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The Tribally Controlled Colleges in the 1980s: Higher Education's Best Kept Secret

NORMAN T. OPPELT

The late 1960s and early 1970s saw a major change in American Indian education. This change was the advent of self-determination in education for some western American Indians. Rough Rock Demonstration School (1966) and Ramah High School (1970), located on different sections of the huge Navajo Reservation, were the first modern American Indian controlled elementary and secondary schools.

At the higher education level, the founding of sixteen tribally controlled colleges on western reservations between 1968 and 1978 has initiated self-determination in American Indian post-secondary education. Little research has been done on these schools; in fact, they are unknown to many persons in the field of higher education. Other than persons who have worked at these colleges, few educators know of their importance in American Indian education. This article has been written to inform interested persons about the present status of these tribal colleges, their progress and problems, and to speculate about their future.¹

The first tribally controlled college, Navajo Community College, was chartered by the Navajo Tribe in 1968. Classes were first offered in 1969 at the small reservation town of Many Farms where NCC shared facilities with the Bureau of Indian Affairs'

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secondary school. The motivation for founding Navajo Community College was the realization by many Navajos that existing off-reservation White institutions were not meeting the post-secondary education needs of most Navajos.² There were too many dropouts, wasted human resources and the preservation and transmission of the Navajo language and traditional culture was discouraged. The Navajo wanted their own college, planned and controlled by their people. They believed that an American Indian controlled college on the reservation would provide services to the tribe and would encourage educated Navajos to return to their homeland where they would provide resident expertise in a number of fields.

In its first few years Navajo Community College was funded by various federal sources, small donations from the private sector and allocations from the Navajo Tribe. Most of these funds were intended for the establishment of the College, not permanent operating funds. Therefore, a more stable source of funding was needed for the College to continue to operate. This need was partially met through the passage of Public Law 89-192, the Navajo Community College Assistance Act of 1971.³ This Act provided that federal funds could be appropriated for operation and capital construction at NCC. The operating funds were based on the number of full-time equivalent American Indian students enrolled each fiscal year. It was still necessary to lobby for funding of this act on an annual basis, but this legislation provided a more stable and unified source of funds than the previous temporary, scattered sources. The passage of P.L. 89-192 was a milestone in American Indian higher education because it set a precedent for the direct federal funding of an American Indian controlled institution of higher education.

In 1971 leaders at Navajo Community College began making plans for a new permanent campus at Tsaile Lake. This campus was occupied in 1973 and is still the only comprehensive campus built specifically for a tribally controlled college. The site at Tsaile has great natural beauty but is isolated from services, transportation and population centers. It provides a good environment for learning and is truly a representative reservation location. However, there are disadvantages in travel to and from the college, and the costs of materials and services are exceptionally high.

The first president of Navajo Community College was Robert Roessel, a non-Indian, who was formerly the director of Rough Rock Demonstration School. Roessel, an energetic, outspoken advocate of American Indian self-determination, was one of the persons most responsible for the founding of Navajo Community College and for its growth in the early years. Roessel's enthusiasm and uncompromising nature eventually caused some of the Navajo leaders to believe he was taking over too much authority in administering the college. They wanted more American Indian control at the executive level and decided non-Indians on the faculty should not have a vote on major policy decisions. This decision and curricular disagreements brought about Roessel's resignation in 1969. Ned Hatathli, a Navajo, was appointed as the second president of Navajo Community College in 1969. Unfortunately, Hatathli met an untimely death in 1971, depriving the Navajo People of a strong leader in education. Hatathli was succeeded by two Navajo chief executives who were poorly prepared to administer an institution of higher education. Their administrations were marked by turmoil, high faculty turnover, poor management and low morale. In 1981 Dean Jackson, a well-qualified Navajo, was appointed president, and it appeared that Navajo Community College had a Navajo leader who would be able to guide the college through the difficult decade of the 1980s.

Since 1968 Navajo Community College has grown significantly in enrollment, but the exact rate of growth cannot be determined because accurate enrollment figures are not available.⁴ As will be explained, this lack of reliable enrollment data has had an effect on the funding of Navajo Community College.

Although Navajo Community College has offered some classes off campus, it is basically a centralized, residential post-secondary institution. It is based on the traditional concept that students should come to the college and live there while working toward their educational goals. It is probable, however, that Navajo Community College, located on the huge Navajo Reservation with its poor roads, lack of public transportation and highly dispersed population, would serve its people better with a less centralized organization. In 1973 a branch of Navajo Community College was established at Shiprock, New Mexico, in the northeast section of the reservation. This branch, located near a major reservation population and employment center, has appreciably

improved the accessibility of programs for Navajos and others living in this area.

The enrollment over the years at Navajo Community College has been approximately 85 percent Navajo, 10 percent other Indians, and 5 percent non-Indians. The students are primarily in their late 20s and early 30s, as the college has attracted relatively few recent high school graduates. Many of the students are American Indians who have not previously had access to higher education or have attended off-reservation colleges and dropped out for various reasons. The overall satisfaction of the students at Navajo Community College is fairly high except for the isolation and the lack of breadth in the curriculum and activities.⁵ Hard data on the outcomes for students at Navajo Community College are not available, and a follow-up study of graduates and dropouts needs to be done.

Navajo Community College has had a core of dedicated faculty and staff over the years. The majority of this group is Navajo, but there have been a few non-Indians who have persisted and made a major contribution in spite of the isolation and other conditions which promote a high turnover among non-Indians. The administration of Navajo Community College in recent years has been composed almost entirely of Navajos. As they have gained experience their effectiveness has improved. At times the Navajo Tribal Council and its chairman have been overly involved in decision making at Navajo Community College, making it very difficult for the administrators to carry out their responsibilities. The tribal chairman and other Navajo officials have controlled the appointment of Navajo Community College administrators, who are sometimes chosen on the basis of personal or family connections rather than their qualifications for the position. As of 1983 this appears to be less common, and hopefully the change of tribal chairmen with the election of Peterson Zah will put a stop to the former nepotistic practices.

The second and third tribally controlled colleges to be established were Oglala Sioux Community College (1970) and Sinte Gleska College (1971) founded on the adjacent Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations in southern South Dakota. Differing from Navajo Community College, which had no official ties with an existing institution, these two Sioux colleges were associated through bilateral agreements with established institutions. Sinte

Gleska had bilateral agreements with Black Hills State College, Spearfish and the University of South Dakota, Vermillion; Oglala Sioux Community College was associated with The University of Colorado, Boulder, South Dakota State University, Brookings, and the University of South Dakota. Both of these tribal schools soon became successful candidates for accreditation with the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools and, henceforth, were able to offer accredited Associate Degrees. In 1983 Sinte Gleska became the first Indian controlled college to attain full accreditation at both the Associate and Bachelor's Degree levels.

The motivations for founding these two Sioux colleges were similar to those for the founding of Navajo Community College. The tribal leaders on these reservations wanted to provide opportunities for their people to prepare themselves for better jobs or to go on to a four-year degree. Cultural preservation and service to the tribe were also major objectives of Oglala Sioux Community College and Sinte Gleska College. The organization of these two colleges differed in an important way from that of NCC. They developed dispersed delivery systems for their courses, programs and services.⁶ Rather than a central campus to which students must come to take courses or obtain services, these two Sioux colleges have a central administrative office but offer classes and services at a number of learning centers throughout the reservation. This enables working students or parents of young children to enroll in convenient courses near their homes. This also makes it unnecessary to build residence halls and other costly facilities for a residential campus. There are some problems incumbent in a dispersed system of higher education. Coordination and communication among faculty and students is difficult in a highly decentralized format.

Both of the first two Sioux tribal colleges benefitted from strong leadership by American Indians and a few non-Indians in their development. At Sinte Gleska, Stanley Red Bird, Gerald Mohott and Lionel Bordeaux were three of the leaders in the first few years, and Gerald One Feather, Virgil Kills Straight and Thomas Shortbull were the leaders mainly responsible for the early success of Oglala Sioux Community College. A unique characteristic of Sinte Gleska is the humanistic viewpoint of most of its faculty since its establishment. They have stressed a broader education

than the other American Indian colleges with an emphasis on the development of problem solving skills to develop future American Indian leaders rather than the narrow vocational skills emphasized at most other tribal colleges.⁷

Soon after the founding of the first three tribally controlled colleges, a number of other western tribes moved toward the establishment of colleges on their reservations. Table #1 lists these schools in chronological order with characteristics of size, location, funding and accreditation status. The tribes chartering colleges were mainly those in the Northern Plains or adjacent prairie tribes to the east. The two exceptions were the Lummi Tribe in the northwest corner of the State of Washington and more recently the L'Anse Vieux Desert Band of the Chippewa in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Ojibwa Community College was founded in 1975 and offered classes until 1980 when the financial crisis in Michigan forced Michigan Tech, the sponsoring institution, to terminate its classes on the reservation.

Examination of the publications of sixteen of the tribally controlled colleges and interviews with administrators and faculty at thirteen of these schools made it evident that they share four broad objectives. These are (1) vocational education, (2) general or transfer education, (3) preservation and transmission of the tribal culture and (4) service to the tribe(s). A number of other objectives are stated in the publications of these colleges, but they can nearly all be subsumed under these four broad categories. A fifth objective that is important at one or two institutions is faculty research and publication. This is most important at Sinte Gleska with its bachelor degree programs and the influences of some of its faculty and staff who were educated at research oriented universities.⁸

The emphasis on the four objectives listed above at all of the tribal colleges is indicative of the similar educational and related social needs of these tribes and their peoples. It may also be that having access to the written objectives of Navajo Community College and the early Sioux colleges has influenced the stated objectives of the later colleges. The priorities among these four objectives vary somewhat among the tribal colleges. The two given top priority at nearly all of these schools are vocational education and general or transfer education. Preservation of the tribal culture is in third place at most of these colleges and service to the tribe(s) is a distant fourth. The conditions peculiar to some of the

tribes influence how much emphasis is placed on the latter two objectives. At several schools the stated objectives of the college do not coincide with the actual programs and the allocation of resources. This may have resulted from prematurely written objectives, changes in the tribe's conditions, or the present administration and staff differing with the framers of the original goals and objectives. It would be advisable for each of the tribally controlled colleges' administrators, faculty and students to examine their written objectives and, if necessary, revise them in accord with their current priorities, practices and goals.

In order to be of maximum service to the tribal members and meet the objectives discussed above, it is necessary for a tribally controlled college to be accredited. During the 1970s American Indian higher education leaders were discussing the feasibility of forming a new, separate accrediting agency for the accreditation of tribally controlled colleges. Some American Indian leaders, under the coordination of the staff of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium, began plans to form such an association. Proponents of this plan believed that, because the existing accrediting associations were devised to accredit traditional White institutions, they were not appropriate to serve as accrediting agencies for the new, unique American Indian colleges. It was feared that, in order to receive accreditation from one of the existing regional associations, an American Indian college might be forced to give up its unique characteristics such as flexibility in admissions and programs, teachers who lacked formal credentials, and other differences which enabled them to meet the special needs of American Indians on reservations. Two other major concerns were the high cost of attaining accreditation and the excessive time it would take to become fully accredited.⁹

Concurrently with planning for formation of their own accrediting association, the tribally controlled colleges began applying for candidacy for accreditation with their regional associations, i.e., North Central Association of Schools and Colleges or the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges. Through bilateral agreements with accredited colleges in their area, all of the tribal colleges, except Navajo Community College which was already accredited, were able to offer accredited courses, and their students received Associate Degrees through the sponsoring institution(s). In 1976 Navajo Community College became the first

tribally controlled college to be fully accredited to offer Associate Degrees. The other tribal colleges applied for candidacy status with their regional associations and, as of 1982, eleven of these colleges had attained candidacy status, enabling them to offer accredited courses and Associate Degrees as independent institutions on a temporary basis. Several of these schools were to be eligible for full accreditation in the near future and were confident of attaining this status. The five colleges which were not accredited in 1982 were among the more recently chartered colleges. They were affiliated with accredited colleges and were corresponding with their regional associations to plan for a visitation for candidate status. The American Indian Higher Education Consortium assisted all of the tribal colleges in their self studies and other efforts to attain accreditation. The accreditation status of all of the tribally controlled colleges as of 1982 is shown in Table #1.

The fears of the administrators and staff members at the tribal colleges concerning the difficulties of attaining accreditation by the existing agencies have, in large, not been realized. They have been allowed to retain most of their uniqueness, and the majority of the faculty believe the self studies required for application have been beneficial to their college. It has taken longer and cost more than they would have preferred, but it has enabled the schools to increase their status and effectiveness in serving their students. Had a separate association been formed to accredit the tribal colleges, it is likely that it—and the colleges it accredited—would not have been fully accepted by the higher education establishment. A few of the tribal colleges may have problems becoming fully accredited, but it appears that the formation of a separate accrediting association is now unnecessary and has little support among the administrators and faculty of the tribally controlled colleges.¹⁰

As of 1982 the physical facilities of most of the tribally controlled colleges were barely adequate to allow them to provide the education necessary for their students. By the standards of general community colleges their buildings, equipment and library holdings would be judged very poor, but considering the overall condition of facilities on the reservations and the fact that most of the programs are dispersed and therefore do not need the extensive physical facilities of a residential college, they are marginally adequate. According to the administrators and faculty of the tribal colleges and my observations in 1982, the greatest

needs are for more and better classrooms and laboratory space. Many of the tribal colleges cannot offer all needed classes because they do not have sufficient or adequate classrooms. Library facilities and holdings are also inadequate at the majority of these schools. This is particularly critical on reservations where there is no public library in the vicinity. Another need at several of the colleges is some type of student lounge or student union and a gymnasium for physical education classes and recreational activities.

The best physical facilities are at Navajo Community College which has the necessary physical facilities for its residential campus. Oglala Sioux Community College and Salish Kootenai College have modern administration buildings with classrooms, laboratories, offices and meeting rooms. Two of the tribal colleges have sites and plans for new campuses, but the cutback in federal spending in the early 1980s made it unlikely that they would be able to implement their plans in the near future. Most of the tribal college administrators and faculty took the view that the human resources are more important than expensive physical plants and, although they need better facilities, they will make do with what they have.

Insufficient financial support has been the single most serious problem in the establishment and development of the tribally controlled colleges. The two most common sources of funding for public two-year colleges, taxation of real property and state appropriations, are not available to tribal colleges. American Indians cannot place taxes on their federal reservation lands, and the states do not consider tribally controlled colleges eligible for most state funding. None of the tribes, except the Navajo, have large enough capital resources to provide any significant financial assistance to their college. Also, the poverty of nearly all reservation American Indians prevents them from paying even the relatively low tuition of a two-year college. Therefore, the tribal colleges must rely on federal funding plus grants from private foundations or individuals.

Nearly all of the tribal colleges received grants from Title III of the Higher Education Act of 1965 to establish and develop their institutions. At most of these colleges the Title III Grant, known as a Strengthening Developing Institutions Program, was granted to a sponsoring accredited college or university for the development of the tribal college. At developing non-Indian institutions the Title III grants were most commonly awarded directly to the

institution.¹¹ The reluctance to make awards directly to the new tribally controlled colleges is indicative of a discriminatory lack of confidence in American Indians to manage their own higher education. Other federal funds have come from Community Action Programs, vocational education grants, Adult Basic Education, Snyder Act (P.L. 93-368), Public Health Service, Title IV of the Indian Education Act and a variety of other smaller grants. The tribal colleges have also received student financial aid funds from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the tribes and vocational programs such as the Comprehensive Employment Training Act. Most of these federal allocations are "soft monies," meaning there is no guarantee they will continue to be available beyond the current funding period.

At a few of the tribal colleges donations or grants from private foundations or individuals helped support specific programs or services. These grants were primarily to provide seed money and were not intended to be a continuing source of support. In recent years most tribal colleges have sought to increase private funding, but this source appears unlikely to provide any stable financial resources for these institutions.

For most of their existence, each fiscal year has been a financial crisis for the tribal colleges. Funding for most programs has been, at most, on an annual basis, making it impossible to do any long-range planning. Each year faculty and staff had to wait for most of the year to find out if they would be employed for the next fiscal year. A more stable source of funding was badly needed to provide more continuity for these struggling colleges.

This source was finally provided, in part, by the passage of the Tribally Controlled Community College Assistance Act of 1978 (P.L. 95-471). After much effort, the American Indian leaders and other supporters, with the coordination of the staff of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium, pushed through this landmark legislation in American Indian self-determination in higher education.¹² This Act provided for grants to qualified colleges for their operation and improvement based on a maximum of \$4,000 for each full-time equivalent American Indian student in attendance. During fiscal 1980, when the first year appropriations were made, twelve colleges were ruled eligible to receive these funds. These schools received a total of \$10,405,999 based on an aggregate of 2,917 full-time equivalent American Indian students, plus \$1,000,000 for technical assistance and feasibility

studies.¹³ It was later determined that the 1,600 full-time equivalent American Indian students reported at Navajo Community College was an inaccurate number and that, rather than being entitled to \$6,405,000, the college should have been granted only \$2,500,000 based on approximately 793 FTE American Indian students. The federal government did not attempt to have any money refunded or to deduct any from subsequent appropriations.¹⁴ In this case the college benefitted, but more commonly the errors have caused the American Indian colleges to receive less money than they are entitled to.

The actual average amount appropriated to the twelve colleges in fiscal year 1980 was \$3,567 per American Indian FTE. The amount appropriated to each of the eligible tribal colleges in fiscal year 1980 is shown in Table #1. The appropriations received from P.L. 95-471 in 1980 constituted from one-fourth to one-half of the operating funds at each of the tribal colleges. Administrators at several of the schools stated that these funds saved their college from having to close due to lack of funds. Although leaders at the tribal colleges must still put much time and effort into the annual battle for funding of P.L. 95-471, it has been much more productive than their previous searches for smaller, scattered funding sources.

Two accredited two-year colleges, College of Ganado, Ganado, Arizona, and Deganeweda-Quetzalquotl (D-Q) University, Davis, California, changed the composition of their governing boards and became chartered by American Indian tribes in the late 1970s primarily to qualify for P.L. 95-471 funding.¹⁵ College of Ganado was founded in 1970 as a Presbyterian college to serve American Indians in northeastern Arizona. It was chartered in 1979 by the Hopi Tribe, and 90 percent of its students are American Indians. D-Q University was founded in 1971 as an independent institution for the post-secondary education of Chicanos and American Indians in California. In 1977 D-Q University became chartered by the Hoopa Valley and Soboba Indian Tribes and since this time the enrollment has been mainly composed of Indians. It has been a very controversial institution since its inception. The federal government has claimed that the administration at D-Q University has violated the lease agreement on its federally owned site by leasing some of its 643 acres for non-educational purposes and that the college has not met the minimal enrollment of 200 students to retain its lease. The leaders

at D-Q University including former Chancellor Dennis Banks, a controversial former American Indian Movement leader, claim the government authorities are harassing the college in order to force its closure. In spite of the continuing reports in the local newspapers of its imminent demise, as of early 1984 D-Q University was still open and fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

The financial recession of the early 1980s and the decreased support for minority programs by the federal administration indicate that the financial problems of the tribal colleges will continue in the coming years. All American Indian tribal leaders and their supporters must continue to work at protecting the funding for P.L. 95-471 and searching out new sources of funding for the tribally controlled colleges.

Enrollments at all of the tribally controlled colleges, except Navajo Community College, are small. They varied in 1979, from 51 students at Little Hoop Community College to 480 at Sinte Gleska College. Navajo Community College had an estimated enrollment of 1,118 in 1979. The average enrollment for the 19 tribal colleges listed in Table #1 is 257.

American Indians are the most underrepresented of any major minority group in the United States.¹⁶ Fewer American Indians, male and female, attend institutions of higher education than do Blacks or Hispanics. At all tribally controlled colleges women outnumber men, at one school as much as five to one. This is partly due to the programs offered at the majority of these schools. At most tribal colleges the vocational programs are primarily those that are traditionally female, such as secretarial, teaching, health and social services. It is evident that these programs reflect the majority of job opportunities for college trained persons on these reservations. The traditionally male job opportunities tend to be in ranching, forestry, roadwork, unskilled labor and other occupations not requiring post-secondary education.

However, even at the tribal colleges with traditionally male programs located on reservations with some job opportunities in these fields, women outnumber men in the student body. A possible explanation for this is that early marriage and child bearing among reservation American Indian women has prevented them from going away from the reservation to attend college, and that now for the first time they have an opportunity to pursue post-secondary education. Another cultural factor suggested by some tribal college administrators is that most young American Indian

men prefer active unskilled jobs and do not see attending college as leading to the type of work they want to do. A few schools are concerned about the preponderance of women in their enrollments and are adding programs in hopes of attracting more men. Additional study of potential students needs to be done on reservations to determine the reasons for the high proportion of women. This will enable those schools that want more male students to make the necessary changes.

The percentage of American Indians in the student bodies at the tribal colleges varies from 80 percent to almost 100 percent. The proportion of American Indian students has an important effect on funding because appropriations from P.L. 95-471 are based on the number of full-time equivalent American Indian students. A relatively large percentage of non-Indian students would raise educational expenses without adding commensurate funds. If a tribal college enrollment reached more than 50 percent non-Indians it would not be eligible to receive funds from P.L. 95-471. The average age of students at tribal colleges ranges from the late 20s to the early 30s, which is similar to other two-year colleges. A high proportion of the students are working and have children. The model student at a tribal college is a thirty-year-old married woman with two or more children. She is working, is often the sole support of her dependents, has poor academic preparation and an annual income well below the poverty level. It is obvious why such a person has not been able to attend a traditional off-reservation college. The tribal college must be flexible and innovative in its admissions policies, programs, regulations and services to accommodate the special circumstances and needs of such a student.

What enables these students with so many barriers to the attainment of a post-secondary education to persist and complete a post-secondary program? The students attending tribally controlled colleges are characterized by the ability to survive in a difficult and sometimes hostile environment. Their life experiences, as small minorities in a White society, have instilled in many of them a patience and perseverance which stands them well in their often long and always difficult path to higher education. They are mature persons who must be highly motivated and resourceful to overcome their handicaps. The moral support of an extended family group is often a major source of motivation to initiate and persist in a program that may require six years to complete a two-year college degree.

The foregoing gives a brief description of the nineteen tribally controlled colleges existing in 1983 in regard to their history, objectives, accreditation, facilities, financing, students, faculty and administration.

In the fifteen years since the founding of Navajo Community College, what strengths and weaknesses have become evident in these unique schools? The weaknesses of the tribal colleges are mainly associated with the lack of sufficient financial support. The Tribally Controlled Community College Assistance Act of 1978 (P.L. 95-471) has provided a more stable funding base, but administrators at these schools still see low funding as the major obstacle to attaining their goals in service to American Indians and to the chartering tribes. In mid 1983 the continuance of funding from P.L. 95-471 was in jeopardy when President Ronald Reagan vetoed the spending because it would set an unwise precedent of federal responsibility for the support of American Indian higher education.¹⁷ Fortunately, in late 1983 the Congress passed a bill to authorize federal aid, including operating funds for the tribally controlled colleges through 1987. This legislation also provided for a study of facilities at the colleges and established an endowment fund that requires the colleges to raise matching funds from private sources. This bill indicated the willingness of Congress to continue support of the tribal colleges for the next few years.¹⁸

Inadequate physical facilities are a serious weakness of most of the tribal colleges. Only Navajo Community College has adequate buildings, equipment, library facilities and other physical facilities for its programs.

In the area of personnel there are still some administrators who lack the training and/or experience to effectively administer a two-year college. Overall faculty preparation and morale are good as of the early 1980s, but turnover of non-Indian faculty is still high at a few schools, making continuity difficult to maintain.

Difficulties in attaining accreditation have been considered a problem for the tribal colleges in the past, but the progress most of these schools have made toward becoming accredited by their regional association has made the formation of a separate agency for the accreditations of tribal colleges unnecessary.

In spite of the weaknesses mentioned above the strengths of the tribal colleges greatly outweigh their deficiencies. The major strength is that the local control of these colleges enables them

to meet the unique educational needs of reservation American Indians better than any existing institution of higher education. Having an accessible, low cost college on their reservation makes post-secondary education actually available to these persons for the first time. The flexibility of admissions, programs and services enables the tribal colleges to meet the previously described needs of American Indian students. Preliminary studies of students at the tribal colleges indicate that they have a much lower attrition rate than do American Indian students at predominantly White institutions. It also appears from incomplete data that American Indians who transfer from tribal colleges to four-year schools have higher retention rates than those who go directly from a reservation high school to an off-reservation college or university.

Another important strength of the tribally controlled colleges is their commitment to the preservation and transmission of the tribal cultures of the American Indians they serve. How well this is being accomplished is difficult to assess, but preliminary observations indicate that this effort is having a positive influence on the preservation of American Indian languages, arts and crafts, religious ceremonies and other aspects of the culture. At least, the American Indian students are not forced to attend a college where their tribal heritage is ignored or actively repressed.

Another advantage of the tribal colleges is that they are providing jobs for educated American Indians on the reservations; helping to stem the "brain drain" which has been occurring for many years. In the past few college educated American Indians returned to their reservations because there were few jobs which enabled them to fully use their education. Also, the faculty, administration and staff of the tribal colleges are providing resident expertise beyond their educational responsibilities. On several reservations tribal college employees are serving in local and state elective offices, which gives American Indians better representation in local and state political decisions.

Prior to the establishment of the tribally controlled colleges, the western reservations had a variety of uncoordinated courses, workshops and educational services offered by various area colleges and universities. Now the tribal colleges have provided coordination and centralization of these post-secondary efforts. This has resulted in better and more economical post-secondary education programs and services for American Indians and non-Indians residing on the reservations.

Table 1
Tribally Controlled Colleges*

| | Date Chartered | Chartering Tribe(s) | Reservation Indian Population | Total Enrollment | FTE Indian Students (FY 1980) | P. L. 95-471** Appropriations (FY 1980) | Accreditation*** Status (1982) |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| Navajo Comm. Coll. Tsaile, Arizona | 1968 | Navajo | 131,379 | 1,118 | 1,600 | \$ 6,405,000 | Accredited |
| Oglala Sioux Comm. Coll. Kyle, South Dakota | 1970 | Oglala Sioux | 12,500 | 368 | 282 | 883,703 | Candidate |
| Sinte Gleska Coll. Rosebud, South Dakota | 1971 | Rosebud Sioux | 9,052 | 480 | 173 | 551,851 | Candidate |
| Standing Rock Comm. Coll. Ft. Yates, North Dakota | 1972 | Standing Rock Sioux | 7,195 | 151 | 111 | 354,761 | Candidate |
| Turtle Mountain Comm. Coll. Belcourt North Dakota | 1972 | Turtle Mountain Chippewa | 8,100 | 387 | 107 | 341,318 | Candidate |
| Ft. Berthold Comm. Coll. New Town, North Dakota | 1973 | Mandan, Arikara and Hidatsa | 3,456 | 60 | — | N.F. | Candidate |
| Lummi Comm. Coll. ¹ Lummi Island, Washington | 1973 | Lummi | 2,500 | 85 (1980) | 27 | N.F. | Candidate |
| Nebraska Indian Comm. Coll. ² Winnebago, Nebraska | 1973 | Santee Sioux, Omaha, Winnebago | 3,271 | 115 (1977) | 109 | 329,453 | Candidate |
| Sisseton-Wahepton Comm. Coll. Sisseton, South Dakota | 1973 | Sisseton-Wahepton Sioux | 3,757 | 96 | — | N.F. | Affiliated with Dakota St. Coll. |
| Little Hoop Comm. Coll. Ft. Totten, North Dakota | 1974 | Devil's Lake Sioux | 2,789 | 51 | 35 | 111,646 | Candidate |
| Cheyenne River Comm. Coll. Eagle Butte, South Dakota | 1975 | Cheyenne River Sioux | 4,638 | 138 | — | N.F. | Affiliated with North State College |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|------|-------------------------------|---------|---------------|-------|----------------------|---|
| Dull Knife Memorial Coll. Lame Deer, Montana | 1975 | Northern Cheyenne | 3,227 | 231 | 93 | 296,709 | Candidate |
| Ojibwa Comm. Coll. ³ Baraga, Michigan | 1975 | L'Anse-Vieux Band Chippewa | 900 | 76 (1978) | — | N.F. | Affiliated with Michigan Tech. University |
| Blackfeet Comm. Coll. Browning, Montana | 1976 | Blackfeet | 5,742 | 304 | 83 | 264,761 | Candidate |
| Little Big Horn Coll. Crow Agency, Montana | 1977 | Crow | 4,208 | 102 | — | N.F. | Affiliated with Miles Comm. College |
| Salish Kootenai Coll. Pablo, Montana | 1977 | Salish- Kootenai | 2,833 | 507 (1980) | 90 | 287,079 | Candidate |
| Deganeweda-Quezalquotl (D-Q) University, ⁴ Davis, California | 1977 | Hoopla Valley and Soboba | 2,273 | 163 (1978) | 76 | 242,431 | Accredited |
| Ft. Peck Comm. Coll. Poplar, Montana | 1978 | Assimiboine and Sioux | 4,630 | 135 | — | N.F. | Affiliated with Miles Comm. Coll. & Dawson Comm. Coll. |
| Coll. of Ganado ⁵ Ganado, Arizona | 1979 | Hopi | 8,253 | 321 (1978) | 131 | 387,286 ⁶ | Accredited |
| TOTALS | | | 218,430 | 4,888 | 2,917 | \$10,455,998 | |

^{*}Figures are as of 1979 unless otherwise noted.

^{**}N.F. Indicates the college was ruled not feasible for P. L. 95-471 appropriations in FY 1980.

^{***}Candidate Indicates the college has been temporarily approved to offer accredited courses and associate degrees by its regional accrediting association.

1. Original name was Lummi College of Fisheries.

2. Original name was American Indian Satellite Community College.

3. Termination of reservation classes in 1980 by Michigan Technical University resulted in closing of Ojibwa Community College.

4. D-Q University was founded as an independent two-year college for the education of Chicanos and American Indians in 1971.

5. College of Ganado was founded in 1970 as a Presbyterian, two-year college for the education of Navajo and Hopi Indians.

6. Includes an emergency grant of \$231,000 in FY 1980.

As of 1984, the tribally controlled colleges are contributing significantly to the post-secondary education of reservation American Indians and to the development of their reservations. They are the first solid evidence that the United States will support the long-denied self-determination in higher education for American Indians. Their success in the future is dependent upon continued federal funding and their ability to accommodate to the changing educational needs of reservation American Indians.

NOTES

1. This article is based primarily on the writer's research on American Indian higher education from 1978 to 1983. The primary sources were institutional documents including catalogs, annual reports, self studies, enrollment figures and accreditation studies of the tribally controlled colleges. The writer also conducted personal interviews with administrators and faculty members of tribally controlled colleges in the fall of 1982.

The entire research will be reported in a forthcoming book on the American Indian and higher education.

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