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.


- **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).
• **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.


- **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

  - **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.
1988: “Institute of American Indian Arts and Cultural Development Act” establishes Congressional Charter for IAIA.


1992: Tribal Colleges start telecommunications system to link schools.


1996: President Clinton signs Executive Order 13021 on Tribal Colleges and Universities.


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]