

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, 2023

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 Board of Regents student information system did not have the functionality to track a student’s tribal membership. In 2019, the BOR migrated to a new student information system that allows tracking tribal membership for students that disclose that information. While BOR institutions collect tribal membership during the application process, data is limited due to the timing of when the new system was implemented. For the purposes of this report, students that have self-identified an ethnicity/race of American Indian/Alaskan Native (AIAN), multi-racial where at least one race was American Indian/Alaskan Native, or self-identified as a member of a federally recognized tribe 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

FAFSA Completion Portal

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.¹ In addition to being an indicator of a student’s willingness to pursue postsecondary education, FAFSA completion is also an eligibility requirement for federal financial aid and many of South

¹ 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>.

Dakota's need-based and academic-based grants and scholarships.

To support college access and postsecondary pursuit for tribal members and other rural and diverse populations across the state, the BOR 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 the FAFSA.

The BOR implemented the pilot phase of the Portal Project in August 2021 in nine school districts. Todd County was included as one of the pilot school districts. The BOR hosts the Portal and paired each of the participating school districts with a representative from one of the six public universities within its geographic region. The objective of the Portal Project is to increase awareness and educate about the benefits of FAFSA completion. The campus representatives encouraged the use of the Portal and provided support to the counselor(s) and students in the districts. The BOR rolled out the FAFSA Completion Portal to all school districts during the 2022-2023 academic year. FAFSA completion at South Dakota public school can be viewed in the [FAFSA Completion Dashboard](#) on the OurDakotaDreams.com website.

Our Dakota Dreams Coalition

In October 2021, the BOR launched the Our Dakota Dreams Coalition. The coalition is funded by a national grant through the South Dakota Department of Education and coordinated through the Board of Regents. The coalition includes representatives from the Board of Regents' central office and institutions, the South Dakota Department of Education, South Dakota Board of Technical Education, and Mapping Your Future. The coalition is designed to support South Dakotans who choose education after high school.

The coalition launched [OurDakotaDreams.com](#) to provide information for South Dakotans pursuing postsecondary education and includes information on FAFSA completion, the value of higher education, and available scholarships. In 2023, additional content was added to the site, such as details about the postsecondary opportunities available at Board of Regent and Board of Technical Education institutions and college prep checklists for elementary, middle school, and high school students.

Dakota Dreams Career Exploration Summer Camps

In summer of 2022, the BOR launched the Dakota Dreams Career Exploration Camps. The Dakota Dreams Career Exploration Summer Camps are a partnership of the BOR, South Dakota Board of Technical Education, South Dakota Department of Education (DOE), and South Dakota businesses and industry. The camps were funded with federal dollars available to DOE through the American Rescue Plan Act.

The residential summer camps are open to South Dakota incoming 7th and 8th grade students with priority given to campers from high need school districts. The campers will stay five days at one of the BOR institutions engaging in hands-on learning and career exploration. During the camp

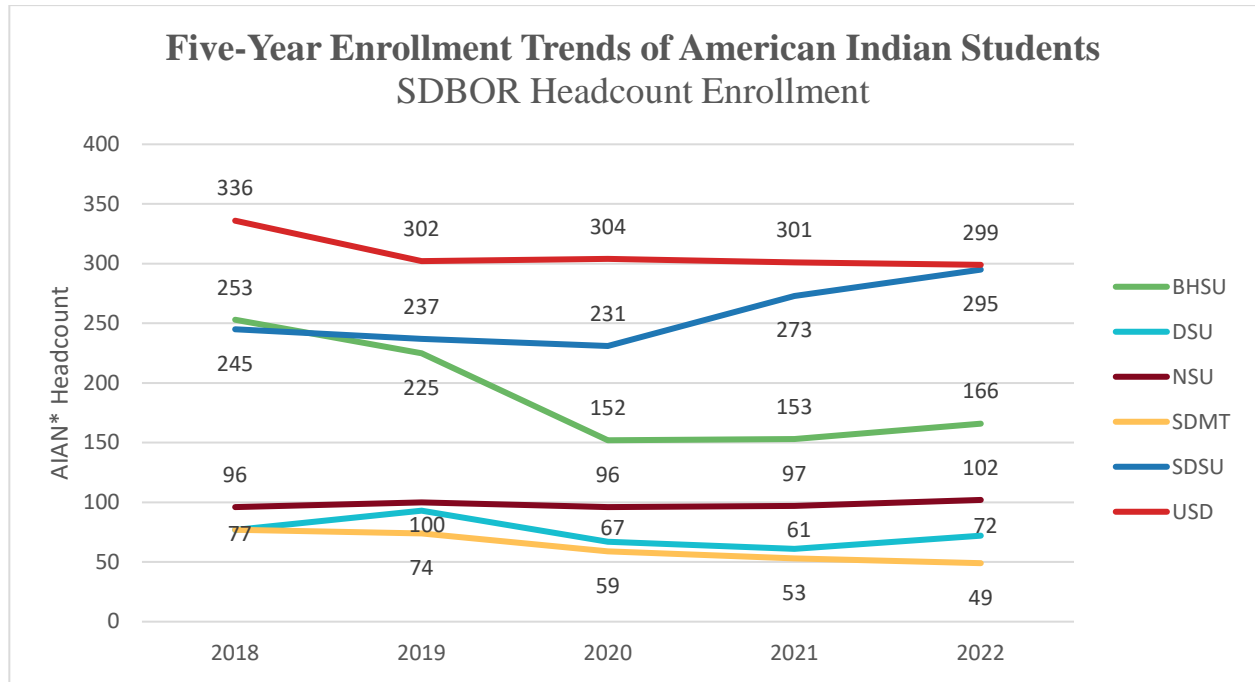
they will spend time on university and technical college campuses and visit area businesses and industry. By the end the camp, campers will have a better knowledge of their career interests and how their education will prepare them for their future professions.

Initially, three institutions were to pilot the career exploration camps with 150 campers in 2022. However, due to an overwhelming demand the pilot was expanded to four institutions and 300 campers. Of the 300 campers **15.6%** (47) self-identified as of American Indian/Alaskan Native (AIAN) or multi-racial where at least one race was American Indian/Alaskan Native.

The 2023 Dakota Dreams Career Explorations Camps will be hosted at all six BOR schools between June 18 and July 13.

ENROLLMENT DATA

While BOR institutions continue to improve the recruitment and retention AIAN* students, the percentage of system level enrollment² of students that identify as AIAN* fell from 3.08% (992) in the fall 2018 to 2.94% (897) in the fall of 2022.



Fall Term	BHSU		DSU		NSU		SDMT		SDSU		USD	
	AIAN* #	% of Headcount	AIAN* #	% of Headcount	AIAN* #	% of Headcount	AIAN* #	% of Headcount	AIAN* #	% of Headcount	AIAN* #	% of Headcount
2018	253	6.43%	77	2.31%	96	2.96%	77	2.92%	245	2.06%	336	3.39%
2019	225	5.90%	93	2.87%	100	2.93%	74	2.93%	237	2.07%	302	3.09%
2020	152	4.34%	67	2.13%	96	2.92%	59	2.39%	231	2.05%	304	3.27%
2021	153	4.44%	61	1.91%	97	2.93%	53	2.21%	273	2.40%	301	3.23%
2022	166	4.90%	72	2.23%	102	3.10%	49	1.98%	295	2.61%	299	3.13%

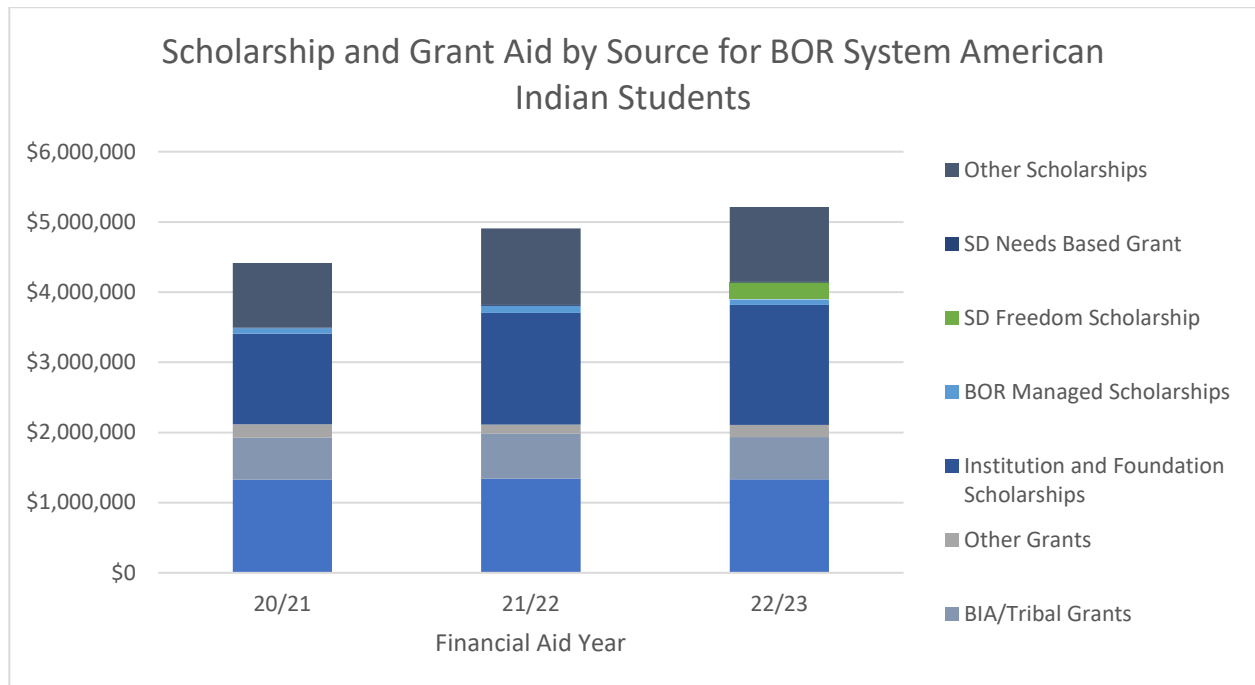
² Enrollment data was obtained from the Regents Information Systems Student Success Analytics Fall Census Snapshots for 2018-2022.

* Students self-identified as American Indian/Alaskan Native, multi-racial where at least one race was American Indian/Alaskan Native or identified as a tribal member.

GRANT AND SCHOLARSHIP DATA

SDCL 13-53-54 authorizes the BOR to explore tuition assistance or waiver programs for students who are members of one of the nine federally recognized tribes in South Dakota.

For financial aid year 22-23, the BOR universities paid more than \$2 million in institutional, foundation, system, and state grant and scholarship awards to AIAN* students³. The amount of institutional and grant and scholarship aid has grown steadily over the last three years. Grants and scholarship award amounts were boosted in 22-23 aid year with the implementation of the South Dakota Freedom Scholarship. 66 AIAN* students were awarded \$241,000 in SD Freedom Scholarship funds.



Financial Aid Year	# AIAN* Students Receiving Grants & Scholarships	PELL Grants	BIA/Tribal Grants	Other Grants	Institution and Foundation Scholarships	BOR Managed Scholarships	SD Freedom Scholarship	SD Needs Based Grant	Other Scholarships	Total Grants & Scholarships
20/21	518	\$1,326,782	\$596,591	\$194,393	\$1,288,195	\$79,150		\$9,680	\$921,252	\$ 4,416,043
21/22	552	\$1,341,676	\$643,230	\$126,069	\$1,590,844	\$102,211		\$13,957	\$1,089,569	\$4,907,556
22/23	572	\$1,333,607	\$599,674	\$171,950	\$1,712,599	\$78,961	\$241,291	\$ 5,800	\$1,067,664	\$5,211,546

³ Financial Aid data was obtained from the Regents Information Systems Student Success Analytics FA Snapshots 2020-2022. The data includes award information for the financial aid year for students identified as AIAN* in the Systems Student Success Analytics Fall Census Snapshot.

INSTITUTION SUMMARIES



BLACK HILLS STATE UNIVERSITY

BLACK HILLS
STATE UNIVERSITY

Best Practices:

In 2017, just 10.2% of Native Americans in South Dakota held a bachelor's degree compared to 29.6% of White South Dakotans (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates). With the largest percentage of Native American Students of any South Dakota Board of Regents Institution, the 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) as BHSU has several activities and programs geared toward supporting the access and success of the American Indian student and 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.

Recruitment

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 and Instagram, as well as 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 travels to area high schools to visit with students and with counselors, upon request. 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 2022-2023 academic year is the one-on-one contact between URLA Marcus, the .5 American Indian professional advisor (Isabella Montero), 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 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 monthly throughout the academic year. One student also traveled to the national A.I.S.E.S. conference in Palm Springs, CA in the fall.
- 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 two work study positions in the Fall and Spring semesters.

The CAIS housed a Mentoring Program during the spring semester, supported by an EPSCoR grant. There were eight Native upperclassmen students who were paired with twenty freshman students. They met throughout the spring semester for support, academic tips, and fellowship.

The CAIS worked closely with Dr. Brianna Mount with identifying students to participate in the GEMADARC Research Program, a 5-week research and travel program held at the Institute of Physics, Academia Sinica. The GEMADARC Research Program and the CAIS faculty and staff actively recruited two students to participate in this educational experience which supported the travel to Scotland and England. The group visited Boulby Underground Laboratory in Northeast England. Boulby is the UK's deepest underground science facility. The students also toured Oxford University as well had the opportunity to visit with faculty. Upon return to the US one student interned for an additional 10-week REU program centered on underground science at the Sanford Underground Research Facility.

The CAIS, along with faculty member Dr. Victoria Sprague, coordinates and sponsors the American Indian Feathering Ceremony, currently in its 37th 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.

Below is a list of activities to provide you with a snapshot of efforts concentrated on the recruitment, retention, and graduation of our American Indian students:

Recruitment/Retention

- One-on-one Meeting with prospective students throughout the academic year
- Native American College Student Task Force Meetings
- Residence Life Cultural Presentation

- University of North America College Resource Fair
- Student Registrations/NSOs
- Virtual one-on-one Student Meetings
 - Rolling schedule

Advising

The CAIS Director and .5 professional advisor are second and third advisors to our American Indian students. We are continuously advising our students on academic programming and planning.

Speaker Series – Professional Development

- *Howasteya Oyuspapi: Capturing Their Good Voices* Documentary
- Gene Swallow: “*How I Created an Art Career*”
- Valeriah Big Eagle: “*Let Us Put Our Minds Together and See What Life We Can Make For Our Children*”
- Courtney Fischer: “*Experiences as a Long-term Indigenous Scholar*”
- Mato Wayuhi: “*Laughter, Love, Tears, & the Hottest Gossip with Musician/Filmmaker Mato Wayuhi*”
- Whitney Rencountre: “*Indigenous Perspective of Traditional and Contemporary Leadership*”
- D’Aryn Lends His Horse: “*First-Generation Determination*”
- Peshawn Bread: “*My Journey Through Hollywood*”

Student Organizations

- Lakota Omniciye & AISES
 - Red Shirt Cultural Gift Exchange – December 2022
 - Students collected and wrapped donated gifts for the children at Red Shirt School.
 - Wacipi
 - Students raised funds to host a competition powwow – April 2023



DAKOTA STATE
UNIVERSITY

DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

As part of DSU's efforts to aid in the recruitment and retention of American Indian students, the campus has invested in important events and initiatives in the areas of academics, research and student programming.

Academics & Research

Three Native American-focused research grants were awarded in 2022-23; a Student Research Initiative (SRI) grant was awarded to a student to research the ways in which natural language processing may be used to help preserve the Lakota language. A Faculty Research Initiative (FRI) grant was awarded to a faculty member to create an animated story about a character from the Karuk tribe. A Research Assistant and Mentor Program (RAMP) grant was awarded to a student to curate a digital collection of the Hiawatha Insane Asylum. In 2022-23, the DSU Research and Economic Development division built on the excellent foundational work of the statewide EPSCoR Track-1 Research Infrastructure Improvement award to foster relationships with the Oglala Lakota College (OLC) and Sinte Gleska University (SGU). The priority has been listening to identify institutional needs, strategic priorities, and areas of mutual benefit. One of the results of that relationship is the collaborative development of an IT institute between OLC and DSU. A graduate of OLC is currently pursuing an MS in Computer Science at DSU, and is pursuing a SD EPSCoR-funded Native American Student Assistantship (funded with support from the National Science Foundation).

Student Programming

In November, 2022 the university Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee supported events to celebrate Native American Heritage Month. DSU Alum Jerry Fogg, a Yankton Nakota mixed-media artist and storyteller, shared cultural and historical information through his artwork. The Flandreau Santee Sioux Wakpa Ipaksan Youth Drum Group shared a drum circle in the Trojan Center Marketplace. The Native American Student Association and Sodexo organized cultural meals served at the university cafeteria. The Karl Mundt Library featured a curated book collection specific to Native American heritage. The library also promoted the Native Lady Book Warrior's Skoden Readathon. The university recommended students review the Lakota Language Consortium website for language learning resources, the Partnership with Native Americans site for cultural and historical information, and the US Department of Arts and Culture Honor Native Land resources. Outside of Native American Heritage Month, the university hosted the Dakota 38 + 2 Wokiksuye Ride riders in December on their annual pilgrimage from Brule, SD to Mankato, MN by providing meals and lodging. In April, the EDI Committee assisted the Native American Student Association to raise awareness of missing and murdered indigenous women with the red dress awareness campaign. EDI Chair, Dr. Stacey Berry, assisted NASA students with fundraising for their scholarship, which is specific to Native American students.

The American Indian Cangleska wašté (Good Circle) Program uses a holistic model which imitates the family-centered orientation of tribal life for American Indian students at Northern State University (NSU). The model provides student-focused planning and experiences to help students cultivate a deeper cultural footprint during their college career, while also providing enhanced academic support services. The Circle Program (CP) is designed to work collaboratively 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 of students, leading to the graduation of American Indian students at Northern State University.

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

- Coordinated recruitment efforts with NSU Enrollment Services including partnering on campus tours and visit days, high school and prospective student outreach, and new student registration activities;
- Enhanced high school dual credit student outreach;
- Cangleska wašté (Good Circle) pre-orientation program to help successfully transition students to college;
- Peer-mentoring that builds connectedness and supports students as they acclimate to college life;
- Personalized academic advising and support from time of acceptance to graduation;
- Expanded scholarships through grant awards and support of the NSU Foundation;
- Academic and cultural workshops and programming, including Native American Day and Native American Heritage Month events;
- Individualized tutoring in collaboration with the Student Success Center;
- Tribal higher education financial aid and scholarship workshops and guidance in partnership with NSU Financial Aid;
- Academic and commencement recognition through the annual *Crazy Horse Memorial Scholarship and Banquet* and *Graduation/Feathering Ceremony*;
- Collaborations with Tribal Colleges and regional communities.

The Circle Program serves as a liaison to Admissions staff to help them understand communities, families, and students in order to best support Native American student enrollment and transitions to university life.

During the 2022-2023 academic year, the Circle Program increased outreach to prospective students to better track and encourage accepted Native American students' progress toward enrollment and seek out scholarship opportunities. This outreach process from the CP, in conjunction with NSU Admissions, will continue to support students through the enrollment funnel. Additionally, increased personalized engagement efforts to all Native American students taking high school dual credit courses at NSU resulted in students receiving academic support and tutoring.

The Circle Program pre-orientation and peer mentoring program are considered best practices in helping students transition from high school to college. During 2022-2023, the CP expanded the existing three-day pre-orientation program into a true first-year program that utilizes peer mentors and other staff to provide intentional academic support and to assure students have the requisite technology and other skills necessary from the start to succeed in the classroom. The first-year program also helps build a sense of community and belonging to NSU and increases peer connections.

In 2022-2023, the Circle Program partnered with the Northern State University Foundation (NSUF) to develop a Native American alumni database for a Give N Day campaign. This partnership resulted in a new Daryl Tonemah Scholarship for Native American students, which will be available beginning in academic year 2023-2024. Additionally, participation in the annual Give N Day campaign has increased donor support for the Circle Program, raising funds to help Native American students with unmet financial need such as textbook expenses and school supplies. This award is facilitated through the CP and campus partners, in addition to the Crazy Horse Memorial Scholarship.

The Native American Student Association (NASA) is a recognized student organization that provides cultural education and event programming for the NSU and Aberdeen communities throughout the academic year. During Native American Heritage month, NASA sponsored a Wolf Talk speaker series event with Mr. Daryl Tonemah, NSU alum, psychologist, and singer/songwriter. Also, in 2022-2023, NASA was recognized by the Board of Regents for outstanding Organizational Leadership.

A highlight during the 2022-2023 academic year occurred when the Circle Program and NASA partnered with NSU Student Affairs to display the nine South Dakota Tribal Nation flags in the Avera Student Center. This permanent installation on campus is intended to show support and inclusivity for tribal students and their communities.

The Circle Program annually recognizes and honors graduating Native American students by hosting the Feathering Ceremony. Families and friends of graduates, as well as NSU faculty and staff, are invited to attend the ceremony. NASA hosts motivational speakers, drum, and singers to honor students at the event. This year's Feathering Ceremony address was offered by NSU alum Ms. Hannah Higdon. The yearly academic honoring event began in 2005.

Northern State University is dedicated to the recognition of tribal traditions and ceremonies that complement the holistic well-being of American Indian and Alaska Native students. The American Indian Circle Program invites the campus community to participate in a monthly Smudge. This is a time where all are welcome to learn of smudging and the importance it symbolizes in Indigenous culture; smudging is also a time of reflection. The CP planted traditional prairie sage in the Mewaldt-Jensen courtyard, adjacent to the Circle Program student lounge on campus, to contribute to the monthly smudge and time of building community.

The Circle Program provides robust academic advising services to help all Native American students at NSU. In addition to academic planning and course registration activities, CP advising assists students in study skill development; offers temporary textbook loans in partnership with

the Williams Library; and provides advice on student employment, scholarships, tribal aid, and other topics key to academic success.

The Circle Program has devised a stop out /re-entry program where the Circle Program Director/Academic Advisor focuses on continued re-engagement of students who withdraw from NSU courses. The goal is to help students develop pathways and clarity around how to earn a degree by providing personal, academic, and financial advice for the re-admission process. The foundation of the program is to maintain personal relationships with students so that they are well-connected with support and resources at the point of re-entry.

On campus, the Cangleska wašté student lounge serves as a space for educational, social, and cultural programming and student studying or tutoring. Peer mentors and NASA use the space for leadership development and to build community amongst the students. The CP student lounge is a part of the Student Success Center / Opportunity Center.

During 2022-2023, NSU connected with the tribal nation Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate and Sisseton Wahpeton College to work toward building trusting relationships and academic partnerships to better serve Native American students and communities in the region.

Northern State University offers a Native and Indigenous Studies academic minor. The Native and Indigenous Studies Minor is an interdisciplinary program that gives students a view of Native American and broader indigenous cultures and a space to consider the importance of indigenous perspectives and knowledge in the twenty-first century. The minor enables students and faculty to make connections among and across Native American populations on a broad range of topics. Students may choose to participate in experiential learning opportunities as well as complete Lakota language courses.

Students with a minor in Native and Indigenous Studies will approach their work through a more robust cultural lens that is inclusive of the fastest growing demographic segment of South Dakota and the region. During the summer 2023, students enrolled in the Cultural Immersion Experience will participate in a five-day travel component to Standing Rock tribal nation.

Native American students have strong support at Northern State University through the American Indian Advisory Committee; the Student Success Center and Student Success Committee; Advising Council; CARES team; the Advisory Group for Inclusion and Belonging; and the Opportunity for All Council. Campus units, including TRIO Student Support Services, Accessibility Services, academic support, tutoring, and others, all work collaboratively to provide support and assistance to Native American students. Students' university *success team*, comprised of faculty, professional advisors, and other personnel, is also highlighted and accessible through Navigate, the campus student success platform and app.

The Circle Program Director/Academic Advisor (1 FTE) provides direct support to students, faculty, and staff; serves as a campus to community liaison; attends the Indian Education Summit; assists with recruitment activities in partnership with NSU Enrollment Services; and collaborates on the BOR Native Task Force with other BOR Indian Education Directors.

SOUTH DAKOTA SCHOOL OF MINES & TECHNOLOGY

Numerous programs at SD Mines serve the American Indian undergraduate students both before they arrive on campus and during their time at SD Mines. 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 and high schools in an 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 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 Liaison** – The Chief of Staff in the Office of the President serves as a liaison between the university and tribal schools and organizations. The liaison has assisted in planning outreach events for tribal school students and frequently represents the university in discussions involving collaboration with tribal organizations.

SDSMT is committed to creating an inclusive learning environment and providing robust supports to help in the retention of American Indian students:

- **Office for Inclusion Pre-Orientation** – This program invites self-identified, incoming students of color, including non-traditional and transfer American Indian students. At the start of the fall semester, students come to campus the week before classes to begin acclimating to college life. The Office of Residential Life allows students to move in prior to the official move-in day. During this time, students attend sessions to get oriented to their class schedule, meet their advisors, are paired with mentors, build relationships with each other, and learn how to be successful in college.
- **Mentor Program** – To ensure that no American Indian student feels isolated or unsupported, peer mentorship is offered to all students who participate in the Office for Inclusion Pre-Orientation as well as those who feel they could benefit from such a relationship. Mentors provide guidance, connection, and support throughout the first semester. Although the commitment for students is only for the first semester, many continue their relationship well into the future. The goal of the program is to positively impact the retention rates of American Indian students. Related objectives are for underrepresented students to have a successful and satisfactory first year, whether they are first-time freshmen, transfer, or non-traditional students. The program is also geared toward reinforcing a Native support system for students who may feel out of place. Mentors are volunteers, but the Office for Inclusion compensates students when funds are available.
- **National Science Foundation (NSF) OSSPEEC II Grant** - A Pre-Engineering Education Collaborative with Oglala Lakota College, South Dakota State University, and South Dakota Mines. The project aims to increase recruitment, retention, persistence, and

completion rates in pre-engineering and engineering for Native American students. OSSPEEC II provides culturally centered and integrated project based experiential learning through pre-engineering classroom activities and co-curricular activities consisting of research on reservation needs in the areas of water quality and quantity, geology, and sustainability. The project also investigates and elucidates the impact of the OSSPEEC model, which emphasizes the importance of experiential learning and incorporation of the Lakota worldview as the basis for making essentially correct preconceptions in engineering. The program is designed for Native American students to complete their first two years of engineering education at Oglala Lakota College and then to complete their engineering education at South Dakota State University or South Dakota Mines. An additional goal of the OSSPEEC II project is to improve the quality of engineering education at Oglala Lakota College through professional development of faculty and staff.

- **American Indian Science & Engineering Society (AISES) Chapter** – South Dakota Mines has an award-winning AISES chapter that promotes excellence, leadership, and opportunities in education and professional development of students. AISES participates in national and regional conferences, scholarships, job placement assistance, internships and co-op opportunities, networking and social support, community service, and campus involvement. The chapter also helps to support the American Indian Honoring Ceremony.
- **Office for Inclusion** - Provides direct student support services for all underrepresented students, including self-identified American Indian students. Support services include, but are not limited to, scholarship alerts, internship/co-op information, and opportunities for leadership and professional development. Along with a student assistance fund to help students pay for their university bill, school supplies, food, student emergencies, etc. This office also provides leadership and helps to facilitate the coordination of programs to underrepresented groups, especially those related to American Indian students. The office reaches out to all underrepresented populations; holds free student lunches for networking and social support each semester, and coordinates the Honoring Ceremony for American Indian graduates. The Office for Inclusion also collaborates with several departments across campus to promote diversity and inclusion initiatives for students, staff, and faculty.
- **American Indian Honoring Ceremony** - The Office for Inclusion coordinates and sponsors the American Indian Honoring Ceremony established in December 2008. This is a special ceremony held in the spring, the day before campus commencement. It celebrates and honors South Dakota Mines Native graduates by providing a traditional meal for graduates, family, and invited community. Speakers are drawn from faculty, staff, alumni, and tribal communities. The Honoring Ceremony includes an invocation, prayers, songs, a traditional meal and gifts to the graduates from their families.
- **Tiospaye Scholar Program** - American Indian students at South Dakota Mines may qualify for the Tiospaye Scholar Program. This program is dedicated to increasing the number of American Indian students receiving STEM degrees by providing support in five areas: financial, academic, professional, cultural, and social. In the current version of the program, students in approved STEM majors are eligible to apply for the NSF All Nations AMP stipend after one semester of attendance. Students with cumulative GPAs exceeding 2.5, 3.0, and 3.5 are eligible to receive \$1200, \$2400, and \$3600 annually. Once AMP scholars confirm AISES membership, they become Tiospaye Scholars and eligible for the support components. Since its inception in 2009, we have graduated 61 Tiospaye Scholars.

Many have gone on for masters degrees, as well as one PhD and one MD. The Tiospaye Scholar Program works closely with Admissions, Financial Aid, AISES, Office of Inclusion, Tribal Colleges, NSF REU Programs, and many faculty across campus. The Tiospaye Scholar Program is housed on the garden level of the Devereaux Library and is co-located with the Industrial Engineering Department. In this location, Tiospaye Scholars have access to the Tiospaye Malone Study Rooms and study resources. Monthly Tiospaye Lunch Meetings provide interaction with summer research opportunities, company internships, other scholarship opportunities, graduate school opportunities, etc. The Tiospaye Scholars are active with helping with recruiting visits from high schools on the reservations.

- **Tribal STEM Faculty Group.** At South Dakota Mines, we have approximately 15 faculty from six departments that have been meeting monthly. The group was initiated two years ago to bring together the faculty from multiple disciplines and support 1) raising scholarship funds for both undergraduate and graduate students, 2) curriculum development and coordination to work towards a minor and/or certificate program, and 3) directly supporting research for and with Tribes. In addition to submitting proposals for external funding in multiple avenues during 2021-2022, we have brought in visitors from Ogalala Lakota College, Sinte Gleska University, Black Hills State University, Oglala Sioux Tribe, SD EPSCoR, and presented our initiatives to the Great Plains Tribal Water Alliance. We are planning to continue growing our collaborative efforts with industrial partners as well. Highlighted Tribal STEM efforts include:
 - Tiospaye Scholar Program-American Indian Student Support
 - Infrastructure development for Tribal communities
 - Students joining professionals to provide technical assistance
 - Collaboration with Tribal Colleges
 - Engaging youth in STEM activities and increasing outreach
 - Tribal support for engineering and science initiatives

SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY



SDSU's American Indian Student Center (AISC) provides culturally appropriate retention and advising programming to positively impact recruitment and retention of American Indian (AI) students. AISC is led by the Larson Family Endowed Director of AISC, with the assistance of a Program Coordinator and an American Indian Success Advisor. The American Indian Success Advisor is a key member of the Student Success Network of the Wintrose Student Success and Opportunity Center. The AISC provides cultural programming and support, including:

- The AISC First Year Experience which 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, or another LLC currently established at SDSU connected to their academic program 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.
- SDSU's 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, establishes pathways, and raises cultural awareness for faculty, staff, and students. The Elder In-Residence program is a three-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, which is led by the Larson Family Wokini and Tribal Relations Director, 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 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 the number of American Indian graduates.
3. Strengthen partnerships, 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 AI Students pursuing nursing degrees through the Native American Nursing Education Center (NANEC). The NANEC provides programming designed to help students enrolled in nursing programs 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 online. 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 online.
- 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 2021.

SDSU also has several active grants to develop and support programming which aids in the retention and recruitment of AI students:

- NIFA/USDA New Beginnings for Tribal Students: Igluwiyea (Prepare Oneself) Funding: \$500,000 over 3 years
Current Funding Amount: \$333,859
Deadline: August 31, 2023
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
Current Funding Amount: \$225,637
Deadline: June 2023
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.
- Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropy
Funding: \$1,000,000 over 3 years
Current Funding Amount: 465,365
Deadline: Currently in progress for extension
Purpose: The purpose of the project is to develop a professional development series for staff and faculty at South Dakota State University to foster a responsive and supportive campus environment for American Indian students with a goal of increasing student retention and graduation rates.

Retention efforts for Native American students have been bolstered by a new position, Coordinator of Native Student Services, which the Director of Native Student Services oversees. The person in this role collaborates with the Director of Native Student Services, Dean of Students, Director of Native Recruitment and Alumni Engagement, and Director of the Institute of Native American Studies to implement and plan events for Native students to attend to build a sense of belonging, community, and academic success while attending USD. Efforts include:

- Organizing the Annual Native Student Services Orientation for incoming first year and transfer students to USD
- Building Community and assisting with recruiting, retaining, and fostering the success of Native Students including overseeing a Graduate Assistant and student work-study employees
- Serving as a bridge for strategic partnerships across campus that lead to the development of more academic and socially based programming, services, and strategic initiatives that focus on increasing access, retention, success, and persistence of students at USD
- Facilitating, coordinating, and implementing programming that provides Native Students with opportunities to participate in the Grow with Google/Partnerships with Native Americans Indigenous Career Readiness Program that provides students with workforce skills that make them more competitive within the job market after graduation

USD has initiated multiple strategies to improve retention and support Native American students, especially those who are members of the nine federally recognized tribes in South Dakota. These strategies include:

- **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 then as a secondary advisor to the major advisor from there, and concludes at graduation. The Native American Academic Advisor also teaches a one-credit First Year Experience course for incoming Native American students. This course includes learning strategies for academic success, meeting other Native students, and building a supportive network in a cohort-based classroom setting. During the academic year 2022-2023, costs included \$41,000 for the salary of one FTE (not including benefits)
- **Native Student Services (NSS)** – NSS offers cultural, academic, and social 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 students. The Director of NSS 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

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, a full-service kitchen, and a study space. During the academic year 2022-2023, NSS costs included \$113,510 for the salary of two FTE (not including benefits), student employee wages, and \$37,183 for operating expenses.

- In 2021, Native Student Services, in partnership with University Housing, created a Living Learning Community called Wiyuskinyan Unpi Tipi (named by Dr. Delphine Red Shirt) meaning “Where They Live Contently” - a living learning community dedicated to Native American or Indigenous students and/or Native American studies majors and minors. The community is designed to provide students with a supportive community that centers Native American/Indigenous perspectives, cultures, and histories. As community members of the LLC, students can participate in programming focusing on important conversations about cultural preservation, tribal sovereignty, language revitalization and the betterment of Native nations. During the 2021-2022 academic year, the retention rate for the Living Learning Community was 77% in the fall and 88% in the spring semester. During the 2022-2023 academic year, 34 students participated in the Fall 2022 Semester with 27 participating in the Spring 2023 semester. Raising money for this initiative would support programming and growth for the 2023-2024 Living Learning Community cohort.

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

- Tiospaye Student Council encourages Native American students to take on leadership roles across campus. Tiospaye supports students in their academic pursuits, promotes Native American life on campus, and diversifies the student body by involving students, faculty, and community members from all walks of life. Tiospaye holds numerous events throughout the year, culminating with the annual Wacipi held every spring
- Native American Science and Engineering Society (AISES) is a national nonprofit organization focused on substantially increasing the representation of Native Americans, 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. They have received awards for their community service projects and community engagement efforts
- Sungmanitu Oyate H’oka (Coyote Nation Singers) is a student-created, student-led traditional Indigenous drum group. This group is composed of male and Two Spirit student singers and staff/faculty from across USD campus. It promotes cultural knowledge and language acquisition
- The Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS) is an inclusive organization dedicated to fostering the success of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans, from college students to professionals, in attaining advanced degrees, careers, and positions of leadership in STEM. SACNAS hosts

an annual conference for students to attend. The USD Chapter provides opportunities for students to network professionally and socially via community outreach projects, visiting speakers, and university speakers within potential career fields for students to consider pursuing and research. SACNAS and AISES often work together to support collaborative goals and efforts.

- Wawokiya Peer Mentoring Program has been revamped this year to provide support to first year and new transfer students who are of minority groups such as Native Americans, Hispanic Americans, African-Americans, as well as first-generation college students (neither parent graduated from college). Historically, it has been run through the Sustainability Department, and this fall be changed again to be run through the Living Learning Community to continue to support Native Student retention and success. This year we paired 8 mentors with 1-2 mentees and all students who participated are still enrolled at the university.

In addition to the recruitment and support provided by USD, the USD Sanford School of Medicine (SSOM) also has initiatives to recruit and support Native Americans 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 Native American Physician (AAIP) conferences and workshops and supports other needs during medical school. Additionally, one Avera scholarship is awarded to an incoming Native American medical student annually.
- 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.