

UNITED TRIBES TECHNICAL COLLEGE
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Testimony for the House and Senate Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
Appropriations Subcommittees on FY 2016 Indian Affairs Budget
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United Tribes Technical College (UTTC) has for 46 years, and with the most basic of funding, provided postsecondary career and technical education 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 preparing our students to participate 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 providers, and administrators. 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 2016 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 \$2.2 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, estimated at \$20 million for five institutions.*
- *Place contract supports costs on a mandatory funded basis and provide full funding for administrative costs grants for tribally operated elementary/secondary schools.*
- *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 our BIE funding under an Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act agreement, and has done so for 38 years. We appreciate that the Administration is requesting a \$65,000 increase for built-in costs for UTTC for a total of \$4,630,000 but our need far exceeds that amount. 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. We struggle to maintain course offerings and services to adequately provide educational services at the same level as our state counterparts. 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 that 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: Indeed, the ramifications of the North Dakota Bakken oil boom are apparent as we have seen faculty and students leave education in pursuit of jobs in the Bakken region. We saw the need for more certified welders in relation to the oil boom and have expanded our certified welding program in response to the workforce need. We are now able to train students for good paying in-demand welding employment with a focus on career rather just a job. Other courses reflect new innovative approaches on energy auditing and Geographic Information System Technology. UTTC is seeing increased interest in our online programs of study and short term skill building training at the UTTC Black Hills Learning Center, a distance learning site located at Rapid City, SD. We are also working toward the establishment of an American Indian Specialized Health Care Training Clinic on our established Bismarck, ND campus.

Forward Funding. We have wanted BIE forward funding for some time and our experience with funding via Continuing Resolutions (CR) has made this request more urgent. Even before the days of what now seems like routine CRs, Congress placed many education programs on a forward funded basis. We ask you to do that for us and the four other higher education institutions that receive BIE funds to be afforded the same consideration. Forward funding would allow us to know nine months in advance (assuming the appropriations bill is enacted in a timely manner), and thus enable reasonable planning time, for these instances. As you know, only once since 1998 has the BIA budget been enacted by the beginning of the fiscal year.

There was an *oversight in the FY 2010 appropriations process* that resulted in UTTC (and Navajo Technical University (NTU)) not receiving BIE forward funding while the other tribally-controlled colleges had their funds transitioned to a forward funded basis. 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. The oversight was that the Administration requested the forward funding under the line item in the budget include all of the tribally controlled colleges except UTTC and NTU. The Administration neglected to update the budget request to include the line item "tribal technical colleges" that had recently been established for UTTC and NTC. Also left out were the BIE-administered institutions of Haskell, Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute, and the Institute of American Indian Art which are funded under other authorities. The American Indian Higher Education Consortium has estimated \$20 million is needed to forward fund these schools. This does not increase the federal budget over the long-run. This simply allows us to know up to nine months in advance our funding, which is critically important when appropriations are delayed and the government is funded under Continuing Resolutions.

Contract Support Costs and Administrative Cost Grants. As mentioned above, we administer our BIE funding through an Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act contract, and thus contract support costs (CSC) are vital to us. We thank this Subcommittee and the Administration for the recognition of the legal obligation the federal government has to pay tribal contractors their full CSC. Placing CSC funding on a mandatory basis is the logical resolution to a long-term solution for CSC that will eventually protect the programs funded on a discretionary basis in the BIA and Indian Health Service budgets.

We have a BIE-funded elementary school on our campus, the Theodore Jamerson Elementary School (TJES), and thus many of our adult students and their children are able to attend school on the same campus. The Administration proposed a budget that would fully fund estimated administrative costs grants (\$75 million, a \$12.9 million increase), which is the schools' equivalent to contract support costs. We ask for your support for this budget request as this would greatly assist the TJES students in completing elementary school.

Funding for United Tribes Technical College is a good investment. 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 68% and a graduate placement rate of 79%. Over 45% of our graduates move on to four-year or advanced degree institutions.
- Students from 49 tribes; 73% of our undergraduate students receive Pell Grants.
- An unduplicated count of 605 undergraduate degree-seeking students: 258 continuing education students; and 42 dual credit enrollment students for a total of 905 for 2014-2015.
- 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 again 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. 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 expanded tribal authorities under the Tribal Law and Order Act and the Violence Against Women Act, 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 is depending on the basic training provided by state academies to supplement what is provided at Artesia. 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 2016 Indian Affairs budget (p. IA-PSJ-12) notes that training initiatives for the Indian Police Academy include developing a pre-Academy training program for candidates; developing a mid-level manager training program; and establishing an on-line distance learning program for recertification, among other things. These are things that we 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 our core operating budget. The Perkins funds supplement, but do not duplicate, the BIE funds. *It takes both sources of funding to frugally maintain our institution.* We actively seek alternative funding to assist with academic programming, deferred maintenance, and scholarship assistance, among other things. The need for 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 \$14.7 million in FY 2015 federal operational funds (\$7.7 million from Perkins; \$6.9 million from the BIE). That is not an excessive amount for two campus-based institutions who offer a broad array of programs geared toward the educational and cultural needs of their students and who teach job-producing skills.

We know members of this Subcommittee have made a point to visit places in Indian Country and we would love to be able to arrange for you to visit United Tribes Technical College. Thank you for your consideration of our requests.