

# AIHEC Strategic Plan 2021-2026

## Introduction

The American Indian Higher Education Consortium's (AIHEC) Board of Directors acknowledges and celebrates the uniqueness of the Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) and AIHEC, as compared to other institutions of higher education and national higher education organizations. AIHEC was established in 1973 by and for TCUs and the students, communities, lands, and cultures they serve. For these reasons, AIHEC's strategic initiatives focus on sustaining, serving, and strengthening TCUs and American Indian and Alaska Native students.<sup>1</sup>

## AIHEC's Vision

The American Indian Higher Education Consortium's vision is strong Sovereign Tribal Nations through excellence in *Tribal* higher education.

## AIHEC's Mission

AIHEC is the collective spirit and unifying voice of our nation's Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs). AIHEC provides leadership and influences public policy on American Indian and Alaska Native higher education issues through advocacy, research, and programmatic initiatives; promotes and strengthens Indigenous languages, cultures, communities, lands, and tribal nations; and through its unique position, serves member institutions and emerging TCUs.

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<sup>1</sup> The AIHEC Board of Directors convened on June 24-25, 2019 at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, NM to begin the process of reviewing and updating AIHEC's strategic goals and plan. A draft set of goals was distributed to the TCU presidents in advance to seek the presidents' reaction and lay a foundation for the planning process. The seven goal statements were more specific than AIHEC's previous goals and designed to be tactical strategies for achieving AIHEC's broader vision. After extensive discussion, the previous strategic goals were brought back to the group and were resoundingly approved. After a president raised concerns about having five goals, a sixth goal was added. The Board then broke into six small groups to refine the goal statements and develop new objectives for each goal. Each of the six groups had responsibility for one strategic goal and its objectives. The larger group reconvened to review their work and make comments and recommendations as each group briefly presented its goal. Presidents returned to their small groups to determine whether and how to incorporate the suggestions. Lastly, AIHEC staff compiled and refined the Board's work, then submitted the draft to the AIHEC Executive Committee for review, before presenting the draft plan to the full Board in fall 2020.

A "SMART" goal format (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time Framed) is articulated for each of the goals/objectives. Thus, AIHEC's 2021-2026 Strategic Plan incorporates the strategic initiative, a goal statement, objectives, and a responsible person or entity (presidents or staff).

## AIHEC's Strategic Initiatives, 2021-2026



<b>Goal A. <u>Sustain and Grow</u>: Secure sufficient funding and resources to meet the operational needs of all TCUs.</b>
Goal A.1: Implement a strategy to influence federal legislation that furthers TCUs collective goals.
Goal A.2: Regularly evaluate trends in policy and environment, determine implications, and strategize responses to strengthen TCUs.
Goal A.3: Legislative Initiative on <i>Envisioning &amp; Empowering TCUs for the Next 50 Years</i> (holistic strategy for “reimagining” TCUs)
Goal A.4: Maintain and strengthen meaningful partnerships and alliances with tribal, regional, state, national, and international organizations.
Goal A.5: Develop a plan for assisting TCUs in impacting tribal and state policy.
<b>Goal B. <u>Inform and Enrich</u>: Coordinating and using data, make informed decisions, share the unique story of Tribal higher education, and increase visibility and equity for American Indian and Alaska Native students and TCUs.</b>
Goal B.1: Create and sustain a culture of data use at AIHEC and the TCUs to support continuous improvement.
Goal B.2: Refine and Implement the AIHEC Research Agenda.
Goal B.3: Plan/launch CIRCLE (Center for Indigenous Research, Culture, Language & Education)

Goal B.4: Expand and strengthen public education on TCUs.
<b>Goal C. <u>Nation Building</u>: Through innovative, collaborative, and data-driven programming, strengthen Tribal communities, sustain our lands and environments, and promote resiliency among our people.</b>
Goal C.1: “We have always been planners”: Encourage restoration of a planning culture within TCUs (and tribes).
Goal C.2: Encourage TCU-to-TCU experiential collaboration, sharing, and learning.
Goal C.3: Through the implementation of capacity building element of a community of practice, achieve operational efficiencies among and across TCUs, including cost savings and capacity building.
Goal C.4: Develop new 1994 Land-grant strategic plan, including strengthening and expanding 1994 Land-grant programs to ensure that the programs (a) align with tribal needs and priorities; (b) serve tribal communities; (c) improve access to resources equitably vis-à-vis other Land-grant institutions, and (d) help meet the food insecurity challenges facing TCU students.
Goal C.5: Develop a plan to support TCUs as “Tribal Innovation Centers” (drivers of community prosperity).
Goal C.6: Review TCU mission statements and assist in their refinement, based on elements of the Indigenous Evaluation Framework (Core cultural values, goals, needs).
<b>Goal D. <u>Engage and Succeed</u>: Achieve TCU student success through culturally grounded, place-based, and data-informed practices.</b>
Goal D.1: Increase TCU student completion rates significantly through the development of a Holistic Framework for Native Student Success that addresses the academic, support, food insecurity, housing, and behavioral health needs of TCU students.
Goal D.2. <i>Educating from Our Worldview and Celebrating Our Identity and Strengthens</i> TCU-wide implementation of Indigenous pedagogy, teaching, evaluation, and student assessment methods.
Goal D.3: Formalize and maximize articulation and transfer agreements among TCUs and with other institutions of higher education.
Goal D.4: Inform and support TCU efforts to establish and provide high-quality holistic student health and wellness services, including meeting the behavioral health needs of AI/AN students
Goal D.5: Through TCU Librarians Org: Improve Student and Faculty Access to Both Print and Digital Information
<b>Goal E. <u>Honor and Ceremony</u>: Advance the Tribal College Movement through practices that honor our past and support our future.</b>
Goal E.1: Annual Orientation: annually share the story of the TCU Movement and history of AIHEC and the TCUs
Goal E.2. Engage Board in AIHEC strategic plan implementation through regular reporting.

Goal E.3. Convene international conference on AI/AN higher education to honor and celebrate AIHEC's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary (2023).

**Goal F. Identity & Sovereignty: Reaffirm our identity as Native people and respect tribal sovereignty.**

*Goal F.1: Build TCU institutional capacity for maintaining and revitalizing Indigenous languages and cultures.*

Goal F.2: Develop a pathway to AIHEC Accreditation: scope, measures, process, cost, financing.