



Written Testimony of Dr. Robert Martin
New Mexico Tribal College Consortium
Fiscal Year 2019 State of New Mexico Legislative
Priorities

Before the
New Mexico Legislative Finance
Committee
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INTRODUCTION

Good Afternoon Madam Chair, Mr. Vice Chair and Members of the Legislative Finance Committee. Thank you for providing the New Mexico Tribal College Consortium an opportunity to present before you. I am representing the New Mexico Tribal College Consortium, which includes four tribal colleges located in New Mexico. Diné College is the first tribally chartered and operated college and operates as a liberal arts college. The Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA) is Congressionally---chartered with a focus on the creative arts. The Navajo Technical University (NTU) is a higher education institution focusing on STEM degree and vocational education programs. The Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI) is operated by the Bureau of Indian Education and concentrates on vocational, technical and liberal arts

Tribal colleges have received support from the State of New Mexico for capital projects and dual credit programs. Thank you for the General Obligation Bond (GO Bond) funding approved by the voters in November. The following are the consortium priorities as well as individual tribal college capital outlay funding requests.

NEW MEXICO TRIBAL COLLEGE CONSORTIUM PRIORITIES

High School Dual Credit Reimbursement Funding

The tribal colleges currently have approximately 1100 students enrolled in its high school dual credit program and has agreements with 25 school districts. We are requesting **\$300,000** in recurring funding for the Tribal College High School Dual Credit Program. The three participating tribal colleges received \$270,000 in dual credit reimbursement funding in FY18. The recurring portion of this amount is \$200,000 with \$70,000 added by the legislature. This amount is greatly appreciated but falls short in addressing the increasing high school dual credit enrollments at each of the tribal colleges – representing less than 50% of the amounts each college should receive.

It is well documented that American Indian students have one of the lowest high school graduation and participation rates in higher education of any ethnic groups in the United States. Since a large proportion of Native Americans are first-generation college students, the opportunity to earn college credits in high school has a huge impact in increasing matriculation to higher education institutions and promoting college success by improving retention, persistence and graduation rates.

Participation in the New Mexico Lottery Scholarship Program

The tribal colleges in New Mexico are again requesting your support for participation in the New Mexico Lottery Scholarship program. As you know, students attending tribal colleges are ineligible for the Lottery Scholarship, discouraging them from studying programs and courses offered close to home and from a unique Native perspective. Both factors are essential in increasing student retention and graduation rates for Native students.

Twenty-five state colleges, and universities (including branch campuses) are eligible for student New Mexico lottery scholarships. Tribal colleges are the only public higher education institutions in the state excluded from this program.

It is estimated that given the current enrollment at NM tribal colleges, very few students are eligible for the lottery scholarship because they are enrolled already in the institutions where they will receive the scholarship. Moreover, given the lower tuition at the tribal colleges, tribal college students participating in the Lottery Scholarship Program would be essentially revenue neutral.

SIPI is operated and funded by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and neither charges tuition nor admits non-Indian students and would not participate in the Lottery Scholarship Program.

New Mexico Research and Public Service Project Funding

The Consortium is requesting \$400,000 in New Mexico Research and Public Service Project (RPSP) funding to increase the number of Native American students from New Mexico who enroll and graduate from an institution of higher education. The three-part project will be carried out by the four tribal colleges, including the following:

1. Raising awareness in New Mexico Tribal Communities regarding the available college degree programs and dual credit courses at the four tribal colleges;
2. Expanding College Readiness programs (also known as Summer Bridge Programs) at each of the Tribal Colleges in the consortium so that they will provide additional academic support, and further prepare high school students for college; and
3. Convening a College Readiness Conference aimed at New Mexico Tribal Educators, Tribal Leaders, and parents to help them prepare Native American youth for college.

If funded, this RPSP project would complement student success initiatives already occurring on our campuses. For example, IAIA recently implemented the “15 to Finish Program” that created financial incentives to encourage students to complete their degrees in a timely fashion – four years instead of five or more. A senior year tuition and book fee waiver will be awarded to students who maintain satisfactory

progress over four years by completing 15 credits per semester.

In addition, the theme for a new comprehensive student success initiative is “Pathways: Completing the Circle” (the Circle is a common Native symbol representing students enrolling at IAIA, successfully achieving academic goals and returning home to be of service to their communities). This initiative engages the entire IAIA community in supporting student retention, persistence and completion. It includes strategies focusing on increasing financial resources through scholarships, accelerating progress through developmental and general education courses, enhancing early alert systems and improving class attendance

TRIBAL COLLEGE CAPITAL OUTLAY PROJECTS REQUEST

Institute of American Indian Arts

The Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA) is requesting **\$275,000** in Capital Outlay Projects funding from the State of New Mexico through the 2019 Severance Tax Bond to assist with infrastructure upgrades and replacements. The total cost of the proposed project is \$307,307 with IAIA providing \$32,307 in additional in-kind services.

The first project is replacing IAIA’s eighteen-year-old telephone system in which replacement parts are no longer available. The age of the system has made it difficult, if not impossible, to complete simple tasks, such as entering new employees into the telephone system and changing telephone extensions. In addition, voicemails have been lost and conference calls either dropped or not connected at all. **(\$150,000)**

The second is replacing of the Information Technology (IT) fiber infrastructure, which was installed during the 2000 campus construction. While we have purchased additional capacity for the Internet through our carrier, the fiber is nearing the end of its life and must be replaced before catastrophic failure of the system occurs. **(\$65,000)**

The third is the re-stuccoing the 40,000 square foot Academic Building with 1700 yards of STO brown coat, primer coat, and color coat. The building is home to the Studio Arts faculty and their courses (painting, drawing, jewelry, ceramics, photography, and the Fabrication Laboratory and the Balzer Primitive Edge Gallery that holds student exhibits open to the public. Only minor repairs have been made to the building since it was completed in 2000. There are multiple, large cracks in the plaster and the stucco is fading. The cracks expose the building to further damage, and it is imperative that they be addressed. **(92,307)**

Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute

SIPI is requesting \$938,219 for campus infrastructure upgrades. The first project is to plan, design, construct and upgrade failing and aging sewer infrastructure across the campus (\$797,459). The second project is to upgrade and renovate emergency lighting and fire alarm and suppression systems campus wide **(\$140,459)**.

Navajo Technical University

Navajo Technical University is requesting **\$750,000** for Planning, Architectural & Engineering and Site Prep for a 15,000SF expansion of the existing Trades Academic Building on the Crownpoint campus. NTU has secured the funding for the construction but needs funding for the Planning, Architectural & Engineering and Site Prep. Programs housed in the building include Welding, Construction Technologies and Electrical Trades.

This expansion will address Safety, Security and ADA issues in the current facility. The current facility is not ADA compliant and this will be corrected. Due to Welding and Construction Trades Instructional activities the current air-handling system is inadequate. This will be corrected. Security Cameras and swipe card door access will also be included in the expansion."

CONCLUSION

Thank you for allowing the Consortium to present our priorities for the upcoming legislative session. I express gratitude to Dr. Barbara Damron, Cabinet Secretary for the Higher Education Department, for her support and assistance of the tribal colleges. Due to her values of inclusiveness and diversity, we have participated in the Department's Capital Projects Hearings, Articulation and Transfer and Common Course Numbering Committees, developmental education reforms, and the State-wide Strategic Plan. Again, thank you for your support. Each tribal college extends a standing invitation to visit our campuses. Representatives from the tribal colleges are available to answer any of your questions.