



IAIA®

INSTITUTE OF
AMERICAN INDIAN ARTS

INSTITUTE OF AMERICAN INDIAN ARTS—PRIORITIES FOR THE 119TH CONGRESS

Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) provide rigorous postsecondary education and research opportunities for American Indians and Alaska Natives (AIANs) and other rural community residents. TCUs offer higher education that is uniquely Tribal, founded on Native languages, culture, and philosophy with strong student support systems and community engagement. Through these educational opportunities, research, and industry partnerships for high-demand careers, TCUs are laying the foundation for sustainable economic development within Tribal Nations and beyond. Together, we build Strong Sovereign Nations through Excellence in Tribal higher education, empowering individuals and strengthening communities.





FACTS

Enrollment Trends (Spring 2024 and Fall 2024)—39.78 % Increase

There was a 23.66% increase in FTE from 24SP to 24FA, and a 39.78% increase in total headcount from 24SP to 24FA.

Spring 2024

Total (FTE): 481.9

Headcount: 744

Undergraduate (FTE): 299.7

Undergraduate Headcount: 309

Graduate (FTE): 88.7

Headcount: 67

Continuing Ed (FTE): 5.1

Continuing Ed Headcount: 44

Non-Degree Students (FTE): 6.1

Non-Degree Students (FTE): 25

Fall Semester (FTE)

	FA2022	FA2023	FA2024
Total	540	537	595.9

Spring Semester (FTE)

	SP2022	SP2023	SP2024
Total	462	490	481.9

Fall 2024

Total (FTE): 595.9

Headcount: 1040

Undergraduate (FTE): 355.2

Undergraduate Headcount: 335

Graduate (FTE): 91.1

Headcount: 71

Continuing Ed (FTE): 5.1

Continuing Ed Headcount: 72

Non-Degree Students (FTE): 4.6

Non-Degree Students (FTE): 21

Full-Time and Part-Time

Full-Time: 305 Part-Time: 400

Full-Time: 349 Part-Time: 242

Highest Level of Degree Available

Master of Fine Arts

TRIO Programs

No

Student-to-Faculty Ratio

9:1

Fun Facts

The student population at the Institute of American Indian Arts represent nearly 100 Tribal Nations from 37 US states as well as Canada First Nations, and international Indigenous communities.

80 graduates were honored at the May 2024 IAIA Commencement Ceremony. Half of the students graduated from Masters of Fine Arts programs, and half with undergraduate degrees or certificates. 73% of students represented Indigenous communities, while the other 27% represent a rich diversity of cultures. The graduates' ages ranged from 17–65 with an average age of 33. Congratulations and commendations were shared with students from the MFA in Creative Writing program for completing their graduate readings, MFA in Studio Arts program on the successful opening of the thesis exhibition, *We've Been Gathering Places*, and MFA in Cultural Administration program on their landmark accomplishment as the first graduating cohort. Nearly 600 people came to witness and celebrate these accomplishments with the graduates.



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IAIA—CRITICAL SUPPORT SERVICES

IAIA provides not only robust undergraduate and graduate academic programs but also supplemental student support services that help to address endemic Indigenous housing, food, and health disparities. In spring 2025, we completed a new 26-bed mixed-use housing facility that increases our on-campus student housing capacity while providing flexible housing for non-traditional students and multi-generational living. This new complex also allows us to increase housing availability outside of the school year, providing an emergency home to students facing acute housing crises. We maintain four year-round campus pantries regularly stocked with packaged, frozen and season fresh foods from our garden, as well as clothing, toiletries, and household goods.

In 2023, IAIA participated in the JED Campus Healthy Minds Survey. Survey results identified that 43% of IAIA students reported suffering from generalized anxiety, 36% reported major depressive disorders, and 23% reported trauma related stress disorders including PTSD. In 2024, in response to this study and in recognition of the growing mental health needs of our students, IAIA invested a quarter million dollars to enhance and strengthen our counseling services to include a Counseling Director, Elder-in-Residence, and the establishment of community activities and healing events informed by the cultures and practices of our constituent Tribal Nations represented in our student body.



IAIA—MISSION STATEMENT

“To empower creativity and leadership in Indigenous arts and cultures through higher education, lifelong learning, and community engagement.”



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IAIA—STRENGTHENING OUR WORKFORCE

TCUs prepare professionals in high-demand fields, including agriculture and natural resources management, health, information technology, and building trades. By teaching the job skills most in demand within our communities, TCUs are laying a strong foundation for Tribal and regional economic growth.

Workforce development is at core of all IAIA programs and curriculum. In addition to courses that build practical knowledge and skills, IAIA offers paid internships and apprenticeships with companies and industries including gallery and art sales, museums, cultural centers, art centers, film sets, theaters, fashion, sports equipment and apparel, marketing, PR, business entrepreneurship, Tribal organizations, and Tribal governments.

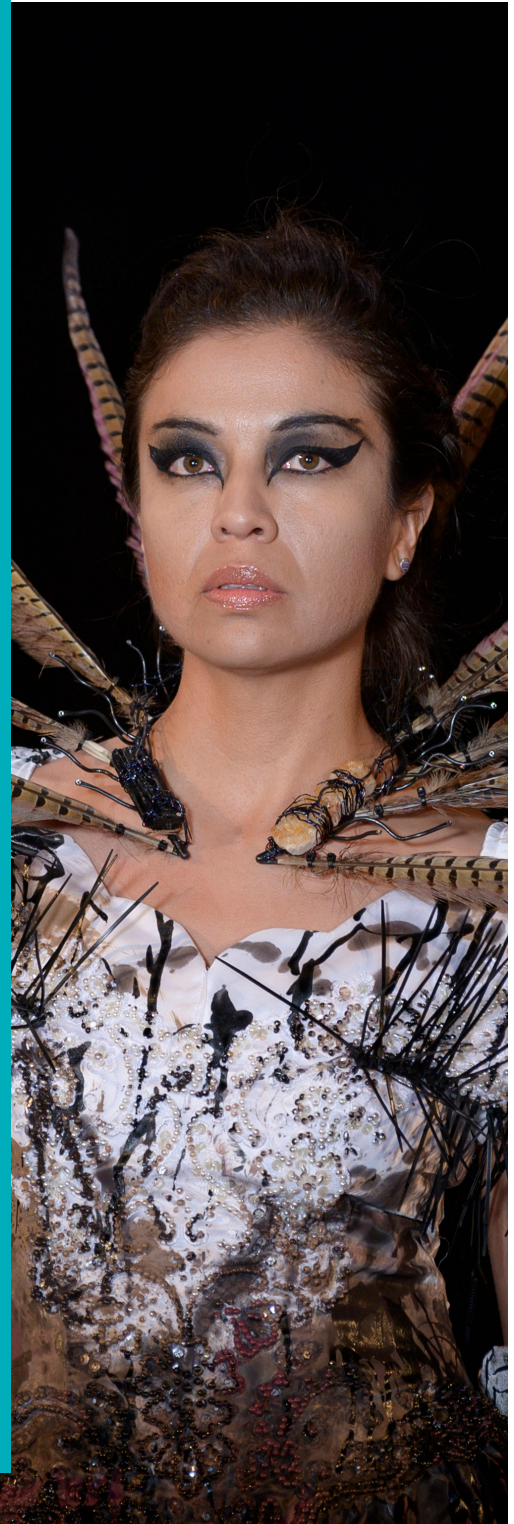
Some of IAIA's industry partners include Nike, Ralph Lauren, MGM, Amazon, NBC Universal, Warner Media, Disney, and AMC. Each year these partnerships provide crucial workforce training for young and upcoming professionals, while also providing a pipeline for new Native talent into these industries and companies.

Among the many IAIA Alumni who have joined the workforce of our partners, include DezBaa' (Diné, Basque, Spanish, and Mexican descent) '21 who returned to IAIA in Fall 2024 to speak on her lived experience as an alum, actor and a writer on AMC's *Dark Winds* series.

As she shared with our students during her presentation, "You are the agent of your navigation, your future, and where you are." She explained that through her experiences at IAIA and AMC, she feels she is now "a vessel for stories that want to be told" and exhorted students to "help others amplify their stories, help your elders amplify their stories."

DezBaa' went on to recount her battle with her own creative fears and limitations, discussing perfectionism as something that can make "the journey out my front door feel like a 1,000-mile trek." "Take a breath," she said. "The kind that is fully committed to the experience you are having now." Then, she says, "take that first step, write that first word, make that first brush stroke."

DezBaa' concluded by welcoming students to what she said would be a "life-shaping experience." "You are capable of being your own inspiration," she said. "Don't be afraid to create your own world."





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IAIA—DRIVING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The impact that IAIA has on the local and national economy is profound. The university not only fuels the local economy with a substantial amount of direct spending each year, but also drives substantial economic development locally through tourism activity at both the campus and at the IAIA Museum of Contemporary Native Arts (MoCNA), as well as dollars that students spend on housing, transportation, goods, and services. On a national level, IAIA alums enjoy an annual earnings premium similar to that of other graduates nationwide.

This premium translates into increased spending power each year and is even more profound when multiplied over the lifetime of our undergraduate and master's level graduates.

In aggregate, these factors drive a total economic impact of \$64M annually.

In November 2024, AIHEC conducted an economic impact study to analyze the importance of TCUs in the regional and national economy. TCUs act as a catalyst for economic growth locally and regionally by enhancing educational opportunities, research, and leadership skills for Tribal and other rural students. (Lightcast findings will be available in early December.)

IAIA has consistently been a driver of arts and culture related economic development at the individual and community levels. 49% of our art program's alums report that they are self-employed fine artists, writers, authors, and editors with many working in and from their Tribal communities (SNAAP 2022). IAIA has established an endowed Business and Entrepreneurship (B&E) program designed to meet the needs of small business owners and self-employed individuals with a focus on the global Indigenous arts industry. The IAIA B&E program allows students to personalize their learning and focusing on a business sector of their choice. Students finish the B&E program with a business plan in hand, ready to pursue establishment and funding with real life experience. Our students have been instrumental in growing and supporting the \$15.7 billion Native cultural tourism market (AIANTA) and multi-billion-dollar international Indigenous Art and film industries.



IAIA—BUILDING OUR FUTURES

TCUs are resilient, resourceful, and proud to lead the nation in many areas, including preparing an American Indian and Alaska Native workforce of engineers, nurses, land managers, technicians, and teachers. Always looking to the future, TCUs are focused on building new partnerships, advancing educational excellence, and creating economic opportunities for Tribal and regional communities.

Among the most exciting developments supporting future at IAIA in the last year include the building of a BA in Native American Art History which will be the first of its kind at the undergraduate level and support research and the future development of both traditional and contemporary Native American arts around the country and the world. A Certificate in Indigenous fashion, with a focus on the burgeoning Native fashion market which has recently included Native designer lines launched by Nike and Ralph Lauren and IAIA's first Baccalaureate in Science in Computer Science with a focus on computational media that supports the advancement and development of Native arts, cultures, and Tribal sovereignty.

In Spring 2025, the university is also opening its new IAIA Research Center for Contemporary Native Arts (RCCNA) which supports and engages our students, Tribal communities and the larger world in research on contemporary Native art and culture, helping Native communities and students reclaim cultural narratives and share their art, history, and culture research.

