

Final Minutes of the AIHEC Summer 2021 Board of Directors Meeting
Zoom Web Conference
Thursday, July 15, 2021 at 12:30 PM ET

- I. **Call to Order:** President Elmer Guy, Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:34 PM (ET). President Cynthia Lindquist, Member-at-Large, offered the opening prayer.

Roll Call: Carrie Billy, AIHEC President and CEO, called the roll with the following results:

Regular Members Present

Aaniiih Nakoda College
Bay Mills Community College
Cankdeska Cikana Community College
Chief Dull Knife College
College of Menominee Nation
College of the Muscogee Nation
Diné College
Fond du Lac Tribal & Community College
Fort Pack Community College
Haskell Indian Nations University
Iḷisagvik College
Institute of American Indian Arts
Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College
Lac Courte Oreilles Community College
Leech Lake Tribal College
Little Big Horn College
Little Priest Tribal College
Navajo Technical University
Nebraska Indian Community College
Northwest Indian College
Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish College
Oglala Lakota College
Red Lake Nation College
Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College
Salish Kootenai College
Sinte Gleska University
Sisseton Wahpeton College
Sitting Bull College
Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute
Stone Child College
Turtle Mountain Community College

President (Voting) or Representative

Sean Chandler
Duane Bedell
Cynthia Lindquist
Richard Littlebear
Christopher Caldwell
Monte Randall
Charles M. Roessel
Stephanie Hammitt
Haven Gourneau
Tamarah Pfeiffer, Acting President
Justina Wilhelm
Robert Martin
Lori Ann Sherman
Russell Swagger
Helen Zaikina-Montgomery, Interim President
David Yarlott
Manoj Patil
Elmer Guy
Michael Oltrogge
Justin Guillory
Twyla Baker
Thomas Shortbull
Dan King (joined after roll call)
Carla Sineway
Sandra Boham
Lionel Bordeaux
Lane Azure
Laurel Vermillion
Monte Monteith, Interim President
Cory Sangrey-Billy
Donna Brown

United Tribes Technical College Leander R. McDonald
White Earth Tribal & Community College Lorna LaGue

Regular Members Absent

Blackfeet Community College Karla Bird
Tohono O’odham Community College Paul Robertson

With 33 regular members being present, a quorum was established.

Other Members Present

California Tribal College Juliet Maestas
San Carlos Apache Tribe College Annette Ayze (representative)

Web Meeting Protocol Review

Patrese Atine, AIHEC Director of Congressional and Federal Relations, reviewed the protocol for AIHEC board meetings held via Zoom.

II. Review and Approval of Meeting Agenda

President Guy reviewed the proposed agenda for the 2021 summer Board of Directors meeting.

Motion: President Martin moved [seconded by President Boham] to approve the meeting agenda.

Outcome:

The motion was agreed to by voice vote.

III. Secretary’s Report

President McDonald briefly reviewed the 2021 spring Board of Directors meeting minutes.

Motion:

President McDonald moved [seconded by President Martin] to approve the minutes of the 2021 spring Board of Directors meeting.

Outcome:

The motion was agreed to by voice vote, with one abstention (Interim President Monteith, SIPI).

Motion:

President McDonald moved [seconded by President Boham] to accept the minutes of the Executive Committee meetings, April through June 2021.

Outcome:

The motion was agreed to by voice vote, with two abstentions (Interim President Monteith and Interim President Helen Zaikina-Montgomery, LLTC).

President McDonald thanked Ms. Billy and Ms. Atine for their work in preparing the minutes.

IV. Treasurer’s Report

Finance and Audit Committee Chair Justin Guillory presented the committee’s motion to the Board and noted that the AIHEC FY 2022 final budget is included in the board book on pages 27-28 and the AIHEC grant report is included on pages 29-30.

Motion:

President Guillory moved [seconded by President Oltrogge] to approve the AIHEC FY 2022 final budget.

Outcome:

The motion was agreed to by voice vote.

V. AIHEC Affiliate Reports

American Indian College Fund

American Indian College Fund President & CEO Cheryl Crazy Bull provided a brief update to the written report found in the board book:

- The A*CF team has been working diligently on reports that provide data and demonstrate impact.
- There was concern earlier this year regarding the low number of student scholarship applications; however, the numbers of applications this year came close to meeting last year's numbers. Significantly, many students indicated that fall 2021 will be their first semester in college.
- Full Circle scholarships will be awarded soon. In total, over \$7.5 million will be distributed to Native students via Full Circle scholarships and TCU scholarship awards.
- Through the Native Pathways to Success project, A*CF is working with high school students to help the students navigate engagement with postsecondary education. Native Pathways students exhibited higher graduation rates than the national average in spring 2020, for both AI/AN students and all students. TCU transfer program students demonstrated an 84 percent retention rate, which is notable given pressures of the pandemic.
- A*CF staff have been working to find resources to support TCUs with high school equivalency programs; further, A*CF is seeing success with the sharing of best practices, implementing virtual resources, and helping students with emergency needs.
- A*CF continues to work on faculty capacity building, such as hosting a convening for TCU faculty on best practices in using technology to teach Native arts.
- In terms of institutional capacity building, an example of A*CF's work is ~~its~~ environmental stewardship programming involving grasslands.
- In the area of community building, A*CF awards TCUs cultural preservation awards to support cultural restoration and outreach activities in communities.
- A*CF is conducting multiple research projects, including the AI/AN College Affordability Study.
- A*CF is continuing its partnership with other Native scholarship organizations.
- Faculty fellowships are still available, particularly in the humanities.
- A*CF's peer-reviewed TCU research journal will continue to be published, and staff are conducting a literature review on Tribal higher education and social justice.

Finally, A*CF is initiating a planning process for ~~the upcoming~~~~its new~~ 2022-26 strategic plan. This will include an analysis of the strategic plans of all TCUs. When completed, this information will be shared.

President Guy thanked Dr. Crazy Bull for her work and that of her staff in supporting TCU students, faculty, and staff.

White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native Education (WHIAIANE)

WHIAIANE Acting Executive Director Ron Lessard provided a brief update, beginning by announcing that today, U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona is visiting Tohono O'odham Community

College (TOCC). He will be promoting the American Families Plan and conducting a roundtable discussion with Representative Raúl Grijalva, Tribal Chairman Ned Norris, Jr., TOCC President Paul Robertson, and others. Other announcements include:

- **Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission:** The commission, which has been meeting regularly for about two years, will hold public hearings in Alaska (August 2021) and Arizona (September 2021). The commission's report will be released in 2022.
- **White House Council on Native Affairs:** Secretary Cardona (ED) and Secretary Haaland (Department of the Interior) are scheduled to host a council meeting on August 6. In addition, the council is beginning to plan a Tribal Nations Conference, which will take place in October or November 2021.
- **Executive Order on Improving American Indian and Alaska Native Educational Opportunities and Strengthening Tribal Colleges and Universities.** The White House is unlikely to issue two separate executive orders (one for TCUs and one for K-12 and others), as AIHEC has requested. Rather, staff are working on a new comprehensive AI/AN education executive order that should include significant language supporting TCUs (explanation of the need for TCUs; directive to federal agencies to work closely with TCUs; and discussion of funding streams for TCUs).
- **National Advisory Council on Indian Education (NACIE):** Mr. Lessard has been advocating for greater TCU representation on NACIE. AIHEC's previous letters of support and nominations for potential NACIE membership should be resubmitted – or new nominations made – when appropriate. The revised AI/AN education executive order should call for TCU representation on NACIE, as well as representation across the education spectrum. Ms. Billy noted that the meeting agenda calls for a discussion of potential nominations to NACIE.
- **Other events**
 - Oct. 13, 2021: 8th Annual Native American Language Summit will be held in Omaha, NE. in conjunction with the National Indian Education Association's (NIEA) annual conference. The registration link should be available soon.
 - Nov. 29-Dec. 1, 2021: International Conference of Indigenous Archives, Libraries, and Museums.

President Bordeaux asked if there has been any follow-up or mention of Tribal accreditation. Mr. Lessard was unsure and said he would look into [the matter](#).

President Bordeaux shared that this week, the remains of nine children who were stolen from their families more than 100 years ago and taken to Carlisle Indian Industrial School, where they passed away, are finally returning home. A ceremony and wake will be held on Friday, and on Saturday, a funeral will take place.

U.S. Department of the Interior-Bureau of Indian Education (BIE)

BIE Program Analyst Katherine Campbell provided a brief update:

- **FY21 TCU Facilities Funding:** BIE recently distributed \$15 million in facilities (construction) funding to TCUs. Each TCU received \$428,571.
- **Covid-19 Relief Funds:** The reporting form for covid-19 relief funds distributed by the BIE to TCUs under CARES and CRRSAA will be distributed when the form is approved by the Office of Management and Budget. [BIE has not clarified](#) ~~It is not clear~~ whether this form will be applicable to funds provided under the American Rescue Plan (ARP). The determining factors will be whether

and to what extent there are differences in uses of the funds. Dr. Campbell advised each TCU to keep the three sets of funding (CARES, CRRSAA, and ARP) separated by funding source and to track all expenditures.

- **BIE Higher Education Scholarships:** BIE has awarded a new contract to the American Indian Graduate Center (AIGC) to administer certain BIE student and teacher scholarships. Teacher education students will be targeted for these scholarships. TCUs with teacher preparation degree programs should make students, and potential students, aware of this new scholarship opportunity. TCU students receive priority, with the expectation that new teachers will work at BIE funded K-12 schools upon graduation. AIGC also is continuing to administer the BIE STEM scholarship program. Congress increased the Special Higher Education Programs by \$500,000, which will enable the American Indian Law Center to support the Pre-Law Summer Institute for American Indian and Alaska Natives students.
- **Other DOI Announcements:** BIE is working on a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the National Park Service and AIHEC. The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) has staff available to present at TCUs on various topics of interest to Indian Country. USGS already is working with SIPI in a mutually beneficial way and would like to expand ~~its~~ partnerships with other TCUs. BIE is considering developing an MOU with USGS.
- **Updated BIE Website:** The BIE will be updating the its website, with Freda Gipp as web master.

President Bordeaux asked if there is any research or information on TCUs working with Tribes and Tribal organizations in support of new forms of Tribal advancement. Dr. Campbell said she will ask Dr. Venida Chenault to review available information and share the findings.

USDA 1994 Programs

USDA 1994 Programs Director Lawrence Shorty provided an update:

- Lisa Ramirez is the new Director of the Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement (OPPE), which houses the 1994 Programs office. Ms. Ramirez will soon send a formal greeting and meeting request to the AIHEC Board. She is aware that there are outstanding requests from AIHEC, including the need for additional 1994 liaisons and an updated memorandum of agreement (MOA). The goal of the MOA, which is required in the Farm Bill, is to ensure that the 1994 institutions have equitable access to the Department's employment services and resources.
- OPPE is involved with overseeing implementation of the USDA 1994 Tribal Scholars Program. Due to lack of advertising and outreach by USDA, no TCU students are participating in the program currently. In the past year, four 1994 students applied to the program, four offers were made, and three students accepted the scholarships.
- There are various employment opportunities within USDA and with additional planning and outreach by USDA, these positions may be filled by recent 1994 graduates.

Ms. Billy asked whether AIHEC should propose a draft MOA. Mr. Shorty stated that proposing a draft would help to initiate discussions. Ms. Billy asked the Board what process they would like to use to review the most recent (President Obama-era) MOA and propose changes. For example, should the Board ask FALCON to take the lead (John Phillips and TCU Land-grant faculty); or should the Board establish an ad hoc working group? As a reminder, President Trump's Agriculture Secretary allowed the previous MOU to expire and did not sign a new agreement. Guidance from the AIHEC Board would be helpful in jumpstarting the process. President Lindquist reminded the Board of the previously

established AIHEC-USDA leadership group, which has not been active since the departure of Secretary Vilsack at the end of the Obama administration.

Mr. Shorty shared that major organizational changes occurred during the Trump administration, including job titles changes, new reporting structures, and re-location of programs and activities. Mr. Shorty anticipates that there will be further changes under the new Biden administration. Ms. Billy noted that the Secretary Vilsack, who served as Agriculture Secretary eight years under President Obama, is now leading USDA once again. He is very familiar with USDA programs and processes and will be working diligently to reestablish structure and efficiency within the Department.

President McDonald suggested AIHEC and USDA use previous discussions as a starting point for new discussions. He shared that the most recent (past) USDA officials were disrespectful to TCU presidents by canceling a meeting after TCU presidents had arrived in the building and were seated around the table. Important issues have been neglected by USDA. The message needs to be clear that the 1994 institutions are not pleased with the treatment received, most recently, but also throughout the existence of the 1994 programs. Over the past 27 years, valuable work could have been taking place, but it did not happen.

Motion:

President McDonald moved [seconded by President King] that the AIHEC Board of Directors urges the Secretary of Agriculture to prioritize 1994 Land-grant institutions and 1994 programs within the Department's annual budget and departmental initiatives due to historic and well-documented funding inequities; and further, that the 1994 program office be located within the Department in a position of influence.

Outcome:

The motion was agreed to by voice vote.

FALCON and TCU Librarians Report:

The FALCON/Land-grant written report is included on pages 65-67 of the board book. The AIHEC Tribal College and Universities Librarian Association written report is included on pages 58-64 of the board book.

VI. AIHEC Report

Since the board last met in March, AIHEC staff have been conducting important work on behalf of the TCUs, as described in the lengthy AIHEC board report (pages 84-162 of the board book). Due to the time, Ms. Billy said she would forego a discussion of programmatic and board membership activities, although a considerable amount of staff time has been devoted to membership issues over the past several months. She encouraged presidents to review the AIHEC report to learn more about progress and significant growth of AIHEC's programmatic initiatives in Native student success; health professions development and research; Native language sustainability, including new funding to establish a National TCU Center on Native Languages; research, data collection and information sharing activities; Land-grant programs and climate adaptation; cyberinfrastructure capacity building at TCUs, including resource sharing across TCUs; public awareness and outreach, including the Tribal College Journal; STEM programming and career development enhancement; a generous gift from MacKenzie Scott; and much more. Three key elements of all AIHEC programs are (1) growing sustainable communities of practice, with the goal of all communities of practice growing into continuous improvement networks; (2) undergraduate student research, particularly Indigenous

community-based participatory research; and (3) inclusivity. AIHEC's programs are all directly tied to the AIHEC strategic plan (goals, subgoals, and objectives), have established metrics, and are founded on the values of Sovereignty, Land, Community, and Personal Gifts (Identity).

Continuing our bi-weekly meeting practice, Ms. Billy asked Patrese Atine to provide a very brief legislative and executive branch update, since we provide the updates every two weeks.

Legislative & Executive Branch Update

Ms. Atine provided the legislative and executive branch update. She stated that information is provided in the board book, but some of that has changed since the initial publication of the book.

FY 2022 Appropriations: Today, the House Appropriations Committee is holding a business meeting to review and pass most of the 12 appropriations bills for FY 2022. Ms. Atine led the Board through a PowerPoint presentation detailing FY 2022 funding levels as proposed by the House. She noted that the House numbers include significant increases for many TCU programs. The Senate appropriations process is moving slower with little action anticipated in the upcoming weeks. Updated funding charts will be sent to the Board, as needed. Ms. Billy reminded the Board that the very positive House funding levels likely will not be enacted, although that is our goal. Unfortunately, the evenly divided Senate undoubtedly will be more conservative with ~~its~~ funding levels.

The Minority Entrepreneur Grant Program is a proposed program for TCUs, HBCUs, and other MSIs to promote entrepreneurship. The proposed program would provide a total of \$50 million. AIHEC is working to ensure that a dedicated portion is provided to TCUs. The bill has been introduced in the Senate, but there has been no action since.

The IMPACT Act is focused on creating and building up a workforce to meet the nation's broadband needs. The bill proposes \$100 million to support training programs at TCUs, HBCUs, and MSIs. AIHEC is working to ensure at least 30 percent is provided to TCUs as a set aside. This bill will likely be added to a larger legislative package.

The Native VetSuccess at TCUs Pilot Program Act would bring resources from the Veteran's Administration (VA) and other federal agencies closer to Native Veterans attending and living near TCUs. Resources include career counseling, medical liaisons with the VA, career transition, and more. In the design of the proposed program, AIHEC has recommended stationing a multi-TCU service center within each of three regions of TCUs (e.g., Plains/Northwest, Southwest, Woodlands). This bill passed the House as part of a larger veteran's benefits legislative package.

Senator Tina Smith (D-MN) is working on a bill to help public schools develop curricula to teach about American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes in their states by creating a resource center at the National Museum of the American Indian. Teaching materials could be adapted for local Tribes. This bill has not been introduced.

President Biden's American Jobs Plan (released on March 31) and the American Families Plan (released on April 28) are outlined in the board book. Under the American Jobs Plan, technology infrastructure is a central priority. AIHEC anticipates inclusion of a Tribal broadband set aside within this plan. The American Families Plan focuses on supporting education, childcare, nutrition, and some housing. The Families Plan includes a free community college program funded through cost-sharing agreements between states, tribes, and the federal government and state governments. AIHEC is

advocating for the full cost to be paid by the federal government for students attending TCUs, among several other priorities and recommendations.

AIHEC is involved in a national campaign calling for Congress to “double Pell” grant funding. Information on this vitally important campaign is included in the board book.

Regarding President Biden’s infrastructure plans, Ms. Billy thanked the TCUs that provided data with a quick turnaround regarding TCU construction and facilities needs. AIHEC is using that information to advocate for additional TCU funding to support construction, renovation, and broadband needs.

Ms. Billy provided an update regarding ongoing discussions with Department of Education (ED) officials on AIHEC’s request for flexibility in the use COVID-19 relief fund to address TCU renovation and construction needs related to the pandemic. If a favorable agreement cannot be reached through discussions with ED, AIHEC may consider undergoing the negotiated rulemaking process to seek these changes. However, Ms. Billy noted that this process is lengthy and may not ultimately result in an acceptable outcome for TCUs.

Finally, Ms. Billy mentioned a new campaign led by the White House called the “College Campus Vaccine Challenge.” Many TCUs have joined the challenge, and Ms. Billy encouraged all TCUs to participate. Our goal should be to get as many TCU students as possible vaccinated, ~~she said~~. Vaccines are our key weapon in beating the covid-19 epidemic in Indian Country. We must do ~~this~~ for our people.

VII. Committee Report

Membership and Accreditation Committee

President Sandra Boham, Membership & Accreditation Chair, reported that the Committee met on June 28, 2021. A key discussion item was the issue of the membership status of Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College (FDLTCC), as raised in letters by President Thomas Shortbull, Ogalala Lakota College. The issue has been brought before the committee multiple times over the years – 1997, 2002, 2005, 2013-2014, and currently. Following an historical review and discussion, the Committee determined that no additional action was needed at this time, as the Committee and Board had acted decisively in 2014 on the issue of the membership status of FDLTCC.

President Shortbull expressed his displeasure with the Committee decision. He said that \$1.3 million had been erroneously given to FDLTCC by federal agencies, and this money could have served the needs of (other) TCU students. He said FDLTCC became a state institution in 1995 and therefore does not deserve the federal funds provided for Tribal Colleges and Universities. President Guy responded that the information presented to the Committee at the last meeting was the same information that had been presented in the past. President Shortbull stated that he had not been invited to the Committee meeting and that he would like his attorney to speak to the Board. President Guy declined the request, and President Shortbull proceeded to read the attorney’s statement. Members expressed concern about the proceedings.

Motion:

President Shortbull moved [seconded by President Sangrey-Billy] to convene in executive session to discuss the issue of Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College.

Outcome:

The motion was agreed to by voice vote.

The Board of Directors convened in executive session at 3:27 PM (ET) and all participants in the meeting who were not members of the Board of Directors were instructed to leave the virtual meeting room. At 4:36 PM (ET), the executive session ended, and non-Board participants rejoined.

President King suggested a separate meeting to discuss the FDLTCC issue in more detail. He stated that it would be beneficial for all to review the issues, including FDLTCC's response to President Shortbull's letter. He reminded the group that this is a membership issue and should be handled internally rather than through the court system. The TCUs need to work together to resolve this issue.

Motion:

President Shortbull moved [seconded by President Sangrey-Billy] to hold a special meeting in three weeks or at a time that is convenient [for the Board] to continue the discussion of the Fond Du Lac Tribal and Community College membership issue.

Outcome:

The motion was agreed to by voice vote.

President Swagger suggested that members come to the special meeting with a positive attitude, and he urged all to avoid using words that will further divide the group.

VIII. Announcements

WINHEC Annual Meeting: President Guy, WINHEC Co-chair, stated that the 2021 Annual Meeting of the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC) occurred on July 5-7, 2021 at Blue Quills First Nations College in Alberta, Canada. The World Indigenous Research and Education Conference was held on July 7-9. Reports were presented on Indigenous education and knowledge. Awards were presented for various aspects of Indigenous leadership. Honorary doctoral degrees were awarded, including one to keynote speaker Buffy Sainte-Marie. While the conference was ongoing, Canadian officials revealed the location of mass graves at former boarding schools for Indigenous youth. Understandably, this was a traumatic experience for all. He said prayer and ceremonies are needed.

President Guy announced that a Zoom meeting will be organized for all to hear from President Lionel Bordeaux and Rongo Wetere (Māori) on the founding of WINHEC. Ms. Billy shared that the TCJ publication, *Meditation on Ceremonies of Beginnings* by Tom Davis, which includes two parts: TCU development and growth, and the development of WINHEC, is a wonderful and touching historical record of AIHEC and WINHEC. A copy of this book has been sent to each TCU president.

The 2022 WINHEC Annual Meeting is scheduled for Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College. Ms. Billy had requested that the meeting be hosted in the U.S. in 2023 to coincide with the 50th Anniversary of AIHEC, but organizers declined to shift dates.

2022 AIHEC Student Conference: President Robert Martin announced that the 2022 AIHEC Student Conference will take place in-person in Albuquerque, NM on March 19-23, 2022. The Parade of Flags will be held on March 20.

IX. New Business: President Guy asked whether any president would like to be nominated to serve on NACIE. Upon receiving no affirmative response, Ms. Billy stated that AIHEC would send additional information on NACIE to each president.

X. Closing Prayer

President Bordeaux offered the closing prayer.

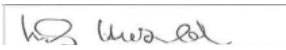
XI. Adjournment

Motion:

President LaGue moved [seconded by President Caldwell] to adjourn the summer 2021 Board of Directors meeting.

Outcome:

The motion was agreed to by voice vote. Accordingly, the meeting was adjourned at 4:46 PM (ET).



Leander R. McDonald, Secretary
American Indian Higher Education Consortium

10/14/2021

Date