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ABSTRACT

This brochure reviews a White House Executive Order on tribal colleges and universities that sets in motion a comprehensive effort to increase public and private resources and partnerships to strengthen the infrastructure of these institutions. Currently more than 350 degree and 180 vocational programs give students an opportunity to earn two-year, baccalaureate, and master's degrees. Goals of this Executive Order include: (1) building recognition and participation by fully recognizing tribal colleges as accredited institutions; (2) ensuring federal support of tribal colleges on an ongoing basis and establishing mechanisms for increasing access to federal resources; (3) strengthening educational achievement by promoting access to high-quality educational opportunities for economically disadvantaged students; (4) nurturing native culture and language; (5) encouraging innovative links between tribal colleges, early childhood programs, and elementary and high schools; and (6) supporting national education goals to ensure achievement and lifelong learning. Corporations, foundations, federal agencies, and others are encouraged to support partnerships; help build infrastructure; assist with planning, development, administrative systems, and communications; create K-12 links between tribal colleges and their organizations through curriculum development, summer academies, and systemic change; provide technical assistance; and use technology to help tribal colleges develop their own capacities. (CH)

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"Education is the only lasting means for ending poverty on reservations, and among Indian people."



Tribal Colleges and Universities Guide the Way

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**White House Initiative on
Tribal Colleges and Universities**

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New Hope at the Federal Level: The Executive Order on Tribal Colleges and Universities

Tribal Colleges are culturally-based; they focus on local economic needs and address the whole person: mind, body, spirit and family. More than 26,000 students from 250 federally recognized tribes now attend these institutions created by American Indians for American Indians. On reservations, where unemployment rates exceed 50 percent, these schools often provide the only hope for gaining the education and skills needed to enter the modern workplace.

For decades, Tribal College leaders have been working to create opportunities afforded to other higher education institutions. Today, through the Executive Order, the White House Initiative on Tribal Colleges and Universities is leading a comprehensive effort to increase public and private resources and partnerships to support them. The ultimate goal: to strengthen the infrastructure of these institutions by demonstrating the stake that all Americans have in their continued success.

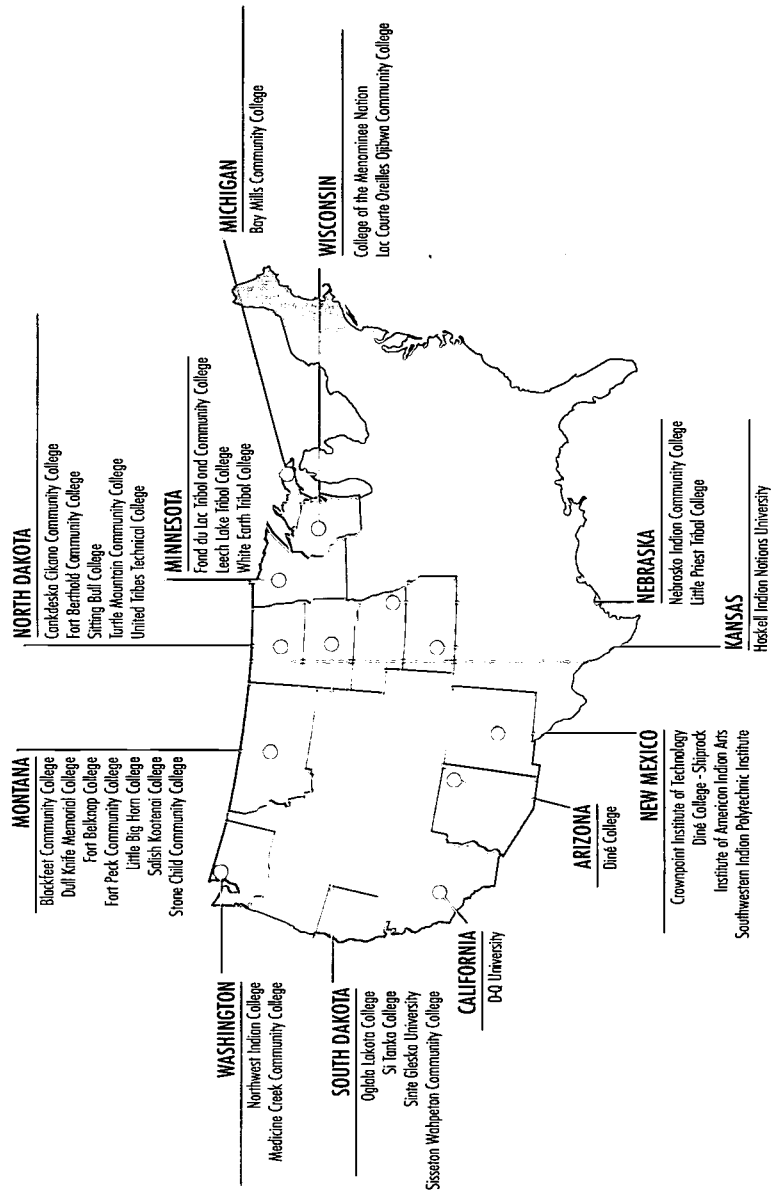
The 15-member President's Board of Advisors on Tribal Colleges and the U.S. Department of Education's Office of the White House Initiative on Tribal Colleges are guiding implementation of the Executive Order.

The Tribal Colleges offer more than 350 degrees and 180 vocational programs. While all give students the opportunity to earn two-year degrees, several offer baccalaureate degrees and some offer master's programs. On average, 75 to 85 percent of Tribal College graduates go on to earn a four-year degree, or become employed in the local community.

Still, the struggle continues. Despite unmatched success in student retention, matriculation, and job placement, many Tribal Colleges still operate in castoff buildings and facilities in disrepair. Most work to keep their doors open in the poorest, most isolated counties in America. Many serve reservations where more than 50 percent live in poverty. Virtually all serve as the best and only hope for students who commute 16 to 150 miles per day in the quest to earn their way off the cycle of welfare and dependence.

The colleges face financial challenges that would bankrupt most mainstream institutions. Unlike other public colleges, Tribal Colleges receive little or no funding from state governments. Legislation passed in 1978, the Tribally Controlled College and University Assistance Act, authorizes federal aid for core operations, which translates to \$6,000 per Indian student today. But the actual appropriation is only about half of that amount.

Technology, too, is important. It is at once their greatest challenge and greatest opportunity. In recent years, several Tribal Colleges have done an extraordinary job of educating students across the boundaries of time and distance. This success is born of necessity. Bay Mills Community College in Michigan's Upper Peninsula serves all 11 tribes in Michigan as well as students in 17 additional states. One of our greatest challenges is to boost the technological capacity of all the colleges for the century to come.



Leading the Way:

The White House Initiative on Tribal Colleges and Universities

The Office of the White House Initiative on Tribal Colleges and Universities leads the implementation of the Executive Order. The Office is charged with:

- **Increasing Resources** by ensuring that greater federal and private sector resources are available to the Tribal Colleges on an ongoing basis.
- **Advocating and Educating** by creating mechanisms to facilitate the flow of information about the Tribal Colleges to the public and private sectors and to the Tribal Colleges about federal resources and opportunities.
- **Building Partnerships** to help Tribal Colleges bring economic development to their reservations and improve the quality of American Indian higher education.
- **Coordinating Executive Order** efforts through a five-year plan, an annual report and monitoring of progress.

“When you support the Tribal Colleges and American Indian higher education, you are supporting and strengthening whole communities and whole nations.”

— Secretary Richard W. Riley, U.S. Department of Education

Goals of the Executive Order include:

- **Building Recognition and Participation** by ensuring that Tribal Colleges are more fully recognized as accredited institutions and that they have access to opportunities—both public and private—afforded to other higher education institutions.
- **Increasing Resources** by ensuring that federal support is committed to Tribal Colleges on an ongoing basis, and that mechanisms are established for increasing access by the Tribal Colleges to federal resources.
- **Strengthening Educational Achievement** by promoting access to high-quality educational opportunities for economically disadvantaged students.
- **Nurturing Native Culture and Language** by promoting preservation and revitalization of native languages and cultures.
- **Building Bridges in the Education System** by encouraging innovative linkages between Tribal Colleges, early childhood programs, and elementary and high schools.
- **Supporting the National Education Goals** through partnerships to ensure achievement and lifelong learning, from early childhood to adulthood.

What We Can Do To Support Tribal Colleges and Universities

Corporations, foundations, federal agencies and others can help support these institutions. Possibilities include:

- **Partnerships:** Match your mission and needs with the Executive Order goals and the colleges' expertise or needs and form public-private, interagency, industry, and K-12 partnerships;
- **Sustainability:** Help build the infrastructure and capacity of the colleges to ensure their place in the globally competitive 21st century;
- **Internal Operations:** Assist with planning, development, administrative systems and communications; help design a new course or upgrade existing programs;
- **Linkage Programs:** Create K-12 linkages between Tribal Colleges and your organization through curriculum development, summer academies and systemic change;
- **Technical Assistance:** Provide technical assistance and advice on topics from grant writing to range management; and
- **Technology:** Use technology and help Tribal Colleges develop theirs—link with the White House Initiative on Tribal Colleges and Universities.

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