Oglala Lakota College

P.O. Box 490
490 Piya Wiconi Road
KYLE, SOUTH DAKOTA 57752-0490
Telephone (605) 455-6000
FAX (605) 455-6023

COLLEGE PRESIDENT
DAWN TOBACCO-FRANK, PH.D.

BOARD CHAIRMAN
DENNIS BREWER

Oglala Lakota College (OLC): Priorities for the 118th Congress
(February 2024)

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. But success at TCUs is defined holistically and most students attend part-time or are transfer students. Our shared vision: Strong Sovereign Nations Through Excellence in TRIBAL Higher Education.

OGLALA LAKOTA COLLEGE FACTS:

- Enrollment Trends: Fall 2019: 1,306, Fall 2023: 1,229; -6%
- Affordable Tuition: Tribal members: $84/credit hour, non-tribal members: $103/credit hour
- Student to Faculty Ratio: Fall 2023: 22 students per full-time faculty
- Part-time/Full-time: Fall 2023: 55% part-time, 45% full-time students
- Spring-to-Fall Persistence of degree-seeking students: Increase from 56% in 2014 to 73% in 2022
- Highest level of degree/program available: Master of Arts
- TRIO Programs: Yes: Student Support Services
- Consistently among the Top 20 Native American Degree Producers nationwide in the majority of associate and bachelor's programs

Oglala Lakota College (OLC) uses a decentralized system with nine instructional sites on the Pine Ridge Reservation, one on the Cheyenne River Reservation and one extension in Rapid City (maximum distance: 225 miles). The purpose of decentralization is to bring instruction and student support services to the students instead of expecting them to travel. OLC provides van transportation and gas vouchers when a class is not offered locally. In addition to standard services, (e.g., academic counseling or tutoring), OLC has a free meals program and gives students in need a free laptop and a Wi-Fi hotspot to ensure everyone can attend distance learning classes. Since Fall of 2020, OLC has distributed over 1200 laptops and more than 1,800 Wi-Fi hotspots.

OGLALA LAKOTA COLLEGE: 1994 Land-Grant Programs

1994 Land-grant Institutions: 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.

OGLALA LAKOTA COLLEGE (OLC): OLC's land-grant equity program, led by the Math, Science, and Technology Department (MST), focuses on providing underrepresented K-12, undergraduate and graduate students opportunities to pursue STEM:

- The MST develops modules that connect western science with Lakota Ways of Knowing and Learning. This bridges B.S. in Natural Science and A.A. in Life Science majors to employment opportunities within the reservation and to graduate programs.
- The MST will design an M.S. in Environmental Sustainability, allowing B.S. in Natural Science graduates to further their education without relocating. OLC will also benefit as the graduates of this program may become OLC instructors.

- The MST provides undergraduate and graduate students with experiential learning opportunities guided by science and cultural mentors, thereby integrating cultural and STEM experiences. This may help students persist in pursuing STEM employment.
- Outreach to K-12 schools includes science fairs, monthly activities for middle school students (e.g., stargazing, water testing), a K-8 robotics program, and a yearly Lakota Leadership Bootcamp for high school students and OLC freshmen and sophomores. These activities will benefit the participants, their schools, and OLC, as outreach plays a key role in recruitment.

REQUEST: $40 million TCU IT Service Fund
USDA – Rural Utility Service

The ongoing pandemic has exacerbated the digital divide and underscored the lack of broadband access across Indian Country. To address these deficiencies that could leave Indian Country – and AIAN students – behind the rest of the U.S. for generations, Congress must act to establish a *permanent* **TCU IT Service Fund within** the **USDA-Rural Utilities Service Program**. An annual $40 million set-aside for TCUs, which are 1994 land-grant institutions served by USDA, would help cover rapidly increasing network, connectivity, and equipment costs, maintenance, infrastructure expansion, and IT staffing.

OGLALA LAKOTA COLLEGE: Broadband and IT Progress & Challenges:

- Progress:
    - Installed Category 6 Ethernet cabling, managed switches, and new wireless access points at all sites
    - Installed 63 smart classrooms, 1 in progress
    - Upgraded internet at 9 of 11 instructional sites and administrative building to 1 Gbps downloads/uploads
    - Working on replacing employees' desktop computers and desktop computers in computer labs
    - Cybersecurity company started audit of OLC systems
- Needs and challenges:
    - Fiber optic connection to building on administrative campus currently connected via a wireless bridge
    - Replacement of servers used at administrative building for a secured network server, DNS, DHCP, and various other applications, and of servers used at all sites to create a Wide Area Network
    - VPN server to allow secure remote network access
- Expenses associated with cybersecurity:
    - $31,284/year for firewall monitoring at instructional sites
    - $26,820/year for Single Sign-On & Identity Management
    - $500/year for cloud backup of files storage
    - $8,000 for cybersecurity audit

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 21st century campuses.

OGLALA LAKOTA COLLEGE: Construction, Maintenance, Rehabilitation

More than a third of OLC's buildings (17 of 49) are at least 20 years old, including most instructional sites and the main administrative building. Whereas upgrades have been completed regularly, such as repairing roofs, paving parking lots, and installing security features and smart classrooms, there is a need for a more thorough overhaul and expansion of existing buildings and construction of new facilities.

Examples of needs with an estimated cost:
- Additions to eight of eleven instructional sites for library, study area, and student commons: $14,000,000
- Additional dorms or individual housing for students: $11,000,000
- Campus revitalization, LEED certification, and weatherization: $10,000,000
- Instructional Affairs Building, including faculty offices and professional development room: $9,000,000
- Faculty housing: at least 25 houses: $7,500,000