



# SAGINAW CHIPPEWA TRIBAL COLLEGE

## MT. PLEASANT, MICHIGAN

### Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College: Priorities for the 118<sup>th</sup> 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.

#### SAGINAW CHIPPEWA TRIBAL COLLEGE FACTS:

- Enrollment Trends Spring 2023/Fall 2023: *Increase 3.42%*
- Affordable Tuition \$60 per credit hour Tuition has never been increased
- Student to Faculty Ratio 6:1 (2022)
- Part-time- 119 and Full-time 28
- Persistence Rate 74% Spring 2023-Fall 2023
- Highest Level of degree/program available is Associate
- SCTC does not have a TRIO Program

#### Turning the tassel - Graduating class of 2023

Student Support is Critical. Without the holistic support services SCTC offers, these students would not be graduating. Many TCU students need support beyond the classroom. Along with academic support services, SCTC offers full lunch twice a week for students and staff. This offers an opportunity for students to sit and share a meal. Success coaches also assist students to engage in college activities and seek out resources. The encouragement the coaches give to students is evident by the persistence rate from Spring 2023 to Fall 2023. The college also provides bus passes for student transportation, as well as referrals to appropriate agencies.



*Tradition and culture lead are the mainstay at SCTC. Dancers led the annual graduation procession.*





### Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College: 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 1994 Land-grant programs and resources have remained inadequate to address the growing agricultural needs and opportunities in Indian Country.



The Land Grant Program maintains the goal of keeping the culture in programs. The staff has doubled since last year. The extension program is expanding the garden area with a hoop house, shed, and outdoor classroom. All these improvements/growth provide cultural teachings, food sustainability, and promote post-secondary education. All who participate are impacted by the culture of the Anishinnabek.



### **REQUEST: \$40 M 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 AI/AN 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.

### **Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College Broadband and IT Challenges**

- SCTC has not advanced in obtaining funds to make sure the broadband will meet the growing needs of staff and students.
- Hardware costs increased.
- Expenses associated with cybersecurity are low because no funds are available.
- Salaries for qualified staff to monitor and maintain IT systems.
- Two IT staff members for the college’s IT infrastructure needs
- Wi-Fi network is minimal and needs to be expanded
- Campus security at a minimum and needs to be improved
- No full-time IT instructors.

### **REQUEST: \$3.2 billion TCU Construction Fund DOI—Bureau of Indian Education**

A July 2021 AIHEC survey of TCUs reveals many chronic unmet facilities and infrastructure needs, including a 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.



SCTC purchased and renovated a former community college. Maintenance and upkeep is estimated to be over \$150,000 annually. The college will have to consider what services to eliminate to pay for the upkeep of the building, or the college will have to reallocate funds from student services to pay for the upkeep of the building.