

**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, 2024

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, BOR migrated to a new student information system that allows tribal membership to be tracked for students who 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 who 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 the pivotal role of FAFSA completion in higher education pursuit. Students who complete the Free Applications for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) are not only more likely to seek higher education¹ but also meet the eligibility requirement for federal financial aid and many of South Dakota's need-based and academic-based grants and scholarships.

To support college access and postsecondary pursuit for tribal members and other rural and underrepresented populations across the state, 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 objective of the Portal Project is to increase awareness and educate about the benefits of FAFSA completion. The BOR rolled out the FAFSA Completion Portal to all school districts during the 2022-2023 academic year.

FAFSA Simplification Act overhauled the processes and systems used to award federal student aid for the 2024-25 aid year; this included significant changes to the FAFSA form, need analysis, and many policies and procedures for schools that participate in federal student aid programs. The implementation of the FAFSA changes was delayed and interrupted multiple times by technical difficulties. The result of delays and technical difficulties has resulted in a lower percentage of South Dakotans completing FAFSA forms. BOR has a communications plan to engage high schoolers and high school administration in the fall of 2024 to provide information about college access and FAFSA completion, as it has done for the past several years.

Dakota Dreams Career Exploration Summer Camps

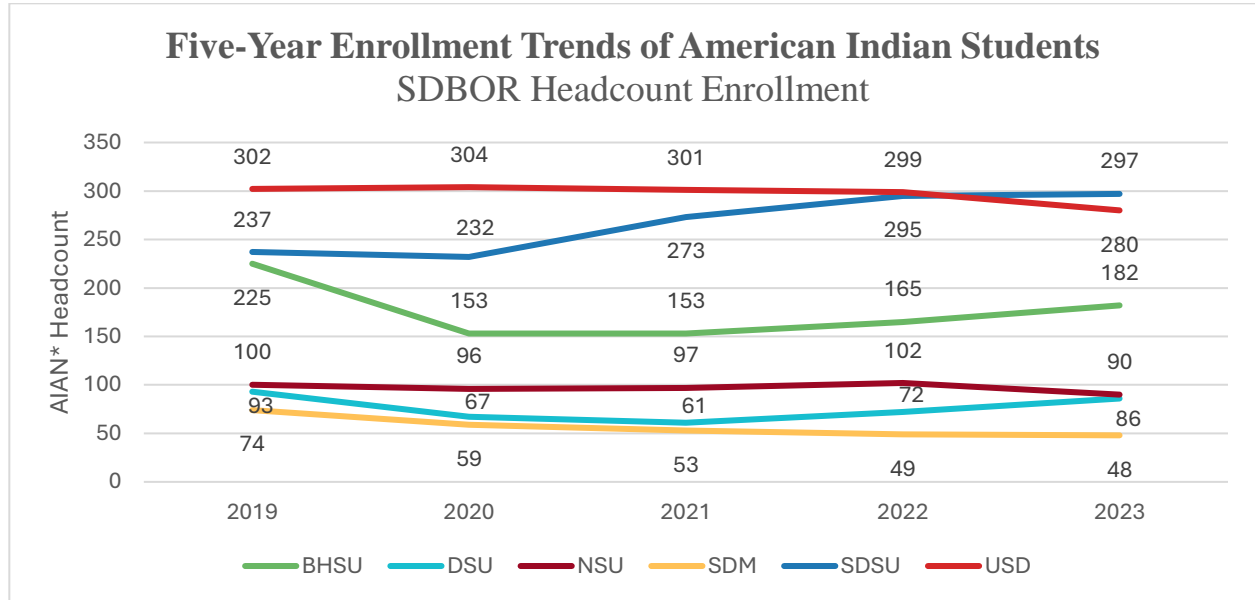
The summer of 2024 will mark the third year of the Dakota Dreams Career Exploration Camps, which are a partnership with BOR, the South Dakota Board of Technical Education (BOTE), the South Dakota Department of Education (DOE), and the South Dakota businesses and industry.

The residential summer camps are open to incoming 7th and 8th-grade South Dakota 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. Campers spend time at the university and technical college campuses and visit area businesses and industry. By the end of the camp, campers will have a better knowledge of their career interests and how their education will prepare them for their future professions.

The camps were funded with federal dollars available to DOE through the American Rescue Plan Act. The funding for the camps will expire in 2024. BOR is currently seeking grants and other funding options to continue the camps in future years.

ENROLLMENT DATA

While BOR institutions continue to improve the recruitment and retention AIAN* students, the percentage of system-level enrollment¹ of students who identify as AIAN* declined from 2.99% (946) in the fall of 2019 to 2.86% (891) in the fall of 2023.



Fall Term	BHSU		DSU		NSU		SDM		SDSU		USD	
	AIAN* #	% of Headcount	AIAN* #	% of Headcount	AIAN* #	% of Headcount	AIAN* #	% of Headcount	AIAN* #	% of Headcount	AIAN* #	% of Headcount
2019	225	5.90%	93	2.87%	100	2.93%	74	2.93%	237	2.07%	302	3.39%
2020	153	4.37%	67	2.13%	96	2.92%	59	2.39%	232	2.06%	304	3.09%
2021	153	4.44%	61	1.91%	97	2.93%	53	2.21%	273	2.40%	301	3.27%
2022	165	4.88%	72	2.23%	102	3.10%	49	1.98%	295	2.61%	299	3.23%
2023	182	5.33%	86	2.47%	90	2.60%	48	1.94%	297	2.59%	280	3.13%

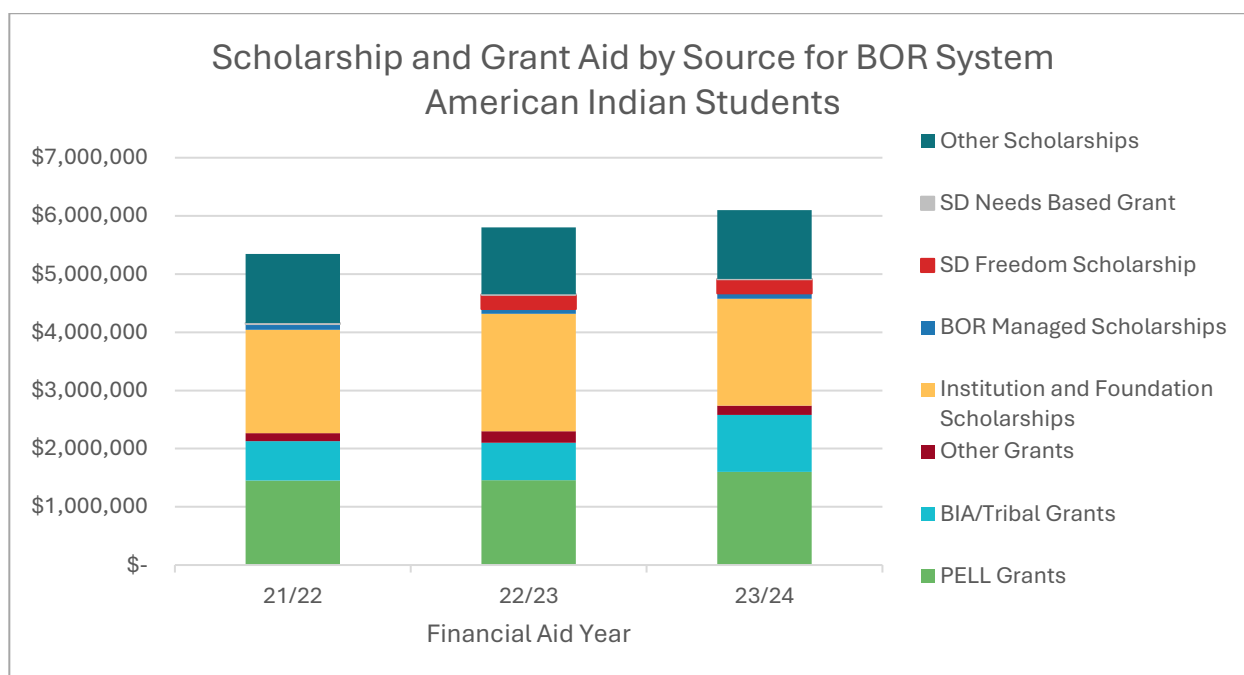
¹ Enrollment data was obtained from the Regents Information Systems Student Success Analytics Fall Census Snapshots for 2019-2023.

* 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 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 23-24, BOR universities paid over \$2 million in institutional, foundation, system, and state grant and scholarship awards to AIAN* students². The amount of institutional grant and scholarship aid has grown steadily over the last three years. Grants and scholarship award amounts continue to benefit in the 23-24 aid year with the use of the South Dakota Freedom Scholarship. 70 AIAN* students were awarded \$244,000 in SD Freedom Scholarship funds in aid year 23-24.



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
21/22	600	\$1,453,000	\$674,000	\$138,000	\$1,777,000	\$102,000	n/a	\$14,000	\$1,189,000	\$5,347,000
22/23	623	\$1,460,000	\$641,000	\$196,000	\$2,022,000	\$79,000	\$250,000	\$6,000	\$1,146,000	\$5,800,000
23/24	619	\$1,604,000	\$975,000	\$160,000	\$1,839,000	\$92,000	\$244,000	\$4,000	\$1,182,000	\$6,100,000

² Financial Aid data was obtained from the Regents Information Systems Student Success Analytics FA Snapshots 2021-2023. The data includes award information for the financial aid year for students identified as AIAN* in the Systems Student Success Analytics Fall Census Snapshot. Scholarship awards for all subgroups were totaled and rounded to the nearest \$1,000

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) at BHSU has several activities and programs geared toward supporting the access and success of American Indian students and the surrounding community. Whether through recruitment and advising, research, or undergraduate and graduate education, there are many opportunities to support 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 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 and texts, 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, and recruitment booths 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 the administration and current American Indian students.

Retention

Critical to the success of the 2023-2024 academic year is the one-on-one contact between Director Urla Marcus, Assistant Director Jordan Mendoza, .5 American Indian professional advisor Alberta Miner, AIS faculty Dr. Rosie Sprague 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, meets throughout the Academic Year to discuss club activities, powwow planning and organization, institutional updates, and policy requirements.
- The A.I.S.E.S. organization met monthly throughout the academic year.
- Book Loan Program that provides up to 50 students with current textbooks and calculators 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 four work-study positions in the Fall and Spring semesters.

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

The CAIS worked closely with Dr. Brianna Mount to identify students to participate in the GEMADARC Research Program, a five-week research and travel program. 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 the 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 at the University of Michigan.

From May 6 to 10, 2024, the CAIS co-hosted a one-week short course on "Genes and the Environment" with Missouri Breaks, SD EPSCoR, and grants from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and the National Science Foundation.

The CAIS, along with faculty member Dr. Victoria Sprague, coordinates and sponsors the American Indian Feathering Ceremony, currently in its 38th 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 the 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 meetings 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, Assistant Director, and .5 professional advisor are the second and third advisors to our American Indian students. They continuously advise students on academic programming and planning.

Speaker Series – Professional Development

- *Howasteya Oyuspapi: Capturing Their Good Voices* Documentary
- Myah Red Horse: “*Made by Myah Jade: Creating Contemporary Native Fashion*”
- Kinsale Drake: “*Celebrating Indigenous Voices through Literature: A Craft Talk and Q & A with Kinsale Drake*”
- Talon Ducheneaux: “*Reservation Pavement*”
- Indi.Go.Go: “*We Are Here to Make a Statement*”
- Collins Provost-Fields: “*Finding Your Medicine*”
- Eunice Straight Head: “*Breaking Social Barriers & Uplifting Indigenous Voices in Art*”
- Jhon Goes In Center: “*Plains Indian Metal Adornment: A Historical Perspective*”

Student Organizations

- Lakota Omniciye & AISES
 - Oceti Sakowin Community Academy Gift Exchange – December 2023
 - Students collected and wrapped donated gifts for the kindergarten children at the Academy located in Rapid City, SD.
 - Wacipi
 - Students raised funds to host a competition powwow – April 2024
“*Contemporary Native Art Guided by Traditional Hands*”

As part of DSU's efforts to recruit and retain Native American students, the campus has invested in important events and initiatives in academics, outreach, and student programming.

Academic Initiatives & Outreach

DSU received an NSF S-STEM grant that supports low-income students pursuing STEM degrees with a last-dollar scholarship of up to \$15,000 per year for up to five years or through program completion, whichever comes first to obtain a STEM degree. Our targeted recruitment efforts comprised sending digital and traditional communication about the scholarships to the following groups: all DSU students, incoming DSU freshmen who completed a FAFSA and had earned less than 30 credits; leaders of the DSU GenCyber Camps; Dana Gehrels, head of math and science at Oglala Lakota College (OLC); and all of the participants of the DSU + Oglala Lakota College 2023 Summer IT institute. DSU has funding to award at least six scholarships in the fall of 2024 and another six in the fall of 2025. Information about the scholarship was also posted on bulletin boards and information screens across the DSU campus.

Dr. Pete Hoelsing (DSU) and Chair Dana Gehrels (OLC) secured funding for and coordinated the 2023 DSU + OLC summer IT institute. The first five days of the institute were held on the Oglala Lakota College campus in Kyle, SD, the week of July 10- 14, 2023, with mathematics sessions presented by DSU math faculty member Dr. Rich Avery and technology sessions presented by DSU computer science student Miles Livermont. The second week of the institute was held on the Dakota State University campus July 17 -21, 2023, with mathematics sessions presented by DSU math faculty member Rich Avery and the technology sessions presented by DSU computer science faculty member Kanthi Narukonda. The DSU + OLC summer IT workshop was funded by an award from the SD EPSCOR grant. This year's DSU + OLC summer IT institute is scheduled to be held from July 15-19, 2024, in Kyle and July 22-26, 2024, at DSU.

Dr. David DeJong, Dean of the College of Education & Human Performance, is in partnership with the Little Wound School in Kyle, SD, to support Native American paraprofessionals and student assistants who wish to earn their teaching degrees. The program will be funded by a grant awarded to Little Wound School from the United States Bureau of Indian Education. Tuition, fees, and materials for participating paraprofessionals or student assistants will be covered by the awarded grant.

Student Programming

The Native American Student Association (NASA) is an active group at Dakota State University, holding weekly gatherings and organizing events during the academic year. NASA hosted events during Native American Heritage Month, including artist talks and exhibits from DSU Alum Jerry Fogg, a Yankton Sioux mixed-media artist and storyteller who shared cultural and historical information through his artwork, and Jennifer White, painter and Post Pilgrim Art Gallery owner who talked about becoming an Indigenous artist and business owner. NASA partnered with Sodexo to organize cultural meals served at the university cafeteria throughout the month. They

organized a red dress display on campus at the end of the Spring semester to recognize Missing and Murdered Indigenous People Day (May 5). NASA also participated in the DSU annual day of giving to raise funds for their scholarship

The American Indian Cangleska wašté (Good Circle) Program (CP) uses a holistic model that imitates the family-centered orientation of tribal life for American Indian students at Northern State University (NSU). This 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 program is designed to work collaboratively with faculty and staff to support the overall mission of NSU. The program's outcome is to build a sense of community that contributes to students' personal growth and academic success, leading to the graduation of American Indian students at Northern State University.

The Circle Program's five-year plan (2020-2025) includes increasing the number of students entering master's programs after completing undergraduate studies. Additional support for CP's goal is through collaboration with the TRIO McNair grant project at Northern State University. Five American Indian students have been accepted as TRIO McNair Scholars.

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 and first-year program to help successfully transition students to college;
- Personalized academic advising and support from the time of acceptance to graduation;
- Peer mentoring that builds connectedness and supports students as they acclimate to college life;
- 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 -Reception and Graduation/Feathering Ceremony*;
- Collaborations with Tribal Colleges and regional communities.

The Circle Program is a liaison to admissions staff, helping them understand Native communities', families', and students' social norms to best support Native American student enrollment and transitions to university life.

- Lara Nelson, American Indian Circle Program Director, attends an admissions staff meeting annually to share best practices for recruiting Native American students.
- Admissions Counselor Makayla Pulfrey serves as the admissions representative on the American Indian Advisory Committee.

Over the past academic year, Native American Student recruitment efforts in high schools & college fairs included:

- High School Visits in South Dakota include: Stanley County x 2, Pierre x 2, Mobridge
- College Fairs in South Dakota include: Stanley County, Eagle Butte, Mobridge, Red Cloud, Rapid City, Pierre, Winner
- On-campus Native American Student Group Visits (from January '23 to present)
 - McLaughlin Elementary, McLaughlin High School, Smea Middle School, and Sisseton Middle School
 - These partnerships that have been developed brought a combined total of 321 students participating in on-campus visits.

Northern State University Admissions continued to partner with Doug Pietz at the Huron Community Campus to support our HCC students.

- The Admissions Counselor for Huron visits the HCC campus twice a month and holds regular office hours to recruit, support, and advise students.
- Northern State University Admissions regularly partners with Aberdeen Central High School's NASA student program to offer on-campus group tours and visits.

Since utilizing the Admissions CRM Slate more regularly, outreach and building rapport with accepted students have begun much sooner and more consistently. Additionally, we continue to engage prospective students using the Admissions CRM Slate to assess progress toward enrollment. In conjunction with NSU Admissions, this outreach process from the CP will continue to support students through the enrollment funnel. Increased personalized engagement efforts for all Native American students taking high school dual credit courses at NSU lead to students receiving academic support and tutoring.

The Circle Program pre-orientation and peer mentoring component are considered best practices in helping students transition from high school to college. During 2023-2024, Northern saw a larger student cohort than in previous years; the CP served 94 students in the fall and 88 students in the spring. 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 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.

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

STUDENT PROGRAMMING

The Native American Student Association (NASA) is a recognized student organization that provides cultural education and event programming for the NSU and Aberdeen community throughout the academic year. During the 2023-2024 academic year, NASA could travel to another BOR institution to participate in their annual Wacipi and expand cultural knowledge

with other non-native students at Northern.

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

Northern State University is dedicated to recognizing 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, and all are welcome to learn about smudging and its importance 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 spent building community.

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

In 2023-2024, the CP partnership with the Northern State University Foundation (NSUF) annual Given N Day campaign raised \$2,483 to help students with textbook expenses, graduation regalia, school supplies, and other emergencies. This award, in addition to the Crazy Horse Memorial Scholarship, is facilitated through the CP and campus partners. Additionally, during the 2023-2024 academic year, the Circle Program requested and received SBAC funding to ensure the continued implementation of the annual Crazy Horse Memorial Scholarship event and the annual Feathering/Honoring ceremony.

Recently, the Circle Program and Student Affairs collaborated and were able to purchase campus tribal flags to use on display during commencement ceremonies and other events. This initiative shows support and inclusivity for tribal students and their communities on campus.

ACADEMICS

The Circle Program provides robust academic advising services to 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 in which the Circle Program Director focuses on the continued re-engagement of students who withdraw from NSU courses. The goal is to help students develop pathways and clarity around earning a degree by providing personal, academic, and financial advice for the re-admission process. The program's foundation is to maintain personal relationships with students so that they are well-connected with support

and resources at the point of re-entry.

During 2023-2024, the NSU Circle Program partnered with the Brown County States Attorney's office to assist with developing and implementing an Oyate Court College to High School Mentoring Initiative. The program aims to offer an alternative program for Native American youth at risk of entering the juvenile justice system. The project receives funding from a grant from the South Dakota Council for Juvenile Services to reduce local racial and ethnic disparities. NSU students served as mentors to local youth in the program.

Northern State University offers a minor in Native and Indigenous Studies. 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 participate in experiential learning opportunities and complete Lakota language courses. Students with a minor in Native and Indigenous Studies will approach their work through a more robust cultural lens that includes the fastest-growing demographic segment of South Dakota and the region.

During the summer of 2023, seven students, one faculty, and the Circle Program Director led a cultural immersion experience. The group participated in a traveling classroom to the Standing Rock Tribal Nation. The next course offering will be in the summer of 2025. Native American students have strong advocacy and support at Northern State University through the American Indian Advisory Committee, the Student Success Center and Student Success Committee, CARES team, the Committee for Inclusion and Belonging, and the Opportunity for All Council. Campus units, including TRIO Student Support Services, TRIO McNair, Accessibility Services, academic support, tutoring, and others, also work collaboratively to support and assist 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.

SOUTH DAKOTA SCHOOL OF MINES & TECHNOLOGY

Numerous programs at South Dakota Mines (SDM) serve American Indian undergraduate students both before they arrive on campus and during their time at South Dakota Mines. In addition to traditional recruiting efforts, SDM 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—The program provides science and engineering experiences for middle and high schools in an area with high concentrations of American Indian students. It 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 tribal and non-tribal 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.
- 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.
 - High Plains Regional Science & Engineering Fair: South Dakota Mines has hosted this annual science fair for almost 70 years. In 2019, just over 11% of all participants were Native students. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the fair was canceled in 2020 and held virtually in 2021, which resulted in significant decreases in Native student participation. Since 2022, the number of Native students attending has been increasing, averaging 8 – 10% of the total participants. The goal is to achieve pre-pandemic participation levels and then grow beyond those figures.
 - Engineering & Science Day: Efforts are being made to increase the number of tribal middle/high schools that come to this annual event. During AY22/23, no tribal middle or high schools attended, and in AY23/24, 120 of 600 students attending were from tribal middle or high schools. This is incredible progress in just one year.

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

- **Pre-Orientation Program** – 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 Pre-Orientation Program 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 Opportunity Center 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 the 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.
- **Opportunity Center** - 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 tuition, school supplies, food, student emergencies, etc. This office also provides leadership and helps to facilitate the coordination of programs for

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 Opportunity Center also collaborates with several departments across campus to promote campus-wide initiatives for students, staff, and faculty.

- **American Indian Honoring Ceremony** - The Opportunity Center 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, families, and the 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 are eligible for the support components. Since its inception in 2009, we have graduated with over 60 Tiospaye Scholars. Many have gone on for master's degrees, as well as one PhD and one MD. The Tiospaye Scholar Program works closely with Admissions, Financial Aid, AISES, Opportunity Center, 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 in 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 Oglala 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
- **Cultural Expo.** This festival highlights the cultures and traditions of the different countries and groups represented on the South Dakota Mines campus and in the Rapid City community. Each culture/country is represented in a booth for the two-day event. The first day is specifically set aside for area schools (K-12) to visit different countries and cultural exhibits and to participate in crafts, story times, and other fun educational activities. The second day includes displays, dance, music, and food from participating booths. Our AISES Chapter represents the indigenous peoples of North America, particularly South Dakota tribes, at their booth. Their food includes some traditional tastes such as Wojapi and fry bread. In the past, the group has partnered with the Rapid City Community Relations Commission. This group is supported by Rapid City local government, whose mission is to Bridge cultures, educate ourselves and others, Advocate, and Model respectful behaviors (B.E.A.M.). They have brought traditional dancers from different reservations in the area to perform on the second day of the event.

SDSU's American Indian Student Center (AISC) provides culturally appropriate retention advising and programming to positively impact the recruitment and retention of American Indian (AI) students. The AISC is led by the Larson Family Endowed Director of American Indian Student Success, with the assistance of a Program Coordinator and a Student Success Advisor. The Student Success Advisor is a key member of the Student Success Network of the Wintode Student Success and Opportunity Center. The AISC provides social, cultural, and academic programming and support. Some of the key programs and supports 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 Welcome Week* is an early orientation 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 expected 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.
 - Wokini Scholars are expected to enroll in the First-Year Seminar course, Introduction to American Indian Studies. Other students are encouraged to take the course for academic credit as well.
- AISC partnered with the Wintode Success and Opportunity Center to offer a peer mentoring and peer advising program for AI students. The program provided one-on-one peer mentoring and advising services as well as skill development workshops and advising events. Sixteen students received the Maštíŋska Oyate (Jackrabbit Nation) certificate in recognition of their high level of participation in program activities, and five students were inspired to seek leadership roles supporting AI students during the 2024-2025 academic year.
- 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.
- SDSU's Artist-In-Residence Program is a three-day program that allows students, staff, and the community to connect with Indigenous artists through luncheons, workshops, and presentations.

- Wahanpi Wednesday occurs twice each month during the fall and spring semesters. Students, staff, and faculty across campus gather at the AISC for lunch, to make connections, and to build meaningful relationships. A different department or office hosts each Wahanpi Wednesday and provides soup and other food items.
- The AISC Graduation Honoring Ceremony takes place the day before the campus commencement ceremony. It is open to all Native graduates and includes a feather-tying ceremony, quilt honoring, and meal for graduates, their families, and invited campus community members. A Native SDSU alumnus is invited each year to provide the keynote address.

The AISC houses two registered student organizations: the American Indian Student Association (AISA) and the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES). The AISC Program Coordinator and Student Success Advisor serve as advisors for both student organizations. AISA focuses on cultural and social connections to foster a strong sense of community. They also host the SDSU Annual Wetu Wacipi. The SDSU AISES Chapter focuses on professional development opportunities for its members. The Jerome J. Lohr College of Engineering provides financial support for AISES members to attend the annual conference. The chapter is also highly engaged in fundraising efforts and community outreach. Both groups host and participate in programs that increase awareness of issues impacting Indigenous peoples.

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 Associate Vice President of the Wokini Initiative, 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.

The number of students enrolled in the Wokini program increased from 15 in Fall 2018 to 125 in Fall 2023. the USDA-NIFA/Igluwiyea grant has provided support for the Wokini Initiative and Sinte Gleska University partnership, which has been successful in student recruitment from Rosebud and Yankton Sioux Tribes, increasing from 2 Wokini Scholars in Fall 2018 to 26 Wokini Scholars in Fall 2022. Wokini successfully collaborates with the AISC in the Wawokiya/Emergency Support committee to provide AI students who are members of federally recognized tribes with financial assistance to support student success. Wokini recently finalized the \$1M Margarette A. Cargill Philanthropic Grant to design, create, and implement a

professional development course to confront the lack of a welcoming and supportive campus climate for American Indian students we recruit and who choose to enroll as students. The tribal enrichment professional development course is in its final phase and is on track to roll out for the fall semester to all faculty and staff who choose to sign up for the opportunity. Briggs Library hosts the Wokini Knowledge Circle, which houses resources related to the history, culture, and people of the Oceti Sakowin.

The Wokini Challenge Grant awarded six-\$10,000 grants in 2023 and eight-\$10,000 grants in 2024 to projects from various on-campus collaborators that are essential in; supporting American Indian Leadership development; relationship building between SDSU, American Indian/Alaska Native students, and tribal communities; preserving Oceti Sakowin/Indigenous language and culture; documenting culturally respectful research practices with American Indians/Alaska Natives and tribal communities; and archiving SDSU's research, extension programs, or other projects with American Indians/Alaska Natives and tribal communities.

Wokini continues to bring various partnerships together to create even more connections on and off campus; these partnerships are essential in finding and creating opportunities for American Indian/Alaska Native students. This includes enhancing Wokini fundraising efforts, identifying internship and career opportunities for students, and extending invitations to the 9 tribes of South Dakota to various campus events relevant to American Indian/Alaskan Native Students. The Wokini Initiative has continued to create networking opportunities through partnerships with the Levitt at the Falls, the He Sapa Wacipi/Black Hills Powwow, and the Lakota Nation Invitational (LNI). Wokini also collaborates with on-campus partners, including the AISC, Admissions, Financial Aid, and many campus departments and colleges, to increase recruitment and retention efforts as well as increase staff/faculties capacity, knowledge, and understanding of Oceti Sakowin culture. Wokini continues to enhance its partnerships with Tribal Colleges and Universities, specifically Sinte Gleska University and Ihanktonwan Community College.

The American Indian and Indigenous Studies (AIIS) program, which is housed in the School of American & Global Studies, works toward mutual goals with the AISC and the Wokini Initiative. SDSU's D/Lakota language program graduates the first cohort of four students to attain the Oceti Sakowin Basic Language Proficiency certificate, the only D/Lakota language credential in the SDBOR system. Increases in retention and success rates in lower division LAKL courses have occurred, and a new course in Lakota teaching methods was added to meet the state certification needs of language students.

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.

In 2019, faculty at SDSU launched a scaffolded, multi-disciplinary initiative called Harvesting Hope. The project aims to engage Native American undergraduate students in crafting and sharing their stories of Indigeneity, belonging, and resilience as they pertain to college persistence. In this program, initially funded by the Waterhouse Family Institute at Villanova, Indigenous students share their individual identity-based personal narratives in the form of creative writing, mini-documentaries, and other artistic forms like dance, beadwork, and painting. Participating students have been able to share their work on campus as well as at state and national conferences. Harvesting Hope has since attracted a second Waterhouse grant and additional external funding from the National Science Foundation.

SDSU also has several active and recently completed 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
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.

- NIFA/USDA New Beginnings for Tribal Students: Oyate Awáŋwáka (Taking Care of the People)

Funding: \$500,000 over 3 years

Purpose: The purpose of the Oyate Awáŋwáka project is to increase retention and graduation rates of Native American students attending SDSU. The Oyate Awáŋwáka project will provide a means to provide specialized support to Native American students as they transition from Oglala Lakota College (OLC) into SDSU's RN to B.S.N. program and complete baccalaureate studies.

- 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.

- Margaret A. Cargill philanthropy *Funding:* \$1,000,000 over 3 years

Purpose: The purpose of the project was 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. The grant final report was submitted on February 29, 2024. The funding from this grant helped create the professional development course that will be used to increase SDSU's staff/faculty capacity, knowledge and understanding of Oceti Sakowin history and culture. The grant also helped Wokini produce, distribute, and analyze American Indian student surveys essential in understanding the impacts of American Indian student programming between 2020 and 2023. Wokini plans to continue the work that this grant helped initiate.

- Indian Health Service (IHS) American Indians into Nursing: Wicozani: A Place of Health and Balance

Funding: \$1,349,364 over 4 years

Purpose: This project's purpose is to recruit, retain, and graduate both AI/AN RNs and nurse practitioners to increase the number of AI/AN nurses available to deliver healthcare services to AI/AN communities in South Dakota and the region. The target population is enrolled tribal members from the Great Plains Indian Health Service (IHS) area pursuing baccalaureate or baccalaureate completion education, or pursuing doctor of nursing practice education with a nurse practitioner focus and committed to serving in an Indian Health Services facility after graduation.

- John T. Vucurevich Funding: Stronger Together: The Power of Intentional Mentors & Academic Tiospaye (Extended Family)

Funding: \$528,000 over 3 years

Purpose: This grant supports the Native American Nursing Education Center (NANEC). The main goal of this project is to increase the number of Native American bachelor-prepared registered nurses in Western South Dakota to diversify the healthcare workforce. Increasing the number of NA nurses in the healthcare workforce has been

found to significantly reduce health disparities among the Native American community. With the assistance of NANECS and its culturally appropriate network, resources, and intentional mentoring program, NA nursing students are more likely to graduate from their BSN programs.

The core team that focuses on Native retention at the University of South Dakota includes the Director of Native Student Services, the Coordinator of Native Student Services, the Director of Native Recruitment and Alumni Engagement, and the Native Student Advisor.

The Director of Native Student Services oversees the Native Student Services division. Native Student Services (NSS) is housed within the Native American Cultural Center (NACC), a home away from home for many students on campus. 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 computer lab, free printing, a lounge area, a full-service kitchen, and a study space. NSS offers student support services as well as socially, culturally, and community-relevant programming throughout the year. The Director 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 to students on campus.

The Coordinator of Native Student Services collaborates across campus to implement and plan events for Native students to attend to build a sense of belonging, community, and academic success while attending USD. The coordinator assists in overseeing the day-to-day operations of the NACC and acts as a support system for students on campus.

The Director of Native Recruitment and Alumni Engagement supports USD admissions by helping incoming students transition to campus by assisting with housing selection, financial aid, and transition strategies. The director also engages with more than 1,400 Native alumni by developing better tracking, community building, and engagement opportunities.

The Native American Academic Advisor provides academic advising support that begins with the registration process for incoming students, continues in the role of 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.

While there are many other partnerships with different Native related programs and divisions across campus, these four positions work the most directly with facilitating and improving Native student experiences. These efforts include:

- Building community and assisting with recruiting, retaining, and fostering the success of Native Students, including overseeing 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.

USD has initiated multiple strategies to improve retention and support for Native American students, supporting the more than 34 tribal nations represented on campus, including all nine federally recognized tribes in the state of South Dakota. These strategies include:

- **Native Student Services Orientation:** Early move-in and orientation for incoming first-year and transfer students to USD.
- **First Year Experience Course:** The Native American Academic Advisor 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.
- **Wiyuskinyan Unpi Tipi Living Learning Community:** 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” 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 on 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. In the 2023-2024 academic year, 39 students participated in the Wiyuskinyan Unpi Tipi program.
- **Native Graduate Honoring:** Hosted every spring to celebrate Native graduates as well as Native Studies majors, this year also featured individuals who earned Indian Law Certificate via the USD Law School, students in executive positions on our Native-focused student organizations, and Iwacinyehci Peer Mentors (formerly Wawokiya Peer Mentoring)

In addition to the core team mentioned above, USD has an admissions counselor who fosters close collaboration between the Office of Admissions and the Director of Native Recruitment and Alumni Engagement; we ensure a focused and culturally sensitive approach to student recruitment and outreach. The admissions counselor who oversees the territory encompassing the Tribal Nations in South Dakota actively participates in recruitment and networking events across the region, building strong connections within South Dakota's Native communities. Additionally, the entire admissions staff undergoes specialized training to effectively recruit and support Native students from around the country. These concerted efforts aim to create an educational environment that honors and embraces Native heritage and perspectives.

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. This

year they held their 50th Annual Wacipi, and are the longest-running higher education Wacipi in the state. In collaboration with the Annual Wacipi, Tiospaye hosts an annual Native Alumni Dinner.

- **American Indian 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.
- **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.
- **Iwacinyehci Peer Mentoring Program (formerly Wawokiya Peer Mentors)** provides support to new first-year and transfer Native students, especially those that are first-generation college students (neither parent graduated from college). This year, it was run through the Wiyuskinyan Unpi Tipi Living Learning Community to continue to support Native Student Retention and Success. NSS paired 8 mentors with 2 mentees each, and all students who participated are still enrolled/graduated in May 2024.
- **The Grow with Google/Partnerships with Native Americans Indigenous Career Readiness Program** concluded this year and provided students with workforce skills that make them more competitive within the job market after graduation. With this funding, we were able to complete Mentor training through the Clifton Strengths Program, bring two speakers within Education and advocacy within the workplace for Indigenous professional development, poster printing for events, room in Charlie's Career Closet for 5 Ribbon Skirts, 4 Live your Values Decks, and 6 WE! Connect Cards Decks, purchase a common read for the Living Learning Community *Legacy: What the All Blacks Can Teach Us About the Business of Life*, and the *American Indian Stories of*

Success book for students to read about what career success can look like in a multitude of ways.

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. The USD SSOM holds two spots for incoming INMED medical students and helps support their needs in medical school through activities such as monthly meetings with speakers, as well as Support to attend events (such as the Academy of Native American Physician (AAIP) conferences and workshops) and supports other needs during medical school. Additionally, one Avera Health American Indian scholarship is awarded to an incoming Native American medical student annually.
- **The 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. SSOM has held annual Scrubs Camps in Pine Ridge since 2018.

USD also has activities to support research and creative scholarship for Native American students.

- **The South Dakota Oral History Center** collects and preserves the voices of the people of the Northern Plains. Through the American Indian Research Project, the Center's collection contains the memories and experiences of individuals from the 1880s to the present. The Center offers scholarships and internships to students interested in researching this unique collection.
- **The Graduate Research Training Initiative for Student Enhancement (G-RISE)** recruits students from non-majority groups (i.e., American Indians, African Americans, Latinos, first-generation college students) and engages them with mentor-driven research and integrating this with traditional STEM elements and professional development activities.
- **SD Rise-Up** is a collaborative program which includes USD, the Kennedy Krieger Institute, the CDC, Johns Hopkins University, and Aaniiih Nakoda College. Its

program's goal is to promote a more equitable health system by introducing highly qualified, diverse undergraduate scholars with three public health leadership experiences: clinical, research, and community engagement and advocacy.