

## Blackfeet Community College: Priorities for the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress



### Blackfeet Community College Facts:

- Enrollment Trends (Spring 2022/Fall 2023): Percentage Change  $337/259 = >1.3\%$
- Affordable Tuition: Full Time is \$1,805/Semester
- Student to Faculty Ratio: 7:1
- Part-time/Full-time: 2020 = 86/244; 2023 = 72/187
- Persistence Rate = 58%
- Highest level of degree/program available: BSN
- TRIO Programs: No



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. Unfortunately, federal education completion metrics fail to consider the unique nature of TCUs and our students. Federal completion rates focus on first-time, full-time students. Success at TCUs is defined holistically and most students attend Full-time with the intent to transfer. Our shared vision: Strong Sovereign Nations Through Excellence in TRIBAL Higher Education.

BFCC offers events/activities during the academic year for the students with topics such as job/career fairs, USDA Regenerative Grazing Practice demonstrations, renewable energy training, Workforce Development Sustainability Gathering, Gifts of Scarface Research Conference, Annual Health Fair. medicinal herbs/roots, ribbon skirts, moccasin making, backrests, belts, rattles, shawls, traditional singing and hand game. Students receive help with job search, resumes, career assessments and mapping, job search, and soft skills development.



### BFCC 1994 Land Grant Program:

The Equity in Educational Land Grant Status Act Created the “1994 Land Grants” more than 25 years ago. Since then, funding for the 1994 Land Grant programs and resources have remained inadequate to address the growing agricultural needs and opportunities in Indian Country.



BFCC: The Blackfeet Community College is currently working on further developing the Meat Processing Curriculum in conjunction with facility and infrastructure development. The curriculum will compliment Piikanii Studies through a Piikanii Wellness Model, and Workforce Development certificate programs. The college continues to demonstrate agriculture practices that include renewable energy implementation and beaver mimicry. The USDA Extension Program looks forward to implementing Piikanii Knowledge Carrier participation in advancing climate smart practices demonstrated on campus in partnership with local non-profits.



**REQUEST: \$3.2 billion TCU Construction Fund**

**DOI – Bureau of Indian Education**

A July 2021 AIHEC survey of TCUs revealed many chronic unmet facilities and infrastructure needs, including lack of student and faculty housing, inadequate classroom space, insufficient libraries, and outdated laboratories.

- TCU deferred maintenance/rehabilitation: \$400 million (total)
- TCU completion of master plans: \$2.7 billion (total)
- TCU operation and maintenance: \$20 million (annual, recurring need)

AIHEC strongly urges Congress to fund dedicated TCU facilities programs through DOI-BIE to modernize current facilities and build safer 21<sup>st</sup> century campuses.

**Transitioning Tribal Colleges and Universities to Clean Energy – 2023 Award**

Blackfeet Community College was awarded \$700,923 - Institutional Development, Facilities and Workforce Development will collaborate with the DOE, Contractor, Glacier Electric, and all other stakeholders to ensure the success of this project. This project will install approximately 136-kW ground-mounted solar PV system on the BFCC campus. This project combined with previous solar installations will transition the entire 17 building campus to 100% renewable energy and provide hands-on training for students and the savings reinvested back into the College to help students and the community. (Requested DOE Funds: \$ 630,834)

**Department of Education (Department) Research and Development Infrastructure (RDI) program 2023-**

Blackfeet Community College was awarded \$1.9 million - The project is a four-year development grant application under the Research and Development Infrastructure (RDI) program, authorized under the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE). The BFCC professional development for workplace wellness project is designed to support BFCC faculty and staff by increasing expertise and human capital development to provide programs and services that are reflective of the needs of the Blackfeet Nation and the College's service area.

**BFCC: Construction, Maintenance, Rehabilitation**

- BFCC major maintenance projects were already experiencing delay due to limited contractors and limited staff time. Certified trades professionals are limited in the community so scheduling becomes a challenge when it has to align to fundraising and grant writing timelines.
- BFCC is focusing on maintenance and upgrades to existing facilities and equipment upgrades. The Campus Facility Masterplan projects construction and planning phase will be on hold until O&M is solidified to maintain increased square footage of campus. The strategic plan will determine priorities in the Campus Facilities Masterplan.
- Fundraising and construction/maintenance and project planning support training would be beneficial to TCU staff and administration.
- Investment in capital projects is conducive to long-term planning and expansion for academic programs and can balance cost savings when alleviating continual upgrades to old facilities.

