

The Status of Student Information at Tribal Colleges and Universities

Prepared under contract to
The American Indian College Fund
October 17, 2003

Richard A. Voorhees, Ph.D.
Voorhees Group, LLC
Littleton, Colorado

Introduction

Timely, accurate information about the success of Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) and the students they serve is critically important. Lack of data that can explain outcomes unique to Indian colleges and how those outcomes are similar and dissimilar to mainstream colleges is a severe impediment to efforts to garner financial support. In an increasingly competitive environment, it is only appropriate that foundations, private donors, and government agencies want to know what their dollars are buying. The American Indian College Fund, in its role as advocate for its thirty-four member colleges, recognizes these challenges.

Most TCUs are relative newcomers to higher education with establishment dates ranging from 1968 through to the present and beyond. Some have struggled to survive this birthing in the face of inadequate funding. For years these schools have been forced to operate from makeshift facilities—empty trailers, converted warehouses, abandoned buildings and the like. Eighty-five percent of their students are estimated to live at or below the poverty level. Still, their emergence and resilience is one of the great success stories in American higher education.

But, it is not just their age or their tenacity in the face of financial hardships that set them apart. They also are different because they serve the very population that is most underserved, and perhaps neglected, in the nation. TCUs have become the lifeblood of American Indian communities, especially those geographically isolated communities where access to higher education is valued but heretofore not widely available. These colleges serve their tribes as a nexus for economic development, community education, Indian languages and cultural, and, most importantly, as beacons of hope across some of the most impoverished landscapes in America. They do all of this in addition to providing the types of accredited higher education programs and services found in mainstream institutions.

Because of the similarity of their missions, mainstream community colleges are often used as a comparison group for TCUs. That is, Indian colleges also are responsive to community needs, serve a clientele which usually is economically

and educationally disadvantaged, and have a very recent history. Both TCUs and mainstream community colleges serve students whose educational goals are much different than students entering mainstream 4-year colleges. Students entering these 4-year institutions generally are fresh out of high school and aspire to baccalaureate degrees. In contrast, community college students are older when they enroll, may have dependents or children of their own, be single parents, be already active in the workforce, and may not see the baccalaureate degree as a likely goal. Collectively, these characteristics are "risk factors" if one accepts the premise that the only legitimate goal for students is that of acquiring a degree. The more risk factors a student has, the less likely she or he is to persist to a degree.

Students who attend community colleges intend to pursue a range of goals that are not always clearly defined, even to themselves, and are not necessarily pursued in a lockstep fashion. Community college and TCU students face a variety of competing demands for their time, their energies, and their resources. These competing demands serve to widen the focus of community college students to a wider world. Even when that perspective narrows, the range of educational goals is likely to be much wider than students at other institutions. For example, legitimate community college goals may include pursuit of degrees or certificates in either vocational or academic areas (with or without transfer), earning credits to transfer or upgrade job skills, to discover or formulate career interests, to maintain a certificate or license, to pursue personal development or to earn a high school diploma or GED, or simply to learn the basic skills including English acquisition for basic survival. TCUs might expand this list by including the maintenance of Indian culture, language immersion, and their vital role as the only nexus for higher education in isolated communities.

Even if it is not simple to describe their outcomes, the higher education components of TCUs face the same challenges that currently beset all colleges. They are not immune from mounting external pressures to demonstrate accountability, efficiency, and service. State and federal governments have grown impatient with higher education's perceived failure to respond to the public's concerns about institutional integrity and credibility. Pending reauthorization of the Higher Education Act doubtlessly will call for greater oversight of all colleges. At the same time existing federal regulations, especially for Title IV federal financial aid programs increasingly require heavy information gathering and reporting by all colleges.

Shifting federal oversight has spilled over to accrediting agencies which find themselves moving increasingly toward a position of monitoring institutional outcomes. Within this era of increased scrutiny it is easy to see that those institutions who cannot respond to requests for data are most likely to suffer. Capacity building for Indian colleges in data, collection, retrieval, and distribution will be a critical need for the foreseeable future.

States, as the largest funders of higher education are increasing their oversight activities. Although TCUs function independently of state government, they

cannot exempt themselves from calls for accountability and efficiency emanating from legislators, governors, and state higher education commissions. Indian colleges must position themselves to be conversant in these terms and to show their contributions to the problems facing states. States are most interested in the economic outcomes produced by institutions of higher education and whether graduates are finding jobs – particularly within the state. Indian colleges find themselves at a competitive disadvantage when their outcomes, especially graduate employment outcomes, are compared to off-reservation employment rates of state college graduates. Such comparisons are unfair, but perhaps inevitable and underscore the critical need for Indian colleges to increase their ability to develop unbiased outcome measures. Captured appropriately, however, a range of measures could show TCU successes, which are comparable to public state institutions while simultaneously working to preserve TCUs' unique missions and identities.

A Short History of Accountability Efforts

For a variety of reasons, data gathering, analysis, and reporting represent fundamental problems for TCUs. Most were established at a time when the volume of reporting to the federal government by higher education institutions was just beginning to accelerate. And, most were born when higher education itself was making a transition in the way it approached quality, a transition that was marked by an accent on outcomes and away from simply assuming that serving students was sufficient rationale for institutional existence. Caught between volume and focus, and the need to keep their doors open with scarce resources, most of the accountability movement in higher education in the 1980's and 1990's left TCUs behind.

A factor limiting the utility of data among TCUs has been the way in which data traditionally has been requested by government entities and funding sources. These data requests are aggregate in nature and consist primarily of reporting institutional inputs, i.e., numbers of students served. Although aggregate reports sometimes require that a range of characteristics be reported including gender, age, and race/ethnicity, they usually can be completed with only a minimum of sophistication, especially at small colleges where a "yellow legal pad" might be the technology of choice and where file cabinets might hold many years worth of data. To be sure, TCUs that are better established tend to be quite sophisticated in gathering, cleaning, analyzing, and reporting data via student information systems. The point, however, is that as long as reporting requirements remain focused on aggregate data, all institutions could, with effort, reach at least some level of minimal compliance.

With the arrival of interest in student outcomes, however, each student becomes the unit of analysis. Data systems, known as unit record data systems, can be used to produce aggregate reports and profiles of student enrollments. Their greatest potential, however, is their ability to track individual students to determine academic performance, retention rates, transfer rates, and post-

graduate follow-up. They are particularly disadvantaged in efforts to meet external data demands as well as to answer critical questions about their practices because the lack of funding impedes institutional research capability.

The Role of Federal Reporting

TCUs report data to the federal government in two ways. In common with all higher education, TCUs respond to annual Integrated Postsecondary Data System (IPEDS) surveys. These surveys are sponsored by the US Department of Education through the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) with the goal of providing national baseline data pointing to the condition of postsecondary education. The second federal reporting requirement is to the Bureau of Indian Affairs to report "student counts" that determine annual levels of federal funding. For reasons that become obvious later, both types of reporting use differing methodology to produce enrollment numbers. And, neither effort should be confused with outcome measures that might be used to improve institutional practice.

IPEDS surveys collect only aggregate data although one recently implemented survey, the Graduation Rate Survey, has begun to collect student outcome data that is analogous to retention. IPEDS consists of institution-level data that can be used to describe trends in postsecondary education at the institution, state and/or national levels. According to NCES, researchers can use IPEDS to analyze information on 1) enrollments of students, undergraduate, first-time freshmen, graduate and first-professional students by race/ethnicity and gender; 2) institutional revenue and expenditure patterns by source of income and type of expense; 3) salaries of full-time instructional faculty by academic rank and tenure status; 4) completions (awards) by type of program, level of award, race/ethnicity, and gender; 5) characteristics of postsecondary institutions, including tuition, room and board charges, calendar systems, etc.; 6) status of postsecondary vocational education programs; and 7) other issues of interest. The US Department of Education also uses IPEDS fall enrollment data in program planning and for setting funding allocation standards for such legislatively controlled programs as the Federal Work-Study Program, Federal Perkins Loans, and the Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants.

Despite their utility, IPEDS data generally are of varying quality across all institutions, mainstream and tribal, and as a result are seldom used by institutions to guide management decisions. TCUs in particular do not have a stellar record in submitting data to IPEDS. A recent collection of IPEDS data submitted by TCUs is appended (Appendix A to M) to this report where the reader can quickly see many missing cases and blank data values. For some elements, no single TCU reported data. On other elements, it appears that submission rates have improved over time, but they still hover around the 70 percent mark. Submission of IPEDS surveys are mandatory for those institutions wishing to maintain their participation in federal financial aid programs for their students, although there is no penalty for incomplete reporting. A consequence

of missing IPEDS data is an incomplete picture of the basic educational activities across all TCUs.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) is charged with supervising the disbursement of money allocated by the Congress for Tribal Colleges and Universities through the Tribally Controlled College or University Assistance Act of 1978. Title I of this Act provides assistance for colleges that submit auditable American Indian student enrollment, or Indian Student Count (ISC) to the BIA. No funds are distributed for non-Indian students, who make up a significant percentage of total enrollment at Title I schools on average. Title I was authorized at a per Indian student level of \$6,000, with a maximum total amount of \$40 million but has never been appropriated at this level. The Fiscal Year 2002 appropriation, for example, was \$3,916 per ISC.

Both types of federal reporting are necessary to maintain institutional operations, IPEDS to maintain Title IV financial aid eligibility and ISC to maintain a base level of funding. There is more incentive to report "correct" data to the Bureau of Indian Affairs since those data are subject to audit. There is no similar quality control in IPEDS. And, there also exists a measure of suspicion in any institution of higher education about external requests for data, suspicion which is magnified among those institutions whose funding by federal government is only recent and perhaps marginal.

Finally, the U.S. Department of Education does not extensively report the IPEDS data they collect from TCUs. The volume of this data found within existing NCES publications is disproportionate to data on other minority student groups, particularly Black and Hispanic populations. Of the six (6) tables that examine race/ethnicity factors in postsecondary education enrollments contained in the "Digest of Education Statistics, 2002" published by NCES, four (4) contain data on American Indian or Alaska Natives. It is true that incomplete data reporting by TCUs may underlie, in part, some of these omissions. However, it would seem that one way to increase the utility of data for national purposes is to report data routinely and visibly. The collective result can be minimal compliance with external reporting or even resistance.

Data Gathering by The Fund and AIHEC

In addition to Ad-hoc reports sought by the American Indian College Fund, the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) also solicits data from institutions. This data is combined to provide better information to Congress and to potential private funders and consist mainly of self-reported information intended to supplement other data sources including IPEDS. These efforts routinely collect information on the numbers of graduates, programs offered, numbers of Indian and non-Indian students served, as well as Ad-hoc queries to institutions to fulfill information gaps needed for proposal writing and public relations purposes. Staff shortages within these organizations coupled with the

same lack of expertise in institutional research common to member colleges result in less than systematic data collection and less than optimal national reporting.

The Fund and AIHEC also are engaged in documenting the impact of private donations to TCUs. For example, a recently completed survey, "Cultivating Success" developed by an independent consulting company sought to document the impact of tribal colleges on those who attend them and the impact of a recent capital campaign known as Campaign Sii Ha Sin. This report found that the Fund's scholarship program played a critical role in their success in obtaining their degrees at the TCUS. This report also pointed to the assets-based model of education, building upon the strengths of American Indian culture where TCUs value the role of family and community in Indian students' lives, provide flexible support for students who must leave for family or tribal obligations, and offer personal and cultural growth courses through an explicitly American Indian-oriented curriculum and environment.

"Cultivating Success" also documented that geographic proximity, for many survey respondents, was a key factor in graduates' decisions to attend a tribal college. Due to family and tribal responsibilities and loyalties, some respondents may not have achieved their degree without the presence of a tribal college. Many survey respondents graduated from their tribal college with a strong, if not stronger, sense of their American Indian heritage, and graduates sought further education not only to benefit themselves and their immediate family, but also to develop ways to give back to their tribes and the larger Indian community.

Current Status of TCU Student Data

This section presents TCU student data drawn chiefly from the IPEDS Peer Analysis System. This data that was used to create the charts that follow are appended to this report and consists of all submissions from existing TCUs. The appendices also include information gathered by AIHEC and The Fund. The weaknesses of these sources previously have been discussed and while there is much work that needs to be done to ensure the completeness of future data, what is depicted here is the data currently available about the TCUs.

TCU Enrollments

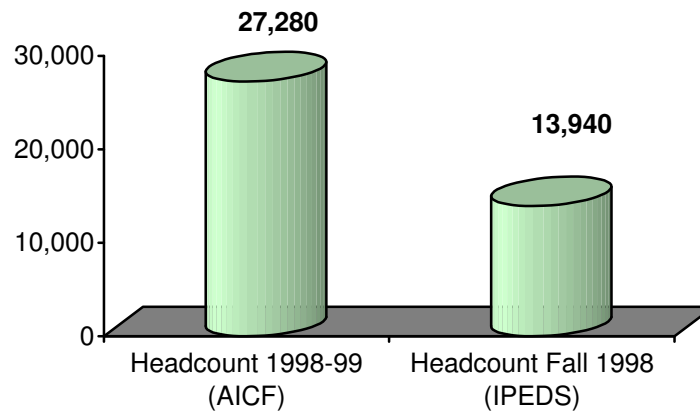
Accurate depiction of enrollment data is especially challenging for TCUs. First there is the issue of the appropriate time span to report. Are the data for fall term? Are they unduplicated data that represent total enrollment across the entire school year? Are they headcount? Are they full-time equivalent? And, since TCUs serve many non-Indians, should they be included in total figures? While there are "right" answers, it is critical that those who want to know about TCU enrollment understand the nature of the questions they ask so that answers can be unambiguously produced.

A second issue is that enrollment data will vary depending on the purpose for which it is collected. The Bureau of Indian Affairs, for example, uses Congressionally mandated formulae to produce the Indian Student Count for funding TCUs. Here, student credit hours are divided by 12. An Indian student enrolled for 12 credit hours would represent "1" student. If three students collectively took 12 credit hours, their enrollment also would represent "1" student. It is clear that the Indian Student Count meant to equalize instructional activity among TCUs and should not be used to estimate headcount students. NCES reports headcount enrollments through IPEDS and also calculates instructional activity by estimating the number of "full-time equivalent students" but this methodology is not the same as the BIA's and even varies depending on the type and control of institution and the level of students.

A third enrollment issue is that not all institutional activity yields a corresponding enrollment figure. For example, IPEDS directions direct institutions, in part, to "report all students enrolled in courses creditable toward a diploma, certificate, degree, or other formal award" but to exclude "students taking CEU's [Continuing Education Credit] unless they are also enrolled in courses creditable toward a degree or other formal award" and "students enrolled exclusively in remedial courses" This definition would seem to exclude non-credit students and might be interpreted to exclude anyone not working toward a degree or diploma. Whatever the case, IPEDS does not intend to capture the full range of instructional activity at any institution.

The combined effect can be seen in a recent survey by the American Indian College Fund. Staff there conducted an independent survey of all constituent colleges to determine total enrollment. This survey combined noncredit (or CEU) enrollment, credit enrollment, and General Equivalency Degree (GED) and Adult Basic Education (ABE) headcount across the academic year for all TCUs to estimate total headcount in the 1998-1999 year of 27,280. The corresponding IPEDS enrollment for the Fall 1998 totaled 13,940, a figure which is compromised by missing data from two TCUs but nonetheless should not be confused with total instructional services to students at TCUs during that year.

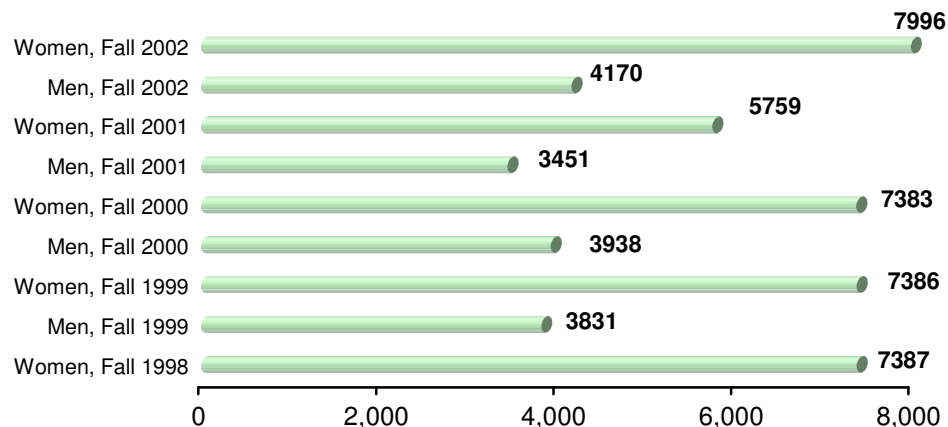
Contrasting Views of TCU Headcount Enrollment



Source: IPEDS Peer Analysis System and AICF Staff Survey

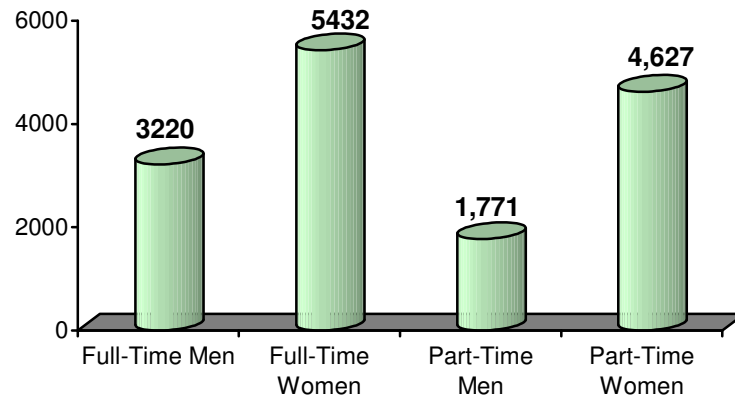
Among credit students, male American Indian enrollment at TCUs is typically about one-third that of female American Indians. Females appear to be increasing their overall enrollment although missing or erroneous data supplied by TCUs to IPEDS, especially for the Fall of 2001, means that their enrollment may be growing faster than is depicted below. As mentioned above, these figures would exclude those American Indians exclusively enrolled in noncredit and/or remedial classes and may even exclude non-degree seeking students. Appendices A and B provide fall headcount enrollment data reported by TCUs to IPEDS for American Indian students and all students from 1998-99 through 2001-02.

American Indian Enrollment in TCUs



Source: IPEDS Peer Analysis System

Attendance Status by Gender, Fall 2002

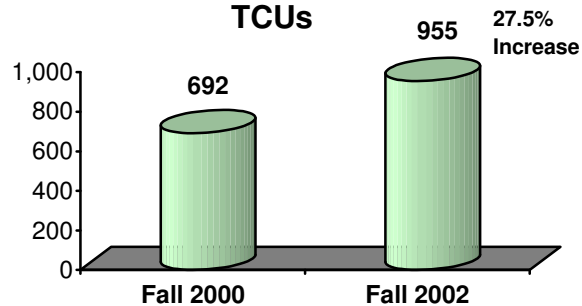


Source: IPEDS Peer Analysis System

Recent High School Graduates

TCUs appear to be rapidly increasing their enrollments of 1st Time, 1st Year Students who graduated from high school in the past 12 months. This rate of growth is a remarkable 27.5 percent from Fall 2000 to Fall 2002. While data fidelity may also be an issue here, this data is encouraging because it may signal that recent campus enhancements, such as new buildings, and the associated increased visibility of TCUs in local communities will bring larger numbers of young students. Appendix C depicts the numbers of very recent high school graduates that TCUs have reported to IPEDS.

Recent High School Graduates at TCUs

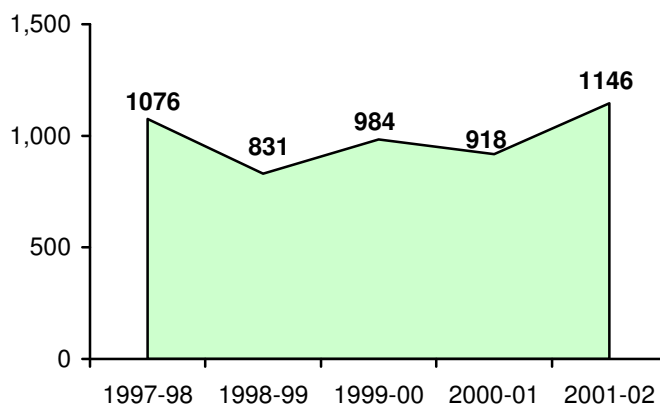


Source: IPEDS Peer Analysis System

Completions

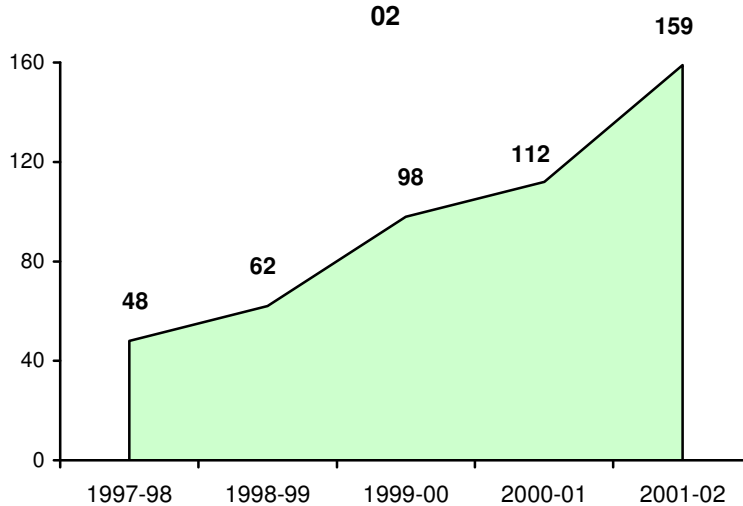
Unlike enrollment data, completions data are usually unambiguous. TCUs generate more than 1,000 academic degrees each year, mainly at the Associate's level. Subsequent figures display the types of Associate and Bachelor's degrees awarded in 2001-02. While the number of Associate degrees reported to IPEDS appears variable over the past five years, the number of Bachelor's degrees awarded has increased more than three-fold indicating that there is an expanding market for these programs, and more of the TCUs offer 4-year degree programs. Appendix G and J provide the underlying data for each TCU.

Associate Degrees Awarded, 1997-98 to 2001-02



Source: IPEDS Peer Analysis System

Bachelor's Degrees Awarded, 1997-98 to 2001-02

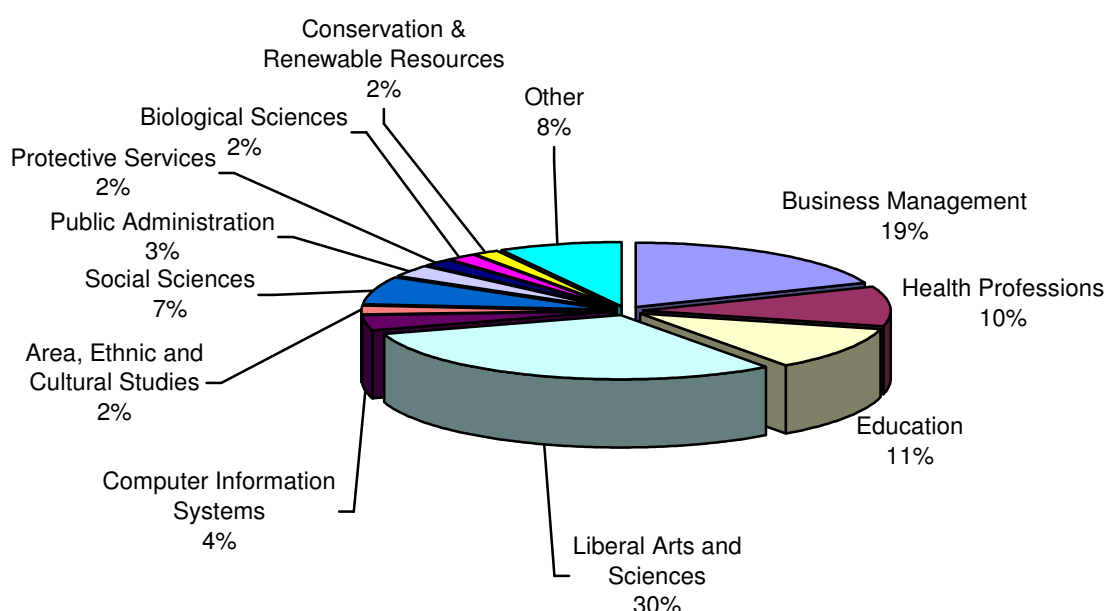


Source: IPEDS Peer Analysis System

Associate Degrees Awarded by Major

About a third of Associate degrees are generated in the liberal arts and science areas can lead to transfer or entrance into a baccalaureate program. Business management attracts the next largest share of enrollment followed by health professions and education. Assumedly, the education Associate degrees are a result of the new provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act that mandates two-year degrees for teacher aides. The remainder of the degrees awarded by TCUs is arrayed both in traditional career and specialized academic programs and areas. Appendix H displays Associate degree awards by Classification of Instructional Program areas reported to IPEDS by TCUs.

Associate Degrees Awarded by Area, 2002

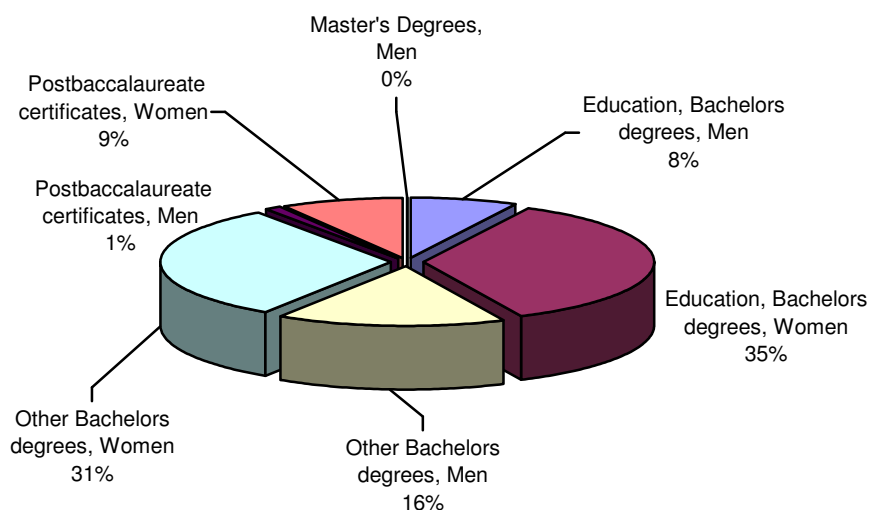


Source: IPEDS Peer Analysis System

Bachelor's and Higher Degrees Awarded

TCU's awarded 159 Bachelor's degrees, 18 post-Bachelor's certificates, and 2 Master's degrees in 2001-02. The figure for Master's degree is considerably lower than previous year's reports to IPEDS and is undoubtedly an anomaly. The demand for higher degrees as illustrated appears large. Twelve (12) TCUs offer degrees beyond an Associate degree. The trend in female enrollments results in larger proportions of females earning degrees at all levels. Appendix J depicts the distribution of Bachelors and higher awards reported by TCUs for the 2001-2002 year.

TCU Bachelor Degrees and Higher Awarded by Area, 2002

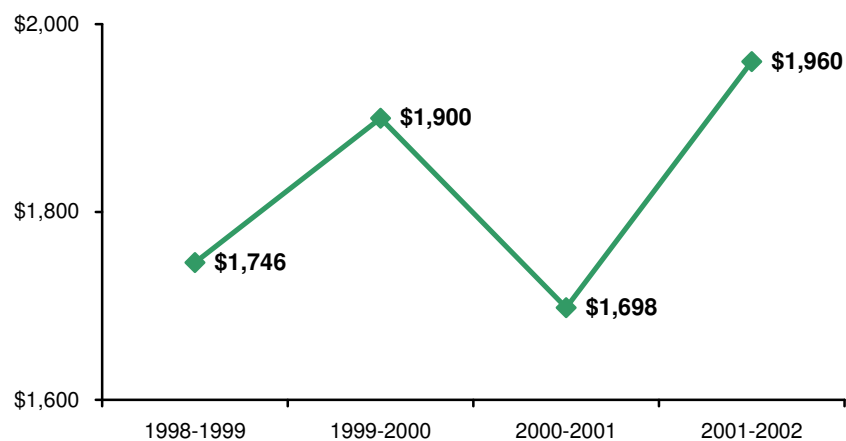


Source: IPEDS Peer Analysis System

Tuition Charges

To meet operating costs, TCUs reluctantly charge tuition. The chart below is influenced by missing data elements and reporting misinterpretations for 2000-01 (Appendix K). If that year is ignored, however, it appears that tuition is steadily increasing at TCUs and approaches the 2002-2003 national average, \$1,957, for community college tuition (Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2003).

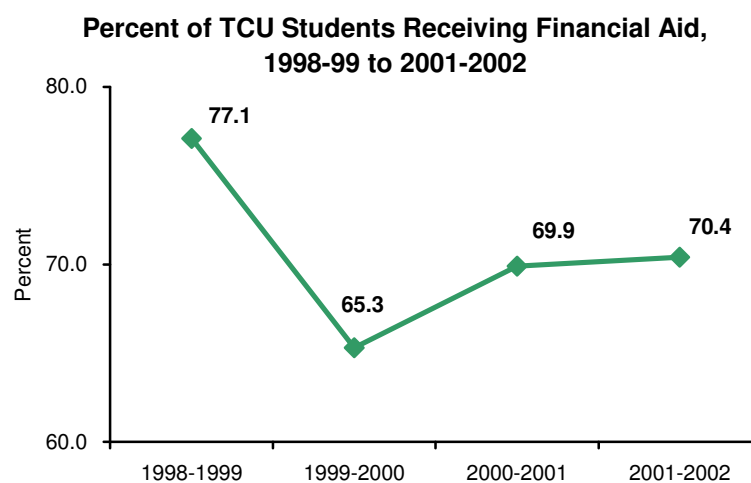
Tuition Charges at TCUs, 1998-99 to 2001-2002



Source: IPEDS Peer Analysis System

Student Financial Aid

The offset to tuition charges has been financial aid. It is widely reported that 85 percent of TCU students live at or below the poverty line, based on the demographic data available from the U.S. Census. A national study (Boylan, Bonham, & Bliss, 1994) of community college remedial students--those students who typically are the poorest of all community college students--suggests that about 40 percent of all community college students receive some form of financial aid, a statistic that is significantly lower than those reported by TCUs in the chart below. It is important also to know that TCUs do not participate in federal student loan programs because they do not want their students to incur unmanageable debt arising from their enrollment, and in addition, there are penalties for high institutional default rates that would affect their ability to retain other federal grants. Since postgraduate job opportunities are often limited on reservations, this general policy appears to be prudent. At the same time, such a stance makes it even more critical that TCUs are able to raise scholarship dollars to assist students who otherwise could not afford to attend.



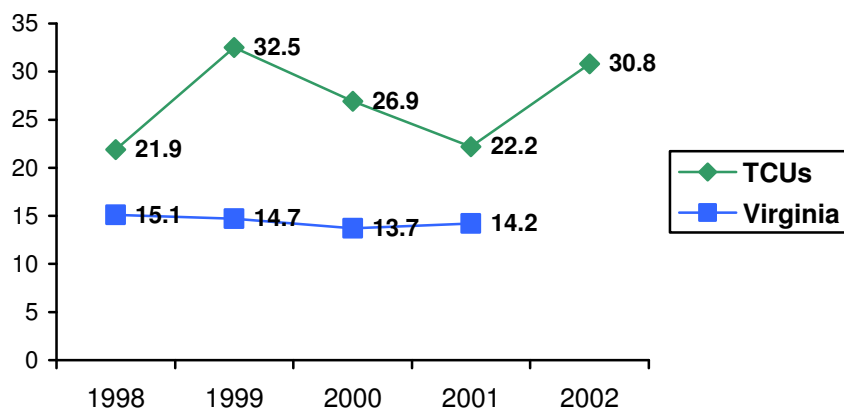
Source: IPEDS Peer Analysis System

Graduation Rate Surveys

Each year the federal government collects information on the graduation rate of students. Known alternatively as "Student-Right-to-Know" or "Graduation Rate Surveys" this data is collected by IPEDS, however, these surveys require sophistication in cohort analysis techniques. Basically, this exercise asks colleges to determine whether a cohort of first-time, full-time, degree seeking students has graduated, transferred, or persisted during a specific time period. For 2-year colleges, this length of time is 3 years. Thus the data reported for 1998 are based on a cohort of students who entered TCUs in the Fall of 1995. Similarly, the 2001 data are for the 1998 cohort.

Graduation Rate Surveys data are often used to gauge retention rates although several technical issues have prevented community colleges from fully embracing the Graduation Rate Surveys in this way. The chart below and accompanying data (Appendix M) illustrate the difficulty that TCUs experience in amassing and reporting these data. If these data are to be believed, however, they compare favorably to statewide community college data. The Southern Regional Educational Board for instance reports statewide graduation rates among its constituent states ranging between 5 percent for Louisiana and 30 percent for Florida (SREB, 2003). The chart below compares reported TCU Graduation Rate Surveys data to those statewide community college data reported by the State of Virginia. It appears that TCU Graduation Rate Surveys data are increasing in quality although they still remain unstable. Improvement in capacity to use cohort-based research will increase the quality of this information in succeeding years.

Graduation Rate Survey Data, TCUs and Virginia Community Colleges



Summary

The ability to design and execute research projects at the local level will be key to Indian college's ability to seek and renew regional accreditation and to meet new challenges issued by the federal government. The North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, for example, now requires each accredited and candidate institution to have in place a method for assessing student learning. Other regional accrediting associations require similar, data-driven activities which provide evidence of institutional effectiveness. In these paradigms, the student, and her or his outcomes occurring as a result of their educational experience becomes the focus for analysis.

Many, but not all, TCUs will need substantial assistance to meet their informational challenges. It is probable that the human resource capacity to meet these goals now exists in some institutions. However, in general, the availability of this expertise and the technological capability of institutions to execute intensive data collection, analysis, and reporting are presently lacking. Further, no single software or hardware standard has been established for tribal institutions, meaning that student record data probably are incompatible across institutions and not easily exchanged or aggregated for research purposes. A critical first step therefore is to inventory the systems now in place.

A steering committee consisting of representative TCU presidents and experts from the higher education accountability community would help to guide national efforts to increase capacity. Additionally, staff from Indian colleges who possess expertise in institutional research will be added. This committee will be charged with developing strategies to increase individual institutional capacity. Serving as an advisory committee to project staff, this steering committee would meet twice in the first year to review project progress. Members would also be expected to disseminate information about the project once they return from meetings and to advocate its utility for fundraising.

Regional training of TCU personnel would bolster efforts to gather, analyze, and report data. Institutional research skills cannot be developed in one or two days. Indeed, these skills are best developed over a period of years. However, focused training in survey research, cohort tracking, and defining data can create a cadre of expertise. Additionally, it is possible that targeted training from NCES or the Association for Institutional Research would help to develop new expertise for TCUs. Two major training needs are forecast at this juncture, documentation of student learning--as required by accreditation agencies--and cohort tracking to improve analyses of how students' enrollment patterns.

Positioning TCUs to increase their capacity in student learning outcomes would include measurement strategies, instrumentation, survey methodology, and research design. Accrediting bodies have provided considerable leeway in assessing student learning and no effort will be made by project staff to force a "one size fits all" system across all TCUs. At the same time, accrediting agencies demand that institutions engage in efforts to measure student learning. Accordingly, the focus will be on developing further capacity to meet both internal research questions and mandates of external agencies.

Cohort tracking involves the identification of groups of students so that changes in their status can be monitored over time. The results of cohort tracking in the form of retention and graduation rates are now required by IPEDS, so that these techniques should not be totally new ground.

Cohort tracking also has other utility within the institutions including follow-up of program completers, program leavers, and, subsequently, for estimating student flow within the institution. Potential training in this area could dovetail with both the establishment of student unit record data systems and with knowledge of

survey research methodology. Follow-up of former students and procedures for ensuring representative information from graduates and other students who leave TCUs is critical. Lack of telephone service, poor transportation, and mobility of graduates to other locations makes student follow-up a special challenge for Indian colleges. Nonetheless, when the historically low employment rates in reservation communities are factored, cohort methodologies can be used to more fully portray the successes of TCUs.

Were the strategies above in place when this report was developed, the quality and quantity of data reported would be vastly improved. Still, taken as a whole and interpreted judiciously, these data illuminate heretofore undocumented parameters about the World in which tribal colleges and universities operate. While confusion continues about TCU enrollments owing to methodology and purposes for which enrollment data are collected, this report suggests that enrollments at TCUs are larger than is commonly believed. Simply, existing federal systems do not collect all enrollments. Were these data reporting systems expanded to include non-credit, remedial, and perhaps non-degree seeking enrollment, a more accurate picture would emerge.

In the main, this report demonstrates that, collectively, TCUs are dynamic enterprises. Enrollment of recent high school graduates is increasing dramatically as is the number of American Indians completing baccalaureate or higher programs at TCUs. TCUs are making progress on the front end and progress on the back end. Part of this progress can be linked to the considerable effort to improve campus facilities over the past five years.

This report also points to the critical need to expand external financial aid to students. The average tuition charge at TCUs is virtually identical to the national average. Because of inadequate federal funding, TCUs have been forced to charge this level of tuition to some of the poorest students in American higher education. It is clear that TCUs are not a bargain for American Indian students. The difference between tuition charges and student resources needs to be met if more students are to enroll and succeed. Remarkably, more than 3 of 4 TCU students are eligible for financial aid, a proportion that is considerably higher than students at mainstream colleges.

An important use of data at TCUs is in the area documenting student outcomes. This is a challenging analytical task even for institutions that have abundant staff and resources to devote to analyzing outcomes. The most visible outcomes process for all colleges is the Graduation Rate Survey. Building the capacity to develop student outcome data will benefit TCUs in a number of ways, especially as demands to demonstrate outcomes and not simply inputs is now the clarion call for all of higher education.

References

- American Indian College Fund (2002). Cultivating Success (2002). A Survey Conducted by the Harder and Company. Denver Colorado: The American Indian College Fund.
- Boylan, H. R., Bonham, B. S., & Bliss, L. B. (1994). Who are the developmental students? *Research in Developmental Education*, 11(2).
- Southern Regional Education Board (2003). Data Library: Retention, Graduation and Progression Rates in Public Universities, Colleges, and Technical Institutes or Colleges.
<http://www.sreb.org/main/EdData/DataLibrary/03/highered/graduates/FB38.xls>
- U. S. Department of Education (2002). Digest of Education Statistics. Washington, D. C: National Center for Education Statistics.
<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2003/digest02/>
- Virginia Community College System (2003). Student Retention and Graduation Rates. Richmond, VA: VCCS.
<http://www.vccs.edu/vccsasr/Research/retention.htm>
- Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board (2003). 2002-03 Washington State Tuition and Fee Report. Olympia, WA: WHECB.
<http://www.hecb.wa.gov/research/issues/tuition.asp>

List of Appendices
Tribal College and University Student Data

Note: these appendices accompanied the final report. All are in Excel format. For PDF copies, [email](#) the Voorhees Group.

- A. Total Enrollments, 1998 to 2002
- B. Part-Time and Full-Time Enrollments, 1998 to 2002
- C. 1st Time, 1st Year Students Graduated from High School in the Past 12 Months, 2000 and 2002
- D. General Education Development (GED) Completers, 1998-1999 to 2000-2001
- E. Credit and Contact Hours Generated, 1998 to 2002
- F. Major Field of Study, 2002
- G. Completions, 1998 to 2002
- H. Associate Degrees Awarded by Major, 2002
- I. One-Year and Less than One-Year Certificates Awarded, 2002
- J. Bachelor's and Higher Degrees Awarded, 2002
- K. Tuition Charges, 1998 to 2002
- L. Financial Aid, 1998 to 2002
- M. Graduation Rate Surveys, 1998 to 2002
- N. Programs Offered, 1998-1999 to 2000-2001