

UNITED TRIBES TECHNICAL COLLEGE
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Testimony for the House and Senate Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
Appropriations Subcommittees on FY 2014 Indian Affairs Budget
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For 45 years, with the most basic of funding, United Tribes Technical College (UTTC) has provided postsecondary career and technical education, job training and family services to some of the most impoverished, high risk Indian students from throughout the nation. Despite such challenges we have consistently had excellent retention and placement rates and are a fully accredited institution. We are proud to be equipping our students to take part in the new energy economy in North Dakota and to be part of building a strong middle class in Indian Country by training the next generation of law enforcement officers, educators, medical technicians and "Indianpreneurs." We are governed by the five tribes located wholly or in part in North Dakota. We are not part of the North Dakota state college system and do not have a tax base or state-appropriated funds on which to rely. The requests of the UTTC Board for the FY 2015 Bureau of Indian Education (BIE)/Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) are:

- *\$6.8 million in BIE funding for our Indian Self-Determination Act contract which is in the Tribal Technical Colleges BIE line item and is \$2.5 million over the Administration's request for UTTC.*
- *One-time BIE funding to forward fund United Tribes Technical College and the few other tribal colleges who are not forward funded.*
- *Congressional support for a tribally-administered law enforcement training center at UTTC and/or more involvement in law enforcement training initiatives.*

Base Funding. UTTC administers its BIE funding under an Indian Self-Determination Act agreement, and has done so for 37 years. BIE funds requested above the FY 2014 level are needed to: 1) maintain 100 year-old education buildings and 50 year-old housing stock for students; 2) upgrade technology capabilities; 3) provide adequate salaries for faculty and staff who are in the bottom quartile of pay for comparable positions elsewhere; and 4) fund program and curriculum improvements.

We appreciate that the Administration is requesting a \$200,700 increase for UTTC for a total of \$4,564,000 but our need is so much more than that. We request that the UTTC portion of the Tribal Technical Colleges line item be \$6.8 million and that the total line item of Tribal Technical Colleges be at least \$11 million.

Acquisition of additional base funding is critical as UTTC has significantly increased its number of students within the past ten years while actual base funding for educational services, including Carl Perkins Act funding, have not increased commensurately. Our BIE funding provides a base level of support while allowing us to compete for desperately needed discretionary contracts and grants. Very little of the other funds we receive may be used for core

career and technical educational programs; they are competitive, often one-time supplemental funds which help us provide support services but cannot replace core operational funding.

We highlight several relatively recent updates of our curricula to meet job market needs: The ramifications of the North Dakota Bakken oil boom are seen throughout the state. We saw the need for more certified welders in relation to the oil boom and so expanded our certified welding program. We are now able to train students for good paying, in-demand welding jobs. Similarly, our online medical transcription program was designed to meet the growing need for certified medical support staff. Other courses reflect new emphasis on energy auditing and Geographic Information System Technology. And we recently opened a distance learning center in Rapid City where there are some 16,000 American Indians in the area. We are also working toward the establishment of an American Indian Specialized Health Care Training Clinic.

Forward Funding. We have wanted BIE forward funding for some time and the experience these past several years with the Continuing Resolutions, sequestration and inexcusably slow and insufficient allocation of funds really brings home this issue.

There was a *glitch in the FY 2010 appropriations process* which resulted in UTTC (and Navajo Technical University (NTU) not receiving BIE forward funding. There is authority for forward funding for tribal colleges under the Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities Act, 25 USC 1810(b)(1) and (2). This authority applies to all colleges funded under that Act, including UTTC and NTU.

When the Administration requested \$50 million for forward funding its FY 2010 budget, they asked for it under the line item of "tribally controlled colleges and universities" – that line item includes 27 tribally controlled colleges. However, we are funded under the line item of "tribal technical colleges" and Haskell, Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI), and the Institute of American Indian Arts (AAIA) are funded under other authorities, and thus when Congress provided the requested \$50 million for forward funding, UTTC and NTU, Haskell, SIPI, and the AAIA were left out. The American Indian Higher Education Consortium has estimated \$22 million is needed to forward fund these schools. This does not increase the federal budget over the long-run. It simply provides funds for vital education programs before the start of each school year, which is critically important when appropriations are delayed and the government is funded under Continuing Resolutions.

The manner of distribution of FYs 2013 and 2014 BIE funds has been a disaster. Between having funding provided via Continuing Resolutions and held back due to the prospects of a sequestration, planning has been very difficult. Six months into FY 2013 we had been allocated only 37% of our BIE funding and in the current (FY 2014) year only about 25% of funds were allocated in the first six months. *The unprecedented uncertainty in terms of timing and amount of funding has taken a toll.* New faculty feel vulnerable because of the appropriations situation, and prospective candidates are reluctant to accept positions due to the same uncertainty. We have significantly reduced off-campus professional development activities for faculty, and held back on upgrading technology resources for our faculty and students.

Additional Information About United Tribes Technical College. We have:

- Renewed unrestricted accreditation from the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, for July 2011 through 2021, with authority to offer all of our full programs on-line. We have 23 Associate degree programs, 19 Certificate and three Bachelor degree programs (Criminal Justice; Elementary Education; Business Administration). Six courses are offered online.
- Services including a Child Development Center, family literacy program, wellness center, area transportation, K-8 elementary school, tutoring, counseling, family and single student housing, and campus security.
- A projected return on federal investment of 20-1 (2005 study).
- A semester retention rate of 85% and a graduate placement rate of 77%. Over 45% of our graduates move on to four-year or advanced degree institutions.
- Students from 75 tribes; 85% of our undergraduate students receive Pell Grants.
- An unduplicated count of undergraduate degree-seeking students and continuing education students of 1391.
- A dual-enrollment program targeting junior and senior high school students, providing them an introduction to college life and offering high school and college credits.
- A critical role in the regional economy. Our presence brings at least \$34 million annually to the economy of the Bismarck region. A North Dakota State University study reports that the five tribal colleges in North Dakota made a direct and secondary economic contribution to the state of \$181,933,000 in 2012.

A Northern Plains Indian Law Enforcement Academy. We ask Congress to seriously look at the problem of addressing crime in Indian Country with an eye toward the establishment of a campus-based academy for training of law enforcement officers in the Northern Plains area of Indian Country. There are cultural and legal reasons why such training should be tribally-directed in order to be appropriate for the realities of tribal communities. With the advent of expanded tribal authorities under the Tribal Law and Order Act and the Violence Against Women Act, 2013, the need has grown. State and national training resources would have an important role in this new endeavor.

Our Criminal Justice program offers two- and four-year degrees, and prepares graduates for employment as federal, state or tribal law enforcement, correction, parole and probation, and transportation safety officers; victim advocates; U.S. Customs, Homeland Security, and Military Investigative services; and private security agents. We point out that the Indian Child Protection and Family Violence Prevention Act contains requirements regarding background checks and character investigations. We want to expand our endeavors to help meet law enforcement needs in Indian Country. Given our Criminal Justice program, our location and our campus resources, we propose the establishment of a Northern Plains Indian Law Enforcement Academy.

Basic law enforcement training is currently provided through the BIA's Indian Police Academy in Artesia, New Mexico. The BIA Academy can train only three classes of 50 persons annually. The BIA is depending on the basic training provided by state academies to supplement what is provided at Artesia. We firmly believe UTTC is well positioned with regard to providing

both basic and supplemental law enforcement training. An academy at UTTC would allow tribal people in the Great Plains and other nearby regions a more affordable choice of training locations, minimizing the distance and long separation of trainees from their families.

The FY 2015 Indian Affairs budget justification (p. IA-PSJ-12) notes that training initiatives for the Indian Police academy includes developing a pre-academy training program for candidates prior to their attending the Academy; developing a mid-level manager training program; and establishing an on-line distance learning program for recertification, among other things. These are things that UTTC could do as part of an academy at UTTC or in partnership with the Indian Police Academy.

In short, the BIA should be utilizing and enhancing the resources of UTTC to make a real difference in the law enforcement capability in Indian Country. We can offer college credit to trainees, and our facilities include the use of a state-of-the-art crime scene simulator. Maintaining safe communities is a critical component of economic development for our Tribal Nations, and local control of law enforcement training resources is a key part of that effort.

The Duplication or Overlapping Issue. As you know, in March 2011 the Government Accountability Office issued two reports regarding federal programs which may have similar or overlapping services or objectives (GAO-11-474R and GAO-11-318SP). Funding from the BIE and the DOEd's Carl Perkins Act for Tribally Controlled Postsecondary Career and Technical Education were among the programs listed in the reports. *The full GAO report did not recommend defunding these programs; rather, it posed the possibility of consolidation of these programs to save administrative costs.* We are not in disagreement about possible consolidation of our funding sources, as long as program funds are not cut.

BIE funds represent over half of UTTC's core operating budget. The Perkins funds supplement, but do not duplicate, the BIE funds. *It takes both sources of funding to frugally maintain the institution.* In fact, even these combined sources do not provide the resources necessary to operate and maintain the college. We actively seek alternative funding to assist with academic programming, deferred maintenance, and scholarship assistance, among other things. The need for postsecondary career and technical education in Indian Country is so great and the funding so small, that there is little chance for duplicative funding.

There are only two institutions targeting American Indian/Alaska Native career and technical education and training at the postsecondary level—UTTC and NTU. Combined, these institutions received less than \$15 million in FY 2014 federal operational funds (\$7.7 million from Perkins; \$7 million from the BIE). That is not an excessive amount for two campus-based institutions who offer a broad (and expanding) array of programs geared toward the educational and cultural needs of their students and who teach job-producing skills.

Closing. UTTC offers services that are catered to the needs of our students, many of whom are first generation college attendees and many of whom come to us needing remedial education and services. Although BIE and Perkins funds do not pay for remedial education, we make this investment through other sources to ensure our students succeed at the postsecondary level. Thank you for your consideration of our requests.