# Final MINUTES OF THE AIHEC SPRING 2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING ZOOM WEB CONFERENCE

**APRIL 23, 2021 at 1:30 pm ET**

1. **OPENING PRAYER**: President Elmer Guy, Vice Chair, opened the spring Board of Directors meeting with a prayer.

# MEMORIAL FOR PRESIDENT ROBERT BIBLE

AIHEC organized a virtual memorial service to honor the late Robert Bible, who served as president of College of the Muscogee Nation and chair of the AIHEC Membership and Accreditation Committee.

President Bible passed away in December 2020 due to covid-19 complications. Many board members spoke of President Bible’s dedication to his college, his Tribal community, and the Tribal College Movement. College of the Muscogee Nation staff sang an honor song for President Bible. On behalf of the Board, AIHEC presented a star quilt to the college.

1. **ROLL CALL:** Treasure Dunlap, AIHEC executive assistant, called the roll with the following results.

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| --- | --- |
| **Regular Members Present**  Aaniiih Nakoda College  Bay Mills Community College | **President (Voting) or Representative**  Sean Chandler Duane Bedell |
| Cankdeska Cikana Community College | Cynthia Lindquist |
| College of Menominee Nation | Christopher Caldwell |
| College of the Muscogee Nation | Monte Randall |
| Diné College  Fond du Lac Tribal & Community College | Charles M. Roessel Roxanne DeLille (proxy) |
| Fort Peck Community College Iḷisaġvik College  Institute of American Indian Arts | Haven Gourneau Justina Wilhelm  Robert Martin |
| Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College | Lori Ann Sherman |
| Lac Courte Oreilles Community College | Russell Swagger |
| Leech Lake Tribal College | Raymond Burns |
| Little Big Horn College | David Yarlott |
| Little Priest Tribal College | Manoj Patil |
| Navajo Technical University Nebraska Indian Community College | Elmer Guy Michael Oltrogge |
| Northwest Indian College Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish College Oglala Lakota College  Red Lake Nation College Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College | Justin Guillory Twyla Baker Thomas Shortbull Dan King  Carla Sineway |
| Salish Kootenai College | Sandra Boham |
| Sinte Gleska University Sisseton Wahpeton College | Lionel Bordeaux Lane Azure |
| Sitting Bull College | Laurel Vermillion |
| Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute Stone Child College | Monte Monteith Cory Sangrey-Billy |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Tohono O’odham Community College Turtle Mountain Community College | Paul Robertson Donna Brown |
| United Tribes Technical College  White Earth Tribal & Community College | Leander R. McDonald Lorna LaGue |
| **Regular Members Absent** |  |
| Blackfeet Community College | Karla Bird |
| Chief Dull Knife College | Richard Littlebear |
| Haskell Indian Nations University | Ronald Graham |

With 32 regular members being present, a quorum was established.

Other members present:

San Carlos Apache Tribe College Martin Ahumada

Other members absent:

California Tribal College: Juliet Maestas

**CALL TO ORDER:** Following the virtual memorial service for President Bible and roll call, AIHEC Board Chair David E. Yarlott, Jr. called the 2021 AIHEC fall Board of Directors meeting to order at 2:26

p.m. ET.

# REVIEW AND APPROVE OF THE MEETING AGENDA

Chair Yarlott reviewed the proposed agenda for the 2021 AIHEC spring Board of Directors meeting.

# MOTION:

President Gourneau moved [seconded by President Guy] to approve the meeting agenda.

# OUTCOME:

The motion was agreed to by voice vote.

# SECRETARY’S REPORT

President McDonald briefly reviewed the 2020 fall Board of Directors meeting minutes.

# MOTION:

President McDonald moved [seconded by President Lindquist] to approve the 2020 fall Board of Directors meeting minutes.

# OUTCOME:

The motion was agreed to by voice vote.

# MOTION:

President McDonald moved [seconded by President Martin] to accept the October and November 2020 and January, February, and March 2021 Executive Committee meeting minutes.

# OUTCOME:

The motion was agreed to by voice vote.

# TREASURER’S REPORT

Finance and Audit Committee Chair Justin Guillory presented the committee’s motions to the Board. A written report is included in the board book, pages 35–97.

President Guillory noted that AIHEC has contracted with Gelman, Rosenberg & Freedman CPAs for more than 15 years as the auditor (rotating audit lead partner and team members every few years), and that the committee has been satisfied with the firm’s work. However, consistent with AIHEC’s procurement policy, the Committee recommends issuing a request for proposals for an independent audit firm beginning with the fiscal year (FY) 2021 audit.

# MOTION:

President Guillory moved [seconded by President Oltrogge] that the AIHEC Board of Directors directs AIHEC staff to prepare and issue a solicitation (request for proposals) to engage an audit firm for a period of up to three years, at AIHEC’s discretion; beginning with the fiscal year 2021 audit; and further, that AIHEC’s current audit firm shall be invited to submit a proposal in response to the solicitation.

# OUTCOME:

The motion was agreed to by voice vote.

Board policy is that the AIHEC Finance and Audit Committee will approve and present to the full board a **draft** fiscal year budget for AIHEC at the spring board meeting preceding the fiscal year that is the subject of the budget, and that the committee will approve and present a **final** fiscal year budget for AIHEC at the summer board meeting, in advance of such fiscal year.

# MOTION:

President Guillory moved [seconded by President McDonald] that the AIHEC Board of Directors approves AIHEC’s draft fiscal year 2022 budget.

# OUTCOME:

The motion was agreed to by voice vote.

AIHEC board practice is to set an annual membership dues structure for a period of five years. The existing structure ends in FY2021. Therefore, the Finance and Audit Committee proposed a new five- year structure, whereby dues would increase at a rate of approximately $600 per year for five years, to a total annual level of $30,000 by FY2026. A $600 per year increase is roughly two percent, which is consistent with the current rate of inflation.

# MOTION:

President Guillory moved [seconded by President Oltrogge] that AIHEC’s annual base dues for regular members shall be adjusted proportionally for a period of five years, to a level of $30,000 in fiscal year 2026; and further, that AIHEC staff are directed to provide options to board members for paying and pre-paying annual dues, including pre-paying the annual increase in dues.

# OUTCOME:

The motion was agreed to by voice vote.

# PRESENTATIONS TO THE BOARD

* 1. **AMERICAN INDIAN COLLEGE FUND (A\*CF)**

A\*CF President and CEO, Cheryl Crazy Bull, provided a PowerPoint presentation and written report, which is included in the board book, pages 99-110.

President Crazy Bull noted that A\*CF is receiving an insufficient number of applications for faculty development awards and student scholarships. As of April 20, 2021, A\*CF has received 1,068 fewer applications than 2020. Carrie Billy, AIHEC, inquired whether the College Fund knew why fewer students are applying for scholarships. Specifically, she wondered whether the recent student aid provided through federal covid-19 relief funding was impacting applications for private sector aid. Ms. Crazy Bull responded that applications appear to have dropped significantly due to several factors, including a reduction in first-time college students. She emphasized that even with financial assistance and federal aid there remains a gap in students’ ability to pay for college. Additionally, some students are experiencing college application exhaustion and burnout . Tiffany Gusbeth, A\*CF Senior Director of Student Success Services, stated that nationally, there is a significant drop in the number of high school graduates pursing post-secondary education. President Cynthia Lindquist asked Ms. Crazy Bull about the possible outcomes if students do not apply for the scholarships. Ms. Crazy Bull responded that TCUs may adjust the per student award amount in administering A\*CF scholarship funding.

Regarding A\*CF Full Circle scholarships, A\*CF staff may need to work with donors to recommend changes in award criteria to ensure the scholarship funding does not go unused. President McDonald shared that students who are not considered financially “well off” often have more barriers when applying for college, but once enrolled, these students are successful in completing programs of study.

Ms. Crazy Bull requested that all TCU presidents share student scholarship information with the appropriate facility and staff. She also asked that each president provide a single contact person to better facilitate the flow of A\*CF information and opportunities to TCU students. She noted that there is a $20 incentive for TCU students who apply for A\*CF scholarships before April 30, 2021.

Ms. Crazy Bull said the A\*CF Indigenous Early Childhood Education Strategic Plan is working to support family and teacher engagement and development. Finally, she said that A\*CF has been notified by the Mellon Foundation that they will no longer support some of faculty development work. Currently, A\*CF has nearly 20 unawarded Mellon faculty fellowships in the Humanities, varying between $15,000 and $40,000. More than 20 awards also remain unfilled for several other faculty fellowships A\*CF is hosting. (See pages 100-101 of the board book.)

The board was asked to make recommendations for membership on the A\*CF governing board, including reaffirming several current members and recommending a president to fill President Bible’s remaining term.

# MOTION:

President Martin moved [seconded by President Lindquist] that the AIHEC Board of Directors reaffirms Presidents Dan King (Red Lake Nation College), Justin Guillory (Northwest Indian College), Michael

Oltrogge (Nebraska Indian Community College), and Twyla Baker (Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish College) to serve a second three-year term on the A\*CF board.

# OUTCOME:

The motion was agreed to by voice vote.

**Nomination**: President Lane Azure nominated President Laurel Vermillion to fill the A\*CF board vacancy created by the untimely passing of President Bible.

**Nomination**: President Dan King nominated President Haven Gourneau to fill the vacancy. **Motion:** President McDonald moved [seconded by President Burns] to close nominations; and the motion was agreed to by voice vote.

**Discussion**: President Gourneau asked about the demographics of the TCU Presidents serving on the A\*CF board.

The board voted by secret ballot, which resulted in an 11-11 tie.

Stating that she had the honor of serving on the A\*CF board previously, President Vermillion withdrew from consideration.

# OUTCOME:

By acclamation, the Board recommends that President Gourneau be nominated to serve on the A\*CF board, filling the seat left vacant by President Bible’s passing.

# BUREAU OF INDIAN EDUCATION (BIE)

Dr. Katherine Campbell, BIE Program Analyst, provided a brief update. She stated that BIE school operations has requested that each TCU draw down all covid-19 relief funds provided by the BIE. She cautioned TCUs to keep BIE funds separate and to track spending. Dr. Campbell is awaiting approval of reporting forms for BIE-CARES and BIE-CRRSAA funding. Reporting requirements for BIE-ARP funding have not been determined. Dr. Campbell stated that TCUs have the option to request an updated reporting agreement due to the awarding of additional covid-19 relief funds.

A memorandum of understanding regarding dual student enrollment at TCUs has been approved by BIE senior leadership.

Finally, Drs. Venida Chenault and Freda Gipp are assisting Dr. Campbell with the BIE Strategic Plan: Goal 4, addressing career and college readiness. Through a contract with the American Indian Graduate Center (AIGC), BIE will be releasing a student pocket guide with information about TCUs. AIGC also administers three BIE funded scholarship programs. Dr. Campbell explained that a special emphasis will be placed on the teacher training through the loan-for-service program to address teacher shortages at BIE funded K-12 schools.

# USDA-1994 LAND-GRANT PROGRAMS

A written report is included in the board book on pages 131 - 133.

# AIHEC TRIBAL COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES LIBRARIANS’ ASSOCIATION

A written report is included in the board book on pages 120 – 130.

# FALCON LAND-GRANT

The 2021 FALCON Annual Conference is scheduled for October 21–24. Currently, the conference is planned as an in-person event, to be held in Kansas City, MO.

# RECESS

President Yarlott declared the meeting in recess at 3:35 pm ET. The meeting resumed at 3:53 p.m. ET.

# WHITE HOUSE INITIATIVE ON AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKAN NATIVE EDUCATION (WHIAIANE)

Ron Lessard, Acting Executive Director of the WHIAIANE, provided an update on various matters. He announced that he had joined Secretary Miguel Cardona (Department of Education) earlier today in a meeting of the recently re-established White House Council on Native American Affairs. During the council meeting, cabinet members discussed Indian education, including TCUs and student needs; broadband access in Indian Country; and the impacts of the pandemic. During the Obama administration, an annual Tribal nations conference was convened to allow Tribal leaders to travel to Washington D.C. to attend meetings with government officials, including political appointees and cabinet members. Plans are being made to resume these annual events, tentatively beginning with an in-person conference in October or November 2021.

# AIHEC BOARD REPORT

* 1. **LEGISLATIVE & EXECUTIVE BRANCH UPDATE**

Ms. Patrese Atine provided an overview of the three federal covid-19 relief packages, TCU-specific funding, authorized uses, and spending timelines. A summary of covid-19 funding is provided in the board book on page 163. President Guillory expressed the difficulties experienced as NWIC has tried to create spending plans, which has been difficult due to the lack of clarity from the Departments of Education and the Interior/BIE. Ms. Billy and Ms. Atine agreed the process has been difficult for everyone but will continue to advocate for flexibility from the departments regarding covid-19 relief funding uses, including construction, as well as spending timelines. In response to a question regarding TCU funding estimates under the recently passed American Rescue Plan, Ms. Billy explained AIHEC’s hesitancy is due to caution regarding the potential for providing inaccurate information. President Lindquist stated that she and her staff have been able to develop internal estimates and plans based on past information.

In response to comments regarding a special meeting to discuss covid-19 relief fund planning, President Gourneau and President Guillory agreed that a special meeting would be beneficial. Mr. Lessard explained that ED is experiencing issues in the implementation of funding due to limited staffing capacity and very short distribution timelines mandated by Congress. Mr. Lessard offered to assist in organizing a meeting with ED officials and TCU presidents to discuss these issues.

President McDonald shared that UTTC’s bank was limited in receiving large amounts of money from federal agencies on behalf of UTTC. Dr. Campbell said she would share this information with BIE staff. A brief discussion occurred regarding limits on interest earned from covid-19 relief funds. Ms. Billy encouraged TCUs to review the FAQs that AIHEC has distributed, and which are located on the ED website. These documents address many of the issues raised.

Ms. Atine provided a summary on the following issues:

* Final funding levels for federal TCU programs for FY 2021 and AIHEC funding request for FY 2022. (Funding table, pages 159-162 of board book);
* Recently introduced and upcoming TCU related legislation (pages144-145 of board book); and
* Brief overview of free community college proposals and other Biden-Harris higher education priorities.

The Department of the Interior will host a Tribal consultation on May 7, 2021, regarding the administration of $15 million provided to TCU for facilities construction through the final FY 2021 consolidated appropriations act. Several presidents stated they had not received notice of this consultation from the Department, and many expressed their disappointment that TCUs were not included in departmental outreach since TCUs were the key stakeholders in the new program. Dr. Campbell stated that the BIE, like the TCUs, had not received notice of the consultation.

# AIHEC CENTRAL OFFICE REPORT & UPDATE

The AIHEC Quarterly Report is included in the board book, pages 134 – 152.

# UPCOMING AIHEC MEETINGS

A schedule of upcoming AIHEC Board meetings and other events is included in the board book on page 180. Of note:

* AIHEC 2021 Summer Board meeting dates are July 13 – 15, 2021.
* AIHEC 2021 Fall Board meeting dates are October 7 – 8, 2021.

In response to President Azure’s question regarding the continued planning of virtual AIHEC meetings, Ms. Billy shared that for planning purposes, AIHEC board meeting dates are determined well in advance (with the exception of the summer meeting) and that earlier this year, the AIHEC Executive Committee had determined that in the interest of health and safety all board meetings would be virtual through the end of 2021, with a slight modification of meeting dates. Further, once a decision had been made, AIHEC would adhere to that decision, primarily to enable all involved to plan for the meetings.

However, this did not mean that all AIHEC meetings would be virtual in 2021 and AIHEC is planning an in-person legislative summit in Washington D.C. in February 2022.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Billy announced that on April 27, 2021, President Sherry Allison will retire as the president of Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI). Although she will no longer be president, President Allison is hoping to stay active within American Indian education and the Tribal College Movement. Mr. Monte Monteith will serve as the interim president while a presidential search is conducted. AIHEC

hopes to honor all presidents who have retired or transitioned from their positions during AIHEC’s spring 2022 board meeting or the 2022 AIHEC Student Conference.

# WHIAIANE DIRECTORSHIP

President Bordeaux stated that to his knowledge, President Biden has not nominated an individual to fill the vacant position of executive director for the White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native Education. Ron Lessard, Mohawk, currently serves as WHIAIANE acting executive director, and he has been a strong supporter of TCUs and Tribal education. He said that Mr. Lessard has participated in Sun Dances for many years, demonstrating tremendous courage and strength.

# MOTION:

President Bordeaux moved [seconded by President King] that the AIHEC Board of Directors supports Ron Lessard to be named permanent executive director of the White House Initiative on Indian Education and liaison between the American Indian Higher Education Consortium and the White House Council on American Indians.

# OUTCOME:

The motion was agreed to by voice vote.

President Bordeaux then spoke of the extreme poverty in Indian Country. He shared his belief that there needs to be a greater emphasis placed on students learning entrepreneurial skills. He asked AIHEC to work in partnership with George Washington University’s Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship to support entrepreneurial education in Indian Country. He also asked AIHEC to push initiatives that support economic development in Indian Country.

# COMMITTEE REPORTS & MOTIONS

* 1. **RESEARCH COMMITTEE: Leander McDonald, Chair**

President McDonald reported that AIHEC has been asked by a partner institution/subrecipient to change or delete standard contract language that states AIHEC (through the AIHEC Research Committee) shall have final approval, with the right to refuse, any publication of research based on a particular project, and specifically, any TCU-related data collected through the project. The committee’s position is that waiving this right would undermine the integrity and best interests of TCUs and the sovereign rights of Tribal nations who allow research within their lands.

# MOTION:

President McDonald moved [seconded by President Guy] that the AIHEC Board of Directors directs that AIHEC shall not under any circumstances waive the “publication/dissemination review and approval” clause contained in AIHEC’s existing contract template, in recognition of the sovereignty of Tribal nations and well-established requirements regarding research on tribal lands and Tribal Institutional Review Board protocols.

# OUTCOME:

The motion was agreed to by voice vote.

# TRIBAL COLLEGE ADVISORY BOARD COMMITTEE: Raymond Burns, Chair

The committee had no motions.

# STUDENT ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE: Robert Martin, Chair

President Martin stated that Mr. Juan Perez has been an important member of the AIHEC Athletic Commission for many years, due to his long-time position as the Athletic Director at Salish Kootenai College; however, in 2020 he was named Director of Admissions at Salish Kootenai College. The AIHEC Athletic Constitution and Bylaws require a serving commissioner to be either a TCU President, an athletic director, or a coach at their institution. Due to Commissioner Perez’s wealth of institutional knowledge of AIHEC Athletics, the AIHEC Athletic Commission and Student Activities Committee requests that the AIHEC Board of Directors approve an exception for Commissioner Perez to remain on the AIHEC Athletic Commission until the end of his existing term (late 2026). President Boham (SKC) has approved this request.

# MOTION:

President Martin moved [seconded by President Sangrey-Billy] that the AIHEC Board of Directors approves an exception to the AIHEC Athletic Commission constitution and bylaws to permit AIHEC Athletic Commissioner Juan Perez to remain as a commissioner and finish his current term, which ends in late 2026.

# OUTCOME:

The motion was agreed to by voice vote.

# MEMBERSHIP & ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE:

The Membership and Accreditation Committee did not meet prior to the board meeting due to the passing of President Bible, who served as committee chair until his untimely passing. A meeting will be held in the upcoming weeks, provided a new chair is elected. All matters discussed during that meeting will be addressed during the 2021 AIHEC summer board meeting.

# NOMINATION:

President Guy [seconded by President Lindquist] nominated President Boham to serve as chair of the Membership and Accreditation committee.

President Vermillion [seconded by President McDonald] moved that the nominations cease. Hearing no further nominations, the chair closed the nominations.

# OUTCOME:

By acclamation, President Boham is named chair of the Membership and Accreditation committee.

# EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: David Yarlott, Chair

Chair Yarlott announced that the executive committee had one motion for board consideration and asked Ms. Billy to explain the issue. Ms. Billy said the motion is regarding a Financial Conflict of Interest Policy, which is included in the board book at the end of the AIHEC report on pages 167 - 179. This policy is similar to and consistent with AIHEC’s existing conflict of interest policy and code of conduct. However, under a relatively new federal law, the National Institutes of Health requires that organizations whose staff will serve as principal investigators applying for and working on NIH funded research, must have a clear and lengthy policy (a) requiring disclosure of significant financial interests (SFIs) that are related to the investigator’s institutional/organizational responsibilities; and (b) that the

organization have a process for monitoring, enforcing, and reporting on this requirement. The policy approved by the executive committee accomplishes these objectives and provides a framework to identify, evaluate, and correct or remove real, apparent and potential conflicts of interest. The policy is based on policies in place at several institutions of higher education, of which NIH has approved. Under the policy, “investigators” are all persons, regardless of title or position, who are responsible for the design, conduct, or reporting of award-funded research proposed for funding, including collaborators and/or consultants.

# MOTION:

President McDonald [seconded by President Guy] that the AIHEC Board of Directors approves the AIHEC Financial Conflict of Interest Policy, as approved by the executive committee on April 22, 2021. **OUTCOME:**

The motion was agreed to by voice vote.

# NEW BUSINESS

No new business was put forward.

# ADJOURNMENT

President Yarlott made very brief remarks, thanking AIHEC and A\*CF for their work and stating that we [the TCUs] are the beacons of hope for our Tribal community.

President McDonald offered a closing prayer.

# MOTION:

President Oltrogge moved [seconded by President Sangrey-Billy] that the 2021 AIHEC spring Board of Directors meeting be adjourned.

# OUTCOME:

The motion was agreed to by voice vote. Accordingly, the meeting adjourned at 5:46 pm EDT. Minutes prepared by AIHEC staff.

Executed and acknowledged by the undersigned being the Secretary of the Board of the Corporation.

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Leander R. McDonald, Secretary Date

American Indian Higher Education Consortium