



## Ongoing TCU Challenges During COVID-19 Pandemic

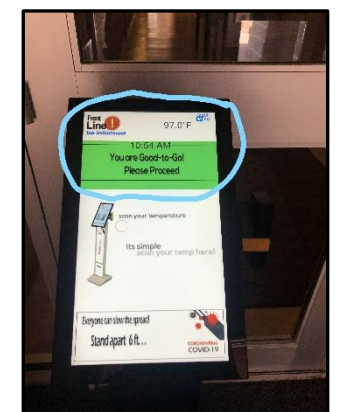
117<sup>th</sup> Congress: February 2021

Through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA), Sitting Bull College (SBC) received urgently needed funding to move classes online to the extent possible and begin to address tremendous digital divide challenges. We were also able to provide emergency grants, equipment, and tuition assistance to our students to help them stay enrolled in classes. As we continue to support students during this difficult time and plan for onsite classes, our needs are growing. To address current pandemic-related challenges and plan for an uncertain future, TCUs need your ongoing support.

### CARES and CRRSAA Funds at Sitting Bull College

- Student aid: Aid given at the end of the semester for students that passed with a 2.00 GPA.
- Technology: assisted with technology for students and faculty to improve distance-learning capacities.
- Online training: Completed employee in-services through a series of online training modules through Safe College.
- Purchased new computer servers/switches/additional software: assisted students and employees with better access to MySBC (records management system) and other technology while off campus.
- Upgraded records management system to completed online registration and advising.
- Purchased software to implement electronic signatures for all documents submitted by students and employees.
- Temperature kiosks installed in all building entrances.
- Air purification devices placed in all classrooms and office suites. Devices kill germs on contact, including COVID-19.
- Contract tracing app developed for SBC. Students and employees must check in each day.
- PPE: Masks, gloves, hand sanitizer, and disinfecting wipes provided to all employees and students. All classrooms and offices have been equipped with disinfecting wipes, gloves, and masks. In addition, all open office spaces and computer labs have been equipped with Plexiglas dividers. Social distancing decals posted.
- Cleaning supplies: Due to weekly deep cleaning, the amount of cleaning supplies used has increased.
- Vehicles: Two pickup trucks were purchased for security and maintenance for delivery of supplies to all locations.
- Classrooms: Upgraded all projectors and SMART Boards.
- Vacation buy-out: For employees who were unable to use personal and annual leave, SBC provided a one-time pay-out of leave.
- Hazard pay: SBC provided hazard pay to employees who worked on-site while the college was on administrative leave.
- Hazard pay: SBC has been on a four-day work week since August 2020, with Fridays used for deep cleaning of facilities. Employees who come in to clean are provided hazard pay.
- Building: improvement of HVA, electrical, lighting, and security along with other items that can improve the health and safety of students and employees
- Loss revenue: Completed a three-year comparison of revenue to expenses for SBC bookstore and daycare facilities.
- Loss revenue: Completed a three-year comparison of tuition and fees for summer and fall 2020.

[https://sittingbullcollege.sharepoint.com/sites/Faculty/Shared%20Documents/General/Smart%20Board%20Demo%20Arin\\_Bruce\\_Terry.mp4](https://sittingbullcollege.sharepoint.com/sites/Faculty/Shared%20Documents/General/Smart%20Board%20Demo%20Arin_Bruce_Terry.mp4)



SBC implemented a number of new strategies and upgrades to IT services. New servers/switches/software were purchased so employees and students had better access to SBC services remotely. New technology was purchased for faculty to assist them with teaching courses through remote learning. Personal protection equipment was purchased, and social distancing practices were put in place to ensure those coming to campus remained safe. In December 2020, SBC became a rapid COVID-19 testing site, which allows all students and employees to be tested weekly.

### Ongoing Challenges at Sitting Bull College

- Reliable internet connectivity
- Time management
- Motivation/procrastination
- Food insecurity
- Safety for their families and themselves
- Isolation/loneliness
- Home schooling children

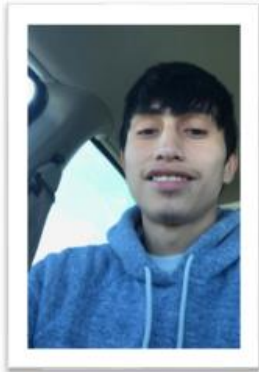
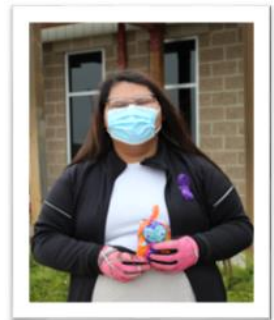
### Student Experience Reported by SBC Counselors:

“Struggles have been .....motivation, difficulty in finding privacy at their residence for Zoom classes and study time, struggles with parenting and providing structure for their children, food insecurity (at the onset of the shutdown), loneliness, transportation, along with struggling with getting a hang of online classes like logging in and submitting assignments

“Concerns are....safety for them and their families, accessing classes online, employment, accessing resources

“I graduated from Fort Yates High School online during the pandemic and entered my first semester of college online, also during the pandemic. Sitting Bull College was trying to do hybrid learning, but I feel safer having my classes online. I believe that if our whole country just listened to the research done by leading scientist that maybe I would be in school fulltime right now, and that for the most part it would have been safer to be in public.”

- Wacantkiya Mani Win Eagle, General Studies (Standing Rock Sioux Tribe)



“The Sitting Bull College app is a helpful app to check our emails, do a daily pre-screening, and stay up to date with everything going on. I felt safe at the school campus with the way they took precautions and made us use the pre-screening to trace people. Thanks to the internet, we can continue with our education, so I think we have to adapt with online school and turning things in when they are due.”

- Reuben Harvey, Business Administration (Oglala Sioux Tribe)

“As someone who is a visual learner, it was very tough for me to learn new material and to be successful in my classes because it was hard to ask questions and get a clear answer in an email. I was already a big procrastinator, but it really increased and got worse when I had to do things from home . . . a place where I never wanted to do anything related to school. I am determined to finish this year and to do my best even after having such a rough start.”

- Summer Wingate, General Studies (Standing Rock Sioux Tribe)





“Now that I am attending school, I’ve come to realize just how much has changed since the pandemic. I work better in a classroom, and I struggle with English and often ask for assistance. There are a few classes I do not mind doing on Zoom because the instructors can show the material that we are working on and explain as they go. I preferred meeting face to face because I tended to get more involved and focused on the work. Now that classes are online, I’ve realized that school was a great place for me to get work done without the distractions that I have at home.”

- Danielle Little Bear, Environmental Science (Standing Rock Sioux Tribe)

#### **REQUEST: \$24 TCU IT Service Fund: USDA – Rural Utility Service**

The ongoing pandemic has exacerbated the digital divide and homework gap and underscored the lack of broadband access across Indian Country. To address these deficiencies, Congress should establish a *permanent TCU IT Service Fund within* the existing (and previously under-used) **USDA-Rural Utilities Service Program**. An annual \$24 million set-aside for TCUs, which are the 1994 Land-grant institutions, is needed to cover ongoing equipment costs, maintenance and upkeep, infrastructure expansion, and IT staffing. If TCUs had adequate funding for IT service and infrastructure support, they would have already put in place many of the community-based mobile hot spots needed to address the “homework gap” on many reservations.

#### **Sitting Bull College: Broadband and IT Challenges**

- Additional IT staff



#### **REQUEST: \$500 million TCU Construction Fund: DOI – Bureau of Indian Education**

A recent AIHEC survey of TCUs revealed a list of chronic facilities-related maintenance and rehabilitation needs, including student and faculty housing, classrooms, libraries, and laboratories. The TCUs have an estimated total need of \$489.75 million in deferred maintenance and rehabilitation and need \$837 million to fully implement existing master plans. A dedicated TCU deferred construction and maintenance/rehabilitation fund through the DOI-BIE would help meet the 21st century needs of *all* TCUs, including technology-enabled facilities; campus renovations; IT infrastructure; and facilities necessary for career, technical, and pipeline programs.

#### **Sitting Bull College Facilities Needs -- Construction, Maintenance, Rehabilitation**

- Parking lots are in need of repairs.
- SBC would like to start a pre-veterinary program but needs an agriculture building – \$5 million.
- SBC needs a health/physical fitness facility – \$5 million.
- Current buildings need HAV upgrades.