



# PRESERVING THE PAST, CULTIVATING FUTURES.

COLLEGE OF THE MUSCOGEE NATION: TCU ONGOING CHALLENGES DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

117th Congress - February 2021

**Through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA), the College of the Muscogee Nation received urgently needed funding to move classes online to the extent possible and begin to address tremendous digital divide challenges. We were also able to provide emergency grants, equipment, and tuition assistance to our students to help them stay enrolled in classes. As we continue to support students during this difficult time and plan for onsite classes, our needs are growing. To address current pandemic-related challenges and plan for an uncertain future, TCUs need your ongoing support.**

## CARES AND CRRSAA FUNDS AT COLLEGE OF THE MUSCOGEE NATION

- Direct Payments to all Title IV eligible students for food, housing, transportation, technology, etc.
- Purchased temperature scanner/kiosks, PPE, Plexiglas barriers for desks and classrooms, cleaners, and air purifier/sanitizers
- Provided laptop computers and hot spots to students and purchased Zoom Video Conferencing Software
- Purchased computer cameras for classrooms and faculty
- Provided breakfast and lunch to all students
- Provided weekend meal baskets to students

In the spring 2020 trimester, the College of the Muscogee Nation (CMN) pivoted to distance learning. During the summer trimester, the college provided laptops and hotspots to students to continue distance learning. CMN purchased computer cameras and Plexiglas barriers for the classrooms and offices. The fall trimester, CMN continued to provide laptops and hotspots to students and offered synchronous learning via Microsoft Teams, as well as asynchronous online courses. The college provided direct payments to all Title IV eligible students in four different disbursements for food, housing, transportation, technology, etc. In addition, CMN students were able to pick up breakfast and lunch meals and a weekend food basket.



## ONGOING CHALLENGES AT COLLEGE OF THE MUSCOGEE NATION

- Emotional, Mental and Behavioral Health Concerns
- Short grant period - too short for TCUs and Students
- Authorized uses needs to be expanded to include all enrolled students
- Ongoing student support needs include laptops, internet service, video conferencing software, and telehealth software



Many students face hardships such as food and housing insecurities, lack of childcare, and lack of access to mental health services. The expansion to utilize funding for a licensed professional counselor at CMN for students, staff, and faculty would make a positive impact as TCUs continue to navigate through the pandemic and its aftermath. Furthermore, the need for costly personal protective equipment continues to be ongoing. Looking to the future, we need to be proactive and engaged on addressing the effects of COVID-19 for several years.



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REQUEST: \$24 MILLION TCU IT SERVICE FUND; USDA – RURAL UTILITY SERVICE

Like many institutions, CMN faced several challenges because of the ongoing pandemic. Fortunately, CMN already had online systems like Microsoft365 with Teams video conferencing and our Desire to Learn Online learning platform prior to the pandemic and we were able to leverage those assets to communicate with students. The primary challenge was providing technology and mobile broadband access to our students to enable remote learning.

## COLLEGE OF THE MUSCOGEE NATION: BROADBAND AND IT CHALLENGES

- In a survey of our 2020 Spring students, a significant portion of our students were found to either have no internet or insufficient internet access (survey was conducted in 05/2020 by kwind/ltomah).
- There is a lack of access to OneNet to meet the Wi-Fi needs of our student body on campus. Currently the campus only has 30% of connectivity to Wi-Fi. OneNet will provide CMN with high speed fiber optics campus-wide.



REQUEST: \$500 MILLION TCU CONSTRUCTION FUND;  
DOI – BUREAU OF INDIAN EDUCATION

A recent AIHEC survey of TCUs revealed a list of chronic facilities-related maintenance and rehabilitation needs, including student and faculty housing, classrooms, libraries, and laboratories. The TCUs have an estimated total need of \$489.75 million in deferred maintenance and rehabilitation and need \$837 million to fully implement existing master plans. A dedicated TCU deferred construction and maintenance/rehabilitation fund through the DOI-BIE would help meet the 21st century needs of all TCUs, including technology-enabled facilities; campus renovations; IT infrastructure; and facilities necessary for career, technical, and pipeline programs.

## COLLEGE OF THE MUSCOGEE NATION: FACILITIES NEEDS- CONSTRUCTION, MAINTENANCE, REHABILITATION

With the increase in student enrollment, the demand for more classrooms is essential to providing a physically distanced healthy environment for students and faculty. Currently, the college has five classrooms dedicated for course offerings, however, with three new degrees there is a greater need for an additional building for classes, faculty and staff offices. In addition, college student services staff need offices to provide a confidential setting for working with students.

During the spring rains, the northern part of the campus floods, creating limitations for future buildings and/or student activities. In addition, the maintenance department should have equipment to maintain the campus during the winter season so that students and staff can park safely and walk to their classes. Funds are needed to complete the fourth building of the Master Site Plan to house the Mvskoke Cultural Studies Program.



- A Mvskoke Cultural Studies Facility that provides additional classrooms and faculty/staff offices
- Equipment to maintain the campus
- Obtain a contractor to grade the northern area of the campus to be construction ready