

UNITED TRIBES TECHNICAL COLLEGE
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Testimony for the House and Senate Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
Appropriations Subcommittees on FY 2019 Indian Affairs Budget

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United Tribes Technical College (UTTC) has for 49 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, the need is great 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 nor do we receive state-appropriated funds.*

The funding requests of the UTTC Board for FY 2019 Bureau of Indian Education (BIE)/Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) are:

- *\$11 million for the line item, Tribal Technical Colleges which compares to the FY 2018 enacted level of \$7.5 million and the Administration's FY 2019 request of \$6.5 million. Of our requested 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.*

Thank you for supporting forward funding for UTTC several years ago and for supporting the forward funding for the remaining tribal colleges and universities (TCUs) in the FY2018 Appropriations Bill, which includes tribal and BIE-operated colleges on this schedule.

TCUs are authorized under differing titles of the Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities Act and there are other statutory authorities for 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 41 years. 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 to our struggle to maintain course offerings and services to provide educational services at the same level as our state counterparts. BIE funds are central to the viability of our core postsecondary education programs and overall mission as a TCU. The following examples provide three of our most successful areas of study directed at addressing workforce shortage areas.

The nurse shortage is one example and one reason why the Associate of Applied Science in Practical Nursing Program is the most popular program offered. Licensed practical nursing (LPN) positions are readily available in Bismarck, North Dakota, and throughout the Nation. Workforce development data project the need will continue to 2030 in part due to the aging population (Baby Boom), nurse retirement, and nurse faculty shortages. These factors result in nursing programs restricting student admission, as there are not enough faculty to meet the faculty/student ratio requirements of State Boards of Nursing.

Business related programs are the second most popular and are set up as 2 + 2 program with the associates degree setting the foundation for a bachelor's degree should the student wish to continue their education to the next level. A significant need for administrators and human resource personnel continues to exist throughout North Dakota and the Great Plains Regions among tribal and non-tribal communities.

Criminal Justice is setup much the same with associate's degree serving as the foundation for transition into the bachelor's degree program, and prepares graduates for employment as federal, state, or tribal law enforcement, in a variety of areas. A huge shortage of law enforcement officers exist throughout the Great Plains and throughout Indian Country. Graduates may also consider the opportunity to enter law as there is a significant shortage of law trained personnel within tribal judicial systems. The Oil Boom brought significant resources to North Dakota communities; however, the financial impact also resulted in a significant increase in crime such as substance abuse (opioid, methamphetamine, and heroin) and the resulting social ills such as human trafficking and domestic violence. A partnership with Lake Region State College of the North Dakota University System is under development that will enhance both of our Criminal Justice programs through the sharing of faculty and resources.

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

- Higher Learning Commission Accreditation through 2021. A campus site visit held in April 2017 indicated we have a firm foundation for furthering efforts as a data driven institution. 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 2016 – 2017, UTTC had a fall to fall retention rate of 38.4% and a 2017 fall semester persistence rate of 49%. Of the 68 graduates in 2017, 45 students were employed, for a placement rate of 66%. Additionally, 14 of those graduates continued their education.
- Students from 51 tribes were represented at UTTC during the 2016 – 2017 academic year.
- Our students are very low income, and 69.6% of our undergraduate students receive Pell Grants in 2016-2017.
- An unduplicated count of 557 undergraduate degree-seeking students and 4 non-degree seeking students; 1,382 continuing education students; and 28 dual credit enrollment high school students for a total of 1,571 of all students for 2016-2017.
- A critical role in the regional economy. 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 and UTTC had a \$59.6 million dollar direct and secondary economic impact on the Bismarck/Mandan communities for the same period.

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 the House and Senate Interior Appropriations Subcommittees 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 last three appropriations acts place Contract Support Costs for the BIA and the Indian Health Service (IHS) in their own accounts and that they are 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 Contact 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 2018 (\$81 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. 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, and the Murdered Missing Indigenous Women movement, 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. 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.

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. *Hecetu yedo.* (It is so)