

Introduction

The story of the native American is familiar. During three centuries of European exploration, colonization and, later, national expansion, Indians were viewed as people to be converted, tamed and removed. Without knowing a complete history, many Americans are nonetheless familiar with the broad sequence of events: Battles for territory, treaties, relocation of whole nations, suppression of traditional culture and the paternalistic trust responsibility of the federal government.

Today, Indian societies still hold the scars of this past. Basic indicators of social health are among the lowest of any group in the United States. Rates of alcoholism, ~~suicide~~ and unemployment, for example, often far exceed the national average. Education, and life expectancy, meanwhile, can hit frightening lows. The problems are enormous.

But these facts can lead to another type of victimization. With so many problems that seem unsolvable, with cultures that appear to casual observers as hopelessly faded, it is tempting to believe that native American society is no longer viable and that solutions to fundamental problems do not exist.

But hope does exist. After years of national confusion and federal neglect, a movement is now building within many Indian communities to promote social and economic renewal. From Indian-controlled industry to a renewed faith in ~~the value of~~ traditional culture, there are people and institutions that are creating a new mood of opportunity and pride. Few tribal communities have been transformed, but an era of self-determination does exist.

A vital part of this movement, we believe, is the growing number of tribally-controlled colleges, institutions of higher learning that are started and run by the people they are expected to serve. Unlike all other American colleges, these Indian institutions are usually located within reservation boundaries and are expected to ~~serve the need~~ respond to the unique needs of "an educationally disenfranchised population," said an administrator of one such college.

The approximately two dozen colleges that are located in eleven states and Canada challenge the idea that traditional culture has no place in contemporary America and that options for advancement do not exist on most reservations. Although the oldest college ~~has~~ was started in 1968, these young and struggling institutions are providing evidence that Native Americans can bring real change to the landscape of reservation communities.

But as young ^{campuses} institutions that are located in isolated corners of the United States, the nation has not recognized the evidence of their work or the promise they hold if they are supported into the future. ~~This~~

This is not a minor concern. ~~All~~ tribal colleges ^{can not} rely ~~not~~ on tuition or tribal support. ~~costs~~ must be kept low for poor students and tribes do not collect the taxes that can support a college ~~but~~ ^{they depend} instead on outside money from the federal government and a collection of ^{grants from} corporations of foundations. The creation, growth and success of these modest institutions are directly related to these outside funds.

The Carnegie Foundation spent two years investigating these colleges and the ideas they represent. We visited seven of the colleges and had the opportunity to talk extensively with administrators, faculty and students at each. In addition we interviewed dozens of ~~tribal leaders, Indian educators, and others involved in native American issues.~~ From this, we are convinced that the concept of tribally-controlled education is valid and that these colleges are providing an essential service in their communities. Specifically, we identified three areas where they were meeting the needs of their communities.

people familiar with the colleges and the needs of their reservations, including

tribal colleges reach ^{to the future} sponsored by First, they are offering educational advancement to cultures ^{students} accustomed to failure.

The attrition rate of Native Americans in higher education is the highest of any group in the nation. Isolated by distance and culture, many Indian students come to accept ~~they~~ that they can not succeed in college. Administrators and faculty and at non-

Indian colleges, meanwhile can be supportive, but frequently do not have the ability to meet the unique needs of native American students.

Tribal colleges, however, focus their programs on this ~~group~~ group.~~dkdkdeo~~

They work to create an environment that encourages participation and builds self confidence. ~~Some~~ Many, for example, offer a range of diagnostic tests and tutoring programs that build basic skills, and ~~offer~~ ^{have} counseling for students who ~~look~~ must overcome a range of ^{social} ~~social~~ barriers ranging from academic angst to the ~~need~~ ^{instability} of transportation to class. At one college, the president will even take time to visit students who ~~show~~ missing classes. ~~look~~ ^{look} ~~back~~ to the past too.

Second, tribal colleges reemphasize the value of traditional culture.

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For ~~many~~ ^{many} of Americans culture, Indian culture is little more than ~~the~~ images of teepees, peace pipes and woven rugs. But ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ many reservation communities, traditional cultures and values ~~are~~ remain a vital part of the social fabric. Traditional languages are still spoken, arts are practiced and spiritual beliefs respected.

All ~~tribal colleges work to~~ ^{validate} these ~~while~~ ^{while} ~~ear~~ ^{ear} ~~part~~ ^{part} schools and colleges of the past ~~wanted to~~ ^{discovered} Indian culture, tribal colleges believe that ~~there~~ ^{it} must ~~remain~~ be a ~~central~~ ^{essential} part of their programs. Each offers a ~~variety~~ ^{variety} of classes ~~that~~ ^{to} ~~part~~ ^{part} ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ ~~what~~ ^{what}. They argue that it is through these ancient skills and beliefs that Indians can build a strong self-identity and

can go on ~~with~~ to participate in the dominant society w/ confidence. Each offers a ~~small~~ variety of classes, ~~that~~ sometimes taught by tribal elders, in language, story telling, history and crafts.

But beyond specific classes, ~~the~~ traditional values are felt throughout ^{all} the ~~whole~~ colleges programs and services. Success and retention is promoted on campus where values are ~~not~~ being reinforced, not challenges. For example, different ideas about ~~time management~~ and how time should be managed and people should interact are accepted understood and accepted.

undelinead → Third, the college also reaches outward by providing a vital range of ~~community~~ programs for community development.

Tribal colleges are, in the truest sense, community colleges. ~~Based in reservations located in the heart of their reservations,~~ ~~the~~ with as many pressing social and economic needs, nearly all offer programs for tribal advancement. Some ^{primary free} offer community education, including literacy training, high school equivalency testing or vocational training. Others are working in cooperation with local business and industry to build a stronger economic base. Leadership seminars for local tribal leaders have

been held and, at one college, cases ~~challenging~~ of discrimination against tribal members have been ~~successfully~~ ^{successfully} comprised by its administration and ~~successfully~~ ^{successfully} argued in court. Many colleges offer two or more of such programs.

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These are a breathtaking array of responsibilities. Yet ~~and~~, as these institutions move beyond their infancy, a trail of successes are now clearly visible ^{and} their value is now well documented.

But ~~as the~~ these accomplishments ~~were~~ ^{progress} ~~and~~ were not made possible because of a firm foundation of financial support. Indeed, they were ~~progress~~ ^{progress} ~~despite~~ ^{despite} the neglect of the federal government and a lack of awareness in the nation.

In fact, ~~the~~ ~~future~~ ~~at~~ ~~no~~ ~~time~~ ~~was~~ ~~the~~ ~~federal~~ support to each college has been in decline for nearly a decade and private support, while generous over the years, cannot fill the gap. It is ironic that tribally-controlled colleges are facing their greatest challenge just at the point where they are poised to do the most good.

But ~~instead~~ ~~they~~ ~~are~~ ~~being~~ ~~burdened~~ ~~with~~. Instead of being celebrated across the nation for their ability to provide genuine progress to chronically underserved people, they are fighting to meet even basic needs. The

comprised of many colleges one after little more than a few trailers. Learning materials can be scarce. Faculty and administrators are given greater responsibilities and lower pay of their peer in non-Indian institutions. Meanwhile, the needs of the reservation remain as great as ever.

four This report looks at these colleges, their role in tribal society and the impact they are having in those communities. Because of this ~~we~~ we have largely limited our report to ~~four primary~~ colleges that are controlled by tribes and are located within a reservation. ~~For our role, as researchers, we worked closely with the~~ we recognize, however, that there are a number of colleges that are not located on a reservation or are ~~not~~ administered by native Americans ~~but~~ but by the federal government or Haskell Indian Junior College in Lawrence, Kansas and United Tribes Technical College in Bismarck, North Dakota are two colleges that fall under these categories. They and others are ^{also} ~~recognized~~ ~~needed~~ ~~providing~~ providing a vital service to American Indians nationwide and we believe that many of our recommendations also speak to their needs.