

UNITED TRIBES TECHNICAL COLLEGE
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Testimony for the House and Senate Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
Appropriations Subcommittees on FY 2018 Indian Affairs Budget
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United Tribes Technical College (UTTC) has for 48 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 fully accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. We are proud of our role in helping to break generational poverty and in helping to build a strong Indian Country middle class by training the next generation of law enforcement officers, educators, medical providers, and administrators; however, there is a long way to go and we need to expand our efforts. 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 2018 Bureau of Indian Education (BIE)/Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) are:

- *\$11 million for the line item, Tribal Technical Colleges, which is \$3.1 million over the FY 2017 enacted level. Of this amount, \$6.8 million is BIE funding for our Indian Self-Determination Act contract.*
- *Continue fully funding Contract Supports Costs with establishment of permanent, full, mandatory-funding.*
- *Continue 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, thank you for the \$500,000 FY 2017 increase for the BIE line item of tribal technical colleges as requested by the Obama Administration. Secondly, thank you again 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 are pleased that as of FY 2017 Congress will be providing forward funding for the Institute of American Indian Arts and that the explanatory language for the appropriations bill indicates that you are interested in providing in FY 2018 for the remaining two colleges who are not yet forward funded -- Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute, and the Haskell Indian Nations University.

The extended length of time to achieve forward funding for UTTC and NTU and the fact that several other Indian higher education institutions were/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 40 years. The UTTC portion of the Tribal Technical Colleges line item should be \$6.8 million based on an \$11 million appropriation. We will want to communicate again with this Subcommittee when we know what the Trump Administration has requested in the Indian Affairs budget.

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. BIE funds are central to the viability of our core postsecondary education programs. Very little of the other funds we receive may be used for core career and technical educational programs; they are competitive, often one-time targeted supplemental funds. Our BIE funding provides a base level of support while allowing the college to compete for desperately needed discretionary funds.

We highlight several recent updates of our curricula to meet job market needs. First, at the certificate level, UTTC recognized the need for more certified welders and heavy equipment operators in relation to the oil boom and expanded these programs in response to the workforce need. UTTC is now the only welding test site in a multi-state region approved by the American Welding Society, and while the North Dakota Bakken oil boom has diminished, these professions remain in demand. The hospital facilities in the regions were unable to hire certified Medical Coding & Billing personnel so we developed and currently offer this certificate as one of our online offerings. We are now able to train students for good paying in-demand employment with a focus on career rather than just a job. Finally, upon receiving approval by the Higher Learning Commission to offer a Bachelor's Degree in Environmental Science, we began this four-year program in the Fall of 2016, thus providing 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 through 2021. We offer 1 diploma, 4 certificates, 14 Associate degrees, and 4 Bachelor degree programs of study (Criminal Justice; Elementary Education; Business Administration; Environmental Science and Research). Business Management, Criminal Justice, Medical Coding and General Studies are fully available and offered online. UTTC continues to be the only TCU in the country approved by the Higher Learning Commission to offer full programs online.
- Services including a Child Development Center, family literacy program, wellness center, area transportation, K-7 BIE-funded elementary school, tutoring, counseling, family and single student housing, and campus security.

- A projected return on federal investment of 20-1 (2005 study).
- From 2015 – 2016, UTTC had a fall to fall retention rate of 38% and a 2016 fall semester persistence rate of 84% for the fall of 2016. Of the 87 graduates in 2016, 53 students were employed, for a placement rate of 61%. Additionally, 19 of those graduates continued their education.
- Students from 69 tribes represented at UTTC during the 2015 – 2016 academic year.
- Our students are very low income, and 70.4% of our undergraduate students receive Pell Grants.
- An unduplicated count of 524 undergraduate degree-seeking students and 4 non-degree seeking students; 1,037 continuing education students; and 29 dual credit enrollment high school students for a total of 1,594 students for 2016-2017.
- 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 \$192,911,000 in 2016.

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 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 FYs 2016 and 2017 appropriations acts place Contract Support Costs for the BIA and the Indian Health Service (IHS) in their own accounts and is funded at an indefinite amount, thus assuring full funding. Given that this funding status for CSC is year to year, 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 2017 (\$80 million).

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.

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)