

# **Annual Report on Programs to Increase Enrollment, Retention, and Support for Students who are Tribal Members in Compliance with SDCL 13-53-54**

Submitted by the South Dakota Board of Regents to the South Dakota State Legislature  
July 1, 2021

## **REPORT BACKGROUND**

SDCL [13-53-54](#) requires the Board of Regents (BOR) to provide an annual report on the progress and actions “to develop programs to increase enrollment and improve retention and student supports for any student who is a member of one of the nine federally recognized tribes in South Dakota at state institutions, including exploration of tuition assistance or waiver programs.”

## **DATA NOTES**

For many years, the BOR student information system did not have the functionality to track a student’s individual tribal membership. BOR has recently migrated to a new system that will allow the tracking of tribal membership for students that disclose that information. BOR has started collecting tribal membership during the application process; however, limited data has been collected due to the timing of when prospective students submit applications. For the purposes of this report, students that have self-identified an ethnicity/race of American Indian/Alaskan Native (AIAN) or multi-racial where at least one race was American Indian/Alaskan Native are considered AIAN to measure the effectiveness of programs implemented to improve outcomes for American Indian students. As more students complete the application and provide tribal membership data, future reports will include information specifically addressing outcomes for students who are members of the nine federally recognized tribes in South Dakota.

## **SYSTEM LEVEL EFFORTS**

The BOR system recognizes the need to improve recruitment, retention, and degree completion by students who are members of the nine federally recognized tribes in South Dakota. Research from the National College Attainment Network (NCAN) has shown, students who complete the Free Applications for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) are more likely to seek higher education.<sup>1</sup>

To support college access and postsecondary pursuit for tribal members and other rural and diverse populations across the state, BOR has partnered with the South Dakota Department of Education to develop and implement the FAFSA Completion Portal to provide high school counselors with the information needed to identify and assist students who have not completed and/or submitted

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<sup>1</sup> DeBaun, Bill, “News: Data, Research & Evaluation: Survey Data Strengthen Association Between FAFSA Completion and Enrollment”. National College Attainment Network, April 2, 2019, <https://www.ncan.org/news/456025/Survey-Data-Strengthen-Association-Between-FAFSA-Completion-and-Enrollment.htm>.

the FAFSA.

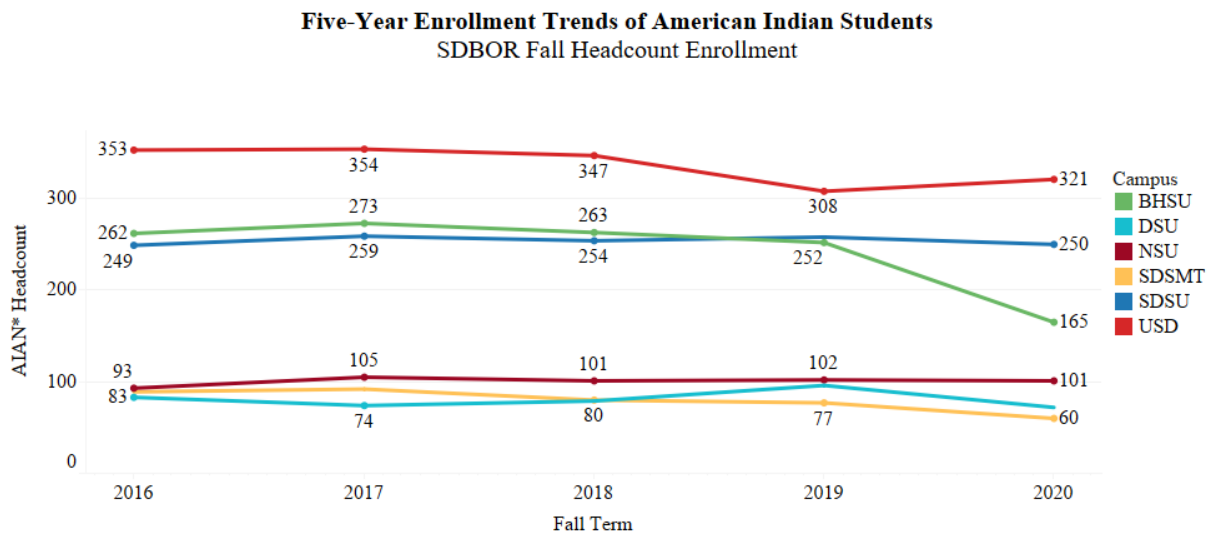
BOR will implement the pilot phase of the Portal Project in August 2021 at nine school districts. Todd County has been included as one of the pilot school districts. BOR will host the Portal and pair each of the participating school districts with a representative from one of the six public universities within its geographic region. The objective of the project is to increase awareness and education about the benefits of FAFSA completion. The campus representative will be responsible for encouraging use of the Portal and providing support to the counselor(s) and to the students in the pilot districts.

In addition to being an indicator of a students' willingness to pursue postsecondary education, FAFSA completion is also an eligibility requirement for federal financial aid and many of South Dakota's need-based and academic-based grants and scholarships. FAFSA completion will likely be an eligibility requirement for the First Premier Scholarship and the Freedom Scholarship (created by [SB 171](#)) to be awarded beginning the 2022-23 academic year.

## ENROLLMENT DATA

The [SDBOR Fact Books](#) includes demographic data for students enrolled at the state's public universities.

From Fall 2016 to Fall 2020, system-level headcount enrollments fell 8.1 percent for all students, from 36,531 in Fall 2016 to 33,566 in Fall 2020. The percentage of students who self-identified as AIAN\* had modestly increased from 3.09 percent to 3.17 percent between Fall 2016 and Fall 2019, however AIAN\* headcount was likely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and the percent of AIAN\* total students enrolled in the SDBOR system fell to 2.89 percent in Fall 2020.



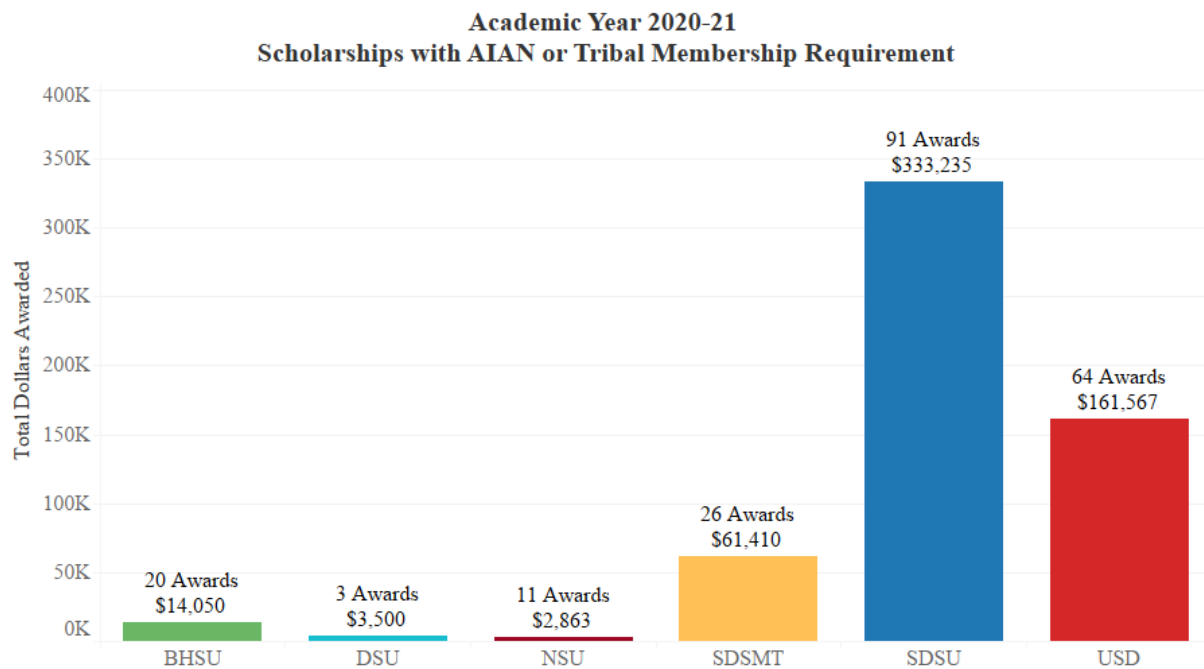
Fall Term	BHSU		DSU		NSU		SDSMT		SDSU		USD	
	AIAN* #	% of Headcount	AIAN* #	% of Headcount	AIAN* #	% of Headcount	AIAN* #	% of Headcount	AIAN* #	% of Headcount	AIAN* #	% of Headcount
2016	262	6.17%	83	2.60%	93	2.59%	89	3.11%	249	1.97%	353	3.52%
2017	273	6.53%	74	2.24%	105	2.91%	92	3.31%	259	2.07%	354	3.45%
2018	263	6.52%	79	2.34%	101	2.89%	80	3.01%	254	2.10%	347	3.45%
2019	252	6.53%	96	2.94%	102	2.98%	77	3.04%	258	2.24%	308	3.10%
2020	165	4.57%	72	2.26%	101	2.94%	60	2.42%	250	2.19%	321	3.39%

\* Students self-identified as American Indian/Alaskan Native or multi-racial where at least one race was American Indian/Alaskan Native

## SCHOLARSHIP DATA

SDCL 13-53-54 authorizes the BOR to explore tuition assistant or waiver programs for students who are members of one of the nine federal recognized tribes in South Dakota. In conjunction with traditional athletic, merit, and degree program scholarships, all six of the state's public universities have scholarships for students that identify as American Indian or who have membership in one of the nine federally recognized tribes.

For the academic year 2020-21, BOR universities paid more than one million dollars in institutional scholarship awards to AIAN\* students. Of those awards, 215 scholarships for a total of \$576,625 had criteria that included American Indian racial identity and/or tribal membership. That information is represented in the chart below.



## INSTITUTION SUMMARIES

### BLACK HILLS STATE UNIVERSITY



**BLACK HILLS**  
STATE UNIVERSITY

#### **Recruitment**

With the largest percentage of Native American Students of any South Dakota Board of Regents Institution, Black Hills State University (BHSU) persistently strives to increase the recruitment, retention, and graduation rates of its Native American students.

The Center for American Indian Studies (CAIS) at BHSU has several activities and programs geared toward supporting the access and success of the American Indian students and the surrounding community. Whether through recruitment and advising, research, or undergraduate and graduate education, there are many opportunities to support the American Indian students on the BHSU campus.

BHSU's Admissions Office makes every effort to connect with high school students, school counselors and high school teachers at tribal high schools and high schools with high concentrations of American Indian students in South Dakota and neighboring states. The Admission's team is not only visible at these schools but actively making personal connections with students and their parents about the educational and social programs that are available to support their learning and growth. The conversation also lends itself to the importance and added value a higher education degree will bring to them personally and to their communities. BHSU also participates in College Application Week and the CAIS sends American Indian students back to their previous high schools to assist the high school counselors during this time.

The CAIS uses Facebook, Instagram, and email to connect and communicate with potential, current, and past American Indian students. Although technology is a great tool, it does not make the impact of a face-to-face visit. The Director, and Assistant Director, travel to area high schools to visit with students and with counselors. The Admissions Team at BHSU also extends the opportunity to travel to Tribal schools for one-on-one visits, college fairs, recruitment booth at the Lakota Nations Invitational event in Rapid City, and the Black Hills Powwow in Rapid City. The CAIS and the Admissions Team at BHSU are in constant communication when it comes to individual and middle school/high school groups visiting campus. They always make it a priority to stop at the CAIS to meet and visit administration and current American Indian students.

#### **Retention**

Critical to the success of the 2020-2021 academic year is the one-on-one contact between Urla Marcus, former Assistant Director Rochelle Zens, the CAIS faculty and our American Indian Work Study with the individual American Indian students. Preliminary indications suggest that addressing and coordinating their needs has been very successful.

- The Lakota Omniciye Club, with a membership of 20 + students, meet (via Zoom) throughout the Academic Year to discuss club activities, powwow planning and organization, and institutional updates and policy requirements.
- The A.I.S.E.S. organization met a few times throughout the AY (via Zoom) and will make

it more frequent in AY 2021-2022.

- Book Loan Program that provides up to 50 students with current textbooks, calculators, and I-clickers throughout the academic year.
- CAIS continues to provide scholarship and internship applications.
- CAIS held tutoring sessions in math, writing, and science for American Indian students on a weekly basis.
- Financial Aid advising & loan counseling.
- CAIS holds Scholarship Writing Workshops
- Leadership workshops & Self-Advocacy
- Students participate in on campus activities such as Leadership workshops and Awards Banquets.
- Placement of one work study position both in the Fall and Spring semesters

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, there were two students (one from Eagle Butte and one from Belle Fourche both Lakota) identified to travel to Taipei, Taiwan to participate in the GEMADARC Research Program, a 5-week research and travel program held at the Institute of Physics, Academia Sinica. The 2021 summer trip was cancelled this summer (2021). The GEMADARC Research Program will resume in 2022 and we will actively recruit two-four students to participate in this educational experience in Taipei. Students also intern for a 10-week REU program centered on underground science at the Sanford Underground Research Facility.

The CAIS, along with the Jace DeCory family, coordinates and sponsors the American Indian Feathering Ceremony, currently in its 35th year. This ceremony is held in the spring, the day before campus commencement. It celebrates and honors BHSU's American Indian graduates and the majors and minors in American Indian Studies. Enrolled Tribal members receive an eagle feather or plume while non-members receive a medicine wheel. There is a meal for graduates, family, and invited community. The Feathering Ceremony includes an invocation, prayers, songs, and presents to the graduates from their families. Whitney Rencountre, a BHSU alum, leads the ceremony.

Below is a list of activities to provide a snapshot of efforts concentrated on the recruitment, retention, and graduation of BHSU's American Indian students:

#### Recruitment/Retention

- One-on-one Meeting with prospective students throughout the academic year
- Native American College Student Task Force Meetings
  - 1/8/2020
  - 3/30/2020
  - 11/5/2020
- Residence Life Cultural Presentation
  - 7/30/2020
- University of North America College Resource Virtual Fair
  - 10/5/2020
  - Student Registrations/NSOs
    - 4/27/2020
    - 5/3/2020

- 6/18/2020
- 7/1/2020
- 8/5/2020
- 8/6/2020
- 10/30/2020
- 11/3/2020
- Virtual one-on-one Student Meetings
  - Rolling schedule

#### Advising

The CAIS Director and Assistant Director are second and third advisors to our American Indian students. We are continuously advising our students on academic programming and planning.

#### Programming

- 10/15/2020 - Cindy Farlee (Native American Agricultural Fund)
- 11/9/2020 - Ann Tweedy (USD Professor of Law)
- 3/3/2020 - Young Lawyer's Association Classroom Visit
- 11/2/2020 - Anti-Racism for Educators in conjunction with MakeSpace
- 2/9/2021 - Nichole Cottier "Rebuilding Indigenous Health Systems"
- 2/23/2021 - Alissa Benoist "Financial Sovereignty"
- 3/18/2021 - Elyssa "Sierra" Concha "Language Sovereignty"
- 3/19/2021 - Sarah White "Educational Equity"
- 3/23/2021 - Dr. John Little "Native Representation in Film and Cultural Appropriation"

#### *CAIS – American Indian Awareness Week*

- 4/9/2021 - Whitney Rencountre "Introduction to the American Indian Wacipi"
- 4/12/2021 - Avanelle No Braid "Women's Traditional Dance Presentation"
- 4/12/2021 - Asay No Braid "Men's Traditional Dance Presentation"
- 4/13/2021 - Carlos Benally "Men's Grass Dance Presentation"
- 4/14/2021 - Keegan Her Many Horses "Men's Fancy Dance Presentation"
- 4/15/2021 - Sophia Benally "Women's Fancy Dance Presentation"
- 4/16/2021 - Hannah Reddest "Women's Jingle Dress Presentation"

#### Student Organizations

- Lakota Omniciye
  - Red Shirt Cultural Gift Exchange – December 2020
    - Students collected and wrapped donated gifts for the children at Red Shirt School.

## **Recruitment**

This past year, due to COVID, many of the typical activities to recruit and engage Native American students were restricted (e.g., recruiting visits to communities). Nonetheless, here is a partial list of relevant activities in support of DSU's Native American students:

- The university reviewed and revised the DSU Smudging policy.
- Native American Student Association (NASA) was consulted to discuss supporting the indigenous student experience as part of DSU's new strategic plan.
- Typically, DSU has several recruiting events (college fairs, high school visits, class visits to campus) unfortunately DSU was unable to have most of those opportunities this year due to COVID precautions.
- Students from BIA schools were invited to the virtual college fairs coordinated by our state organization, but the virtual college fairs were not targeted to that population.
- DSU admissions counselors attended a virtual college fair connected to the Crazy Horse 7th Generation College Prep Program the 2020 summer and expect another opportunity during the 2021 summer.

## **Retention**

In previous years as part of DSU's efforts to create an inviting and inclusive environment to aid in the retention of American Indian students, DSU invested in cultural competency training, hosted community events, and helped facilitate DSU student attendance to traditional American Indian cultural celebrations. Many of the trainings and events were not offered this past year due to COVID restrictions. Below is a list of activities and services DSU was able offer:

- DSU provided support for the DSU Native American Student Association (DSU NASA).
- The flags from South Dakota tribal nations have been included in the international flag display in DSU student union.
- Sodexo offered an Indigenous people day lunch using native foods for the campus.
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### **Student Organizations**

#### **Native American Student Association (NASA)**

- The NASA students were given approval to do the Red Dress Project that raises awareness of Missing and Murdered Indigenous People.
- NASA raises money to provide a \$500 scholarship to an indigenous student every year. NASA worked with DSU marketing to design a very cool club shirt; it sold these shirts to help promote the club and raise money for its annual scholarship (Spring 2021).
- NASA asked member Vanessa Polmateer to create an original artwork to highlight the issues of violence against Indigenous women. Polmateer is a member of the Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe.

DSU also obtained a donor directed endowed scholarship (yielding approximately \$1,600 per year)



to be used for needs-based financial support to continuing students who self-identify as African American, Hispanic, Native American or Alaskan/Pacific Islander or students who are participating in CybHER.

## **Recruitment & Retention**

In the spring of 2014 NSU created an academic advising position focused on American Indian students as part of its new academic advising program funded with federal Title III funds. The position and subsequent American Indian Circle Program are housed in Academic Affairs within the University College. The Title III grant established the academic advisor position and NSU has used internal resources to build each year from one advisor position to its current form of a growing program with an office and a director. The Circle Program exists as much to help the university adapt to American Indian students as it does to help American Indian students adapt to the university. The American Indian Circle Program uses a holistic model that serves to imitate the family-centered orientation of tribal life for American Indian students at NSU. This model provides student-centered planning and experiences that helps these students cultivate a deeper cultural footprint during their college career, while also providing enhanced academic support services. This program is designed to work together with faculty and staff to support the overall mission of NSU. The outcome of the program is to build a sense of community that contributes to the personal growth and academic success that leads to the graduation of NSU's American Indian students.

The Circle Program currently offers a variety of services to engage and support American Indian students and the broader NSU community:

- Cangleska wašté (Good Circle) five-day pre-orientation program that helps transition students from home to college.
- Academic advising from time of acceptance to graduation.
- Peer mentoring that builds connectedness and supports students as they acclimate to college life.
- Academic and cultural workshops
- Individualized tutoring
- Tribal-Higher Education/Scholarship workshops
- Academic recognition through the Crazy Horse Memorial Scholarship and Banquet and Graduation/Feathering Ceremony
- Cultural programming throughout the year, including for Native American Day and Native American Heritage Month

NSU has increased academic offerings with our new Native and Indigenous minor, and Native students have a strong advocacy component through the American Indian Advisory Committee, Diversity Action Pillar Team, and the Behavioral Intervention Committee. The Circle Program Director/Academic Advisor (1 FTE) also provides direct support to faculty and staff, is a campus to community liaison, attends the Indian Education Summit and collaborates with other BOR Indian Education Directors. Additionally, TRIO Student Support Services provides support and services to Native American students that meet the program criteria, although the program is not primarily focused on that population. We also have an active Native American Student Association (NASA), which provides cultural education and event programming for the campus and Aberdeen community.

### **Recruitment**

There are numerous programs at SD Mines that serve the American Indian undergraduate students both before they arrive on campus and during their time at SD Mines. The SD Mines' Admission Office makes concerted efforts to connect with high school students, school counselors, and math and science teachers at the tribal high schools and at high schools with high concentrations of American Indian students.

In addition to traditional recruiting efforts, SDSMT also utilizes experience-based outreach for early recruitment and to foster interest in science and engineering:

- American Indian Science & Engineering Society (AISES) Pre-College Outreach – This program provides science and engineering experiences for middle schools and high schools in area with high concentrations of American Indian children. This outreach is a voluntary effort through our AISES student chapter.
- Admissions Outreach – The South Dakota Mines' Admission Office makes concerted efforts to connect with high school students, school counselors, and math and science teachers at the tribal high schools and at high schools with high concentrations of American Indian students. Recruiting efforts are made by visiting high schools and participating in college fairs across the state. This effort predominately involves one Admissions Counselor.
- Tribal School Outreach and Engagement Plan – Through the President's Office, specialized efforts are underway to increase engagement with regional tribal schools through personal visits by the Tribal Liaison from South Dakota Mines. The liaison makes presentations at the schools that discuss college planning and opportunities at Mines.

### **Retention**

SDSMT is committed to creating an inclusive learning environment and has established mentorship programs and projected-based learning opportunities to help in the retention of American Indian students:

- Center for Inclusion – Provides direct student support services for American Indian students including scholarship alerts and internship/co-op information as well as providing opportunities for leadership and professional development. The office holds free events for networking and social support and coordinates the Honoring Ceremony for American Indian graduates. This office is staffed by one FTE.
- Center for Inclusion Pre-Orientation – This program invites both incoming freshman and transfer students to arrive on campus a week before classes begin to start the acclimation process to college life. Students attend sessions to get oriented, meet their advisors, and are paired with a mentor.
- Mentor Program – All American Indian students are paired with a senior or junior-standing mentor. The mentors provide guidance, connection to the campus, and other support and is geared toward reinforcing a Native support system for students. Mentors are paid a stipend of \$500 per semester.

- American Indian Science & Engineering Society (AISES) Chapter – An AISES chapter on campus promotes excellence, leadership, and opportunities in education and professional development of students. AISES students participate in national and regional conferences, scholarships, job placement assistance, internships and co-op opportunities, networking and social support, community service, and campus involvement.
- National Science Foundation OSSPEEC II Grant – This grant is a pre-engineering education collaboration with OLC, South Dakota State University, and South Dakota Mines. The project aims to increase recruitment, retention, persistence, and completion rates in pre-engineering and engineering programs for Native American students. The program provides culturally centered and integrated project based experiential learning through activities consisting of research on reservation needs (e.g., water quality, geology, and sustainability).
- Research Opportunities for Undergraduates (REU) – South Dakota Mines is the host to two NSF REU programs, the NSF REU “Back to the Future” site and the NSF REU “Security Printing and Anti-Counterfeiting Technologies (SPACT)” site. These programs provide research opportunities for American Indian students and engage students in a funded 10-week summer undergraduate research experience. As part of the site activities, undergraduate students are also involved in outreach activities which support ongoing programs that support American Indian high school students such as the Army Educational Outreach REAP and UNITE program. Recent highlights include student presentations at the national AISES conference and student mentoring of local American Indian high school students. The sites had an average participation of nearly 20% American Indian students.



## **Recruitment & Retention**

SDSU's American Indian Student Center (AISC) provides culturally appropriate retention, advising, and programming to increase recruitment and retention of American Indian students. Cultural programming and support for provided include the following:

- The AISC First Year Experience is designed for American Indian students seeking to establish campus connections, create life-long friendships, and create a support system to facilitate the transition to SDSU and enhance their overall academic experience. The AISC First Year Experience consists of:
  - *AISC Orientation Program* is a program that allows American Indian students to arrive on campus prior to the start of the fall semester. Students meet with their academic advisor, AISC staff and current SDSU AI students before the start of classes. They participate in activities designed to help them become acclimated to campus. They also learn valuable skills and begin cultivating resources that will help them be successful at SDSU.
  - *Oyate Yuwitaya Tipi Living Learning Community* (OYT) is designed for first year AI students. Wokini Scholars are required to live in the OYT LLC their first year to work toward building connections and a sense of belonging with other students who share similar life experiences.
  - The *First-Year Seminar* course, Introduction to American Indian Studies, is required for Wokini Scholars. Other students are encouraged to take the course for academic credit as well.
- Elder in-Residence Program is designed to foster academic, cultural, and social support for American Indian students pursuing higher education. The program introduces cultural practices, celebrates and honors traditional knowledge, reinforces and affirms tribal identity, and establishes pathways and raises cultural awareness for faculty, staff, and students. The Elder in Residence program is a 3-day program, during which time the elder has opportunities to engage with SDSU American Indian Students, contributes to the classroom experience by serving as a visiting lecturer and provides presentations for the greater SDSU community.

The *Wokini Initiative: A New Beginning* is SDSU's collaborative and holistic framework to support American Indian student success and Indigenous Nation-building. Wokini provides innovative university and community wide collaborations to strengthen American Indian student success by building relationships with the tribal communities of South Dakota. The goals of the Wokini Initiative are to:

1. Transform SDSU to create a welcoming environment for American Indians by increasing SDSU's staff/faculty capacity, knowledge and understanding of Oceti Sakowin history and culture through training, professional development and other learning and networking opportunities.
2. Improve American Indian student enrollment and success by providing effective support in all aspects of the university experience to increase number of American Indian graduates.

3. Strengthen partnership outreach and research infrastructure with tribal communities in South Dakota through trusting relationships, strategic networks, and ongoing effective communication.

Along with the recruiting and retention activities provided by the AISC and Wokini Initiative, SDSU provides additional support to AIAN Students pursuing nursing degrees with the Native American Nursing Education Center (NANEC). The NANEC provides programming designed to help students to thrive and flourish. Some of the NANEC programming opportunities include:

- RN to BSN Mentoring - The RN to BSN program is designed for diploma or associate degree nursing students to earn their baccalaureate degree completely on-line. The NANEC supports RN to BSN students through mentoring and academic support. Mentors are available to students via face-to-face meetings, emails and/or phone calls/texting. Mentors provide support, encouragement, and resources that students may find helpful on their journey to earning their BSN on-line.
- Undergraduate Nurse Mentoring - Mentoring is offered for Native American pre-nursing and nursing students. The Lakota nurse mentor meets with the student monthly as needed. The mentor is available as a guide, role model, and advocate as the student progresses through the nursing program.
- Graduate Nurse Mentoring - NANEC offers mentoring to Native American students enrolled in the graduate nursing program. In collaboration with the Graduate Nursing Student Services advisor, the mentor provides additional social, academic, and cultural support. Mentoring provides a one-on-one relationship where Native American graduate students can seek guidance, direction, and encouragement throughout their graduate nursing education experience.
- Wohanpi na Wounspe (Soup and Learn) - Every month, NANEC hosts Wohanpi na Wounspe (Soup and Learn) events featuring various cultural topics and Lakota speakers. The event is open to all SDSU nursing students, staff, faculty, and the public. This professional development opportunity promotes cultural education, awareness, and competency grounded in Lakota culture and values.
- You' Nihanp (Honoring Ceremony) - Each semester, students are honored with a ceremony at graduation. Honoring ceremonies have been a part of Lakota history for generations. The ceremony signifies recognition of achievement for students for having completed their nursing program. The honoring ceremony also means understanding the responsibility of conducting their lives as professional nurses.
- Wicozani Otipi (Welcoming Room) - the Wicozani Otipi, or a place of balance in wellness, is a place for Native American nursing students, faculty, and staff to rejuvenate, relax, and unwind after a long day of studying and/or work. Wicozani Otipi is quiet and comfortable, allowing people to re-focus and re-center after a hard day's work. The Wicozani Otipi is inspired by Lakota artwork and consists of a lounging area, microwave, refrigerator, and coffee machine.

SDSU has also fostered a collaborative education agreement with the Crazy Horse Memorial Foundation where SDSU offers a 15-credit fall-semester, undergraduate, academic certificate program in leadership and sustainability delivered at The Indian University of North America® at Crazy Horse Memorial. The program is titled Wizipan, which is based on the Lakota term - Wachante Hecha Wizipan - The Heart of All that Is. Ten students completed the program in 2020.

SDSU also has several grants active to develop training and programming to aid in the retention and recruitment of AIAN students:

- NIFA/USDA New Beginnings for Tribal Students: Igluwiyea (Prepare Oneself)  
Funding: \$500,000 over 3 years  
Purpose: This project addresses the critical need for tribal students in South Dakota to prepare for, transition to, and ultimately, graduate from an institution of higher education. The project is a collaboration among South Dakota State University, Sinte Gleska University, including its additional branch locations of Lower Brule Community College and Ihanktonwan Community College, and tribal high schools serving the Rosebud, Yankton, Crow Creek and Lower Brule Sioux Tribal communities. The project will strengthen current programming, create additional pre-college and transition programs, develop sustainable resources, and increase support for American Indian students through targeted outreach and consistent face-to-face student engagement.
- Bush Prize for Community Innovation  
Funding: \$500,000 over 3 years  
Purpose: In recognition of winning a 2019 Bush Prize for Community Innovation, this grant will advance South Dakota State University's transition to creating a welcoming environment for Native Americans through the Wokini Initiative. Numerous training and development opportunities have been deployed.
- Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropy  
Funding: \$1,000,000 over 3 years  
Purpose: The purpose of the project is to develop and create a professional development training series for staff and faculty at South Dakota State University to foster a culturally responsive and supportive campus environment for American Indian students to increase their retention and graduation rates.

### **Recruitment**

This year, USD's recruitment was centered on a new position implemented through the Office of Undergraduate Admissions, with a role coordinating and leading recruitment efforts for Native American students in partnership with Native Student Services (NSS). These efforts included:

- Maintaining effective relationships with agencies to work with potential students, develop and update articulation agreements, and visit agencies on a regular basis to maintain contact and nurture prospects.
- Implementing a substantive recruitment plan, in consultation with NSS & Director of Tribal Relations, throughout the academic year which included all nine federally recognized in South Dakota, federally recognized tribes in adjacent states, and college fairs or conferences with a significant Native American population.
- Working closely with NSS in designing and implementing a recruitment and training plan for the Native American Ambassadors Program and cultivating the Wiyuskinyan Unpi Tipi Living Learning Community.
- Coordinating with fellow Admissions Counselors on all Native American student visits; and, Coordinating with NSS for all group visits from the Native American/reservation high schools.

### **Retention**

USD has initiated multiple strategies to improve retention and support students who are American Indian, including those who are members of the nine federally recognized tribes in South Dakota.

- Native American Academic Advisor and First Year Experience Course - The Native American Academic Advisor provides academic advising support that begins with the registration process for incoming students, continues in the role as primary or secondary advisor for students' first 45 credit hours, continues as a secondary advisor to the major advisor, and concludes at graduation. The Native American Academic Advisor also teaches a one-credit First Year Experience course for incoming American Indian students. This course includes learning strategies for academic success, meeting other American Indian students, and building a supportive network in a cohort-based classroom setting. During the academic year 2020-2021, costs included \$46,653 for the salary of one FTE (not including benefits).
- Native Student Services (NSS) – The NSS offers cultural, academic, and social programming cultural programming, traditional meals and food workshops, freshmen orientation, graduate honoring ceremony, assistance with financial aid and scholarship applications, open houses, and game nights. Most NSS programming is offered in the Native American Cultural Center (NACC) and is inclusive of all students, with particular attention to the needs of Native American students. The Director of Native Student Services also oversees the day-to-day operations of the NACC, maintains contact with various tribal groups across the state, provides training across campus, and acts as a support system and cultural advisor.
- The Native American Cultural Center (NACC) – The NACC is a space for Native American students centered around their individual and community needs. Cultural



practices are prioritized. In addition, the NACC offers a newly updated computer lab, free printing, a lounge area, full-service kitchen, and study space.

- During the academic year 2020-2021, Native Student Services costs included \$77,840 for the salary of one FTE (not including benefits), student employee wages, and \$40,232 for operating expenses.

USD also has several student organizations that serve to provide opportunities to engage American Indian students and educate the community:

- The Tiospaye Student Council encourages American Indian students to get involved in school activities. Tiospaye supports students in their academic pursuits, promotes American Indian life on campus and diversifies the student body by involving students, faculty, and community members of all walks of life. Tiospaye holds numerous events throughout the year, including the annual wacipi held every spring.
- The American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) is a national, nonprofit organization focused on substantially increasing the representation of American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, First Nations, and other indigenous peoples of North America in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) studies and careers. The USD AISES chapter provides opportunities for students to network professionally and socially via community service projects and present their research at the national conference. In collaboration with Wells Fargo, the national AISES organization has developed a culturally contextualized financial literacy curriculum called Native Financial Cents for elementary, middle, high school, and young adult students. This program is currently being utilized with USD's TRIO Upward Bound participants and the First Year Experience course.

In addition to the recruiting and support provided by USD, the USD Sanford School of Medicine (SSOM) also has initiatives to recruit and support American Indians seeking careers in healthcare fields:

- USD is a satellite site for the Indians into Medicine (INMED) program based at the University of North Dakota. This program provides opportunities for enrolled members of federally recognized tribes who are planning to enter the healthcare field. For example, one opportunity includes participation in the INMED Summer Institute (SI), a program for students in grades 7-12 to enhance their knowledge in academic subjects such as biology, chemistry, physics, and math as well as study skills, health and wellness, and communication strategies in a campus setting. SSOM transports students from SD that are accepted to SI. The USD SSOM holds two spots for incoming INMED medical students, supports attendance at Academy of American Indian Physician (AAIP) conferences and workshops, and supports other needs during medical school. Additionally, one Avera scholarship is awarded to an incoming American Indian medical student annually.
- The Native American Healthcare Scholars Program (NAHSP) provides support, mentoring, career development, and awareness-building activities for a select group of junior and senior high school students from Red Cloud Indian School and Pine Ridge High School. The goal of the program is to increase the number of American Indian healthcare professionals.
- The He Sapa Health Careers Summer Camp is a three-day camp held in Rapid City, SD, for American Indian high school students who are interested in pursuing a future career in

healthcare. Participants explore a variety of healthcare careers, learn about important issues significant to American Indians, and develop both professional and social networks.

- The Pine Ridge Scrubs Camps are designed to encourage students in South Dakota to consider pursuing a career in healthcare. Made possible through a collaborative effort between South Dakota's Department of Education, Department of Health, and USD, these camps offer high school students in the surrounding area the chance to learn about various health professions and network with professionals in the field.
- During the academic year 2020-2021, Sanford School of Medicine costs were grant-funded and included \$117,909 for salaries for one FTE (not including benefits) and \$21,598 for operating expenses.