



## Demonstrated Resilience & Continued Challenges During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Cankdeska Cikana Community College (CCCC) received Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds in 2020 and is now accessing funding from the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA). These funding streams support the continued operations of the Spirit Lake Tribe's community college to provide higher education and training opportunities for area residents. CARES Act funds helped CCCC to transition to online instruction and to take initial steps in addressing the digital divide. Most importantly, the funds help CCCC to support Native college students to succeed by providing the following:

- ✧ Direct student emergency aid
- ✧ Angel Fund (gift cards)
- ✧ Laptops, printers, scanners
- ✧ Emergency Fund (rent, child care, vehicle repairs, utilities)
- ✧ Online classes
- ✧ Training and skill development for using technology
- ✧ Professional and peer tutors
- ✧ Tuition and Fee waivers
- ✧ Books and supplies
- ✧ Mental Health Counseling Services

**Dr. Cynthia Lindquist**  
President



*"Having sufficient resources makes a difference."*

The supplemental coronavirus funding has made a significant impact for CCCC's student persistence data. CCCC's calculated student persistence rate from fall 2020 to spring 2021 is 79% for first time entering college students and 87% for continuing students. This is remarkable as it is almost double the spring 2020 to fall 2020 rates (43% and 48% respectively). Having sufficient resources makes a difference.



**Stuart Young**  
Dean of Administration

*"CCCC has provided computer equipment to students & staff with the funding we received."*

CCCC's IT (information technology) main network system remains at 100Mbps because of the extreme cost to upgrade, but the College has been able to add two additional 1Gbps lines that provide additional bandwidth. A second wireless network connects to one of the additional 1Gbps lines that provides public internet access from CCCC's parking lot. While not an ideal solution, several CCCC students did homework in their vehicles in the spring and summer of 2020.

The College's learning management system for online (Moodle) was moved to a new server that allowed for increased numbers of students to use the system at the same time. Moving some servers to the cloud also helps with bandwidth capacity. These improvements were made possible with the coronavirus relief funding.

All instructors and some staff have been provided Zoom accounts to conduct online classes or meeting. Video capture and editing software was purchased for all instructors as well as computers, printers, monitors, keyboards, mouse, webcams, etc. Program directors and other key institutional functions (i.e. Registrar and Financial Aid) were also provided these tools. CCCC has given out 215 laptops to students since March 2020.

# Faculty



**Jackie Lampert**  
Co-Academic  
Dean/Early  
Childhood  
Education  
Instructor

*"We do not work 8-4:30 like staff; we are monitoring and answering student calls throughout the day and into the night."*



**Dr. Lori Gourneau**  
Science  
Instructor

*"When the pandemic hit, our administration took action to keep their employees safe."*

CCCC worked throughout the summer making plans for the fall. At that time, no one knew how the pandemic would turn out. We were notified that we would continue to instruct online for the fall. The college took action to allow all instructors to take home computers & printers, if they did not have one at home. We were also provided computer cameras with microphones so that we could set up our computers for online methods of teaching. This made a world of difference in instruction. We were able to communicate more efficiently from home with our directors, students and other employees. Students were more eager to share their financial situations. Some of my students needed financial help and the college set up gift cards for gas and food which helped them out immensely. As an employee at CCCC it was a comfort to know that our administration was sincerely concerned about their employees and the students' welfare and safety.

CCCC faculty have been going the extra mile and putting in a lot of extra hours to keep students retained and to help them succeed. Some examples are:

- Holding extra tutoring/math lab hours when convenient for students
- Increased flexibility in schedule - Holding more evening classes later at night (EX 8 and 9:30) and some Friday classes
- Instructors are taking extra online interaction and engagement training to learn specific distance education teaching and learning techniques and strategies
- 2-hour face-to-face math labs with a student who specifically requested it and continuing throughout the semester
- Some in-person classes using pandemic protocols per a student request
- Accommodating students who are parents by being more flexible when they have to come/go during online instruction due to their children
- Helping students with many tech issues (ie. - using screen share, helping with downloads, how to access class and class materials, sending out Zoom link for EVERY class)
- Holding monthly meetings as a group and individually with students to keep them updated and making SAP
- ALWAYS there for students with a listening ear - whether it's personal, social/emotional, career options/choices etc.
- Being more flexible with extending deadlines and allowing for makeup sessions when a student misses class



**Dr. Brent Voels**  
Science  
Instructor

*"CCCC provided a safe work environment and improve my teaching skills."*

One of the first things CCCC did in order to make the transition to online learning possible for STEM classes was to acquire a license for Labster. Labster is an online virtual laboratory that provides labs that are appropriate for the material found in entry level STEM classes. This was necessary since in person hands on labs were not safe to hold. ([www.labster.com](http://www.labster.com)) Access to Labster at a discounted rate was made possible via CCCC's collaboration with the ND University System.

I am extremely grateful to work for a place that took a more cautious approach in order to protect both the students and employees of the college.



**Karen Saari**  
Math  
Instructor

*"CCCC was able to provide the resources for a broader, more all-inclusive, support system."*

CCCC has provided numerous supports for both staff and students during the time of this global pandemic.

- Extremely high levels of technology and software support to enable instructional and remote work for faculty
- Devices and internet support for students
- Training for both students and staff in the use of technology for distance learning
- Faculty development for engaging students in distance learning
- Flexible remote work options
- Health and wellness opportunities, including mental health support

# Staff

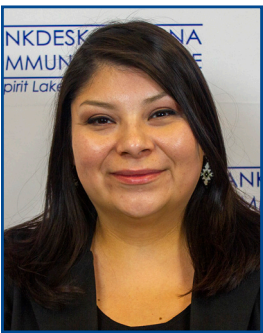


**Chelly  
Merkel-Veer**  
CFO

Personnel who continue to work on campus are filling in the gaps in a variety of areas and ways. CCCC does not have 'departments' per se and the College operates one-person or minimally-staffed offices, thus daily tasks take longer to accomplish. Work things such as printing and putting together documentation for processing that needs to be scanned is very time consuming and has to be done by human hands. Getting signatures remotely on documents requires scanning multiple times in order to get all required signatures.

*"On-site staff are filling the gaps."*

# Students



**Chanoa  
Nestell**

*I hope one day to have the potential to help change adversities of our communities.*

My name is Chanoa Nestell, proud enrolled member of the Spirit Lake Nation. I am currently enrolled at the Cankdeska Cikana Community College studying for my Associate's degree in Business Administration. In choosing a program, business administration was very versatile. A good start to continuing to a Bachelor's program in the future. Having a voice to help people rise is inspiring to me and earning an education will give me that sense of inspiration.

**Education Goals:**

- Associate's degree in Business Administration



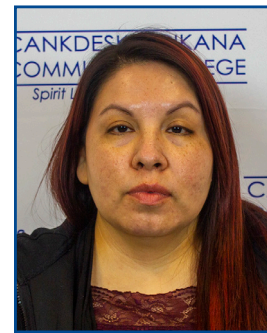
**Brittany  
Omen**

*I want to bring back knowledge/business to help my community.*

I am an enrolled member of the Spirit Lake Tribe, currently attending Cankdeska Cikana Community College finishing up my last semester for my AA in Business Administration. I enjoy CCCC, as many of the staff are extremely helpful and encouraging of my academic career during my time here. I plan on pursuing higher education and bringing back any knowledge/business to help my community expand.

**Education Goals:**

- To complete my Associate's in Business Administration
- Obtain my Bachelor's in Business Administration



**Areonna  
GreyBear**

*I want to help my community to find ways to be the best version of themselves.*

I am an enrolled member of the Spirit Lake Tribe, currently attending Cankdeska Cikana Community College. I am studying for my AA degree in Business Administration. I have lived here most of my life and want to help my community to find ways to be the best version of themselves and succeed in life.

**Education Goals:**

- Associate's of Arts in Business Administration
- Transfer to a 4-year college
- Obtain my Bachelor's in Business Administration



**Woksape** - Wisdom  
**Wicowahba** - Humility  
**Wowaditake** - Courage  
**Wawokiya** - Generosity

**Wowaditake** - Fortitude  
**Waohoda** - Respect  
**Ohañ Owotana** - Honesty



# Challenges & Needs of CCCC

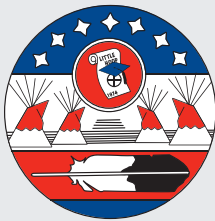
While the relief funding has provided the resources to keep the college open and to focus on student retention, there are significant concerns about sustaining those services once the funding is expended. Another key concern is the restrictions in the authorized use of the funds that limits the potential for sustained change and improvement. Almost every tribal college has construction needs. CCCC has wanted to do student housing for several years in an effort to address the continued declining enrollment but there are no funding sources.

Given the pandemic, CCCC has a serious need for a College Clinic or health services. This has been noted previously related to behavioral and mental health services for college students and their families. Professional student affairs staff is a significant need that has bubbled up during the past year in addressing the pandemic as well as adequate administrative staff (just to do the paperwork for the relief funding) that support an academic institution.

The return to 'normal' classroom structure – in-person classes – is still the ideal and many students continue to ask when this will happen. Community members have said they will not enroll until classes are back in session (in-person). At this time, CCCC is planning for fall 2021 to be back, in some form, to in-person classes.

As a Dakota tribal college, the most significant challenge and need from the pandemic is the recovery from the unbelievable losses of tribal member cultural experts and knowledge holders. The Spirit Lake tribal community has lost more than 30 elders (60 years and older) since August 2020 and most all from the coronavirus. Tribal enrollment is 7,558 and the elder (65 years and older) population is 5% of enrollment with only 5 members remaining who are 90 or older. These are the Dakota knowledge holders who are integral to family dynamics and keeping the culture and language vibrant. Tribal elders are the teachers of language and culture.

CCCC supports the priorities identified by the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) for equitable funding for tribal higher education and for specific requests: \$24 million annually for a TCU IT Fund within USDA's Rural Utility Service; \$75 million for a TCU Reserve Fund in Commerce-NTIA Tribal Broadband Program; appropriations for TCU Construction/Facilities (\$500 million DOI/BIE); and appropriations for TCU Facilities Operating and Maintenance Account (DOI/BIE/O&M). These initiatives would provide CCCC with access to funding for sustained improvements for technology upgrades and for campus infrastructure.



## CCCC HEAD START

### Spirit Lake Tribe



Head Start is a child development and family support services program for pregnant women, young children from birth to five, and their families. CCCC administers the Head Start program serving the Spirit Lake Tribe's families. CCCC Head Start has been severely impacted by the coronavirus pandemic with the biggest issue of how do you, or can you, deliver services to babies and very young children in an online environment?

Following school protocols, CCCC Head Start closed for children in classrooms in March 2020 and struggled throughout the year in attempts to reopen. But with more than 25% of the teachers and staff testing positive and more than half requiring quarantine, it was impossible to stay open. However, the program was able to provide meals and activity packets on a daily basis to 75 homes. This was done mostly via delivery but several families did come to pick up the food and packets. Other supplies (diapers, wipes, cleaning supplies, etc.) were also provided when deliveries were made as the staff kept in constant contact with the parents or guardians.

CCCC Head Start lost its Director, Charles Morin, to the coronavirus on November 17, 2020. He was an educator, tribal member, father, relative, and friend to many. Finding a new director has proven to be a great challenge.

The CCCC Head Start center reopened for children in the classrooms on Monday, February 8, 2021 only to have severe winter weather with temperatures in the 20 and 30 below zero range for a week, so no children that week! The pandemic's impact has put the program's enrollment at less than 100 children for the first time in the many years the Tribe has had a Head Start program. Most Head Start families do not have computers or internet access due to poverty. Adequate, trained staff continues to be an issue that contributes to the struggle of operating the program.

