

UNITED TRIBES TECHNICAL COLLEGE
3315 University Drive, Bismarck, North Dakota 58504
Leander "Russ" McDonald, PhD, President, 701-255-3285

Testimony for the House and Senate Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
Appropriations Subcommittees on FY 2017 Indian Affairs Budget
March 17, 2016

United Tribes Technical College (UTTC) has for 47 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 by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). We are proud to be preparing our students to participate in the 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 University System and do not have a tax base or state-appropriated funds on which to rely.* The funding requests of the UTTC Board for FY 2017 Bureau of Indian Education (BIE)/Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) are:

- *\$11 million for the line item, Tribal Technical Colleges, which is \$3.6 million over the Administration's request. Of this amount, \$6.8 million is BIE funding for our Indian Self-Determination Act contract.*
- *Place Contract Supports Costs on a permanent, full, mandatory-funded basis.*
- *Provide full funding for Tribal Grant Support Costs for tribally-operated elementary/secondary schools.*
- *Establishment of a tribally-administered Northern Plains law enforcement training center at UTTC.*

First of all, we thank you for placing the Tribal Technical Colleges account that provides core operational funds to our institution and Navajo Technical University (NTU) on a forward funded basis as of fiscal year 2016. We also support your interest in providing forward funding for the three remaining colleges who not yet forward funded: Haskell Indian Nations University, Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute, and the Institute of American Indian Arts.

The extended length of time to achieve forward funding for UTTC and NTU and the fact that three Indian higher education institutions are still not forward funded highlights the carefulness with which tribal college references need to be made. We are authorized under differing titles of the Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities Act and then there are other statutory authorities for the three institutions administered through the Bureau of Indian Education.

Base Funding. UTTC administers our BIE funding under an Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act agreement, and has done so for 39 years. We appreciate that the Administration is requesting a \$500,000 increase for Tribal Technical Colleges, but our need far

exceeds that amount. The UTTC portion of the Tribal Technical Colleges line item should be \$6.8 million based on an \$11 million appropriation.

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 our other funds can be used for core career and technical educational programs; they are competitive, often one-time 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. At the certificate level, we saw the need for more certified welders in relation to the oil boom and 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 than just a job. And we recently received HLC approval to offer a Bachelor's Degree in Environmental Science that will provide experiential research opportunities for our students.

Funding for United Tribes Technical College is a good investment. We have:

- Renewed unrestricted accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission for July 2011 through 2021, with authority to offer all of our full programs on-line. We offer 16 Associate degrees, 5 Certificates, and 3 Bachelor degree programs of study (Criminal Justice; Elementary Education; Business Administration). Six of the programs are offered online.
- Services including a Child Development Center, family literacy program, wellness center, area transportation, K-6 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 58% and a graduate placement rate of 82%.
- Students from 37 tribes represented; 67% of our undergraduate students receive Pell Grants.
- An unduplicated count of 536 undergraduate degree-seeking students: 828 continuing education students; and 24 dual credit enrollment students for a total of 1,283 students 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.

Contract Support Costs. 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. This has been an enormously important development for Indian tribes. We appreciate that the FY 2016 appropriations act places Contract Support Costs for both the BIA and the Indian Health Service (IHS) in their own accounts and is funded at an indefinite amount, thus assuring full funding. That circumstance applies only to the FY 2016 appropriations and we join with others in Indian Country in supporting a long-term legislative solution that will provide full and permanent funding for Contract Support Costs. Placing CSC funding on a mandatory basis is the logical resolution to a long-term solution for CSC that will also protect the programs funded on a discretionary basis in the BIA and IHS budgets.

Tribal Grant Support Costs for K-12 Tribally-Operated Schools. We have a BIE-funded elementary school on our campus, the Theodore Jamerson Elementary School, and thus many of our college students and their children attend school on the same campus. For these elementary schools, Tribal Grant Support Costs are the equivalent of Contract Support Costs for tribes although authorized under different statutory authorities. We thank you for providing what is estimated to be full funding for Tribal Grant Support Costs in FY 2016 (\$73.3 million), and we support the Administration's FY 2017 request of \$75.3 million, estimated to be full funding.

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 at UTTC. We ask that you direct the Secretary of Interior and the Bureau of Indian Affairs to work with the Northern Plains tribes and others on the timely development of a plan for the establishment of an academy to better serve the tribes residing in the Northern tier of the United States.

Establishment of such an academy at UTTC continues to be strongly supported by the Great Plains Tribal Chairman's Association (GPTCA) via Resolution 5-1-20-16. The Resolution requests that the Secretary of Interior and the BIA consult with the tribes on the details of a plan for establishment of the Academy. Cultural and legal differences further support why such training should be tribally-directed in order to be appropriate for the realities of tribal communities within different parts of the Indian Country. The need is critical and continues to grow with the methamphetamine, opioid and heroin crises and the resulting social ills from these epidemics. North Dakota and other northern border regions have special problems relating to drug and human trafficking. Additionally, the expanded tribal authorities under the Tribal Law and Order Act and the Violence Against Women Act only further the importance of trained law enforcement officers within our tribal communities. State and national training resources would have an important role in this new endeavor.

The UTTC Criminal Justice program currently 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. A pre-law program is currently in development to address the shortage of law trained personnel within tribal judicial systems. 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, which often has waiting lists. 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 for training locations while minimizing the distance and long separation of trainees from their families.

The FY 2017 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. *Both sources of funding are necessary to the frugal maintenance of 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 only \$15.1 million in FY 2016 federal operational funds (\$8.2 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. *Mitakuye Owasin* (All my relatives)