

## History of American Indian Higher Education:

### (1) 1660s-late 1800s: Missionary-Colonial Period – 2 Fronts: Private & Public

#### A. Private Efforts:

- **1618: “Henrico Proposal:”** early colonists tried to raise money for colleges for “children of the infidels.” Failed miserably when indigenous people feuded with and killed colonists and destroyed college.
- **1654: Harvard Indian College:** Also failed – of first 20 students, only two survived. All others died of sickness, lifestyle change. Of two who survived, one died in shipwreck returning to Cambridge for commencement.
- **1769-1893: Dartmouth Experience:** Only 58 Indians received instruction

#### B. Public – Federal Government:

- **1776: U.S. Constitution:** Gave Congress power to “regulate commerce and make treaties” with Indian tribes. Early on, new government had good intentions:
  - **Northwest Ordinance:** “good faith”, no taking of land without consent”;
  - **George Washington:** “more adequate provision for...laws...outrages against... Indians”
- **1778: First Treaty (Delaware Tribe)** Between 1778-1884, more than 400 treaties. 120 specifically include educational provisions. In the treaties, more than one billion acres of land were ceded to the U.S.
- **1819: First Law: “Indian Civilization Fund Act:”** Payments to religious groups and others to “live among and teach” Indians.

- **1824: Bureau of Indian Affairs Created under U.S. War Department.**  
1839 -- formal development of federal “manual labor schools”
- **1830s: U.S. Supreme Court: Two Important Decisions**
  - **Cherokee Nation v. Georgia:** “Domestic Dependent Nations... unquestionable right to the lands they occupy” (John Marshall)
  - **Worcester v. Georgia:** Clarifies Government-to-Government relationship -- *Treaties and laws* are key to “trust responsibility,” not Constitution: “treaty” and “nation” have clear, legal meaning. U.S. government applies those words to Indian nations as to all other “nations.” (Treaties do not “confer” rights – Sovereignty and Nationhood are inherent rights.)

## (2) Late 1860s-1920s: Reservations & Removal:

- **Federal Activity:** In my view, worst time for American Indians:
  - Education is clearly federal responsibility through treaty obligations, yet...
  - Broken, unfulfilled treaties;
  - Proliferation of BIA boarding schools, many with terrible living conditions;
  - Beginning of widespread “English only” policies and regulations, although missionaries report to BIA that most effective education occurs when teachers learn native language;
  - “Allotment” – Dawes Act – with goal of “public school education”
  - “Catholic-Protestant” fight over distribution of federal funding, ultimately ending most federal money to religious institutions
- **Higher Education:** Began as elem.-secondary and voc-ed, evolved in early 1900s
  - **1879:** Carlisle Indian School (Captain Pratt)
  - **1884:** Admission of Indians to Hampton Institute in Virginia

- **1884:** Founding of Haskell Institute and Croatan Normal School (now UNC at Pembroke)
- **Tribal Leadership:** This time period also marked, in my view, the beginning of the Tribal College Movement:
  - **Chief Manuelito (Navajo):** “Education is the Ladder – tell our people to take it.”
  - **Chief Sitting Bull:** “Let us put our minds together and see what world we can make for our children.”
  - **Chief Plenty Coups:** “With education, we are the white man’s equal – without it, we are his victim.”

**(Our leaders returned to these lessons 100 years later...)**

**(3) Mid1920s-1940s: “New Deal:”** Rethinking federal Indian policies after WWI

- **Council of One Hundred:** Leading figures gathered to recommend changes
- **Popular Writers Speak Out:** Zane Grey (return to old ways, criticism of missionaries —“The Vanishing American”); John Collier creates “American Indian Defense Organization”
- **1928: The Meriam Report:** Brookings Institute/Johns Hopkins asked to conduct nonpolitical investigation of Indian affairs to prevent Collier from doing it.
  - **Meriam Report:** Condemns allotment, poor quality of services, urges property protections, publicly reveals terrible Boarding School conditions; begins movement toward “self-determination.”
  - **Indian Reorganization Act:** (Meriam report leads to this in 1934) Ends allotment policies, provides some religious freedom and tribal self-governance, and “Indian preference” in hiring.

**(4) Mid-1940s-1969: Termination:** End of WWII renews calls to “set American Indians” free.

- **1945:** AI veterans return to reservation homes and, on Navajo, begin discussions on creating a “tribally controlled college”
- **1960:** Raymond Nakai runs for Navajo Tribal Chairman on platform of “working toward Navajo control of education and creation of Navajo institution of higher education”
- **1968:** Navajo Community College created

#### **(5) 1970s-present: Self-Determination**

- **1968-1973:** Five more TCUs founded; in 1973: American Indian Higher Education Consortium formed by first six TCUs
  - **1971:** Enactment of the Navajo Community College Assistance Act
- **1975:** “Indian Self-Determination Act” signed into law
- **1978:** Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities Assistance Act, and ongoing fight for full funding begins
- **1987:** First Carnegie Report on TCUs
- **1988:** “Institute of American Indian Arts and Cultural Development Act” establishes Congressional Charter for IAIA (clb)
- **1989:** Tribal College Journal and AICF founded
- **1989:** Tribally Controlled Post-secondary Vocational Institution Act (clb)
- **1992:** Tribal Colleges start telecommunications system to link schools
- **1994:** Equity in Educational Land-grant Status Act of 1994 (clb)
- **1996:** President Clinton signs Executive Order 13021 on Tribal Colleges and Universities
- **1997:** Second Carnegie Report on Tribal Colleges
- **1998:** First Executive Director is appointed to White House Initiative on Tribal Colleges and Universities; Title III program for American Indian Tribal Colleges & Universities enacted and funded; WHITCU begins work on new AI teacher prep program (clb)
- **1999:** Gates Foundation announces \$50 million gift for minority scholarships

- **1999-2001:** (clb) Largest yearly appropriations increases for TCUs since enactment of TCU Act; expansion of opportunities to other departments, including \$3 million for TCU section in Title III and \$10 million in funding for AI teacher preparation program – specifically:
  - **FY2001:** WHITCU focuses on expanding funding obligations and opportunities throughout federal budget (clb):
    - **\$3 million increase in TCU Act (plus \$1.2 M for other TCUs)**
    - **\$9 million ED -- total for Title III-TCU;**
    - **\$40 million ED -- dual-degree;**
    - **\$5 million ED -- administrators corps**
    - **\$5 million HUD -- Community Development grants**
    - **Land-grant increases: endowment, extension, and research**
    - **\$1 million DOJ – law related education**
    - **\$28 million DOC -- MSI program**
    - **\$10 million NSF – information technology**
    - **\$1.5 million SBA – TBICs (\$3 million for AIBDC)**

## **(6) Current Activities:**

- **1999:**
  - Alliance for Equity in Higher Education formed
  - PABTCUs sworn in (2 meetings)
  - Two IHEP reports on TCUs
  - Expansion into International activities
  - TCU Technology Planning Launched
  - Facilities initiative: Public Private Partnership with AICF
    - Lily Foundation: \$30 million for facilities – largest gift ever from private foundation to AI organization
- **2000:**
  - Facilities initiative Expanded to Public Sector

- Technology initiative in full swing
- Recent White House Briefing on TCUs and Economic Development
- “American Indian Education Reform Summit”: PABTCU vision
- Discussions on moving to “higher education system”
- PABTCU begin work on first report/recommendations

American Indian Education  
February 27, 2000