

History of American Indian Higher Education

(1) 1660s-late 1800s: Missionary-Colonial Period – Private & Public Efforts

A. Private Efforts

- **1618: “Henrico Proposal”**: early colonists tried to raise money for colleges for “children of the infidels”. Failed miserably when indigenous people feuded with and killed colonists and destroyed college.
- **1654: Harvard Indian College**: Also failed – of first 20 students, only two survived. All others died of sickness. Of two who survived, one died in shipwreck returning to Cambridge for commencement.
- **1769-1893: Dartmouth Experience**: Only 58 Indians received instruction

B. Public Efforts – Federal Government

- **1776: U.S. Constitution**: Gave Congress power to “regulate commerce and make treaties” with Indian tribes. Early on, new government had good intentions:
 - **Northwest Ordinance**: “good faith”, no taking of land without consent”; **George Washington**: “more adequate provision for...laws...outrages against... Indians”
- **1778: First Treaty (Delaware Tribe)**: Between 1778-1884, more than 400 treaties. 120 specifically included educational provisions. In the treaties, more than one billion acres of land were ceded to the U.S.
- **1819: First Law: “Indian Civilization Fund Act”**: Payments to religious groups and others to “live among and teach” Indians.
- **1824: Bureau of Indian Affairs Created under U.S. War Department**: 1839 -- formal development of federal “manual labor schools”
- **1830s: U.S. Supreme Court: Two Important Decisions**
 - **Cherokee Nation v. Georgia**: “Domestic Dependent Nations... unquestionable right to the lands they occupy” (John Marshall).

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- **Worcester v. Georgia:** Clarifies Government-to-Government relationship -- *Treaties and laws* are key to "trust responsibility," not Constitution: "treaty" and "nation" have clear, legal meaning. U.S. government applies those words to Indian nations as to all other "nations." (Treaties do not "confer" rights – Sovereignty and Nationhood are inherent rights.)

(2) Late 1860s-1920s: Reservations & Removal

• **Federal Activity**

- Education is clearly federal responsibility through treaty obligations, yet...
- Broken, unfulfilled treaties;
- Proliferation of BIA boarding schools, many with terrible living conditions;
- Beginning of widespread "English only" policies and regulations, although missionaries report to BIA that most effective education occurs when teachers learn native language;
- "Allotment" – Dawes Act – with goal of "public school education"
- "Catholic-Protestant" fight over distribution of federal funding, ultimately ending most federal money to religious institutions

• **Higher Education**

- **1879:** Carlisle Indian School (Captain Pratt)
- **1884:** Admission of Indians to Hampton Institute in Virginia
- **1884:** Founding of Haskell Institute and Croatan Normal School (now UNC at Pembroke)

• **Tribal Leadership**

- **Chief Manuelito (Navajo):** "Education is the Ladder – tell our people to take it."
- **Chief Sitting Bull:** "Let us put our minds together and see what world we can make for our children."
- **Chief Plenty Coups:** "With education, we are the white man's equal – without it, we are his victim."

(Our leaders returned to these lessons 100 years later...)

(3) **Mid1920s-1940s: New Deal** - Rethinking federal Indian policies after WWI

- **Council of One Hundred:** Leading figures gathered to recommend changes.
- **Popular Writers Speak Out:** Zane Grey (return to old ways, criticism of missionaries --"The Vanishing American"); John Collier creates "American Indian Defense Organization".
- **1928: The Meriam Report:** Brookings Institute/Johns Hopkins asked to conduct nonpolitical investigation of Indian affairs to prevent Collier from doing it.
 - **Meriam Report:** Condemns allotment, poor quality of services, urges property protections, publicly reveals terrible Boarding School conditions; begins movement toward "self-determination".
 - **1934: Indian Reorganization Act:** As a result of the Meriam report, the Indian Reorganization Act ends allotment policies, provides some religious freedom and tribal self-governance, and "Indian preference" in hiring.

(4) **Mid1940s-1969: Termination** - End of WWII renews calls to "set American Indians" free.

- **1945:** AI veterans return to reservation homes and, on Navajo, begin discussions on creating a "tribally controlled college".
- **1960:** Raymond Nakai runs for Navajo Tribal Chairman on platform of "working toward Navajo control of education and creation of Navajo institution of higher education".
- **1968:** Navajo Community College created

(5) **1970s-present: Self-Determination**

- **1968-1973:** Five more TCUs founded. In 1973, American Indian Higher Education Consortium formed by first six TCUs.
 - **1971:** Enactment of the Navajo Community College Assistance Act.
- **1975:** "Indian Self-Determination Act" signed into law.
- **1978:** Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities Assistance Act, and ongoing fight for full funding begins.
- **1987:** First Carnegie Report on TCUs.

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- **1988:** “Institute of American Indian Arts and Cultural Development Act” establishes Congressional Charter for IAIA.
- **1989:** Tribal College Journal and AICF founded.
- **1989:** Tribally Controlled Post-secondary Vocational Institution Act.
- **1992:** Tribal Colleges start telecommunications system to link schools.
- **1994:** Equity in Educational Land-grant Status Act of 1994.
- **1996:** President Clinton signs Executive Order 13021 on Tribal Colleges and Universities.
- **1997:** Second Carnegie Report on Tribal Colleges.
- **1998:** First Executive Director is appointed to White House Initiative on Tribal Colleges and Universities; Title III program for American Indian Tribal Colleges & Universities enacted and funded; WHITCU begins work on new AI teacher prep program.
- **1999:** Gates Foundation announces \$50 million gift for minority scholarships.
- **1999-2001:** Largest yearly appropriations increases for TCUs since enactment of TCU Act; expansion of opportunities to other departments, including \$3 million for TCU section in Title III and \$10 million in funding for AI teacher preparation program – specifically:
 - **FY2001:** WHITCU focuses on expanding funding obligations and opportunities throughout federal budget:
 - \$3 million increase in TCU Act (plus \$1.2 M for other TCUs)
 - \$9 million ED -- total for Title III-TCU;
 - \$40 million ED -- dual-degree;
 - \$5 million ED -- administrators corps
 - \$5 million HUD -- Community Development grants
 - Land-grant increases: endowment, extension, and research
 - \$1 million DOJ – law related education
 - \$28 million DOC -- MSI program
 - \$10 million NSF – information technology
 - \$1.5 million SBA – TBICs (\$3 million for AIBDC)

(6) Current Activities



- 1999
 - Alliance for Equity in Higher Education formed
 - PABTCUs sworn in (2 meetings)
 - Two IHEP reports on TCUs
 - Expansion into International activities
 - TCU Technology Planning Launched
 - Facilities initiative: Public Private Partnership with AICF
 - Lily Foundation: \$30 million for facilities – largest gift ever from private foundation to AI organization

- 2000
 - Facilities initiative Expanded to Public Sector
 - Technology initiative in full swing
 - Recent White House Briefing on TCUs and Economic Development
 - “American Indian Education Reform Summit”: PABTCU vision
 - Discussions on moving to “higher education system”
 - PABTCU begin work on first report/recommendations

[need to add updated information since 2001]