategically

align the Longhouse's public service mission to promote indigenous arts and cultures with the academic mission of the College.

In Summary

The decisions we make today will have implications long into the future. Now is the time as we would say at Evergreen to "Dig Deep" and ensure that there is a national commitment to advancing higher education for American Indian students today and for generations to come, in partnership and collaboration with tribes. We must make an investment to ensure that American Indian students have access to higher education, have the resources necessary to be successful, and that they graduate with the skills and credentials they need to make a difference for their communities and their families.

The stakes are too high not to. We live in an increasingly complex world, and tribal leaders are challenged to respond to the very real impact of climate change and other threats to the environment, threats to tribal sovereignty, and other challenges. At the same time there are unprecedented opportunities through various kinds of economic development, changing technologies and the fastest growing demographic—Native youth. Well educated tribal members can help negotiate the changing terrain on behalf of their communities.

The landscape in higher education is changing quickly and dramatically. The students in higher education and those at the doorstep are more diverse racially, ethnically and financially. If the United States is to be competitive globally well into the twenty-first century we must make sure that no one is left behind and that each student is able to reach behind and pull the next generation through.

As stated by Vi Hilbert (1918–2008), Upper Skagit Elder and Daniel J. Evans Chair Scholar (1995), "When I first walked on that campus (Evergreen), the beautiful thing that I felt there was the Spirit. The Spirit said 'Come. This is a place for people to hear what your ancestors wanted you to pass on."

Thank you again for allowing me the opportunity to speak before your Committee today.

The CHAIRMAN. Almost to the second. Thank you, Dr. Purce.

Mr. Monette?

STATEMENT OF MELVIN MONETTE, DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE FELLOWSHIPS, AMERICAN INDIAN GRADUATE CENTER

Mr. MONETTE. Chairman Tester and members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity for the American Indian Graduate Center to be here. On behalf of Sam Deloria, our Director, and the board of directors, we appreciate the invitation.

The American Indian Graduate Center is a 45 year old national non-profit that has been serving American Indian and Alaska Native graduate and professional students since our inception. Among our diverse opportunities for funding, we administer 40 annual BIE Loans or Service scholarships to students across the Nation. The intent of this program is to provide agencies with well-trained, highly-qualified individuals to fill vacancies created by retirements and other attrition.

To date, we have funded 330 individuals who are either continuing their education, working in intended areas, seeking employment or have completed their required employment and are remain employed with American Indian or Alaska Native serving institutions or organizations. Additionally, AIGC manages private and corporate scholarship funds for both undergrad and graduate students. Our award winning program boasts high-level Federal appointees, tribal leaders, published researchers, large and small private business owners, some of your own congressional staff and many community leaders among our alumni. However, the numbers are small, and because we can still count them, name them and know them, we know this is not enough.

For the most recent academic year, 2013–2014, the American Indian Graduate Center funded 545 undergraduate, graduate and professional level students. These students represent 149 federally-recognized tribes, attend schools in 47 States and studied in 161 academic major areas. They have a combined unmet need of $10,049,626 at the time they reported their financial need.

Besides membership in a federally-recognized tribe, AIGC funds students no matter where they sit on the American Indian identity spectrum. We are careful, as you should be, not to stereotype American Indian students with a narrow model of geographic isolation or culture as an impediment to successful participation in higher education.

Higher education is often a dream for many families. We know that the system is broken, the pipeline is broken. We know that finances alone are not enough to provide students with the means for their success. We know that pipeline programs and bridge programs need to be funded. We know that families need access to bridge programs, programs that are required by many institutions that families can't afford to get to, to stay in and to participate in. We also know that oftentimes American Indian student financial aid shows up much later than the beginning of the semester, leaving our students fighting for books, borrowing books or waiting until they get a book in order to study and do the homework and falling far behind. These are students who often are bringing their families with them, looking for homes, looking for other opportunities, not just for an academic opportunity for themselves. So they are in need of much more than funding. They need their funding early on.

We know that programs that are funded through the Native-serving non-tribal institution funds, student support services, are vital. Our students look for one another, they look for people on their campus who can understand them, help them and just see them where they are at that point in time and to connect them to tribal scholarships, to their tribes, to other people in their community who know and have empathy with them. So we call for those programs to be funded.

While we are looking at other successful programs moving from undergraduate to graduate programs, the American Indian Law Center hosts the pre-law summer institute at the University of New Mexico. We know that this program is highly successful. For all students from that program who attend law school, 90 percent of them are successful. We believe that framework will work in other disciplines. We would like to have you look at that program and consider replicating it in the Department of Education programs and other programs, HHS programs, medical programs, and provide funding for such.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Monette follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MELVIN MONETTE, DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE FELLOWSHIPS, AMERICAN INDIAN GRADUATE CENTER

Chairman Tester, Vice Chairman Barrasso, and members of the Committee, thank you for inviting the American Indian Graduate Center (AIGC) to testify. I am Melvin Monette, Director of Graduate Fellowships and Special Programs and a citizen of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians. On behalf of Director Sam

Deloria and AIGC, I am grateful for this opportunity to provide testimony for the record on "Examining Higher Education for American Indian Students," as part of the Committee's Indian Education series. I would also like to thank the Committee for hearing the collective call of tribes and Native communities regarding the need to address the current state of Native education. The renewed commitment of this Committee to focus on improving all education systems serving Native students is critical as we work together to ensure equitable educational opportunities.

The American Indian Graduate Center, Inc. (AIGC) is the oldest and largest provider of graduate and professional student scholarship services in the United States. AIGC is a 45 year old, private, national 501(c)3 located in Albuquerque, New Mexico. We have managed the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) Special Higher Education Programs contract to provide scholarships and fellowships to over 16,000 American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) full-time and degree-seeking graduate- and professional-level students who are members of federally-recognized tribes studying any major of choice at any US accredited institution in the United States.

AIGC is also the provider of 40 annual BIE Loans for Service to AIAN graduate- and professional-level students who intend to seek employment primarily with the BIE, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) or other federal agencies serving the AIAN communities. The intent is to provide agencies with well trained, highly qualified individuals to fill vacancies created by retirements and other attrition. To date, we have funded 330 individuals who are either continuing their education, working in intended areas, seeking employment or have completed the required employment and remain employed in AIAN serving organizations. Additionally, AIGC manages private and corporate scholarship funds for both undergraduate and graduate students. The award winning program boasts high-level federal appointees, tribal leaders, published researchers, large and small private business owners, some of your own congressional staff and many community leaders, among our alumni. Our sister program, AIGC Scholars is the American Indian administrative partner for the Gates Millennium Scholars Program. AIGC and AIGC Scholars collaborate in student recruitment, outreach, student services and professional development for those institutions serving Native students.

For the most recent academic year, 2013–2014, AIGC funded 545 undergraduate, graduate and professional level AIAN students: 106 Doctoral, 284 Masters, and 145 Professional. These students represented 149 federally-recognized tribes, attend school in 47 states, studied in 161 major areas, and have a combined unmet need of $10,049,626 at time of reporting financial need. Besides membership in a federally-recognized tribe, AIGC funds students regardless of where they sit on the American Indian identity spectrum. We are careful, as you should be, not to stereotype Indian students with a narrow model of geographic isolation or culture as an impediment to successful participation. All Native students are deserving of AIGC assistance and capable of the academic success we expect of them.

American Indian Higher Education Inequitable Outcomes

Since 1977, American Indian and Alaska Natives have more than tripled in the number of baccalaureate degrees conferred each year; however, comparing the percentage distribution of degrees conferred to all other races, AIAN's have not even doubled. While we are enjoying more numbers, comparatively we continue to represent less than 1 percent of all baccalaureate degrees conferred. Unfortunately, the collective and average federal student loan data for AIAN's is statistically insignificant except for the 1999–2000 reporting year which indicates a $22,000 average loan debt for 18–24 year-old college seniors. This report does not tell us the average debt of AIAN students who have a tendency to be older than the average traditional college student. (Digest of Education Statistics, 2013 Tables and Figures)

Since 1977, AIAN's have more than tripled in the number of Master's degrees conferred each year (1018 to 3674); however, comparing the percentage distribution of degrees conferred to all other races, AIAN's have only doubled. While we are enjoying more numbers, comparatively we continue to represent less than 1 percent of all master's degrees conferred. The Fields of Study most pursued and completed by AIAN Master's level students are Education, Business, Health Professions, Public Administration and Social Services, Psychology, and Social Sciences and History. (Digest of Education Statistics, 2013 Tables and Figures)

Since 1977, AIAN's have more than tripled in the number of Doctoral degrees conferred each (240 to 913); however, comparing the percentage distribution of degrees conferred to all other races, AIAN's have only doubled, in fact we experienced a .1 percent drop from 2011 to 2012. While we enjoy more numbers, comparatively we continue to represent less than 1 percent of all Doctorate degrees conferred. The Fields of Study most pursued and completed by AIAN Doctorate level students are Health Professions and Related Programs, Legal Professions and Studies, Edu-

cation, Psychology and Biological and Biomedical Sciences. In 2011, AIAN's made up .4 percent of all full-time instructional faculty. Since 2007, the percentage has remained the same, while the number has increased less than 200 from 3340 to 3529. Less than 600 AIAN's are full professors (.3 percent of the total). Comparatively these faculty earn less, are younger, and have a total household income less than their non-Native peers. (Digest of Education Statistics, 2012 and 2013 Tables and Figures)

For the Academic Years 2011 and 2012 AIAN's received 662 and 618 selected Professional degrees, respectively. Slightly more than half (53 percent) of those degrees (688) are Law (LLB or JD) and another 16 percent (214) are MD's. As a collective, health sciences make up 540 (42 percent) of these degrees. The selected professional degrees include dentistry (60), medicine (214), optometry (7), osteopathic medicine (53), pharmacy (120), podiatry or podiatric medicine (15), veterinary medicine (40), chiropractic (31), law (688) and theology (72). (Digest of Education Statistics, 2013 Tables and Figures)

At all postsecondary levels, including institutional employment, American Indian and Alaska Native people continue to lag behind their non-Native peers. While American Indians and Alaska Natives represent 1.7 percent of all people in the US (2010 US Census), we continue to represent less than 1 percent of all levels of postsecondary students. We call for funding of programs to create equity for citizens of federally-recognized tribes in the United States. Our recommendations include replication of the American Indian Law Center's Pre-Law Summer Institute (PLSI) for other fields of study. This program has been in existence since 1967 and has over 90 percent rate of completion for those participants who enter law school. The aforementioned professional degree data is our proof that such programs work; it is no accident that Law degrees are more than double those of other professional fields. This program doesn't assume the definition of "Indian" student includes substandard; rather, it assumes all are capable of succeeding in law school and prepares students for the rigor of such by providing them with the requisite reading, study and writing skills necessary to succeed in Law School. The program focus is industry specific, but the frameworks are replicable to most any professional program.

The Broken Pipeline to Higher Education

We are all aware of the dismal state of Native education partly due to lack of preparation of the professionals who serve Native students. There is an overrepresentation of Indian children in Special Education because schools don't know where to place students coming from low performing schools. We need to increase the capacity and development of Title VII teachers to work on a tutorial basis, among other areas of need, to bring these children up to par with their peers. Native students in tribal, BIE and large urban centers continue to lack access to Advanced Placement (AP) and Post-Secondary Education Opportunity (PSEO) courses which have been proven to impact college readiness. If AP and PSEO are proven to prepare students for the rigors of college, why can't the regular classroom teachers be challenged to create rigorous coursework for all students? High School counselors serving AIAN students spend more time creating schedules and performing disciplinary actions than they do providing college access information. As a former college recruiter, I experienced many tribal, BIE and other rural Native serving schools deny all students access to information about colleges. The message that any amount of higher education is valuable is not getting through to our students. Our students are faced with seemingly unmovable obstacles as the numbers show.

- 23 percent of American Indian and Alaska Native students received special education service in 9th grade in 2009. The next highest group is White students at 10 .7 percent. Clearly, we need to make an impact in k–8 education by adequately preparing teachers to work in Native communities.
- 31 percent of American Indian and Alaska Native students were enrolled in high-poverty public schools in the academic year 2010–2011, compared to 6 percent of their white peers.
- 23 percent of American Indian and Alaska Native students attend schools that are comprised of 50 percent or more American Indian and Alaska Native peers (16 percent of American Indian and Alaska Native students attend schools that are comprised of 75 percent or more American Indian and Alaska Native peers).
- Fewer American Indian and Alaska Native students attend high schools that offer AP or IB courses than all other groups.
- 29 percent of AIAN 9th graders' high school counselors report the primary goal of the school counseling program is to help students plan and prepare for postsecondary education. This is compared to 41 percent of Hispanic students' coun-

selors—the next highest group. By 9th grade, 34 percent of AIAN males and 21 percent of AIAN females have been suspended or expelled; second only to black students with 42 percent male and 24 percent female. On all indicators, AIAN students reported the highest percentage of 9th grade students who had ever been retained a grade. The highest. Second only to black students, 44 percent of AIAN students' parents were contacted by the school about a child's problem behavior at school and 28 percent had been suspended or expelled. 43 percent, the highest of all races, of AIAN students' parents were contacted about poor attendance and 50 percent were contacted about poor academic performance. On both measures, AIAN students experienced the highest percentages.

- 87 percent of AIAN students did not participate in math and science related school-sponsored activities.
- Second only to Hispanic students (15.1 percent), AIAN students dropped out at a rate of 12.4 percent in 2010.
- Less than 1 percent differentiates the graduate rates of Black and AIAN students; both group experience less than 65 percent graduation rates.
- With the highest percentage of any group at 28.5 percent AIAN students expect to complete high school or less. Another 10.9 percent expect to complete some college.
- When it comes to an expectation to complete a bachelor's degree, AIAN 9th grade students fall to the bottom of the list at 11.8 percent while 26 percent expect to complete a graduate or professional degree.
- Fairly equal with their peers, 22 percent of AIAN students don't know what they want to do post-high school. Native teenagers are "normal" when it comes to being asked questions about their future.
- American Indian and Alaska Native students take either the SAT or ACT at the lowest rate of all groups—68 percent.
- The only group below the 90th percentile, 87.4 percent of AIAN seniors in 2004 planned to continue their education after high school. Of that group 13 percent applied to only one college while only 34.4 percent applied to 2 or more colleges. When it comes to 5 or more colleges, the numbers for AIAN students was statistically insignificant.

This profusion of disparities for AIAN k-12 students is well documented. The relationship to higher education is a definite lack of adequate preparation for postsecondary education. How can we expect any student to persist who begins behind from the onset? One proposal might include summer enrichment and higher education preparation programs that provide life-skills training necessary to navigate life after high school. Another might include supporting mentoring and internship opportunities at the local level through federally funded projects which provide meaningful experiences necessary for individuals to make educational and career choices. Access to individuals who have experienced and completed college provides positive mentorship for students.

Only 27 percent of AIAN students reported participation in college preparatory and awareness programs. We must fund federally supported college readiness programs that are proven to work for Indian students. Mandatory summer bridge programs are only effective if students and families have the financial means to attend and engage in them. Monies such as the grants to TCU's and Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institutions must include specific set-asides for access to these programs. Additional funds must be appropriated to those institutions serving a smaller percentage, yet a critical mass, numerically, to support AIAN and low-income students attendance at the programs that we know work for all students with the economic means to attend.

Native students have the least access to counselors, family members and online resources to plan for higher education. We know that President Obama's Broadband Access initiatives are providing access to more rural and tribal communities; however, as more and more American Indian and Alaska Native students attend online education forums, this community level broadband is already overtaxed. More efforts must be put behind increasing household access for Native families to research post-secondary opportunities and to complete coursework in timely manners. It is reported that in 2006, a reflective study of the 2004 graduating class found that AIAN students applied to college at the lowest rate, 75.2 percent—and this is out of the percent that graduated. 65.4 percent of this group applied for financial aid.

Financial Aid

Again, for the most recent academic year, 2013–2014, AIGC funded 545 undergraduate, graduate and professional level AIAN students: 106 Doctoral, 284 Masters, and 145 Professional. These students represented 149 federally-recognized tribes, attend school in 47 states, studied in 161 major areas, and have a combined unmet need of $10,049,626 at time of reporting financial need.

With respect to financial aid, for all levels of higher education, for students who are already behind their peers in academics and socialization into college or graduate school, their financial aid package has to be supported. The BIA must release tribal scholarship funds for distribution much earlier to meet the needs of incoming students. Students contact AIGC, regularly, to request assistance for books, supplies, housing and other items needed for immediate engagement in school. Releasing tribal education dollars at the critical starting point for students will go a long way toward persistence. When students don't have to play catch up, weeks into the semester, with their readings and other assignments, they are able to seek, early in the term, any other support needed to remain caught up with all work. AIGC and AICF cannot provide this funding. These students are not only attending classes. Many AIAN students that we serve are moving children and families to new schools, locating accessible housing, maneuvering new health care systems, trying to find other resources and navigating a new environment; all while daily, trying to work with tribes, AIGC, financial aid offices and business offices to remain in school while waiting for the tuition payment to arrive without taking out unnecessarily high amounts of student loans.

Tribes cannot provide this alone. Institutions cannot be responsible to make up the difference. We need a collective. There is a wealth of expertise, within the Department of Education's Federal Student Aid program, that can provide outreach to Indian communities. Allocation of funds for such positions is greatly needed.

We recommend the following:

1. Increase funding for research opportunities for Natives in graduate programs to provide true fellowships to post-secondary institutions for Native students without requiring them to agree to "return home" or "give back" as part of their funding. It is not expected of other groups and it's unfair, if not inequitable, to expect Native people to "return home" or "give back". The reality is that an extremely high percentage of all graduates work at all levels of public service in some capacity. An educated and employed Native professional is just as likely to provide for their "community" as any other educated professional. By providing institutions the financial assistance to recruit and retain top graduate students, this provision would create equitable access to highly-selective and competitive research institutions where Natives are statistically under-represented.
2. Include Native students receiving BIE loan for service program money, DOE discretionary grant assistance and other similar programs in the "non-compete" clauses for federal positions.
   a. VISTA has a one (1) year non-compete status for federal positions.
3. Include Tribal Citizenship in demographic collections for higher education—this would ensure that money intended for tribal citizens is used to fund tribal citizens. Additionally, this provides tribes, the BIE and DOE with true numbers of tribal citizens being served at all levels of education. Collecting "citizenship" status versus "ethnicity" strengthens data, shifts the focus from institutions boasting self-identified numbers to those institutions with fewer numbers but greater need. As an added bonus, tribes will have access to true data and information about their citizens to report return on investment numbers.
4. Either expand the definition of Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institutions to include those institutions with a specific number of Native citizens versus a percentage of the total or provide similar funds to institutions with a critical number of Native citizens. Reauthorize and reallocate funds for this program, especially in the mandatory funding category—Native students shouldn't be subject to the whims of grant funding. Research tells us that some students benefit from the services the NASNTI program intends to provide. There have been no new grantees since 2011.
5. Expand FERPA to include Tribal Education Departments as they are Local Education Agency responsible for reporting data on their citizens. This provision will allow tribal education departments to more effectively align tribal resources with community needs.

6. Continue to press the FCC on issues of Broadband access for tribal communities. The reality is that while broadband access is increasing for tribal communities' economic centers, it is not reaching citizens who reside in more rural areas. With the increased interest of Native students in online education, be it for-profit or non-profit institutions, broadband access is critical to the learning experience for these students.
7. Online Education Institutions. While many non-profit institutions are creating online programs that are more academically rigorous and will better prepare Native students for employment in their communities, for-profit institutions continue to prey on Native communities with their assumptions that Native students have access to unlimited funding. Anecdotally, we hear story after story from Native graduates that they have student loans far exceeding that of their peers who attended traditional institutions. We would like to call on Federal Student Aid to provide data on Native students in these institutions in comparison to Native students in all institutions. Additionally, we call on Federal Student Aid to provide this information for all levels of higher education.
8. National programs like AILC and AIGC can be partners in the creation of college and graduate school preparation programs that work. We would like to offer our expertise, national outreach and networks, and collective alumni experiences to work with the Departments of Educations, Interior, and Health and Human Services in creating frameworks for model programs at all levels. The proven program strategies of Know Before You Go, PreLaw Summer Institute and longer summer bridge programming will impact the persistence rates for Native students nationally.

This testimony is intended for higher education; however, we would be remiss in our duties if we didn't remind the SCIA that native learners in Indian country are failing, in part, due to a federal system that is failing them. Construction needs in BIE and tribal grant schools are embarrassingly high and are systemically necessary. More must be done to reduce the administrative costs of managing construction grants to increase the direct funding to these schools. We can cite research about the impact of asbestos, black mold, failing heating and cooling systems, exposed wiring, broken pipes and dismal aesthetics on classroom learning, but it's time to move beyond Native communities proving the need to the BIE being given the tools (funding) necessary to address those needs. Then, we must address the need for highly qualified teachers' housing and pay in these remote communities. Native students deserve educational professionals who are dedicated to their community rather than Teach for America-like programs providing "saviors" to Indian country.

Congress and federal agencies should fund Native education programs that strengthen tribal self-determination, such as tribal education agencies, and ensure resources are appropriated to the BIE to address student concerns and needed systemic changes. To start, the Department of the Interior should transfer budget authority from the BIA to the BIE to increase its efficiency and effectiveness by decreasing the bureaucracy inhibiting funds from positively impacting Native students and tribal self-determination.

As a result of BIA authority over the BIE budget, the BIE is often low in priority when compared to other programs. Recently, internal BIA FY 2014 Operating Plan reduced BIE higher education scholarships. While the reduced lines were under tribal priority allocations, such reductions were not authorized by tribal leaders but were a result of internal redistributions in the agency. Although the reductions are small as compared to the overall increase in the BIA budgets after Congress postponed sequestration, rescissions without appropriate consultation are unacceptable. Providing the BIE the ability to develop its own budget would ensure the BIA cannot reallocate funds from the BIE as it would be a separate Bureau with its own budget authority.

Tribal Colleges serve 9 percent of Native learners in higher education. While that number may be low by comparison to their mainstream counterparts, the TCU students become the work-force for their communities in larger percentages than the latter group. The BIA, Department of Interior and all other agencies must work together to examine barriers to economic development on reservations. While the rest of America is working on economic recovery, Indian country is still working on development. Billions of dollars are spent to aid developing countries while tribal funds continue to be cut. We must remove barriers, create opportunities, and provide technical assistance to tribes and individuals wanting to do business in their own communities.

Conclusion

AIGC appreciates the continued support of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs and we look forward to working with its members under your leadership. We share your commitment to Native Higher Education to ensure all AIAN serving post-secondary institutions are effective at helping our students to persist to the fullest desired education level. To attain parity, there must be a collaboration among all entities at all levels—tribal, federal, state, local with community based organizations' input and inclusion of post-secondary institution leadership. Once again, thank you for this opportunity.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you for your testimony and thank you for ripping through it. I very much appreciate it.

We have a choice here, and the Senate gets pretty wild when people start voting. We have two votes. And I don't what your schedules are. We can submit our questions for the record, and I think Senator Heitkamp is going to do that anyway. Or I could come back at about a quarter to 5 o'clock if the two votes, if we get through this first vote and I can vote again and be back here by about a quarter to 5 o'clock.

I have a conflict at 5:10. So if you guys want to stick around, I will come back and fire questions at you for about 15 or 20 minutes. If you'd rather just have us submit them in writing and you can go wherever you want to go to have a good meal tonight, we can do that. So the question is, a good chairman would just dictate it. Some of you have traveled a long way. If you want to have questions verbally in the record answered, we can do that. If not, it would probably be easier to submit them in writing for the record. Dr. Purce?

Dr. PURCE. I would be glad to have them submitted in writing. I have to catch a bird back to Seattle to meet with my bosses tomorrow morning in Evergreen.

The CHAIRMAN. You know what, we don't want you to get fired. Is that okay with the rest of you, if we just submit them in writing?

Senator HEITKAMP. Mr. Chairman, can I just ask Mr. Monette to extend my greetings to Sam. He is a great Indian leader and he has been in Indian education, he is a dear friend. So I want you to know that, tell him he is still in the hunt and still in the fight and so am I. Maybe someday, we will get it done.

The CHAIRMAN. That is what we will do, we will put questions in writing. I just want to say one thing before you go. Thank you for the work that each and every one of you do. It is critically important. I think the Department can learn a lot from your on the ground experiences. So if we can help be a conduit in that, we certainly will.

As I look at the testimony, whether it is affordability or whether it is actually getting the job done, you guys are top flight in my book. So I just want to thank you all for what you do and how you do it and the success you have had, because you are going to have much more success in the future. Hopefully we can replicate that success in other places around the Country.

Thank you very, very much.

With that, I want to thank the witnesses again today, and the record will remain open for two weeks from today. With that, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:13 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL INDIAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (NIEA)

Chairman Tester, Vice Chairman Barrasso, and members of the Committee, tribal leaders and Native advocates have consistently listed education as a top priority for our communities. As such, the National Indian Education Association (NIEA) is excited that the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs has heard the collective call and is working to highlight the condition of Native education across all grade levels in order to find solutions to persisting problems. As NIEA and Native education stakeholders have stated for years, equal educational opportunities from early to higher education is critical to the future of tribal nations and Native communities. The renewed commitment of this Committee and its focus on improving all education systems serving Native students is critical. As part of our continuing partnership to ensure equitable educational opportunities for Native students, we are glad to provide this testimony regarding "Indian Education: Examining Higher Education for American Indian Students" for the congressional record.

NIEA, founded in 1969, is the most inclusive Native organization in the country representing Native students, educators, families, communities, and tribes. NIEA's mission is to advance comprehensive educational opportunities for all American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians throughout the United States. From communities in Hawaii, to tribal reservations across the continental U.S., to villages in Alaska and urban communities in major cities, NIEA has the most reach of any Native education organization in the country. By serving as the critical link between our communities and education institutions—such as public and private universities, community colleges, and tribal colleges and universities (TCUs)—NIEA hopes the Committee will take our testimony into consideration as you address concerns in higher education.

Native Education Crisis Due to Federal Mismanagement

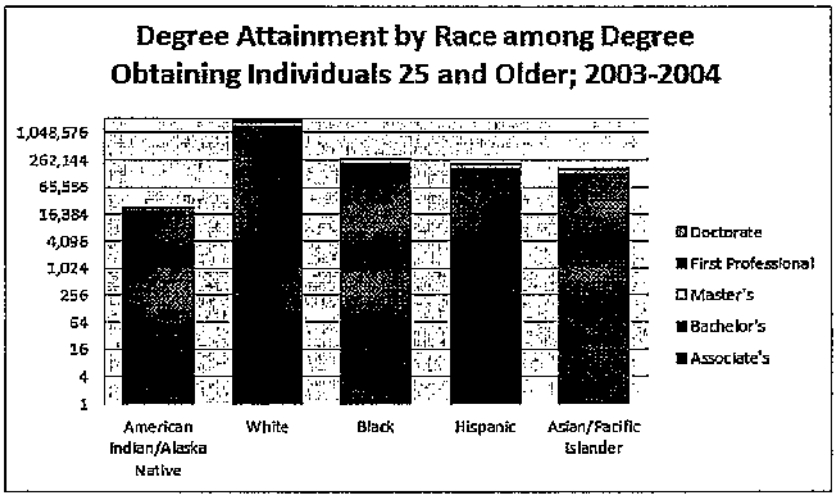
As all of us realize, Native education is in a state of emergency partly due to the inability of the Federal Government to uphold its trust responsibility. Native students lag behind their peers on every educational indicator, from academic achievement to high school and college graduation rates. In 2010, only 1 in 4 Native high school graduates who took the ACT scored at the college-ready level in math, and only one-third in reading. In the same year, more than half of the majority students in high school tested at college-ready levels, illustrating the persistent readiness gap among Native and non-Native students. As Native students leave high school ill prepared for higher education, remediation or academic failure often become commonplace for our students. In the last decade, only 52 percent of Native students enrolled in higher education immediately after high school and fewer than 40 percent of those students graduated with a bachelor's degree in six years. Nearly 62 percent of White students graduated within six years. In addition to the shockingly low number of Native college graduates that this percentage represents, the disparity among Natives and non-Native students illustrates the continued lack of college preparedness experienced by Native populations.

Native Student Demographics Snapshot [1]

- In 2012, 17 percent of Native students age 25 and over held at least a bachelor's degree in comparison to 33 percent of White students.
- In 2012, 6 percent of Native students held an advanced graduate degree (i.e., M.A., M.S., Ph.D., M.D., or J.D), as compared to 12 percent of the White population.

[1] National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, United States Department of Education.National Indian Education Study. 2011 (NCES 2012–466). *http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nies/*

- The 2010 Census found that only 65,356 Natives ages 25 years and older had a graduate or professional degree.



The Trust Responsibility to Native Education

Since its inception, NIEA's work has centered on reversing these negative trends, a feat that is possible only if the Federal Government upholds its trust responsibility. Established through treaties, federal law, and U.S. Supreme Court decisions, this relationship includes a fiduciary obligation to provide parity in access and equal resources to all American Indian and Alaska Native students, regardless of where they attend school. With equal educational opportunity, our future generations will be prepared for academic achievement and consequently, success in college and careers.

The Federal Government's trust corpus in the field of Indian education is a shared trust between the Administration and Congress for federally-recognized Indian tribes. To the extent that measurable trust standards in Indian education can be evaluated, NIEA suggests this Committee refer to the government's own studies encompassing Native test scores, treaty-based appropriation decreases, and Government Accountability Office (GAO) Reports, among other reports, which illustrate the continued inability of the federal government via the BIE to uphold the trust responsibility.

NIEA 2014 Postsecondary Education Recommendations

I. Create Equity in Higher Education to Fulfill Trust Obligations

NIEA requests this Committee work with Native-serving postsecondary institutions to increase the educational attainment rate for Native students. This Committee should ensure equity in access to higher education resources and institutions in policy and legislation like the Higher Education Act (HEA) reauthorization. This Committee should also work with the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee as they develop policy priorities to encourage and strengthen tribal-state partnerships in Native education.

For example, expanding adequate resources for Indian Education Professional Development Grants is necessary to meet training needs and increase retention rates among Native teachers, administrators, and education leaders in reservation schools, as well as the surrounding schools with high Native populations. There should be more opportunities for higher education partnerships with Regional Education Laboratories (RELs) in order to facilitate and collect data regarding Native students. Collaborative opportunities should also include community colleges and universities that serve high numbers of Native students. Such partnerships should assess factors, such as total cost of attendance, debt burden on graduation, job or graduate school placement rate, etc, as they often critically affect a student's ability to thrive in college and beyond.

Competitive Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) undergraduate programs for Native students should be developed to meet 21st Century

workforce needs. Native students require increased resources across all Native-serving institutions (public, private, TCU), so funds are available in areas such as capital financing, master's degree development, and STEM programs. Increasing competitive grant competitions for Minority Science and Engineering programs to include all institutions, not only selected groups, would facilitate increased access to resources.

II. Increase Retention Rates Among Native Students

The Federal Government should provide colleges and universities adequate resources to increase retention rates among Native students. As successful federal investments, TRiO programs, such as Upward Bound and Student Support Services, illustrate the ability to positively impact retention when support is appropriated. These programs provide critical academic support in higher education to assist colleges and universities in retaining vulnerable students and increase graduation and preparedness for a student's post-graduate career.

Unfortunately, the Federal Government reduced critical TRiO programmatic funding for Upward Bound and Talent Search during sequestration, which equated to a $17,500 cut from each program per year in just a single institution. This is reflective of more expansive reductions nationwide. While Congress postponed sequestration, we request that future reductions as mandated under the Budget Control Act be replaced permanently to avoid funding cuts to our most vulnerable students. Programmatic ineffectiveness in serving at-risk students is only exacerbated when already strained programs are required to serve more students with equal or reduced budgets.

Further, need-based financial aid programs should be expanded to provide year-round assistance, so that available resources cover summer course sessions. Since Native students are more likely to require remedial course work and are the least likely to graduate from college—with only 15 percent of those entering college earning a bachelor's degree within six years—summer course options are particularly important for Native students. Moreover, the inability to graduate on time often increases the student's financial burden. Through funding for expanding summer course options, Native students will have more opportunity to finish college in four years and graduate with less student loan debt.

III. Support and Strengthen Native Language and Culture

Similar to elementary and secondary education systems, it is critical that higher education institutions have the ability to partner and collaborate with local tribes and Native education stakeholders. This would support cultural and linguistic initiatives before Native students enter and as they attend college. Tribes understand the needs of their children best and can help higher education institutions ensure a collegiate education is not only respectful to their Native students but also engages students to become future leaders in Native communities.

Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado, provides a laudable example of such a partnership. The college, on average, has 900 Native students from over 140 federally recognized tribes each semester. Through the school's collaboration with tribal communities, it works to strengthen the Native culture of its students from matriculation through graduation to their entrance into the job market. At Fort Lewis College, programs and classes offer Native students the ability to strengthen their collective Native culture through the Native American Center, the Native American Honor Society, and the American Indian Business Leaders Organization, as well as the Elder-In-Residence program. This emphasis on academic and cultural support has made Fort Lewis College one of the top public institutions in the country where Native students excel and graduate.

Yet, many institutions across the country do not have the resources to provide a support system like that of Fort Lewis College. Postsecondary institutions should have the resources and political support to graduate more students who understand Native cultural and linguistic traditions. Native language revitalization and preservation is a critical priority for tribes and Native communities because language preservation goes to the heart of our identity. This Committee should work to provide resources for college students to become educators and leaders who understand their local Native identity. We also request that this Committee work to create a means for providing debt repayment options, adequate housing, and other incentives to degree-holding Native educators and students who wish to return to their communities. Because jobs are often inadequate in a Native student's community due to geographical isolation and small, rural markets, we request the Committee increase incentives for Native teachers to return to Indian Country and reinvest their talents and cultural understanding among their fellow tribal citizens.

IV. Professional Development for Student Success

We request this Committee increase and expand available professional development opportunities for Native educators. NIEA submitted draft language last year to expand the Department of Education's (ED) Office of Indian Education (OIE) Indian Professional Development program. This expansion would support Native students pursuing doctoral degrees. While current law provides training to assist qualified Native individuals to become traditional K–12 teachers and administrators, educators and administrators in higher education institutions, teacher aides, social workers, and ancillary educational support, this request, as consistent with NIEA Resolution 2012–4, would grant funds to support and train Native individuals to obtain postsecondary masters and doctoral degrees.

To help students achieve, Native communities need certified educators who have the local, cultural understanding and knowledge to support our young generations. Native-serving higher education institutions, such as tribal colleges and universities and non-tribal Native-serving institutions are committed to building a Native-speaking teacher workforce and stress culturally and developmentally-appropriate pedagogy that embeds community values and tribal culture. The commitments and strategies are working, but as described above, there must also be increased access to resources and education programs in order to help Native students become educators. In many locations, there is the will, but there are not enough certified Native language or culture teachers. We need this Committee to work with Congress and the Administration to stand behind TCUs and other Native-serving postsecondary institutions by increasing their ability to support Native teacher preparation and Native student retention and graduation.

Conclusion

NIEA appreciates the continued support of this Committee, and we look forward to working closely with its members to support our students. Strengthening our partnership will ensure all Native-serving schools, from pre-schools to TCUs, are as effective as possible. To achieve success, there must be collaboration among all entities and at all levels—tribal, federal, state, and local—that touch a Native child's life. We particularly appreciate this 2014 education series because confronting the challenges facing our Native students cannot be approached through one facet of the education system at a time. Only by working with all stakeholders in all education systems will we increase our students' preparedness for success. Once again, thank you for this opportunity.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MAGGIE L. GEORGE, PH.D., PRESIDENT OF DINÉ COLLEGE

Introduction

Good afternoon Chairman Tester, Vice Chairman Barrasso, and members of the Committee. Thank you for including American Indian Higher Education as part of your Indian Education Series. Originally named Navajo Community College, Diné College is a public institution of higher education first chartered by the Navajo Nation in 1968. The educational philosophy of Diné College is Sa'ah Naaghai Bik'eh Hoozhoon (SNBH), the Diné traditional paradigm for understanding all living systems. SNHB is applied in all academic and student support programs to advance quality student learning while maintaining a meaningful connection to traditional Navajo values and sensibilities. SNBH has played an important role in the development and success of Diné College.

From inception, Diné College continues to be at the forefront of American Indian Higher Education. Over the last three years, Diné College has focused its efforts on Student Success and Capacity Building. Under Student Success, the College is addressing issues of access, academic achievement, and retention. Under Capacity Building, we are actively working to develop new degree programs, improve learning environments, and renovate facilities. Each of these play an important role in providing Navajo and Indian students' access to and success in higher education. With the Higher Education Act (HEA) reauthorization slated for this year, the College respectfully submits it views and recommendations.

Remedial Education

Remedial Education is a term describing a sequence of courses designed to bring underprepared students to the level of skills expected of new college freshmen. While colleges vary in their practices; the common approach is to prepare a student for college-level study through coursework to develop effective academic writing, reading and math skills as required in many university classes. These are skills generally taught in high school. Thus, remedial education offers a second chance for

students to acquire specified knowledge and skills for academic success. Remedial Education is a national issue; however, it is especially problematic in Indian Country.

According to Diné College data, 85 percent (a five year average) of entering Navajo college students are enrolled in remedial education coursework for reading, writing, and math. Although there is no concrete tracking data on a particular incoming class, it is likely the graduation rates of a particular class is similar to national research findings in that students requiring remedial education are less likely to graduate, guaranteeing that the placement of students in remedial coursework acts as a gatekeeper to their completion of a degree. Further, the Navajo Nation funded students in remedial courses have cost from $903,250 in 2011 to $2,068,500 in 2009 for 18,571 remedial courses in Math and English.

Recently, Secretary Arne Duncan, in his address to the State Higher Education Executive Officers' Higher Education Policy Conference, noted that "(S)tates are taking on the challenges of boosting college and career readiness by reforming and reducing the need for remedial instruction." Likewise, at an on April 5, 2012, Diné College hosted the Navajo Nation Roundtable on Remedial Education, for the purpose of assessing the impact on Navajo students of remedial education in Higher Education and to explore new solutions and policies. Those attending represented a broad cross-section of educational institutions within and outside the Navajo Nation including major state universities and public schools districts in New Mexico and Arizona, Bureau of Indian Education, Navajo Department of Education, Navajo Nation Board of Education, and both public and tribal school boards.

A number of recommendations came out of the roundtable. Diné College has made progress in developing and implementing a number of them—a summer remediation program, strengthen partnerships with K–12 schools, revising placement testing criteria, and establishment of a dual credit program. Each of these are important steps, but more can be done to address Remedial Education in Indian Country.

Recommendation

One important recommendation stemming from the Navajo Nation Remedial Education Roundtable is the need for reliable data and research. While Tribal College and Universities (TCUs) are addressing Remedial Education locally, very little research and reliable data exists with respect to Remedial Education and American Indian Students on a national level. Through the HEA reauthorization, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Post-Secondary Education, in collaboration with TCUs, should be charged with developing a research question and funding a study to identify issues and best practices to address Remedial Education in Indian Country.

Dual Credit Program

As a way to increase access to higher education, and in part, address remedial education issues, Diné College established its Dual Credit Program in 2013. Through the program, high school students can get a jump start on college by earning college credits while still attending high school. Dual credit is a process by which a high school junior or senior enrolls in a Diné College course and receives concurrent academic credit for the course from both the college and the high school. The dual credit courses are taught on a Diné College campus or on the high school campus only. Diné College offers dual credit opportunities for all the courses listed in our catalog. To date, the dual credit program has had 38 students complete 190 college credit hours.

To ensure student success, as part of the College dual credit program, we provide on-going academic support and monitoring through our Dual Credit Coordinator, an assigned counselor, and on-site tutoring. Upon high school graduation, students can continue taking classes at Diné College and work toward a certificate or degree. Dual credit coursework is counted toward a Diné College degree and can be transferred to different colleges or universities. Over the last year, the College has entered into 17 Dual Credit Agreements with local high schools and school districts.

On the New Mexico state level, the New Mexico TCUs successfully secured $100,000 in funding from the State of New Mexico to support dual credit programs at New Mexico TCUs. This $100,000 does not cover all the costs of tuition and fees associated with the New Mexico TCU dual credit enrollment. For the 2014–2015 academic year, the New Mexico TCUs secured $200,000 for their dual credit programs. The TCUs anticipates that this funding will again fall short to cover the cost of dual credit enrollment.

At the Arizona state level, Diné College is seeking legislation to provide support for to expand its dual credit program. It is important to note here that 72 percent of Navajo high school students on the Navajo Reservation in Arizona attend state

public schools. At the Navajo Nation level, the College is leveraging existing scholarship funds to also support tuition and fees for dual credit students. Diné College is keenly aware that diverting this funding places the Navajo Nation Office of Scholarship and Financial Assistance (ONNSFA) in a difficult position. In 2013, ONNSFA received 14,605 scholarship applications but it was only able to fund 5,527 students.

Recommendation

Through the HEA reauthorization, create and authorize funding for Dual Credit Programs at TCUs to be administered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs or Bureau of Indian Education.

Construction and Facilities

Through the Navajo Community College Assistance Act of 1978 (P.L. Pub. L. 95–471; hereinafter "1978 NCC Act"), Congress provided for a facilities study to be completed by the Department of the Interior by August 1978. The 1978 Facility Study was never completed and funding for Diné College construction and facilities was never appropriated. In the 2008, Congress enacted the Navajo Nation Higher Education Act and directed the Department of the Interior complete a Facilities Study by October 31, 2010. The study was not completed. Additionally, when Congress enacted the 1978 NCC Act, it provided for a $2,000,000 annual construction grant be made to the College.

Over the last three years, the College has been working to ensure the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) completes the 1978 Congressionally-mandated facility study. The College previously submitted the prerequisite inventory in 1979, 1988 and 1996, yet the BIA took no action. Last fall, the College again submitted a new inventory. In April 2014, the College met with the BIA Navajo Region Office and we were able to come to a consensus on the need to complete the study and to develop an action plan with a timeline. Additionally, I have personally briefed Interior Secretary Sally Jewell and Assistant Secretary Kevin Washburn on the issue. Once the facility study is completed and submitted to Congress, the College will begin advocating for construction funding authorized by the 1978 Act. We request the Committee's support in ensuring the completion of the College's facility study.

Recommendation

Amend the Navajo Nation Higher Education Act to renew the deadline to October 30, 2015 and provide the Department of the Interior direction to complete the Facilities Study through Committee report language.

Title III—Part A—Strengthening Tribally-Controlled Colleges and Universities

In 2009, Diné College conducted a comprehensive assessment of three areas: the skill level of new students, the academic progress of current and former students, and the gap and weaknesses in the academic program. The study concluded Diné College students: (1) enter with significant academic deficiencies and non-academic needs; (2) experience a significantly high failure rate in the pre-college level reading, writing, and math sequences; (3) lack understanding of academic or degree planning; (4) lack test taking and study strategies; and (5) did not understand the concept of transfer or even which course will transfer to four-year institutions. The study also provided the College with data that 88 percent of our student are first generation college students. Using the research finding and data, the College submitted a Title III grant proposal to address these issues.

In October 2010, Diné College was awarded its Title III grant. The at Diné College Title III Program focus areas are: (1) Academic Placement and Support; (2) Student Engagement; (3) Educational Goal-Setting and Intervention, and (4) Improved Instruction and Curriculum. Under these focus areas, the College has successfully reorganized its Student Success Division and has greatly improved student services in all these areas. At the end of the Spring 2013 semester, the Title III personnel reported to have assisted 1,467 students overall. As a next step, the Student Success Division is now developing an institution-wide advising system with goal of implementing it by Spring 2015.

I would also like to highlight that the Title III grant funded the planning and delivery of the college's Summer Institute Program at the Tsaile Campus. The Summer Institute is a two week residential summer bridge program designed to help first time freshman students engage in rich academic and social experiences and to gain understanding of transitioning to college and learn about what to expect in college. Another important success is that the Title II program built two new Student Success Centers at the College's Tsaile, AZ and Shiprock, NM campuses. The Student Success Center is a central location for student support services. Title III fund-

ing has played an important role in building Diné College's student services capacity.

Recommendation

Through the HEA reauthorization, authorize Title III funds to be used for (1) establishing and operating Dual Credit Programs, including instruction and capacity building; (2) developing and offering College Readiness and Transition programs, including personnel and student expenses; (3) developing and operating Admissions Office capacity, including personnel and training.

Forward Funding of BIA Higher Education Program

Since 1983, the Navajo Nation has administered its own scholarship program through a P.L. 93–638 contract. The Office of Navajo Nation Scholarship and Financial Assistance (ONNSFA) awards approximately $12 million in Federally funded college scholarships a year. Additionally, the Navajo Nation commits $7.2 million of its own revenues and income from tribal trust funds to college scholarships. An additional $1 million is secured in corporate and private donations. The ONNSFA funds over 5,000 undergraduate and approximately 500 graduate students annually.

All too often, Navajo students arrive on college campuses with little or no money. This is particularly problematic for Navajo college students who depend on these scholarship funds to pay for tuition, books, and room and board. It can take days or even weeks for scholarship funds to be distributed to the students. In the meantime, they are required to buy books and other supplies and pay living expenses for themselves and, often, their children. Given the economic situation in their home communities, most students receive little assistance from their extended families. In addition, the rural and undeveloped economy of the Navajo Reservation provides few wage-labor opportunities for students. As more and more Navajo and other Native American students seek a college education, forward funding of the BIA Higher Education program would allow the Navajo Nation and other Indian tribes to disburse scholarship funds in a timely manner.

There is precedent for forward funding of Federal Indian education programs. Currently, the Bureau of Indian Education funded schools (including P.L. 93–638 and P.L. 100–297 schools (25 U.S.C. § 2010), Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities, (25 U.S.C. 1810) are all forward funded. For the Navajo Nation and Indian Country, forward funding has proven to be beneficial to all education stakeholders: Indian Tribes, Bureau of Indian Education funded schools, public school districts, Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities, and Federal Agencies. Most important, forward funding is in the best interest of Indian students at all levels.

Recommendation

Through the HEA reauthorization, included authorization to forward fund the BIA Higher Education Program. See existing language in in Senator Tom Udall's bill S. 1131, Building upon Unique Indian Learning and Development Act.

Support for Our Sister Institutions and Adult Literacy Legislation

Diné College supports the forward funding of our sister institutions, Southwest Indian Polytechnic Institute, the Institute of American Indian Arts, Navajo Technical College and United Tribes Technical College. Authorizing language to accomplish this is found in Senator Tom Udall's bill S. 1131, Building upon Unique Indian Learning and Development Act. We also support passage of the Senator Mazie K. Hirono's S.1998 Native Adult Education and Literacy Act of 2014. The bill provides funding for General Education Diploma and Adult Education programs. We strongly urge the Committee to work to include these in the HEA reauthorization.

Conclusion

Diné College provides a unique opportunity for Navajo and Indian students to succeed in an educational setting that prepares them for further studies, opens up employment possibilities, and incorporates traditional Navajo cultural values and learning styles. Since the 1868 treaty between the United States and the Navajo People, education has been stressed to our people. Diné College and the tribal college movement is an outgrowth of this. The Navajo Nation and people are very proud of the foundations and opportunities that Diné College has provided over the last 45 years. I invite each member of the committee to visit our College and see firsthand our success and challenges.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LISA SHORT BULL GERTH, GRADUATE STUDENT, MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

Good morning. I am sending you this letter to give testimony concerning issues I have encountered while trying to obtain my MA degree. I will begin with the history of when I received my bachelor's degree while attending the University of South Dakota in Vermillion, South Dakota. My major was English with an emphasis in creative writing. My minor was in Indian Studies. While I was taking courses for my minor in Indian Studies, I realized that with the courses I was studying, I was essentially wasting my time because I didn't know what I could do with that. I talked to the former director of Native American Studies at the time, Dr. Leonard Brugier. I told him about my frustrations and asked if in his position he was able to help create a bachelor's in Native American studies. I said, I would need to finish my program in English but this kind of program was necessary because just having a minor was useless and you needed to have bachelor's degree in order to put Indian studies classes to use. Eventually Leonard was able to make this happen.

When I graduated from USD in 1994 I did various jobs. My most important use of my English degree and Indian studies minor was writing a proposal to perform Native American Cultural training for upper level management of the Army Corp of Engineers. The corp was so impressed with the training that I created, they gave the company I wrote the proposal for a three year contract and I was the company's program manager for three years. I worked with tribes around the country.

This job only deepened my passion to learn about Native American tribes. When our contract ended in 2009, it was at the peak of the recession. It was difficult finding a job anywhere around South Dakota. I decided to go back to school. I wanted a degree related to working with Native Americans. What I discovered was my Alma Mater was having a difficult time trying to keep the Indian Studies bachelor's program alive. There was no Director of the program for Indian studies. Dr. Edward Valandra was the last Director, and he quit his job apparently. There were no instructors to teach the Indian Studies courses and they were running ads to fill two positions for Instructors. I believe the Dean of students was acting Director of the Indian Studies Department. There was a large collection of Oral History recorded interviews that were once housed in the basement of Dakota Hall but were moved to the library of USD and the person hired to care for them was not required to be Native American.

An important note to mention is that when I was pursuing my education at USD there were some strong contributing factors to my success. There were several Native Americans who were working at USD. Among them were Steven Whithorn, who worked in financial aid, that position was later filled by Del Big Crow, and then Patty Wells Evans. All three of these individuals are now deceased. Also Dr. Duane Mackey who was in the counseling dept, I believe, Dr. John Williams, Drug and alcohol abuse, and are both deceased. Dr. Robert Bunge was a professor in Modern Languages and also deceased. Besides this group of individuals there was Mr. Gene Thin Elk who is now the coordinator of the Native American Cultural Center and Dr. Wayne Evans who was a professor in Bilingual education, who is now retired. So I feel this is the reason that there are so many needs to save the Indian Studies dept. I called several people involved in saving this program and know the story well. I don't understand when so many people were dying that people at USD didn't have the foresight to remedy what was happening and maybe that had to do with funding. At the time, the two positions for Instructors have been filled to begin the fall 2014 term. At this time, there is no master's in Native American Studies offered at USD.

In my efforts to find a University in South Dakota, I called SDSU in Brookings, S.D. There was a story in the newspaper saying that they were going to start their first ever Native American Studies program there. It was going to be started under the new hire of Director of Ritchie Meyer. I talked to him on the phone. He said at that time, he was working with Sinte Gleska University on a program to save the Lakota Language. I asked if he would continue that throughout the school year and he said yes. I asked what he had planned for the new Indian Studies program and he said, "I'm not exactly sure, they literally just told me to get it started." My thoughts were, how can someone be involved in a large language program and try to start something as major as a whole new Indian Studies program that needed a focus and direction and not have any plans for it. I talked to him at the end of the semester and he said the school year went very well. He also said that he just got a grant and was studying Indian Studies programs to see what was successful. He forgot I made that suggestion to him before I left South Dakota in 2013 to begin my Master's in Native American studies. As long as it's being done, I suppose, and

someone cares. I told him that I would put him in touch with Dr. Walter Fleming the Chair of the Native American Studies Department.

I also asked him if there would be any chance of a job when I graduate from MSU and he said probably not at this time. He said they had a very low budget and needed to use grad students to teach the courses. My theory is a newly graduated MA who taught for one whole year would have better qualifications to teach Indian studies course, but again, this is probably due to budget constraints. Mr. Meyers was saying that he was aware that they hired two new people to teach the Indian Studies courses at USD. He said, currently Gene Thin Elk was the only person teaching cultural studies at USD. I said, "Well that is all well in good that USD is doing something, but for your information, the graduate program here at USD doesn't even have a cultural component." So all the stuff the students are getting there will not be of use if those students decide to pursue the MA. Some of it may help as far as understanding Native Americans but MSU focuses on Fedral Law and Indian Policy, theories and methods of Native studies, history, and literature. What Mr. Thin Elk teaches might help a student write a paper or two but would not give them a solid foundation to build on like a strong well designed BA curriculum would.

Black Hills State has a bachelor's in Indian Studies but I have not contacted them. At the time I was trying to make my choice for a University I was living in Aberdeen and wanted to stay East River. It didn't take me long before I realized that if I wanted a quality education in Native American Studies, I would have to move. So I started to explore my options via the Internet. I had been previously in touch with MSU in 2009 and the peaked my interest at that time. I gave them a call. It took some time to get my ducks in a row, but I did and am currently a student here. One of the most fascinating things I encountered to help with my success not only as a student but in life, was being given an opportunity to teach. I taught the Intro to Native American Indian Studies course to 50 students. It was remarkable to see that many students having to take my class as a requirement for their program. This was due to the tremendously successful program called "Indian Education for All." This program is so amazing. Coming from South Dakota our history of race related issues are no secret. During the recession, to keep myself going, I hired myself out to do Native American Cultural sensitivity training. I trained the Rapid City and the Aberdeen, Police Departments, the Black Hills National Forest, SD Game, Fish and Parks and Aberdeen Central H.S.

I do this because I firmly believe that education is the way to combat ignorance that leads to racism. As an educator I saw for myself where students came into the start of the semester talking about their parents being racist and they themselves knowing nothing about Native Americans. At the end of the semester, these students were talking about compassion for people they never knew and how honored it was to see us as the people we are with a beautiful culture. Many said that they would teach what they learned from me to their children. I don't do the work I do to become rich or famous. I do it because I think back to some of my own experiences growing up in SD. I think of thinks like it takes a village to raise a child. I spent only about 5 years of my life on the Rosebud Reservation. I started my education in the Rapid City School System. When I moved to Rosebud and started 6th grade I was so far above my peers, I found education to be somewhat boring. My teachers knew what the problem was for me and would always give me extra things to do to keep me busy.

Then after my father died, my mother relocated to Aberdeen, S.D. I believe in the saying it takes a village to raise a child which is another reason why I am writing this letter. I am thinking of all the young Jr. and Sr. High school students in South Dakota and anywhere in the United States who may not know how to pursue the goals I made for myself. Or back in South Dakota may not have the chance to get a quality education because of the budget cuts. I talked to Secretary J.R. LaPlante who works for the Govenor's office. I was telling him that South Dakota needs to adopt a model like the Indian Education for All. He talked about the fact that it would get hard to people to listen to me in South Dakota because the Indian Education for all made the state Spend money not make money. I'm not a math major but I do know if there are 4 sections being taught of Intro to Native American Studies, each section has 50 students, each student pays $1,000 for this class that makes $800,000.00/per year for the University. Every University, and is funded by the board of Regents, who collects money for the state. Don't they? How is this a costly program? La Plante also mentioned that it was a Republican/Democrat issue. How about making this an issue that does not focus on the needs of constituents but focuses instead on the needs of young adults who need to earn a living. How about building self-esteem in people who come from South Dakota towns that have been compared to third world countries such as Rosebud and Pine Ridge and all of their

districts, or Cheyenne River, or Sisseton? I myself am tired of being at the bottom and what to get a better world-view from the top. That's why I am pursuing an MA in NAS. When I was working in jobs where I could see for myself the social ills affecting Native people is what easier to understand what their needs are.

As a former English major I was a reporter for newspapers. I also was a case manager in Hardin Montana. I was affiliated with the HRDC office there. We helped people, mostly Native Americans from the Crow Agency, learned how to fill out job applications and do mock interviews so they could get jobs. Many of the young people had started their families before they even left high school and many of these people were close to illiterate. So, while I was the reporter I would read story after story of the government concerned about the high drop- out rates of Native Americans, the high number of pregnancy among Native American women, the low birth rate, etc. We all know the problems. What better way to address the problems by creating successful education programs for them. The government has a concern for these people up until the age of 18. Some of the people don't have anybody concerned about their success in high school at home. So when they turn 18, they have no one. Maybe that is part of the reason for the high suicide rates. These young Native people see what happens to their older siblings. If you have successful programs that guide you all the way through more young people might consider. Here is an example of what I think could be a successful program:

If one of the reasons South Dakota might be reluctant to adopt a model like Indian Education for all is shortage of funds, there is no reason why the government can't fund the BIE and have the BIE be a sponsor of the program. I have talked to Walter Fleming to see if he may want to do some collaborative work with Universities and tribal colleges in South Dakota and I believe he has. Traditionally it takes about 6 years to complete a BA and an MA degree. It would be a nice incentive if there was collaborative work where it only took 5 years. You could (A) Start College in SD earning credits for a BA for two years, you could gain valuable credits taking classes at a Tribal college for two years then (B) transfer to MSU and complete A Master's in one year. This is just one example of how this might work.

Possible (C) Option: Dr. Walter Fleming also has been working to start a PHD program here at MSU. If BIE gets involved in helping create this program, there would more students interested in participating, and those numbers would be used to justify starting one. We want to give students something to strive for. At this time, I believe there are only two Universities in this whole country that offer American Indian Studies programs.

Or if this program still needed to be the traditional 6 yrs, at least you have guidance and support from day one of a Bachelor's possible all the way to a doctorate. Many places have fellowships such as the US Fish and Wildlife who guarantee you jobs with them if you are a fit for them during the fellowship. With a largely supported program that is turning out high numbers of grad students every year more federal agencies will create fellowships.

So, not only building self-esteem, and giving students achieve-able goals to obtain, here is another reason to support this program. What do we go to college for? To be able to get jobs. What is needed to help an economy in a recession? The creating jobs. At the time all federal agencies are using Tribal Liaisons. You need to have college experience, usually at the Master's level to do these jobs. Have you been following this letter? Those programs are struggling. With the exception of MSU who does have a high success rate of graduates. But there are many opportunities in which we as NAS majors can thrive once we graduate.

How about creating a call center, where Native Americans can take calls from Native Americans who want to complain about their experience with an Indian Health Hospital as a way for the government to maintain quality control. Or how about Tribes owning and operating a facility that fills the orders of lung drainage units and other medical supplies so tribes benefit instead of spending their money outside of the tribe. This helps economic development for the tribes. Maybe it will save the government money in the long run. It will certainly help monitor the use of money earmarked for health care. This money goes to tribes instead of the government having to reimburse other people who contract with IHS hospitals.

I am also writing this story because in order to pursue my educational goals, I had to leave my state and my home. I put everything in storage because South Dakota doesn't have a program like the one I needed. But why not? We have 7 reservations in South Dakota, why don't we have heavily supported Native American studies programs. Look at all the people, not Native American who are archeologists or Anthropologists who have jobs. And they have a bad reputation with some folks. Well, give us the money, let us research ourselves and tell our own stories by giving us the funds to make our own programs.

In conclusion, there are so many benefits for the government and BIE to become better at improving the quality of education that Native Americans receive. South Dakota is so long overdue in making a major change, and one of support, for Native American Tribal colleges, and for Indian Studies programs in South Dakota Universities. In my opinion, separation of Church and State is somewhat understandable, Separation of Native Americans and State is unforgiveable. Adopting a model like Indian Education for all would demonstrate the desire to make good the reconciliation efforts of former Gov. George Mickleson If it will take extra funding from the government to make this happen, it is my desperate plea that you open the doors of opportunities for future Native American students and get behind the State of South Dakota and all its universities, Tribal Colleges, and Montana State University in their efforts.

RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. TOM UDALL TO CHERYL CRAZY BULL

Question 1. Your remarks are compelling about how to make higher education more affordable for Native American and Alaska Native college students. I understand that only three TCUs participate in the federal student loan program: Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College (Minnesota), Salish Kootenai College (Montana), and United Tribes Technical College (North Dakota). Why do so few TCUs participate in the federal student loan program?

Answer. The nation's tribal colleges and universities, which collectively are the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC), stated in a press release issued July 17, 2014 that more than 75 percent of students enrolled at TCUs are Pell Grant recipients. The very real threat of losing Pell Grant eligibility, which the majority of their students depend upon, is the major reason that most TCUs do not participate in the federal student loan program. And it's not just TCUs. According to the Institute of College Access & Success, 20.1 percent of Native American community college students are enrolled in non-participating institutions.

However, speaking with regard to Tribal College non-participation, many TCUs choose not to participate because they are concerned that when too many student borrowers default on their federal student loans, the schools can be sanctioned and could face the possibility of losing the ability to offer Pell Grants to their students. This potential loss of Pell Grant eligibility for current and future students (based on the lack of loan repayment by a small fraction of former students) impacts the Tribal Colleges' decisions on participation in the federal loan program. This is an even greater concern for smaller institutions, which could have only a handful of loan recipients but where the majority are Pell Grant recipients. Tribal Colleges feel that it is imperative that they work to preserve a major source of the majority of their students' financial aid.

In addition, federal student loan programs are even less attractive in 2014 as concerns about cohort default rates (CDRs) have been heightened amongst higher education institutions because this is the first year that sanctions will be imposed in colleges based on three-year rather than two-year time periods.

Tribal Colleges do not want to risk losing Pell Grant eligibility for their students because the Tribal Colleges themselves rely upon Pell dollars to cover their costs, since they are underfunded. Therefore, until federal policy is changed to decouple the student loan program and Pell Grant eligibility, most Tribal Colleges will opt not to participate in loan programs because the risk of losing Pell Grant eligibility for thousands of American Indian students who rely upon Pell Grants is just too great.

A partial solution would be to offer year-round Pell Grants to promote Native student access to education. Year-round Pell Grants would promote access to higher education for the most underserved group of students in the nation. Native Americans have the lowest college enrollment and degree-attainment rates in the country, as noted in June 2014 testimony, which can be attributed to high rates of poverty. Year-round Pell Grants would also provide a boost in students' persistence to complete their degrees because funding would be uninterrupted. Offering year-round Pell Grants would also support the goal of helping strengthen graduation rates. Students who have to stop out for financial reasons often find jobs and then decide not to return to college. Finding a job may solve a student's short-term financial problems, but without a degree, they are limited with regard to future earning potential. In addition, individuals lacking degrees impact both their community's and America's competitiveness and economic health.

Extending the Pell Grant program year-round would help both full-time and part-time students who are not on a traditional schedule. Because many Native students

work and attend school part-time, a year-round Pell Grant program would help increase their access to a higher education.

The American Indian College Fund acknowledges that Pell Grants alone are not enough to meet their students' financial needs. Pell Grants only cover a portion of the cost of attending a Tribal College (the average cost of attendance for academic year 2013–2014, including books and board, was $14,168, contrasted with the average income of a first-time entering TCU student of $15,262, according to AIHEC). To prevent Tribal College students from borrowing from private, more expensive loan sources to fill the gap, the schools instead choose to make higher education affordable and accessible by charging very low tuition rates, writing off an average of $100,000 in tuition costs annually, and providing comprehensive support systems.

In essence Tribal Colleges, which are open enrollment, public institutions that provide access to high quality postsecondary education opportunities to both Native American and non-Native reservation residents, choose to do more with less so that their students can financially access a higher education. They spend less and achieve more so their students do not have to face the financial burden of repaying student loans after school.

It's not just Tribal College students that face the dilemma attendant with federal student loans and Pell Grants. According to a report titled "At What Cost? How Community Colleges That Do Not Offer Federal Student Loans Put Students at Risk" authored by the Institute for College Access and Success, nearly one million community college students in 30 states—or 8.5. percent of community college students nationally—are enrolled in schools that blocked all of their students' access to federal student loans. And access to federal student loans varies considerably by race and ethnicity. Native American, African America, and Latino students attending community colleges are the most likely to lack access.

Finally, there is a definite bias with regard to access to federal loans in rural areas. According to the report, community college students in non-urban areas (where Tribal Colleges are located) are more than twice as likely to lack access to federal loans as their peers who attended community colleges in urban areas. Students attending a community college in a non-rural area comprise one-fourth of all community college students, according to the report. Again, the link may be an economic issue: schools who serve large populations of students who are Pell Grant recipients may be reluctant to risk losing the primary financial source that provides their students with financial access, while also risking the dollars the institutions rely upon for operation.

Question 1a. What would you recommend for Native students at TCUs to have greater access to federal student loan and scholarship programs?

Answer. Rather than implementing federal student loan programs at Tribal Colleges that current federal regulations could cause schools to risk losing access to the Pell Grant program which serve such a large number of Native students, the American Indian College Fund joins AIHEC to recommend that Congress adopt a plan for equity in federal funding for the TCUs.

Although Congress designated Tribal Colleges as land-grant institutions in 1994, they receive only $4.4 million in federal monies compared to $300 million for state schools and $43.9 million for historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). Inequity in research funding is even greater, with $1.8 million being afforded to TCUs compared to $243.7 million to state schools and $52.5 million to HBCUs.

Enrollment at Tribal Colleges has grown by 23 percent over the past five years as more Native American students see a higher education as a path to self-subsistence and a better life. A growing future Native student population combined with the current need gap means the need for financial assistance will only increase. *(Source: AIHEC).* The American Indian College Fund believes a combination of year-round Pell Grants, additional federal funding for tribal colleges, programmatic support for the TCUs, and scholarships for Native students is the way to meet that growing need. Unmet need will only result in fewer students and lost opportunities for the neediest of Native people to become self-sufficient and provide better lives for themselves, their families, and their communities.

The American Indian College Fund, for its part, is working to raise funds from individual, corporate, and foundation entities to provide a greater number of scholarship programs for Native students as part of its 25th anniversary fundraising initiative, as stated in testimony.

Summary Recommendations

To meet current unmet and projected future student need for financial aid as more Native American students see a higher education as a path to a better life, while helping to eliminate the current economic and educational disparity in Native

communities, the American Indian College Fund advocates a two-prong approach to Pell Grant and federal student loan issues.

First, until federal policy is changed, the College Fund recommends the decoupling of the student loan program and institutional Pell Grant eligibility, as most Tribal Colleges will opt not to participate in loan programs because the risk of losing Pell Grant eligibility for thousands of American Indian students who rely upon Pell Grants to earn their educations is just too great for the reasons stated throughout this document.

Second, the American Indian College Fund advocates offering year-round Pell Grants to promote Native student access to education. Year-round Pell Grants would promote access to higher education for the most underserved group of students in the nation. Native Americans have the lowest college enrollment and degree-attainment rates in the country, which can be attributed to high rates of poverty, as noted.

RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. TOM UDALL TO THOMAS "LES" PURCE

1. *If we are not "growing our own" teachers and principals, school districts need to recruit school personnel from much further away.*
   a. *How can do we increase the number of skilled educators who see tribal education as a lifelong career, and not just a step to a non-tribal school district?*
   b. *What incentives are there for highly qualified teachers to commit to high need, high poverty and tribal schools? What else is needed?*

There are no easy answers. It is worth recognizing that there are two types of Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools operating on Tribal lands. The first are "contract" schools which operate under a tribal charter and have their own duly elected board. The second are "pure" BIE schools operate essentially (and directly) from Albuquerque. They have boards but only in an advisory capacity. The "contract" schools are fairly autonomous and set their own pay and benefit scales. Typically, pay and benefits at "contract" schools are lower than surrounding public districts (which hinders recruitment). "Pure" BIE schools typically offer higher pay and benefits than do surrounding public districts because their pay scale is based on the federal scale coupled with good benefits. However, this has not been the solution given that even these schools face difficulty recruiting and retaining teachers and administrators. Also, many BIE schools (both "contract" and "pure) also offer subsidized housing but still have difficulty recruiting teachers given the rural/remote locations. "Contract" schools typically operate without tenure protection for faculty members which makes it even more difficult to attract and retain qualified teachers.

It is also worth noting that the educational environment is such that students in these schools are typically in a greater state of flux than in other institutions. There is often student movement between reservation and non-reservation schools. This mobility has typically not been tracked effectively meaning, that students are at risk for falling between the cracks and teachers become

frustrated. Creating better communication between reservation and non-reservation schools and systems will help this problem. Similarly, creating ways for curriculum to be shared between schools and systems will likely improve educational experiences for students and morale for teachers. Sharing of this sort must, however, be done in both directions for it to be meaningful. In other words, rich cultural content from reservation schools can be shared with public schools while other content, perhaps STEM content, can be shared with reservation schools.

Two other steps might be taken to improve recruitment and retention of faculty. First, anything that can be done to provide cultural content and language instruction to teachers would likely be very helpful. If pay were to rise, for example, as teachers completed language or cultural competency courses, this would likely help, assuming such courses were offered. Coupled with these courses should be a program to provide community mentors to acclimate teachers to the community. Second, it would likely be productive to provide undergraduate students thinking about going into teaching with immersion experiences at these schools during their undergraduate years.

2. *TCUs have a unique role as primary training campuses for preparing teachers and administrators for both Indian educators and non-Indians working with Native American learners.*
    a. *What else can we do to increase the pipeline for Native Americans and Alaska Natives to pursue and excel as teachers and administrative leaders? One important aspect of lowering unemployment and strengthening the economy is improving the partnerships among Business (who know what skills their workers need), Training Programs (e.g., community colleges, who could prepare workers with these skills) and the potential workforce (to gain these skills for available jobs).*

Two steps come to mind for increasing the pipeline for Native Americans and Alaska Natives. The first step requires improving the K-12 system from which many of the Native Americans and Alaska Natives arise. Students who make it through these systems often need additional, remedial education to be successful in college. One of the greatest consequences of this need for remediation, beyond the critical issue of persistence in college when ill-prepared for collegiate level work, is the fact that a significant portion of a student's first two years might be devoted to remedial courses. This can greatly extend the time needed to earn a degree, but Pell Grant eligibility does not expand for these students, meaning that they lose their funding prior to graduating. The second step would be to increase the number of teacher education programs directly on reservations.

Finding a single mechanism for strengthening partnerships between businesses and training programs will be all but impossible since the specific business needs vary so widely across Reservations. A fairly common problem is that those qualified to be instructors in many technical fields can make significantly more money by practicing their trades rather than teaching given the current pay offered in many of these areas. Another problem is that some of these fields require expensive equipment for training and, even if start-up funding is provided for this equipment, replacement equipment can often not be purchased. All too frequently then, students are trained

on outdated equipment. Finding ways for TCUs to work with business to diversify revenue streams and thus employment opportunities has to be a key solution, but it is far easier to say this than to accomplish it.

3. *Congress is working on reauthorizing the Workforce Improvement Act.*
    a. *Could you describe the role of tribal colleges and universities in being part of the network of training the un- and underemployed and working with the business community to identify needed workers and skill sets?*
        i. *To what extent have tribal colleges made themselves eligible entities for WIA training funds?*
        ii. *How do TCUs work with their tribal governments and regional employers to identify business and job opportunities for which the TCUs would help prepare a skilled workforce?*

Given that the focus of this question is on the activities of TCUs, it falls beyond the scope of my expertise.

4. *Too many students are entering college, including tribal colleges and universities, unable to do college level work. This increases the need for remedial courses in college, and delays the time students need to earn their college degrees.*
    a. *What should the federal government and tribal governments do to reduce the need for college remediation so that incoming students are able to do college level work?*

This is a critical question and many of the probable solutions will be pertinent for both Native and non-Native students. Thinking solely about Native students, perhaps the single most productive action can be taken is to increase ways that students, from their very early years, see themselves as being academically successful. This will include building culturally relevant and diverse curricula which have many entry points for students to engage. Ensuring that cultural knowledge and Native languages are seen as valuable will help enormously. Making it clear to students that all academic disciplines, not just STEM disciplines, are valued will help enormously. Creating opportunities for students to participate in programs on TCU as well as non-Tribal college and university campuses will help enormously. Expanding the ranks for culturally qualified, high quality teachers educating these students will help enormously. Increasing outreach to parents, beginning with parents of very young students, educating them about the ways in which college can be affordable and the ways in which a college education can be valuable will help enormously.

RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. JON TESTER TO JAMIENNE STUDLEY

1. *The Special Programs for Indian Children activity for the Department of Education has seen an approximate 5% decrease since 2010. Located within this activity is the Professional Development program which is composed of the American Indian Teacher Corps (AITC) and the American Indian Administrator Corps (AIAC). These programs seek to recruit and retain effective teachers and administrators for schools with large Native populations. If the Department is aware through its own National Assessment of Education Progress of the significant disparities that face American Indian students, what is the justification for the decrease?*

The decrease you describe is the result of across-the-board reductions required by Congress, including the 5.2 percent sequester in fiscal year 2013. The decrease is not a reflection of the Department's belief in the importance of qualified teachers and administrators in Indian Country, but rather the broader appropriations environment that has cut the Department as a whole by roughly $1 billion since fiscal year 2010.

2. *In your testimony, you discuss Native American-Serving Nontribal Institutions (NASNTI) which are defined as having a student body that is composed of at least 10 percent American Indian. How many schools does this include? Do you know how many Native students attend these schools and what percentage they represent nationwide of American Indian postsecondary students? Would it benefit Indian students if the 10% requirement were changed to a lower requirement?*

According to information in the Department's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), there are currently 36 accredited degree-granting not-for-profit institutions that have 10 percent or more Native American students. Nineteen of those institutions are current NASNTI grantees and serve 20,984 Native American undergraduate students. This represents 15 percent of the total number of Native American students including students in tribal colleges. Based on IPEDs data, if the 10 percent requirement were changed to 5 percent, an additional 13,504 Native American undergraduate students currently attend institutions that might qualify for NASNTI funds. However, unless the discretionary appropriation for this program increases, the number of grants and percentage of students won't significantly go up. The President's 2015 Budget reflects a 7.8% increase in mandatory NASNTI grant funding provided through SAFRA.

3. *Many of our tribal colleges and universities have started out in abandoned or donated structures and have done a great job with limited resources to build campuses in their communities. One of the challenges we hear about is the lack of funds for facilities, and that includes dormitories. What can be done by the Department to assist TCUs with the facilities needs of their campuses?*

The Title III American Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities Program (TCCU), authorized under section 316 of the Higher Education Act, allows the Secretary to reserve 30 percent of the amount appropriated by Congress for this program for the purpose of awarding one-year grants

of not less than $1 million to address construction-related activities. These funds may be used for construction of facilities if used to strengthen the institution for academic purposes. For example, the Department did approve Dine' College's proposal to use grant funds for the construction of dormitories because the isolated area made dormitories important for the strength of the college. The project director provided a justification for the funds.

In addition to construction, Title III TCCU appropriations may be used for maintenance, renovation, and improvement in classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and other instructional facilities, including the purchase or rental of telecommunications technology equipment or services, among other things.

4. *Within the Department's budget justification materials, under the Indian Student Education activity, the Department lists several unfunded authorizations that include "In-service training for teachers", "the Indian fellowships program", the "Gifted and Talented program", and others. If these programs were funded and not just authorized, what would these programs do? What are the barriers to getting these programs funded?*

As suggested by the program names, these programs variously would support grants to eligible consortia to provide high-quality in-service training for teachers of Indian children, fellowships to Indian students to enable them to study in graduate and professional programs, establishing centers for gifted and talented students at tribal colleges and universities, grants to support the creation of tribal education agencies in administrative planning and development, and demonstration projects to improve educational opportunities for adult Indians. However, Congress seldom funds all authorized programs through annual appropriations acts. Indeed, the general trend has been to reduce the number of funded programs through a combination of program consolidations and eliminations. As noted above, with the Department's discretionary budget (excluding Pell Grants) remaining below the fiscal year 2010 level following sequestration in fiscal year 2013, overall budget constraints are the biggest barrier to funding new programs, even ones that already are authorized.

5. *Participation of high school students in college level courses or advanced academic coursework is a strong indicator of a student's preparation for either the workforce or postsecondary education. As you know, American Indian and Alaska Native students lag behind all other ethnic groups in advanced coursework. What are the challenges that lead to this disparity? What is the Department doing to increase access and participation in advanced coursework for American Indian high school students?*

An analysis of the recent report released by the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC), suggests that American Indian and Native American students are much less likely than any other ethnic group to attend high schools that offer Advanced Placement (AP) classes, calculus, or physics.

The challenges for AI/AN students to participate in early college options are many. The CRDC reports that AI/AN students are more likely to be identified as students with disabilities and to be provided special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) than students from any other racial/ethnic group. While IDEA served 13 percent of all U.S. children ages 3 to 21 in 2011, it served 16 percent of AI/ANs of the same age. Further,

more AI/AN students have high rates of absenteeism from school than students of any other race/ethnicity. In 2010, while 55 percent of all students reported having at least one absence in the preceding month, the figure was 66 percent for AI/AN students. Absenteeism means less time for classroom instruction and learning. Another obstacle to learning time is suspension. In 2011, AI/AN students had the second highest rate of students who were suspended during the year, at 7 percent. (Data may be viewed at http://ocrdata.ed.gov)

There is a need for access to quality programs and for school personnel who support AI/AN students in enrolling in advanced-level courses and who identify AI/AN students for gifted/talented programs. In our K-12 Title VII programs, we see too few school districts that are focusing on this segment of the AI/AN population. Students who are able to compete tend to do so outside of the Title VII programs and may or may not be identified as AI/AN in the data reports. The Tribal Colleges and Universities have been slow to join the early college provider groups, which could impact the availability of these types of opportunities for AI/AN students. The costs associated with bringing high school students to campus and providing faculty, space, and time can also be prohibitive. When AI/AN students have access and opportunity, they benefit from these programs.

ED is committed to increasing access to accelerate opportunities for American Indian and Native American students through the following efforts:

(1) The Title VII Indian Education Demonstration Grant program is designed to improve the educational opportunities and achievement of Indian children by developing, testing, and demonstrating effective services and programs at the preschool, elementary, and secondary levels. Some of these programs have included early college or advanced coursework for AI/AN students in order to improve the transition from high school to college. In addition, 1,300 local educational agencies receive Title VII formula grants, which can be used to increase access and participation in advanced coursework and improve college readiness.

(2) The Advanced Placement Test Fee program helps to eliminate some of the financial roadblocks that students and families encounter when taking AP courses. Those roadblocks make it difficult for low income students (including low-income American Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Native Alaska students) to gain access to rigorous AP courses. Funds are not used to pay for advanced placement courses but can be used to help pay the costs for students taking approved AP tests administered by the College Board, the International Baccalaureate Organization and Cambridge International Examinations. By subsidizing test fees for low-income students the program is intended to encourage students with the most need to take AP tests and obtain college credit for high school courses, thereby reducing the time and costs required to complete a postsecondary degree. Students who earn at least a passing grade on an AP exam can receive college credit when enrolling at most universities, allowing them to bypass introductory courses.

(3) The Alaska Native Education program (ANEP), authorized under Section 7304 of the ESEA, supports supplemental educational programs and services to help meet the unique educational needs of Alaska Natives. The program allows for a wide range of projects and activities, including projects that will enable Alaska Native students to become prepared for advanced placement opportunities. Grant funds can be used to support the development of curricula and education programs, including the development and operation of student enrichment programs

in advanced courses such as science and mathematics.

(4) Through TRIO and GEAR UP, programs that are designed to help low-income individuals and first-generation college students prepare for and complete college, the Department provided TCUs with $4.6 million in FY 2013 to support 18 TRIO projects to serve 3,637 AI/AN students.

(5) The Administration proposed $300 million for the Race to the Top Equity and Opportunity program to foster change at the State and local level to better identify and close achievement gaps, including those for AI/AN students.

(6) ESEA Flexibility has brought significant changes aimed at improving the academic achievement and other outcomes of Native students. Previously, the achievement of many AI/AN students as an identified subgroup was not visible in school performance ratings because the number of those students in a given school was below the minimum number for statistical reliability. Under ESEA Flexibility, a number of states have taken the step to include the achievement of more students in calculating school performance by creating one or more combined subgroups. For example, South Dakota has increased the number of schools accountable for reporting AI/AN achievement from 71 to over 300 by creating a "gap group" that includes students in various subgroups that have historically experienced achievement gaps. States have also submitted plans for how to translate higher academic standards into practice for all students, especially for English learners and students with disabilities. Given the disproportionately high EL and special education identification rates within the AI/AN population, these plans are expected to improve the college- and career-readiness of these students.

Response to Written Questions Submitted by Hon. Tom Udall to Jamienne Studley

1. *OIE awards grants to institutions of higher education that then provide supplemental funding and support to undergraduate and graduate students who are pursuing degrees and/or certificates in education. The participants who accept funding and training under this program must perform work that benefits Native people related to their training. The Department of Education's Indian Education Professional Development (PD) Grants program is expected to prepare and train American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) professionals by increasing the number of qualified school personnel (teachers, school administrators, teacher aides, language instructors, etc.) that serve AI/AN populations.*

   a) *Are TCUs taking full advantage of the Department of Education's Indian Education Professional Development (PD) Grants?*

   The Office of Indian Education (OIE) administers the discretionary Professional Development Program (PD) grant, authorized under the ESEA, Title VII. The eligible entities for this program include (1) an institution of higher education, including an Indian institution of higher education; (2) a State educational agency or local educational agency, in consortium with an institution of higher education; (3) an Indian tribe or organization, in consortium with an institution of higher education; and (4) a Bureau-funded school. Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) are chartered by their respective tribal governments, including the ten tribes within the largest reservations in the United States. They operate more than 75 campuses in 15 states and one

Canadian province—virtually covering Indian Country—and serve students from well more than 230 federally recognized Indian tribes.

There are currently 29 active grants for Title VII Professional Development, and 16 of these are to TCUs, with the rest of the grantees being other eligible entities.

b) Is this pipeline program sufficient to meet the need or are other initiatives recommended, and if so, do you have any suggestions?

The need for American Indian/Alaska Native teachers and administrators is great. The PD Program has graduated 836 educators from 2005 to 2013, with the majority employed working with the target population. The TCUs have been providing education degrees for a relatively short time, only about the last 20 years. They are becoming more proficient and effective in this work. The TCU tailor their education programs to meet the unique cultural needs in their communities. Other institutions of higher education are also preparing American Indian students to enter the field of education, and this needs to continue as well. The Department is aware of the Teach For America Native Alliance and applaud their efforts. Even with multiple approaches, the need continues to exist.

RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. TOM UDALL TO BILLIE JO KIPP

American Indian communities are generally located on Indian reservations geographically isolated and culturally distinct. Most educators and other school personnel may not commit to tribal education as a long-term career. Lack of an investment in personnel hurts the curriculum and pedagogy, contributing even further to students' disconnecting from the educational system.

Question 1. If we are not "growing our own" teachers and principals, school districts need to recruit school personnel from much further away. How can do we increase the number of skilled educators who see tribal education as a lifelong career, and not just a step to a non-tribal school district?

Question 1a. What incentives are there for highly qualified teachers to commit to high need, high poverty and tribal schools? What else is needed?

Answer. Currently the difficulties for Tribal Colleges is having the ability to provide 4 year degrees to tribal and community members who do not want to leave the reservation, but want to pursue a higher teaching degree. Developing hybrid courses, 2 +2 opportunities, and distance education programs from collaborating universities will increase the numbers of qualified educators. Funding in this area has to reflect a commitment to growing our own, currently Blackfeet Community Colleges engages in these activities, but we incur all costs without out funding. Additionally, outside professionals who work in disadvantaged areas are given loan forgiveness opportunities, while the opportunities for these programs for local native professionals are not equitable. An examination of the loan forgiveness program for allowing local Native Americans who are educated in the tribal college system to be eligible for this benefit is warranted.

BCC has engaged in unique behavioral health aide programming, we have worked with the local school district to improve the skill level of Native American teacher aides, which has resulted in improved skills sets and possible salary raises for teacher aides who further their education in this program. This is developing and addressing a need for the school district and improving the quality of teacher aides, which have historically been in the school district for years. Paraprofessional educational opportunities have to be supported financially as an intervention for improved services to tribal communities.

Question 2. TCUs have a unique role as primary training campuses for preparing teachers and administrators for both Indian educators and non-Indians working with Native American learners.What else can we do to increase the pipeline for Native Americans and Alaska Natives to pursue and excel as teachers and administrative leaders?

Answer. Tribal colleges are in remote areas, providing and financially supporting more hybrid and distance education programs in all areas, BA, MA, and Ph.D., is definitely needed. The funding levels of these programs are often funded by the trib-

al college without financial support, but because tribal college's commitment to improved education for native people is a mission, we attempt to offer programming without compensation which impacts an already stressed budget.

One important aspect of lowering unemployment and strengthening the economy is improving the partnerships among Business (who know what skills their workers need), Training Programs (e.g., community colleges, who could prepare workers with these skills) and the potential workforce (to gain these skills for available jobs).

Question 3. Congress is working on reauthorizing the Workforce Improvement Act. Could you describe the role of tribal colleges and universities in being part of the network of training the un- and underemployed and working with the business community to identify needed workers and skill sets?

Question 3a. To what extent have tribal colleges made themselves eligible entities for WIA training funds?

Question 3b. How do TCUs work with their tribal governments and regional employers to identify business and job opportunities which the TCUs would help prepare a skilled workforce?

Answer. Tribal colleges often respond to on demand training programs for the local workforce. Tribal councils and tribal workforce programs will identify needed training and the tribal colleges will respond to provide training to eventually improve the local economy by addressing workforce development opportunities. Workforce development has been a critical function of tribal colleges. For BCC, we have a Career Center with distance capabilities and networking with the tribal, state, and federal job recruitment opportunities.

WIA is a Blackfeet Manpower One Stop funding trajectory. When the tribe is the primary applicant for funding the tribal college does not compete with tribal applications. Increasing tribal college specific funding in these areas would improve the ability to respond to workforce needs.

Question 4. Too many students are entering college, including tribal colleges and universities, unable to do college level work. This increases the need for remedial courses in college, and delays the time students need to earn their college degrees. What should the federal government and tribal governments do to reduce the need for college remediation so that incoming students are able to do college-level work?

Answer. College prepared students attending colleges across the United States is at an overall low. This is impacting the educational system of the nation, including tribal colleges. At BCC, we are attempting to engage in more dual credit opportunities for high school students. Additionally, we are offering summer courses for high school students in developmental education courses. Again, the cost of this programming is not supported by funding and we are incurring those costs. Novel, unique, local programming such as these need to be investigated for improved outcomes. However, funding is limited and research funding for unique educational models is difficult for tribal colleges to attain as we are often competing with the university systems. Research funding specifically for tribal colleges in addressing the educational needs of their reservations could provide unique educational interventions and promising best practices.

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