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A Qualitative Study of Tribal Colleges and Universities that have Transitioned:
From Two-Year Associate Degree Granting Institutions to Targeted Four-Year Bachelor Degree
Granting Institutions

By:
Lynette Chandler

B. A. Degree: Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana, 2000

M.A.: Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana, 2003

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Dean of the Graduate School
Perry Brown

Co-chair: Dean Roberta Evans
Phyllis J. Washington College of Education and Human Sciences

Co-chair: Dr. Frances O'Reilly
Phyllis J. Washington College of Education and Human Sciences

Dr. John Matt
Phyllis J. Washington College of Education and Human Sciences

Dr. William McCaw
Phyllis J. Washington College of Education and Human Sciences

Dr. Darrell Stolle
Phyllis J. Washington College of Education and Human Sciences

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ABSTRACT

Chandler, Lynette K., Ed.D,

August 2010

Educational Leadership

A Qualitative Study of Tribal Colleges and Universities that have Transitioned:
From Two-Year Associate Degree Granting Institutions to Targeted Four-Year Bachelor Degree
Granting Institutions

Co-Chairpersons: Roberta D. Evans, Ed.D. and Frances O'Reilly, Ed.D.

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to analyze how tribal colleges and Universities have transitioned from two-year associate degree granting institutions to offering four-year bachelor degree granting institutions. This case study includes three tribal colleges: Sitting Bull College, Salish Kootenai College and Turtle Mountain Community College. These colleges were selected to provide a solid cross section of the ten TCUs that have developed four-year degree programs while keeping the research bounded by the Northwest boundary of the United States. This research was framed by the central question: What is the process that selected two year associate degree offering TCUs used to develop specifically targeted four-year baccalaureate degree programs? The following six sub-questions were used: 1. Why are there so few examples of TCUs offering four-year baccalaureate degrees? 2. Why is it important for TCUs to offer a baccalaureate degree in addition to the associate degrees? 3. Is the desire to offer baccalaureate degrees only present in some TCUs or do all TCUs have this desire? 4. What has compelled these institutions to be among the first of the TCUs to make the transition from offering only two-year associate degrees to targeted baccalaureate degrees? 5. How has offering a targeted four-year degree by a TCU helped its students and community? 6. Are American Indian students more successful at TCUs, than at mainstream institutions, when seeking a four-year degree in a targeted area of study?

The researcher organized the data collection according to patterns, consistencies, memoing, coding theme and selected vignettes to reflect the data. The researcher interviewed and transcribed the interviews based on the sub-questions and interview questions.

Three key themes emerged from the analyses of the data. They are: 1. Student needs were the driving factor for each TCU in making the decision to transition to offering a targeted four-year baccalaureate degree(s). 2. The TCU was responding to an identified community need for certain skills within that particular community. 3. Leadership and the resources available at the time of the inception of the newly formed targeted four-year degree(s) were also a common element in the responses to the interview questions.

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First and foremost I would like to thank the participants in this study for their trust in me as a researcher and as someone who would hold their stories and honor their stories with integrity. Sharing in their hard work and dedication to their community and students has enriched my life.

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To my committee, I thank you for your willingness to work with me and guide me through this process. I appreciate the time you have taken out of your lives to make this possible.

To Fort Belknap College I thank the President Carole Falcon-Chandler, the administration and staff for allowing me the time needed to work on my doctorate degree and dissertation. Their support and encouragement made all the difference in providing the opportunity for me to obtain my degree.

To the American Indian College Fund I thank Rick Williams, the organization and staff for supporting me throughout the dissertation process. I believe it is people and organizations like the American Indian College Fund, that make it possible for American Indian students to complete their journeys while improving their lives and the lives in their communities.

To my husband Sean Chandler you have made this doctoral journey with me, side by side through all of our classes, projects, research and writing. I could not have done this without your encouragement, support and patience. You truly are my partner in all things.

Finally, to my family, I must say thank you to my mother for driving me to all of my research sites, being there to support me throughout my education and staying with my daughters in the summers so I could attend classes. To my father for his guidance, being a role model to me and also for instilling in me the dream to make the world a better place. To my in laws, the Chandlers, for taking care of my children so that I could finish this journey. To my grandmother Naomi Longfox for being a strong woman and encouraging me to strive forward and succeed. To my sisters for being my shoulders to lean on through my struggles and keep cheering me on.. To my daughters Wozek and Serena who were understanding of the time I spent away from them while going to class, researching and writing; know I will be there for you when you both begin your higher education.

CHAPTER ONE

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) were started over 40 years ago by the American Indian (indigenous) communities in the United States. According to Barden, “The mission statements that guide TCUs stem from their unique native/indigenous communities’ history and cultural traditions; consequently, the activities supported by TCUs are aimed at meeting their communities’ varied needs” (as cited in Benham & Stein, 2003, p. 99).

Fort Belknap College (FBC), for example states in its mission statement that the college will “promote and protect the cultural integrity of the Gros Ventre and Assiniboine tribes” (FBC Catalog, p. 3). All of the Tribal Colleges have similar mission statements that reflect their specific cultural characteristics and their local communities.

Barden further stated, “At the local level, a community usually means a geographically identifiable place that is occupied by a number of people and that has a social, kinship, within or near the boundaries of reservations” (as cited in Benham & Stein, 2003, p. 101). Each TCU in the United States was begun by a small cadre of community members (American Indian and non-Indian) of that reservation for American Indian community members of a reservation; TCUs now also serve surrounding areas and include non-Native student populations.

The Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, or Howard Wheeler Act as it is also known, permitted tribes to form tribal governments and incorporate as business corporations (Fleming, 2003, p. 205). Tribal governments were recognized as having the right to exercise all inherent existing powers. Treaties were signed nation to nation between the United States and a host of American Indian tribal nations, which recognized the tribes as sovereign entities within the

United States. Inherent powers included recognition of a tribe's right to choose its own form of government, the right to define the conditions for tribal citizenship, and the power to regulate and dispose of tribal property (Wilkins, 2002). The Reorganization Act established tribal governments somewhat similar to state governments and these tribal governments are now permanent in nature (Benham & Stein, 2003, p. 101).

A very important policy period in the history of the United States for American Indians was established by the Self Determination Act of 1975. It was during this era (late 1960s and early 70s) that American Indians became active in politics, which brought about positive changes for American Indian people in the United States. The ultimate goal of the Self Determination Act was for tribes to administer all of their own programs, but only when they became ready to do so (Flemming, 2003, p. 221). This was a step to regain strengthened sovereignty that had been severely eroded by the federal government through court proceedings and precedent law over much of the previous 100 years.

Problem Statement

Non-native mainstream institutions of higher education have traditionally not served the American Indian population of the United States well over the past two hundred years. Furthermore, even as the mainstream higher education institutions have worked hard over the last several decades to increase minority participation in their institutions, American Indians continue to experience low retention rates and low graduation rates. Examples are that in 1997-1998 American Indians received only .6% of the bachelor's degrees, .5% of the master's degrees, and .4 % of the doctoral degrees awarded in the United States (Benham & Stein, 2003, p. 217). Unlike mainstream non-native institutions TCUs have become a central place for tribal

community members to fulfill their desire of achieving a better life through educational attainment.

American Indian students who began at tribal colleges were 75% more successful when transferring to 4 year institutions and completing a degree. Pavel et al's (1998) research indicated that students who transferred from tribal colleges had a 75 percent greater completion rate than those Native students who went directly into the four-year university system (Pavel et al, 1998). Also, in a study of high school students in 1987 Sanders found that a high dropout rate was associated with a "growing feeling of isolation, rejection and anxiety felt by American Indian children as they confront the incompatibility of their cultural value system with that of their Anglo American classmate" (p. 81). That feeling at the high school level more likely is still a variable that effects the college age American Indian student. More recent studies show this same statistics that approximately 64% of American Indians who complete high school enroll in postsecondary education. However, the document "The Demographics of American Indians" (Hodgkinson, 1990) also suggested that as many as 75% of American Indians who begin college leave prior to graduation (Hoover & Jacobs, 1992, p. 1).

In a world economy it is incumbent on the United States to increase educational opportunities for all segments of society. Not only will the U.S. workers, goods and services being in competition with other U.S. businesses and organizations but with other countries work forces (Schweke, 2004). Without the benefit of 4year degree programs individuals (both American Indian and Non-American Indian) will have fewer and fewer employment opportunities in the 21st Century. With more four-year programs being available at TCUs it will give more American Indian students more vocational opportunities than they now have closer to their home communities. Not all students can uproot their family to move to where a four year

college or university is located. Therefore if TCUs were to offer more 4 year programs, more native students would have access, and then have more options for careers and employment for the future.

The centrality of TCUs for American Indian college students relates to the fact that the TCU system supports their cultural and social kinship system. Richly diverse and complex, American Indian extended-family networks are different from those of nonminority nuclear families (Brown & Robinson-Kurpius, 1997, p. 3). Students often associate a feeling of isolation when moving away from reservation communities. The expectation for them to take care of themselves without relying on strangers often exacerbates their feelings of isolation, and the valuing of cooperation over competition can place them at a disadvantage in an environment where grades are awarded according to the bell curve (Brown & Robinson-Kurpius, 1997, p. 3). This coupled with the severely different economic background many American Indian college students come from makes it very difficult for American Indian students to adjust to mainstream academic life in universities.

Another factor influencing American Indian college student dropout rates and success revolves around their experience at mainstream institutions and academic performance. Gloria and Robinson-Kurpius reported that a minority student's sense of cultural fit within the university environment significantly effected a sense of belonging and desire to stay in school (Brown & Robinson-Kurpius, 1997, p. 4). There are racial discrimination factors as well that influence an American Indian student's desire to stay and persist in a mainstream institution. Explicit and implicit racism compounds feelings of isolation and alienation (Brown & Robinson-Kurpius, 1997, p. 10). The concept of "fight or flight" is relevant to each American Indian student's reaction to their success or lack thereof. Too many American Indian students flee,

rather than fight racism in the university environment (Brown & Robinson-Kurpius, 1997, p. 10). The aforementioned reasons are often why American Indian college students drop out of mainstream four-year institutions of higher education and return home to their reservations.

Tribal Colleges are able to help alleviate these feelings of isolation and rejection because of their geographic locations: located on reservations. Tribal Colleges value the role of family and community in Indian students' lives and provide flexible support for students who have family or tribal obligations and offer personal and cultural growth courses through an explicitly American Indian-oriented curriculum and environments. (Voorhees, 2004, p. 5)

The need for a bridge between mainstream four-year institutions of higher education and tribal communities is one of the most important reasons for TCU movement beginning in 1968.

TCU's graduates have expressed desires to continue their successes and to seek 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. (Voorhees, 2004 p. 5)

There is a clear need for TCUs to expand and offer specifically targeted baccalaureate degrees in many TCUs, however, currently there are only eight TCUs out of thirty-five in the United States that offer specifically targeted four-year degree programs. All TCUs offer two-year associate degrees and are spread widely across the western United States making it very difficult for a TCU student from one college to make use of a four-year degree program at another TCU that has such a program.

The Eight TCUs (Sinte Gleska University, Oglala Lakota College, Haskell Indian Nations University, Salish Kootenai College, Turtle Mountain Community College, Si Tanka University, Institute of American Indian Arts, and Dine College) that have instituted specifically targeted

baccalaureate programs have done so in such disciplines as human resources, social sciences, arts, business, American Indian studies, education, sciences and nursing (AIHEC, report 1996, p. 64).

There is definitely a need for this type of study [qualitative study describing the process of two-year Tribal Colleges transitioning to four-year baccalaureate colleges] I haven't seen an in depth study of this nature [qualitative multiple case study]. The only thing I've seen is tribal college presidents talking about the barriers at meetings (Billy, C., personal communication, April 3, 2007).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore and describe the choices and paths taken by three TCUs that have developed specifically targeted four-year degree programs. The three TCUs have been chosen because they are among the first to develop targeted four-year baccalaureate degree programs. The study will be conducted in a natural setting and develop a level of detail about the individual and place that are the focus of the study. The researcher will also seek involvement of the participants in the data collection and to build rapport and credibility with the individuals in the study (Creswell, 2003, p. 181).

This study will focus on and describe the process of the following three TCUs in the western United States that have developed successful targeted four-year degree programs, Salish Kootenai College (SKC), Sitting Bull College (SBC), and Turtle Mountain Community College (TMCC). The multiple case study will provide information to assist other TCUs in their efforts to develop targeted four-year baccalaureate degree programs.

Selecting these three TCUs provides a solid cross section of the ten TCUs that have developed four-year degree program(s). By selecting SKC, TMCC, and SBC the research will be

able to focus on the first TCUs to develop a four-year degree program(s), Salish Kootenai College, which is among the first group of TCUs to develop a targeted four-year degree program; Turtle Mountain Community College, a TCU that came several years later with a four-year targeted degree program, and Sitting Bull College one of the most recent TCU to develop a four-year degree program(s).

Sinte Gleska University and Oglala Lakota College were the first two TCUs to develop four-year degree programs in the early 1990's, and were soon followed by Salish Kootenai College and Haskell Indian Nations University.

There are now ten TCUs that have developed four-year degree programs including the four mentioned above. Each developed its four-year degree program based on a specific targeted need in their community. Each TCU, which has developed a four-year degree program, did so keeping in mind that such an undertaking would use valuable fiscal resources; thus the targeted approach when developing their four-year degree program(s) rather than expanding their total curriculum into four-year degree programs.

The selection of Salish Kootenai College, Turtle Mountain Community College, and Sitting Bull College for the study was based on several facts. a) All ten of the TCUs used the same criteria for deciding to go forward with the development of a four-year degree program(s). Each decided on the basis of a real need within their community that was not being met by outside higher education institutions; b) each chose to invest limited fiscal resources based on that targeted need; and c) each continues to monitor the four-year degree program(s) based on student participation when evaluating the continued need for the program.

By selecting SKC, TMCC, and SBC the researcher will be able to focus on one of the first TCUs to develop a four-year degree program(s), SKC ; one of the TCUs that came several

years later, TMCC; and one of the most recent to develop a four-year degree program(s), SBC. Selecting these three provide a solid cross section of the ten TCUs that have developed four-year degree program(s) while keeping the research bounded by the Northwest boundary of the United States.

Central Question

The central question for this qualitative study is: What is the process that selected two-year associate degree offering TCUs used to develop specifically targeted four-year baccalaureate degree programs?

Sub-questions

1. Why are there so few examples of TCUs offering four-year baccalaureate degrees?
2. Why is it important for TCUs to offer a baccalaureate degree in addition to the associate degrees?
3. Is the desire to offer baccalaureate degrees only present in some TCUs or do all TCUs have this desire?
4. What has compelled these institutions to be among the first of the TCUs to make the transition from offering only two-year associate degrees to targeted baccalaureate degrees?
5. How has offering a targeted four-year degree by a TCU helped its students and community?
6. Are American Indian students more successful at TCUs, than at mainstream institutions, when seeking a four-year degree in a targeted area of study?

Limitations of the Study

The limitations or conditions outside the investigator's control that affect data collection include the following:

1. The completeness of the interviews with the administrators, and those that are suggested as collaborators in the initial process of transition, will be dependent on their willingness to share their experiences, successes, difficulties, and barriers they eventually overcame.
2. The "Hawthorne Effect" may influence the participants' responses.
3. Variations in resources (economic, community good will) available to the institution being studied may differ from TCU to TCU.

Delimitations of the Study

The delimitations are the boundaries purposely put on the study, usually to narrow it for research ability. The focus of this particular multiple case study is bound by place and time to the western region of the United States where the TCUs are located. The three chosen TCUs are among the oldest of the tribal colleges founded in the United States and are located in the western region. It is also specifically to the three TCUs selected, which have developed four-year baccalaureate degree programs within the last 20 years.

Significance of the Study

The findings this study will provide a model(s) for two-year associate-degree offering TCUs that aspire to develop targeted four-year baccalaureate degree programs. The information could also have a positive impact on the future of the TCU movement by documenting the successes of those TCUs that have developed four-year degree programs. Therefore, it is imperative that a multiple case study such as this be completed to ensure that multiple

perspectives, ideas and success stories are illuminated for the future success of other TCUs planning to expand their curriculum to include a targeted four-year degree programs. This study will also illustrate the steps TCUs are taking in assisting the advancement of American Indian Higher Education in the United States and elucidate some of the steps needed to continue American Indian self-determination. Stein states,

Tribal Colleges have had a major impact on indigenous communities that have suffered disease, economic collapse, war and forced acculturation and massive loss of populations. To build something worthwhile that is lasting, whether as an individual or community, one must have a working philosophy that also allows one to dream and envision a better future; for American Indian people who have suffered the ravages of colonization, this becomes especially true as they set out to build educational institutions to serve their communities. (As cited in Behnham & Stein, 2002, p. 25)

Definitions

For the purposes of this study the following terms will apply:

American Indian/Native American . A member of any of the indigenous peoples of North, South, or Central America, belonging to the Mongoloid group of peoples (Ballantine, 2001).

American Indian/Federal Government: The common definition for American Indians to be eligible for federal services requires a specific blood quantum, with one-fourth being the most widely accepted fraction (Wilkins, 2002).

Culture. The totality of socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought (Ballantine, 2001).

Indigenous. Originating and living or occurring naturally in an area or environment (Ballantine, 2001).

Tribe. A unit /socio political organization consisting of a number of families, clans or other groups who share a common ancestry and culture and among whom leadership is typically neither formalized nor permanent (Ballantine, 2001).

TCUs. American Indian/indigenous- serving higher education institutions of a post-secondary education nature (AIHEC, 2001).

Chapter Summary

As shown above, Non-native mainstream institutions of higher education have traditionally not served the American Indian population of the United States well. American Indians have experienced low retention rates and low graduation rates at mainstream higher education institutions.

Tribal Colleges and Universities are institutions that have been more successful in helping American Indian people continue their formal education after secondary schooling. The completion of their higher education enhances their tribe's sovereignty, progress, and also supports self-determination. American Indian Community members throughout the United States recognize the importance of education in the present world, thus tribes have sought to gain a positive educational experience that is culturally relevant by founding and establishing TCUs. For example, David Gipp the president of United Tribes Technical College stated These institutions provide tribal citizens with the skills they need to be vital contributors to society and to our culture," he said Tribal Colleges are a key to the renaissance in American Indian life as we save our languages and rebuild over 550 tribal nations (Gipp, 2008, p. 1).

The Tribal College Movement has grown since 1968 from just two-year institutions of higher education to today where select TCUs are expanding to offer targeted four-year degrees. This qualitative multiple case study will provide a model(s) for two-year associate-degree offering TCUs that would also like to develop targeted four-year baccalaureate degree programs. This multiple case study will also add to the body of literature, or lack thereof, in regard to an important movement in American Indian higher education. At the present time there is little research that addresses and illuminates these important and evolutionary steps for Tribal Colleges.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Related Literature

The purpose of the literature review is to provide information about TCU history and contemporary issues facing American Indian Students in Higher Education. The literature has been chosen to provide an understanding of the American Indian's place in the United States, the Tribal College Movement, the organizations supporting TCUs and the key individuals that founded the movement. The review also reflects the need for a qualitative multiple case study because there is little, or no, information provided on how to transition from a two-year degree offering TCU to a targeted four-year degree offering TCU.

Origins of the Tribal College and University System

The 1960s were an era of exciting expansion in higher education with community colleges playing a major role. Though there is a visible separation between non-Indian community colleges and TCUs, their functions are much more similar than different. Both strive to serve their communities as comprehensive institutions providing programs that respond to community and student needs. Their differences lie in funding sources, jurisdiction, and cultural factors, not educational goals. According to Stein (1992),

The founders of the TCUs deliberately chose the community college model of higher education as being most appropriate to meet their needs. Today, the TCUs and their sister non-Indian institutions generally remain separate in the political and fiscal arenas, but not in spirit. An atmosphere of educational exchange, mutual trust, and mutual appreciation does exist between the two systems (pp. 6-7).

The history of two-year colleges began early in the nineteenth century in the United States being only eight junior colleges and all of these were "private" institutions enrolling all of

300 students (Bass, 1974). The pattern of growth of the two-year community colleges during the 1960's can be directly linked to the beginnings of tribal colleges, and ultimately the increased enrollment at the four-year universities during the same time period.

The concept of “junior college” began within the University of Chicago when its President, William Rainey Harper, proposed and implemented the internal division of the University of Chicago in 1892 into two separate divisions, somewhat awkwardly called the “Academic College” and the “University College” (Bass, 1974). The names didn’t become permanent, but more importantly, his idea did become a permanent part of higher education. Harper worked for many years on this concept and Bass stated that Harper’s efforts culminated in the establishment of the first independent public junior college in Joliet, Illinois in 1903. The idea and implementation of two-year colleges then grew through the twentieth century and spread across the United States.

In 1917, California passed legislation enacting two-year junior colleges. The legislation officially adopted the name “junior college” and provided financial support for junior-college districts on the same basis as state supported high school districts throughout California (Bass, 1974, p. 51). The United States federal government then moved the process along with the passage of the 1963 Higher Education Act, which provided federal money for vocational programs in the junior colleges (now called community colleges by most communities in which they were located) that dramatically expand their higher educational opportunities and offerings.

Today there are thirty-five TCUs in the United States reaching from Alaska to Arizona to Washington and Michigan. The TCUs serve numerous American Indian tribes, but all adhere to several basic principles in their mission statements. Each has stated that the needs to preserve, enhance, and promote the language and culture of its tribe is central to its existence. TCUs serve as community centers by providing libraries, tribal archives, career centers, economic development

and business centers, public meeting places, and child and elder care centers. Despite their many obligations, functions, and notable achievements, TCUs remain the most poorly funded institutions of higher education in this country (AIHEC, 2009, p. 2). Each provides quality academic programs for students seeking two-year degrees for transfer to senior institutions and some are providing selected four-year programs. Wherever possible, each TCU provides vocational and technical programs that help assure that students can find decent jobs in their communities upon completion of their studies (Boyer, 1989, p.68).

First Generation Students

First generation students are persons who are the first in their families to seek a higher education and are often at a distinct disadvantage in gaining access to post-secondary education as shown in a study by Chen. First-generation students represented 22 percent of those who entered post secondary education between 1992-2000, indicating that first-generation students were less likely than other students to attend college within eight years after high school (Chen, 2005, p. iii.). This statistic is representative of many minority populations in the United States. American Indians are included in the minority populations or non-white population statistics according to the National Center for Education Statistics.

First generation college students are often less prepared academically for college as demonstrated by their low percentage in taking higher-level mathematics courses in high school, their lower senior achievement test scores, and their lower college entrance examination scores that often led to delayed post secondary entry (Chen, 2005, p. iv). The data points toward a need for a transitional period; community colleges can fill this roll. This data clearly demonstrates the need for community colleges and specifically in the case of American Indian TCUs.

Tribally-controlled Colleges and Universities

The founders of the Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities (TCUs) movement undertook the challenge of entering a system of education in which American Indian people had been denied input and had seen a concentrated effort by the U. S. government to eradicate all things American Indian. As a result of 200 years of federal Indian policy - including policies of termination, assimilation and relocation - many reservation residents live in conditions of poverty comparable to those found in Third World nations (AIHEC, 2008, p. 2). To counteract the U. S. government's philosophy, a small group of American Indian educators (and their non-Indian colleagues) chose the relatively new higher education community college model on which to pattern their efforts at regaining control of education for their tribal communities. The founders developed a philosophy in the late 1960s and early 1970s that would support a dual mission, protecting and enhancing their own cultures and at the same time embracing many of the tools of standard post-secondary education. TCUs continued their forty year effort of exploration, initiative, and development that began in the summer of 1968 with the founding of Navajo Community College in Tsaile, Arizona. According to Stein, Swisher and Tippeconnic (1999), TCUs can best be described as small, tenacious institutions of higher education, which serve the smallest and poorest minority group in the United States (American Indians) under difficult and challenging circumstances. TCUs are chronically under-funded, with over worked administrators, faculties, and staffs, and are viewed by the rest of American higher education with some wonder at their ability survive (Stein, Swisher & Tippeconnic, 1999, p. 259).

The initiative and development work done by the TCU presidents, Boards of Trustees, and the Native American Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC), the national organization of TCUs, has led to many innovative and productive outcomes. Two of these are:

1. The passage of PL. 103-32, the Equity in Education Land Grant Status Act of 1994, which grants land grant status to the TCUs. This important piece of legislation now helps to preserve and expand a solid agriculture, programmatic, and financial base for all TCUs (AIHEC Senate Agricultural-Development Testimony, May 31, 1995), and
2. Executive Orders signed by Presidents Clinton and Bush which is an important reminder that the TCUs are constituents of the entire federal government and are part of a larger federal mandate to American Indian education. President Clinton signed Executive Order No. 13021 on October 19, 1996 which promoted TCUs access to all federal programs and instructed those same agencies to explore ways in which they might assist TCUs carry forward their mandate to serve American Indian communities (Robbins, 2002, p. 88). On July 3, 2002, President George W. Bush signed an executive order creating two powerful new advocacy tools for TCUs, which are the President's Board of Advisers on Tribal Colleges and Universities and the White House Initiative on Tribal Colleges and Universities (Morgan, 2002).

TCU History

In order to truly understand the nature of the TCU movement one must review its history, which includes the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC), key participants within the TCUs, its structures, and its impact on tribal communities. The movement towards American Indian self-determination in the late 1960s was hastened by many earlier events such as World War II, the Civil Rights Movement, and the political policies and leadership of presidents Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon. It should, however, be noted that since the beginning of the 20th century some individuals such as August Breuninger, an American Indian, believed that American Indians should control their own educational institutions; he went on to propose in 1911 to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) that they have an American Indian university.

In the mid-1950s Tribal Chairman Robert Burnette of the Rosebud Sioux (Sicangu Lakota) proposed total tribal control of education on the Rosebud Sioux reservation and the development of a college. In the early 1960s educator Dr. Jack Forbes, an American Indian, pulled together a small but well know group of American Indian leaders and put forward to the U. S. federal government a well thought out plan to develop and found an American Indian university (Benham & Stein, 2006, p. 30). Each of these aforementioned efforts didn't come to fruition, yet each illustrates the ongoing and continuous desire of American Indian people to regain control of the education of their people.

Nowhere in the United States were events moving more quickly concerning American Indian control of Indian education than in the Navajo Nation according to Stein (1992).

Political leaders such as Navajo Nation Chairman Raymond Nakai, councilmen Guy Gorman and Allen Yazzie, and educators such as Dr. Ned Hatathli, Dr. Robert Roessel, and Ruth Roessel formed Dine, Inc. in the early 1960s with the intention of taking control of the education of Navajo students. One area of Indian education that the founders of Dine, Inc. desired to impact immediately was that of higher education. The attrition rate of 90% or more experienced by Navajo students attending colleges off the reservation seemed to demand innovative solutions. The participants in Dine, Inc. began exploring the possibility of a community college for the Navajo people. This wasn't a totally new topic of discussion as noted earlier but never before had it been approached with such seriousness. A new era was about to be born in Indian education. (Stein, 1992, pp. 9-11)

American Indian Higher Education Consortium

In 1972, the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) was born of political necessity. Leaders of the TCUs recognized that unity among the small number of TCUs

was imperative in promoting TCUs as a viable option for American Indian people in higher education and in stifling those who would use tribal differences to create havoc within this unique movement (Stein, 1992, p. 109). The colleges found they had many unique traits in common that bonded them, including:

1. They were located on or near Indian reservations that were isolated geographically and culturally.
2. The institutions had Indian Boards of Regents or directors with a majority of Indian administrators and faculty.
3. Indian student bodies were small, serving a student population ranging from seventy-five to eight hundred.
4. They suffered from chronic under-financing and funding unpredictability, affecting their institutions.
5. Student bodies and the Indian communities surrounding the institutions were demonstrably from the lowest income areas in the United States.

(One Feather, 1974, p. 72)

Two other important decisions were also reached. First, the colleges called their organization the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC). Second, with the encouragement of Helen Schierbeck, of the Department of Health Education and Welfare, the newly founded organization would pursue higher education Title III funds from the federal government to finance its operation. AIHEC has continued to fulfill multiple roles as the national representative of the TCUs over the past thirty-plus years of its existence with one subsuming priority over all others. Its most important role has been that of advocate in Washington, District of Columbia on behalf of the TCUs, charged with securing and maintaining

the principal funding source of the colleges (Stein, 1992). With the establishment of AIHEC, each new college can turn to the wisdom of the founding TCUs for support during their beginnings. This type of support has been essential and a major reason the tribal college movement has spread across the United States the past 40 years.

Accreditation

Most TCUs are now fully accredited institutions with the same academic standards as their mainstream counterparts (AICF, 2003, p. 1). The tribal colleges go through the same process for full accreditation as do universities (Falcon-Chandler, Interview. 2009). The decision by TCUs to adhere to the accreditation standards of mainstream accrediting associations was made for two reasons: first, so their students could get the recognition they needed when applying for employment and if they chose to transfer to mainstream four-year institution of higher education; second, much of higher education funding is tied to gaining accreditation from a mainstream accrediting association (Falcon-Chandler, Interview. 2009).

Economics

According to Houser, students who attend TCUs often come from and reside in areas that are equivalent to developing countries outside of the United States. Houser (1997) states that American Indian reservations in the United States are among the poorest communities in the country with high unemployment rates. Therefore, TCUs have an important place in each community because the communities they serve are in dire need of economic stimulus and educational institutions bring this into fruition. Seventeen of the tribal colleges are located in chronically distressed agricultural areas of the northern Great Plains; the magnitude of reservation economic problems was revealed in a national study, (Johnson, 1987) conducted by the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church, which identified the “25

poorest counties in the United States... of these countries, seven are located in South Dakota on reservations served by tribal colleges” (as cited in Houser, 1997, p. 5).

The reservations on which most TCUs are located face unemployment rates that can reach as high as 80%. Also, only 65% of American Indians and Alaskan Natives over the age of 25 were high school graduates in 1990, compared with 75% of the total U.S population (AIHEC, Report 1999-2000). In addition to the high unemployment rates on the reservation, AIHEC reports that social barriers add to the economic and educational hurdles. The suicide rate for American Indians is more than twice that of other racial/ethnic minority groups, the death rate from alcohol-related cause is very high, and large number of single-parent households continues to increase (AIHEC, Report 1999-2000). These socioeconomic statistics reflect the needs and many challenges for American Indians living on an Indian reservation. Because of the location of most reservations in rural geographically isolated areas, it is often very difficult for American Indian students to commute and adjust to larger non-Indian communities where higher education institutions are located. In 1995, American Indians accounted for approximately 130,000 students, or less than 1 % of all students in higher education; the majority of those enrolled attended two-year institutions rather than four-year schools (AIHEC, Report 1999-2000).

Demographics of Students

TCUs serve American Indian communities well because the values of the community are reflected in the mission statements and daily activities and interactions with students at TCUs. These institutions maintain close contacts, not simply with individual students, but with the whole families and communities; these contacts shape recruitment and retention activities. TCUs are also successful in American Indian communities because, as smaller higher education institutions, the staff and faculty are able to provide a more personal experience with each

student. Students who have not been involved in formal education for some time, and many recent high school graduates, need more opportunities to build skills, both academic and personal, to enable them to succeed (Houser, 1997).

At many TCUs, non-traditional students make up the majority of the student population, and at most TCUs, between two-thirds and three-quarters of all students are female with the median age for all students being between 29-30 years (Houser, 1997, p. 5). TCUs are also unique in the way they function as an extension of the values and norms of their communities for their students. Students and staff repeatedly describe their colleges as functioning like an extended family, with warmth, humor, and discipline provided in a culturally appropriate ways. The colleges are inclusive; parents, children, relatives, friends, and community members are regularly invited to attend college events with many passing through campus areas daily (Houser, 1997, p. 9).

Often, the reason many American Indian students do not complete degrees during their first attempt at a large higher education institution is because the adjustments they must make on a cultural and personal level are too much to overcome. In Davis's study, she investigates the family and educational history of American Indian college graduates to determine what identifiable characteristics are factors in their success. The traditional extended family structure is culturally different from the white nuclear family and is undergoing changes due to influences and pressures from the white majority society" (Davis, 1992, p. 29).

Tribal colleges often function as an extended family of American Indian students as mentioned previously. The type of educational institutional environment TCUs provide is a key component of American Indian student success. Thus, because TCUs are located on the reservations of the American Indian students they have a much higher retention rate of American

Indian students over the course of the school year (AIHEC, 1999-2000). Many students that graduate from TCUs with Associate Degrees transfer to four-year colleges and universities. One study of students from Salish Kootenai College, found that American Indian students who had attended the SKC and then transferred to the University of Montana earned higher grade point averages and had higher graduation rates than American Indian students who had gone to the university directly from high school (Zaglauer, 1993). Further, at the 16 TCUs that reported completions data for 1996-7, 936 degrees were awarded, including 409 associate's degrees, 58 bachelor's degrees, and two master's degrees. Of all of these degrees, 84 percent were awarded to American Indian/Alaskan Native students and 67 percent were awarded to women (NCES, 1990-1997). TCUs are essential to many American Indian students successfully transitioning to mainstream four year-colleges and universities attaining a higher education.

Unique Assessment Needs

While having many unique characteristics, TCUs also have unique ways of assessing and evaluating their successes. More often than not, traditional mainstream evaluations do not apply or do justice to the work and success of TCUs. TCUs early on recognized that their own successes, and those of their students, ought not to be evaluated solely by yardsticks appropriate to other communities (Houser, 1997, p. 11). Further, independent assessments on the effectiveness of TCUs completed by organizations such as AIHEC, or other private higher education entities, proved to be much more accurate in measuring the success of the TCUs.

For instance, AIHEC partnered with Systemic Research in 2004, to develop a measure for a TCU success that is relevant to each unique tribal college and its community. Together, AIHEC and Systemic Research have designed, developed, and implemented the AIMS, or American Indian Measures for Success, data collection instrument. The instrument, AIHEC-

AIMS Key Indicator System (AKIS), was developed based on input from AIHEC, TCUs, accrediting organizations, American Indian College Fund, Bureau of Indian Affairs and others (AIHEC 2009, p. iv). This instrument was developed because of the distinctive needs of measurement for TCUs; this reflects the unique system of higher education that is the Tribal College and University. Often, traditional measures of success, assessment and measurements of student success did not reflect TCUs; thus, AKIS was developed to measure success and impact higher education.

Leadership

The leaders in the tribal college movement have faced many challenges in the last 40 years as the institutions have been formed and continue to grow. There is a great deal of change and innovation surrounding the tribal college movement; each is a reflection of the leadership of the TCUs. According to Senge, “The original meaning of the old French word change was “bend”, or “turn,” like a tree or vine searching for the sun. The idea that “the only constant is change” has been a truism of life since at least the time of Heracleitus, circa 500 B.C. (Senge, 1999, p. 14).

The beginning of the concept and building of Tribal Colleges have brought about profound change to the world of higher education and Indian education. Senge prefers to use the term “profound change” to describe organizational change that combines inner shifts in people’s values, aspirations, and behaviors with “outer” shifts in processes, strategies, practices and systems (Senge, 1999, p. 15). The building of whole new education systems and institutions that are unique to the needs of American Indian people are an example of profound change. Each institution was built by the innovation of leaders and changes that occurred through growth and learning. The TCUs were built on the basis of change and new ways of shifting strategies and

practices. According to Senge, the word “profound” stems from the Latin fundus, a base or foundation. It means, literally “moving toward the fundamental” (Senge, 1999, p. 15). This coincides with the Tribal College movement in that profound change has occurred by doing something new and building educational institutions capacity for doing things in a new way. Tribal Colleges continue to evolve, grow and change.

Senge has views of leadership that parallel the activities in the shaping of Tribal Colleges and Universities. Senge prefers to view leadership as “the capacity of a human community to shape its future, and specifically to sustain the significant processes of change required to do so” (Senge, 1999, p. 16). All of the leaders in the Tribal College movement have been involved in a change process; in each case of a Tribal College being formed and evolving, significant change has been initiated by leaders and sustained by leaders. A leader of this type was essential to beginning a new idea in each community that involved significant change and transforming the community in each instance.

Senge has organized learning capabilities in organizations into the five “learning disciplines”: Personal Mastery, Mental Models, Shared Vision, Team Learning and Systems Thinking (Senge, 1999, p. 31.). Among the five disciplines, the Shared Vision most relates to the journey of the Tribal College movement. According to Senge,

Shared Vision is this collective discipline that establishes a focus on mutual purpose.

People learn to nourish a sense of commitment in a group or organization by developing shared images of the future they seek to create (symbolized by the eye), and the principles and guiding practices by which they hope to get there.

This is a key piece of the formation and guidance of the Tribal College movement; the communities in each instance have come together for a common goal and are creating a new higher education institution based on unique principles and needs of American Indian people.

Chapter Summary

The literature review covers the history of TCUs, first-generation college students in relation to higher education, and delves into contemporary issues related to TCUs developing targeted four-year degree programs. At this time, TCUs are a place where many American Indian students can obtain a higher education and/or begin the process of preparing to transfer to a four-year college or university. In addition to the contributions TCUs make to the lives of their students as individuals, the institutions also contribute significantly to their communities through their facilities, their roles as conservers, innovators, and adapters of traditional values to new situations, and their abilities to focus sustained energy on local issues and problems (Houser, 1997, p. 13). Boyer states, “Tribal colleges are part of a movement for fundamental social change within reservations... Their mission is to rebuild cultures and, in the end, create new and stronger nations” (Boyer, 1997, p. 16).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

A qualitative study was conducted to examine different models for two-year TCUs transitioning to offering targeted four-year baccalaureate degrees using multiple case study research methods. The outcomes of this multiple case study of the three TCUs chosen lead to understandings, to assertions, and perhaps even to modifying of generalizations (Stake, 1995) so that other TCUs will have information if they chose to move toward offering selected four-year degree programs. The researcher investigated individual experiences, conduct interviews, and review document material in the form of TCU reports, and journal articles that provided the basis for developing the case study. The researcher collected open-ended emerging data with the primary intent of developing themes from the data (Creswell, 2003). The researcher then validated the findings with a review of literature and provide a case study for other TCUs wishing to develop targeted four-year baccalaureate degree programs.

Research Design

The multiple case studies model was selected as the paradigm for this research as the qualitative approach is the best form of research to describe intimate knowledge to inform how selected two-year TCUs transitioned to offering targeted four-year. The methodology of this study was the least disruptive to each TCU that has agreed to participate in the case study. The actual methods of data collection will be based on, interviews, and document analysis (Creswell, 2003, p. 181). The open-ended questions in the interviews were recorded by audio means with the data collection and inquiry illuminating each step taken by the three TCUs that are a part of the case study, which have successfully developed a targeted four-year degree program. The

theory, or general pattern of understanding, emerged with initial codes developing into broad themes and coalescing into a broad interpretation (Creswell, 2003, p. 182).

A data gathering plan has been modeled after Stake's recommendations for organizing data. Data will be gathered according to the following: "(1) definition of case, (2) list of research questions, (3) identification of helpers, (4) data sources, (5) allocation of time, (6) expenses, and (7) intended reporting" (Stake, 1995, p. 51).

The following are guidelines recommended by Stake when doing Field-Observation Case Study and will be implemented in this study.

1. **Anticipation:** In this phase the researcher will consider the questions and issues, will have read literature, both methodological and exemplary and identified the "case" and defined the boundaries of the case. The researcher will have anticipated key problems, events, persons and considered possible audiences.
2. **First Visit:** The researcher will have arranged preliminary access, negotiated a plan of action, and arranged regular access. There will be discussed arrangements for maintaining confidentiality of data, sources, and reports. Persons will be able to review drafts to validate observations, and descriptions. The researcher will then revise a plan of action, adapt case boundaries, and issues as needed.
3. **Further Preparation for Observation:** In the phase the researcher will make preliminary observations of activities. This will allow the researcher to allocate resources to persons, methods, issues, and phases. During this time the researcher will also identify informants and sources of particular data. Instruments. To be used for the study will also be completed in this phase. A record-keeping system, files, tapes; coding system, and

protected storage areas will be specified. At this time again the researcher will need to re-work priorities for attributes, problems, events, and audiences.

4. Further Development of Conceptualization: Now the researcher will learn what audience members know and what they want to understand. Then the researcher will sketch plans for the final paper and plan how to disseminate of findings. It is at this time that the researcher will allocate attention to different viewpoints and conceptualizations.
5. Gather Data and Evaluate Data: In this phase the researcher will make observations, interview, debrief informants, gather logs, and use interviews to acquire the information. The researcher will select vignettes, special testimonies, and illustrations to accurately portray the participants' responses. Finally, the researcher will gather additional data to validate key observations.
6. Analysis of Data: This phase will include: reviewing the raw data under various possible interpretations; searching for patterns of data; seeking linkages between program arrangements, activities, and outcomes; drawing tentative conclusions, organize according to issues,; and organizing the final paper.
7. Providing Audience Opportunity of Understanding: the research then must consider the paper as a story and look for ways in which the story is incomplete, draft reports and reproduce materials for audience use and then revise the paper to accurately represent the participants' participation and comments. (Stake, 1995)

Upon completion of data collection the data was organized following Stake's guidelines for doing a Filed-Observation Case Study and the interviewer selected vignettes and classify data while beginning interpretations. The interviewer then reviewed raw data under various possible interpretations and search for patterns and categories. The interviewer also sought linkages

between program arrangements, activities and outcomes; then, conclusions organized according to issues were reached and added to the final paper.

Central Question

The central question was: What is the process that two-year associate degree offering TCUs use to transition into offering targeted four-year baccalaureate degree(s)?

Sub-questions

1. Why are there so few examples of TCUs offering four-year baccalaureate degrees?
2. Why is it important for TCUs to offer a baccalaureate degree in addition to the associate degrees?
3. Is the desire to offer baccalaureate degrees only present in some TCUs or do all TCUs have this desire?
4. What has compelled these institutions to be among the first of the TCUs to make the transition from offering only two-year associate degrees to targeted baccalaureate degrees?
5. How has offering a targeted four-year degree by a TCU helped its students and community?
6. Are American Indian students more successful at TCUs, than at mainstream institutions, when seeking a four-year degree in a targeted area of study?

Interview Questions

1. What was the motivation for the Tribal College developing four-year baccalaureate degree programs?

2. Were there barriers encountered by the TCU when developing a targeted four-year baccalaureate degree program? If so, what were those barriers the TCU encountered when developing a targeted four-year baccalaureate degree program?
3. What are the successful strategies and tactics used by the TCU when the decision was made to develop a targeted four-year baccalaureate program?
4. What were the most pressing institutional needs of the TCU at the time of its decision to make the commitment to develop a targeted four-year degree program?
5. What were the students' most pressing needs at the time of the TCU's decision to make the commitment to develop a targeted four-year degree program?

Participants

The choice of the three TCUs chosen for this study was based on a year-long selection process based upon a review of the literature (in the field and of the TCUs now operating four-year degree programs) and attendance at the annual American Indian Higher Education Consortium conference in Missoula, MT where all the TCUs had convened. Three were identified that best fit the parameters set and had a representative model of a targeted four-year degree program. Boundaries included each of the three TCUs is located in the northwestern region of the United States that provide a cross-section look at the three TCUs among the first eight TCUs to implement a targeted four-year degree; and the time needed to conduct the interviews. Key personnel (including presidents and other key people involved in the process were identified during this multiple case study qualitative process and were selected by the researcher for interviews. Each of the interviewees provided an insight that is unique to that individual and thus helped formulate the most accurate data and model to provide a thorough analysis of the research. The study included an estimated twelve interviewees along with

thorough analyses of comments, publications and newspaper articles that provided a complete story of the processes involved in the development of four-year targeted degrees at the three TCUs.

This study provided a model(s) for two-year associate-degree offering TCUs that aspire to develop targeted four-year baccalaureate degree programs. The information also has a positive impact on the future of the TCU movement by documenting the successes of those TCUs that have developed four-year degree programs. This study also illustrated the steps TCUs are taking in assisting the advancement of American Indian Higher Education in the United States and elucidated some of the steps needed to continue American Indian self-determination.

These three TCUs were selected because they are among the handful of TCUs that have established a targeted four-year bachelor degree(s) program(s) and have been leaders in the TCU movement. Also, each began during the 1970's and are among the oldest of the some 35 Tribal Colleges within the United States.

SKC, TMCC, and SBC ensure the research was able to focus on the first TCUs to develop a four-year degree program(s). SKC is among the first tier of the ten TCUs that currently offer four-year targeted degrees. Several years later TMCC followed and is in the second tier of TCUs to offer four-year targeted degrees. And finally, one of the most recent to develop a four-year degree program(s) is SBC. Selecting these three provided a solid cross section of the eight TCUs that have developed four-year degree program(s) while keeping the research bounded by the Northwest boundary of the United States.

Data Collection Procedures

A single stage sampling procedure was used for this qualitative study in which the presidents and former presidents were contacted and identify key personnel that were working

for them at the time the transition to a four-year degree occurred. There was a well established protocol for selecting these other individuals based upon the need to interview the personnel involved in the actual development of that TCU's targeted four-year baccalaureate degree(s) program. The data collection procedures have already been discussed in Chapter One with information being collected in semi-structured observations, interviews, and including a thorough analysis of pertinent documents (Creswell, 2003, p. 185). Documents in relation to TCU history, current status of TCUs, and the importance of TCUs were collected for the purposes of this qualitative study.

The setting of the case study interviews was on-site at the TCU being researched, so the interviewees felt comfortable in their home environment. The interviews were audio recorded and protocol was followed using observational approaches suggested by Creswell:

The observational protocol will be a single page with a dividing line down the middle used to separate descriptive notes (portraits of the participants, a reconstruction of dialogue, a description of the physical setting, accounts of particular events or activities) from reflective notes (the researcher's personal thoughts, such as speculation, feelings, problems, ideas, hunches, impressions); there will also be demographic information about the time, place and date of the setting where observation is occurring.(Creswell, 2003, p. 189)

Role of the Researcher

The researcher has many years working in higher education, and specifically Tribal Colleges, and this unique insight provides an immeasurable understanding of the functions, needs, and capabilities of Tribal Colleges. This inimitable knowledge and expertise allows the

researcher to have a special significant and special awareness into the functions of Tribal Colleges and the roles they serve in the Tribal College movement in the United States.

This researcher is a professional administrator at a tribal college in Montana, with faculty experience in higher education, and publications in the field of indigenous and higher education. The researcher is also involved with national and international organizations that specialize in indigenous higher education such as the American Indian Higher Education Association, National Indian Education Association and the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC). This researcher has presented at conferences and led groups for these organizations. This background makes this researcher uniquely qualified to produce a solid and thorough multiple case study. The researcher is also an enrolled member of a federally recognized tribe, and works at a tribal college located on an American Indian reservation located in Montana.

Chapter Summary

The qualitative multiple case study of Salish Kootenai College, Turtle Mountain Community College, and Standing Rock College will provide information that adds to the body of knowledge and literature pertaining to those TCUs that have developed targeted four-year baccalaureate degree(s) programs. This multiple case study provides a foundation for other TCUs interested in developing targeted four-year baccalaureate degree(s) programs. Currently, there are not many literature resources on this subject matter; this study is a valuable asset to the study of higher education, American Indian education, and to the TCU movement in the United States.

The processes utilized by this researcher are established by guidelines set forth by the University of Montana. The guidelines are as follows: in order to be considered by the University

of Montana Institutional Review Board (UM IRB), all information must be submitted for review and the researcher will complete the IRB Checklist (Form RA-108) and prepare an 11-point IRB Summary and attach any required written informed consent forms. All information obtained during this multiple case study will remain confidential unless otherwise specified by the interviewees (<https://www.umt.edu/research/irb/irbguidelines.htm>).

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

Introduction

The data analyses for this qualitative study utilizes all the material collected from the literature review, materials collected from the participants prior to the site visit, documents and materials collected during the site visits, the interviews, and the final contact materials including post-interview communications.

Stake states, “There is no particular moment when data analysis begins. Analysis is a matter of giving meaning to first impressions as well as to final compilations. Analysis essentially means taking something apart” (1995, p. 71). Stake also suggests that, “We need to take the new impression apart, giving meaning to the parts. Not beginning, middle and end, not those parts but the parts that are important to us....Analysis and interpretation are the making sense of all this” (1995, p. 71).

This study was guided by Stake’s guidelines for data gathering and analysis and interpretation. The study examined the motivations of the TCU’s personnel interviewed when they were developing and implementing their targeted four-year degree(s) programs. Interviewees from each TCU selected for the study stated similar reasons why a targeted four-year degree(s) program was implemented for their college, though each had unique specific targeted four-year degree(s) to address their students’ and communities’ needs.

The researcher found that each tribal college interviewee whether a TCU president, faculty member, student support services personnel, or other key administrator felt at ease during the interview and there was a near immediate trusting connection between the researcher and interviewee. Stake suggests the case study researcher “plays different roles and has options as to how they will be played” (1995, p. 91). Further, Stake says that “Each researcher consciously or

unconsciously makes decisions about how much emphasis to give each role” (1995, p. 91). The researcher, a current tribal college employee as well as a Native American, was able to establish a comfort zone that allowed participants to openly share information; this allowed the interview process and the information divulged during the interview to be thorough and direct. The participants in the study further felt there was an established trust and were open about the struggles and the ways in which they strategically developed their targeted four-year degree(s) program.

The researcher found the interview process, and information gained in each interview, greatly enhanced the understanding of the process each TCU used to develop, grow, implement, and sustain their targeted four-year degree(s) program. The process used by the researcher was to reflect on each of the TCU’s experiences, both individually and collectively, while engaging in developing their targeted four-year degree(s) programs. The outcomes of this study will provide one model for other TCUs to help guide them in what may work best in their own communities when developing their targeted four-year degree(s) program.

Method of Data Analyses

The multiple case studies model was selected as the paradigm for this research and an intimate knowledge of the interworking of each TCU is reflected in the analyses following Stake’s guidelines. This research and data collection was modeled after Stake’s recommendations for organizing data. ‘First: definition of case, second: a list of research questions, third: identification of helpers, fourth: the data sources, fifth: the allocation of time, sixth: the expenses, and finally seventh: the intended reporting” (Stake, 1995, p. 51).

The guidelines recommended by Stake when doing Field-Observation Case Study were used and implemented in this study. The sites visited were Sitting Bull College (SBC), Salish

Kootenai College (SKC), and Turtle Mountain Community College (TMCC). The researcher followed Stake's guidelines in regard to each visit: "anticipation of visit, first visit, further preparation for observation, further development of conceptualization, gathering data and evaluating data, analysis of data, and finally providing audience opportunity of understanding" (Stake, 1995).

The researcher has organized the data collection following Stake's guidelines and has selected vignettes to reflect data interpretations. The interviewer also found patterns, categories, and linkages between program arrangements, activities, and outcomes during the data analysis. Stake stated, "All research is a search for patterns, for consistencies" (1995, p. 44). The research yields patterns and consistencies across the three selected TCU participants: Sitting Bull College, Turtle Mountain Community College, and Salish Kootenai College.

The purpose of this study was to illuminate the processes used by select TCUs when developing specifically targeted four-year baccalaureate degree(s) program. The study focused on the following:

1. Why was it important for each TCU, selected for this study, to offer a targeted baccalaureate degree in addition to their associate degrees,
2. What compelled their institution to be among the first of the TCUs to make such an important decision to offer targeted baccalaureate degree programs,
3. How the offering of a targeted four-year degree(s) has helped meet the needs of the students and their communities, and
4. Why are relatively few TCUs offering targeted four-year baccalaureate degree(s).

According to Stake, "We can look for patterns immediately while we are reviewing documents, observing, or interviewing" (1995, p. 78). Each TCU chosen for the study had

similar patterns emerge relating to the reasons they began offering targeted four-year degree(s) programs. The patterns this research illuminated were:

1. They were similar in their decision making process as to what degree(s) to offer that best met their student and community needs.
2. Leadership too was a theme that emerged at each of the TCU chosen for the study,
3. The driving force for the process to implement targeted baccalaureate degree programs was a strong president and/ or key personnel of the tribal college that led these efforts.

Participant Identification

The researcher followed Stake's recommendations for participant selection for this qualitative study. Stake asserts, "The researcher should have a connoisseur's appetite for the best persons, places, and occasions. 'Best' usually means those that best help us understand the case, whether typical or not" (1995, p. 56).

The three TCUs that defined the case study included Sitting Bull College (SBC), Turtle Mountain Community College (TMCC), and Salish Kootenai College (SKC). The following is information about each institution and the mission statements. :

Salish Kootenai College

The first TCU to be visited is Salish Kootenai College. Salish Kootenai College (SKC) began as a branch campus of Flathead Valley Community College (FVCC) occupying office space donated by Polson School District. Beginning in the Winter term of 1977, the Reservation Extension Center boasted 16 part-time faculty and 49 students. The Center offered 45 credits at seven sites around the reservation. That same year, a resolution was passed by Tribal Council to formally establish a tribal college on the Flathead Reservation. The college subsequently applied

for membership in the new AIHEC (American Indian Higher Education Consortium) organization, at the time a consortium of 12 colleges. The following academic year, the college had six full-time faculty and eventually moved location to Pablo.

The mission of Salish Kootenai College is to provide quality postsecondary educational opportunities for Native Americans, locally and from throughout the United States. The College strives to provide opportunities for individual self-improvement to promote and help maintain the cultures of the Confederated Tribes of the Flathead Indian Nation. The vision of Salish Kootenai College is to foster curricula and vocational certification, and associates and bachelors degree programs that meet the unique needs of the Native American population. While the college encourages diversity, its primary purpose is to serve the needs of Native American People. The early years were difficult and funding was largely by grants, but in October of 1978, the Tribally Controlled Community College Assistance Act was passed and provided a stable funding base. In 1981, the college broke ties with FVCC and formally called itself Salish Kootenai College. The first academic catalog (1979-1981) listed three degree and four certificate programs, 117 courses, and a total enrollment of 142 students. Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) initially accredited Salish Kootenai College in 1984 as a two-year institution of higher education. This accreditation was reaffirmed in 1989 and 1993. In 1998, the Commission accredited the College at the bachelor degree level. This accreditation was reaffirmed in 2003. In 1989, the registered nursing program was established, only the third in the nation at a tribal college.

By SKC's tenth year, the new catalog (1989-1991) identified six buildings, nine degree and five certificate programs, 310 courses, and 540 full-time students. The decade of the 90's saw a ten-year accreditation in 1994. Several buildings were purchased from the tribes. Land was

purchased to the east and south of the present campus and a new Fine Arts Center, Science Facility and golf course are at or near completion.

Initially, SKC offered only associate degrees and one-year certificate programs, but between 2003-5 SKC developed four targeted four-year bachelor degrees in addition to its Associate degrees and Certificate programs (www.skc.edu).

The following is the mission statement, vision and goals of Salish Kootenai College:

Mission Statement

The mission of Salish Kootenai College is to provide quality postsecondary educational opportunities for Native Americans, locally and from throughout the United States. The College will strive to provide opportunities for individual self-improvement to promote and help maintain the cultures of the Confederated Tribes of the Flathead Indian Nation.

Vision

The vision of Salish Kootenai College is to foster curricula and vocational certification, and associates and bachelors degree programs that meet the unique needs of the Native American population. While the college encourages diversity, its primary purpose is to serve the needs of Native American People.

Goals

The Salish Kootenai College Board of Directors has adopted the following goals. These were formulated to provide further specificity to the Mission Statement.

1. To assist with the preservation of the cultures, languages, histories, and natural environment of the Salish, Pend d'Oreille, and Kootenai people

2. To provide postsecondary education opportunities for Native Americans in the following areas: degree programs, vocational training, college transfer programs, community service, Native American culture and history, and adult education.
3. To provide a learning environment in which students develop skills in effective communication, critical thinking, cultural understanding, and citizenship.
4. To provide comprehensive student services.
5. To provide life-long, continuing education opportunities for both personal and professional development through a variety of instructional formats offered on and off campus.
6. To provide assistance to tribal entities and departments in staff preparation, planning, research and services according to identified needs.
7. To assist the Indian community with economic development needs of the Flathead Indian Nation.
8. To provide adequate institutional support and financial resources.

(www.skcc.edu)

Turtle Mountain Community College

The second TCU to be visited is Turtle Mountain Community College (TMCC). Turtle Mountain Community College (TMCC) is one of the original six tribal colleges that were established by various Indian Tribes in the early 1970's. The Turtle Mountain Chippewa Tribe chartered the college in 1972. The Turtle Mountain Community College is located in north central North Dakota in the historical wooded, hilly, and lake-filled area known as the Turtle Mountains.

In its brief history the college has emerged as a leader among this nation's 32 tribal colleges. Its origin was humble. For the first few years the college operated out of two offices on the third floor of a former Catholic Convent. For a short period the college operated out of the basement of an abandoned IHS facility. In 1977 the college moved into an abandoned tribal building and a BIA facility that had been moved to Belcourt's main street by a tribal member who had converted the building to a café and dance hall. It was on Belcourt's main street that the college later purchased and renovated several old buildings and as funding became available built a series of primarily metal buildings.

In May 1999, the college moved to a new campus and a new facility. The new facility is located 2-1/2 miles north of Belcourt. Trees and vegetation surround the new site that overlooks Belcourt Lake. Turtle Mountain Community College's new main campus includes a 105,000-sq/ft building located on an approximately 123-acre site. The new facility includes state of the art technology, a fiscal area, general classrooms, science, mathematics and engineering classrooms and labs, library and archives, learning resource centers, faculty area, student services area, gymnasium and mechanical systems. A new auditorium with seating capacity for 1000 opened in 2003. The former main campus in Belcourt has twelve buildings that provide 66,000 square feet of space. Both campuses are being used for college or community use. The two campuses house all college functions with the exception of some off-campus community responsive training programs. Turtle Mountain Community College is a commuter campus and maintains no residence halls.

Since its beginning the college has grown from a fledgling institution serving less than sixty students per year, to its current status of serving over 650 full time equivalents and approximately 250 pre-college adults. Indeed, Turtle Mountain Community College has

demonstrated success in enrolling and graduating students. The college serves the tribal community in other ways too. Its many programs are helping to build local capacity to effect positive systemic change by improving all levels of educational achievement of tribal members and public and private economic sustainability of Turtle Mountain Chippewa.

The college received initial candidacy for accreditation in 1978. In April of 1980, the college received its first biennial visit to review progress and development. As a result of this visit, Turtle Mountain Community College was granted continued Candidate Status for an additional two years. The college received a team of North Central Association evaluators for a second biennial visit in April of 1982. The team's report again recommended the college be continued in Candidate Status at the Associate Degree granting level.

In April of 1984, a team of evaluators visited Turtle Mountain Community and in August of that year the North Central Executive Board granted the college Accreditation. In April of 1989, a team of evaluators visited Turtle Mountain Community College to determine if continued accreditation should be granted. Members of the team concluded that the college met continued accreditation criteria and made this recommendation to the full NCA commission. On August 25, 1989, the commission voted to continue the accreditation of Turtle Mountain Community College. In October of 1993, NCA sent a team of evaluators to review the college's request for continued accreditation. As a result, the College was granted ten years of accreditation with a focus visit to occur in the spring of 1996. The focus visit resulted in the college receiving full accreditation. In April 2001, The Higher Learning Commission granted full accreditation for the first baccalaureate degree, a Bachelor of Elementary Education. In addition to a wide array of associate degrees and certificate of completion programs, TMCC is proud to

offer four year degrees in Elementary Education and Secondary Science Teacher Education (www.turtle-mountain.cc.nd.us).

The following is the mission statement, institutional goals and philosophy for Turtle Mountain College:

Institutional Mission Statement

Turtle Mountain Community College is committed to functioning as an autonomous Indian controlled college on the Turtle Mountain Chippewa Reservation focusing on general studies, undergraduate education, Career & Technical Education, scholarly research, and continuous improvement of student learning. By creating an academic environment in which the cultural and social heritage of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa is brought to bear throughout the curriculum, the college establishes an administration, faculty, and student body exerting leadership in the community and providing service to it.

Institutional Goals

Turtle Mountain Community College hereby establishes the following goals:

1. A learning environment stressing the application of academic concepts to concrete problems;
2. Academic preparation for learning as a life-long process of discovery of knowledge embedded in the intellectual disciplines and the traditions of the tribe;
3. In and out of class opportunities to discover the nature of Indian society, its history, variation, current and future patterns, needs and to serve as a contributing member toward its maintenance and betterment;
4. A curriculum wherein Indian tribal studies are an integral part of all courses offered as well as history, values, methods, and culture of Western society;

5. Continuous assessment of institutional programs and student academic achievement for the purpose of continuous improvement of student learning;
6. Baccalaureate, Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, Associate of Applied Science degrees and certificate programs of study;
7. Cooperation with locally Indian-owned business and stimulation of economic development for the service area;
8. Continued independent accreditation; and
9. Community service and leadership.

Institutional Philosophy

Turtle Mountain Community College is a tribal community college with obligations of direct community service to the Turtle Mountain Chippewa Tribe. Under this unifying principle, the college seeks to maintain, seek out, and provide comprehensive higher education services in fields needed for true Indian self-determination.

The Seven Teachings of the Anishinabe People

The philosophical foundation of the college is embedded in the system of values that stem from the heritage and culture of the Anishinabe people and expressed in the Seven Teachings of the Tribe.

1. To cherish knowledge is to know **WISDOM**.
2. To know love is to know **PEACE**.
3. To honor Creation is to have **RESPECT**.
4. **BRAVERY** is to face the foe with integrity.
5. **HONESTY** in facing a situation is to be honorable.
6. **HUMILITY** is to know yourself as a sacred part of the Creation.

7. **TRUTH** is to know all of these things.

(www.turtle-mountain.cc.nd.us).

Sitting Bull College

The third TCU to be visited is Sitting Bull College (SBC). Sitting Bull College began as Standing Rock Community College (SRCC) on September 21, 1973. On that date, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Council granted a charter to SRCC to operate as a post-secondary educational institution with the authority to grant degrees at the Associate of Arts and Associate of Science level. Recognizing the need for an institution of higher education which would provide opportunities for people in the immediate area, several movers and shakers on the Standing Rock reservation began the process of establishing one of the nation's first tribal colleges.

At the time the charter was granted, different colleges from around the state were offering a number of courses on the reservation. However, there was no coordination of effort and tribal leaders felt that it would be best to go through one institution. Bismarck Junior College (BJC) was designated to be that institution. As ties with BJC strengthened, discussions were begun to determine whether the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe should join other tribes which were in the process of forming their own colleges. A grant to BJC from the Higher Education Act provided money for Standing Rock Community College to begin offering courses.

Standing Rock Community College opened its doors officially in July of 1973. The first offices and classrooms were in the Douglas Skye Memorial Retirement Complex in Fort Yates. There were three full-time people on staff. The process of seeking accreditation was initiated in 1975. Candidate Status for accreditation was granted to Standing Rock Community College in 1978 after a thorough evaluation by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

Commission on Higher Education. This status meant that the college was recognized as providing service and that it would be ready for full accreditation within six years.

Every two years during this six-year period, evaluators returned to the college to document progress. SRCC was visited in the spring of 1980 and again in the spring of 1982. Both times, the teams recommended Candidate Status. The college received full accreditation in 1984. To mark this achievement and recognize their continued growth, the college officially changed their name to Standing Rock College (SRC).

The college later received continued accreditation in 1987, 1991, 1996, and ten years in 2004 with approval to begin offering Bachelor of Science programs in Business Administration and Elementary Education. In 2007 SBC received approval to add a Bachelor of Science program in Environmental Science and in 2008 approval was received to add Bachelor of Science programs in Early Childhood Education, Secondary Science Education, Special Education, and General Studies. On March 6, 1996, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Council voted to officially amend the charter, changing the college's name to Sitting Bull College (SBC). The objectives were not altered and the college continues to operate as the charter specifies. Currently, there are over 70 full-time faculty, administrative and support staff. The original enrollment of 90 students has grown to approximately 300 each semester. Bachelor programs, associate level general college transfer programs and vocational programs are currently being offered.

While the accreditation activities ensure that Sitting Bull College meets the standards of the higher education agencies, the fact that SBC is tribally controlled means it must also provide services to the Native American community. Advisory boards made up of community members provide input that is relied upon for program continuation and changes. The College Board of

Trustees is elected from the eight districts. At the state and national levels the college is a member of the North Dakota Association of Tribal Colleges and the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (www.sittingbull.edu).

The following is the mission statement, goals and vision of Sitting Bull College:

Mission

Sitting Bull College is an academic and technical institution committed to improving the levels of education and training, economic and social development of the people it serves while promoting responsible behavior consistent with the Lakota/Dakota culture and language.

Vision

Catching the spirit to fulfill a dream through culture, academics, technical training, and responsible behavior for now and the future.

Philosophy

All people grow to their full potential by knowing and understanding their beautiful and profound cultural heritage; therefore, Dakota/Lakota culture will permeate a holistic educational process, which will permit all people to develop in balance from the elders' teachings to live in the present world.

Student Outcomes and Goals

1. Students will be able to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, synthesizing critical thinking skills.
2. Students will develop their own leadership and community building skills.
3. Students will value and develop a balanced physical (body), intellectual (mind), social (heart), and spiritual (soul) lifestyle.
4. Students will be able to work effectively with others in a cooperative manner.
5. Students will study Native American Indian culture.
6. Students will be able to function in a technological world.
7. Students will become respectful citizens of the Earth.

(www.sittingbull.edu)

The three TCUs that defined the case study included Sitting Bull College (SBC), Turtle Mountain Community College (TMCC), and Salish Kootenai College (SKC); fifteen individuals working at the three TCUs were selected to be interviewed. TCU Presidents, vice presidents, faculty members, program directors, chairs of departments, student support services personal, and financial aid staff were among those chosen as to be interviewee participants for the study.

The 15 participants who did consent to interviews are represented with the demographic profiles noted in Table 1:

Figure 1

Participant Demographic Profiles

Demographic Profile	Data
Gender	9 Female, 6 male
Presidents	3
Vice Presidents	2
Student Affairs personnel	2
Faculty	4
Chairs of Departments	4

There were 7 participants interviewed from Sitting Bull College, there were 3 participants interviewed from Turtle Mountain Community College, and there were 5 participants interviewed from Salish Kootenai College.

Each of the participants selected was intimately involved in the development of their college's targeted four-year degree programs. For this study, all participants were engaged in

face-to-face interviews that were recorded with an audio recorder. By engaging the participants face-to-face and recording the interviews the data collected have context accuracy and content quality.

Many of the participants interviewed for the study had other responsibilities in addition to the position they were originally hired for within their TCU. Often respondents indicated this was due to the fact that their institutions were chronically underfunded. TCUs are chronically under-funded, with over worked administrators, faculties, and staffs, and are viewed by the rest of American higher education with some wonder at their ability to survive (Stein, Swisher & Tippeconnic, 1999, p. 259).

Participants were American Indian and non-Indian people who were interviewed at each TCU. There were 7 non-Indian people interviewed and 8 American Indian. For the purposes of this study, a person is considered to be American Indian if their blood quantum is $\frac{1}{4}$ of a federally recognized tribe in the United States.

Fleming (2003) states,

The American Indian is the only ethnic group in the United States that must prove its ethnicity. That is a product of their relationship with the federal government. They often signed treaties with the government and were promised specific rights. Tribes ceded millions of acres of land in exchange for those rights. To make sure the right people are afforded those rights, the government must have criteria for defining who is an Indian. Some government agencies require proof of a certain amount of native ancestry, or Native blood, to determine eligibility for services. In some cases, Native must have a *blood quantum* of one quarter native blood in order to be considered an Indian. (p. 7)

The researcher actively sought participants that could give a well rounded, accurate representation of the process and the evolution of implementing the targeted four-year degree(s) program at each of the sites. The roles, within the institutions of personnel included in the study, varied such as, curriculum developers, engaged in the finances of the college, teaching in the four-year degree(s) programs, helping develop and implement the targeted four-year degree(s) programs, serving student needs, teaching, leading the institutions and/or departments, and a number of other duties related directly to the well being of these underfunded higher education institutions. One participant speaks to the underfunded situation of tribal colleges,

We just don't have the resources that the four-year mainstream institutions do...the biggest problem is that we are just stretched so thin. We in the tribal colleges wear many hats. I am the department chair, but I'm also supervising students, and teaching them also. I am also the program director in a grant, project director for two different grants and oversee three different grants.

An interviewee from another tribal college in the study spoke about the reasons they are among the first and other TCUs have not made the transition to offer four-year baccalaureate degrees. "One of the reasons is that they just don't have the resources available to hire the additional faculty that is required... this takes a lot of resources, and some tribal colleges may not have the funding or the money available to begin the programs."

The third tribal college spoke to this issue as well stating,

We are in a rural location, it's hard to, for example, pull in enough qualified faculty with the PhD's that are required because they just don't get paid enough, we can't pay enough...trying to keep the degree program financially viable is still an issue for us.

Another interviewee stated,

Finances are an important factor because tribal colleges are running on a shoestring budget already. If we spread ourselves too thin, we won't be viable so you really have to say what programs would be financially viable for us because we're already just so tight. People are underpaid and so on.

Individual Interviews

Each interview was prefaced with the statement that satisfied the University of Montana's Institutional Review Board protocol as well as Fort Belknap Colleges Institutional Review Board protocol (the researcher's place of employment). This ensured the interview was conducted in a manner that was in compliance with acceptable methods of interviewing. The interviewer created a conversation where the participants' experiences were related in a comfortable setting. In the communication the resulting story specified the process of their respective TCU's journey in transitioning from a two-year associate degree granting institution into an institution able to grant targeted four-year baccalaureate degree(s).

Each face-to-face interview was conducted at the interviewee's respective TCU during the weeks of January 20-29, 2010 and February 2-4, 2010. The interview time allotted averaged between one and two and a half hours in length. Each participant was notified prior to the site visit via email and/or a phone call. Only one person, at TMCC, was not available for an interview due to extreme bad weather conditions and a winter storm warning; in fact the college was closed due to a blizzard the first day of scheduled interviews. However, the researcher and the other scheduled interviewees were able to get on site at TMCC that day and the interviews were conducted as scheduled.

Data management

The researcher insured that all the participants completed an interview consent form before proceeding with an interview, the interviews were then conducted. Following the completion of the individual interviews, the transcriptions were completed and the individual participant data were kept in sixteen computer files, hard copies, and audio files. The computer files were kept in two different safe electronic locations, the transcriptions were kept in two separate locked locations, the audio files were kept in three separate locked locations, the hard copies were kept in two different locked locations, and the coded data was kept in two different locked locations.

The sixteen files were identified by the participant's code and contained the interview transcription and any accompanying notes related to the interviewee. The participant consent forms were stored in a locked storage area per the requirements of the Institutional Review Board of the University of Montana-Missoula.

Data Analyses Procedures

Stake recommends that data is transcribed, organized, and then the researcher reviews the raw data for various possible interpretations. A searched for paper trails is conducted, linkages are sought between program arrangements, activities and outcomes examined, tentative conclusions are drawn and organized according to issues, and the final paper is written (Stake, 1995, p. 78).

While interviewing participants, some unexpected themes began to emerge. First, the differing styles of leadership dictated the path taken in the development and implementation of the targeted four-year degree programs. Although the outcomes were the same in reaching their goal of offering a targeted four-year baccalaureate degree(s), the leadership styles varied from

TCU to TCU in this study. Secondly, none of the three TCUs in the study offered the exact same degree(s), although they are similar higher educational institutions. Needs and resources unique to each respective TCU and community played a large role in their differing targeted four-year degree(s) offerings.

Stake also suggests, “The qualitative researcher concentrates on the instance, trying to pull it apart and put it back together again more meaningfully-analysis and synthesis in direct interpretation”(1995, p. 75).

Initial Interpretation

Reading individual interviews in their entirety

An initial reading of all fifteen interviews without coding took place to begin the process of analyses and interpretation described by Stake as “reading and rereading the accounts, by deep thinking, then understanding creeps forward” (1995, p. 73). A strategic way, according to Stake, that “researchers reach new meanings about cases are through direct interpretation of the individual instance and through aggregation of instances until something can be said about them as a class” (1995, p. 74).

The researcher read all the transcriptions from the individual interviews were read in their entirety. This was the first step in analyzing the data, which coupled with the initial interviews led to one preliminary theme and three sub-themes surfacing within the study. The second step in the analysis of the individual interviews was the reading and coding of these three preliminary themes. The third and final step of the individual interview analysis was the summarization of the coding and identification of the overall themes that surfaced from the data. The results of this are shown in Figure 2

Figure 2

One Overall Theme, Three Preliminary Sub-Themes Reference Tallies

Preliminary Themes	Reference Tally
Coming Together	15
Unique Student Needs	13
Building Intellectual Capacity	15
Leadership	13

Memoing, Identifying, and Coding Themes

The interview transcriptions were read with the intent to memo/note specific statements the participants spoke about regarding the initiation and implementation of the targeted four year baccalaureate programs at their institutions. These memos were re-read to see if the statements referenced the preliminary theme and sub-themes that surfaced in the interview process, and the first reading of these transcripts. A mention of the theme and sub-themes were noted in the margins of the transcripts and eventually combined for a tally of the theme and sub-themes were compiled.

After rereading the memoed and coded section of the fifteen interview transcriptions, there was one overall theme and three sub-themes that emerged that were consistent with the preliminary theme and sub-themes. Stake also states, “We try to find the pattern or the significance through direct interpretation” (1995, p. 78). Using Stake’s methods of direct interpretation, the researcher identified correspondence, patterns, and naturalist generalizations in order to understand behavior, issues, and contexts with regard to a particular case. Syntheses of

these processes resulted in the multiple case narratives and vignettes and concluded the data analyses processes.

Direct Interpretation and Summarizing of Individual Interviews and Overall Theme

Upon rereading of the coded sections of the fifteen individual interview transcriptions, several overall themes began to surface. Stake suggests, “The qualitative researcher concentrates on the instance, trying to pull it apart and put it back together again more meaningfully-analysis and synthesis in direct interpretation” (1995, p. 75).

There was one overall theme and three sub-themes that emerged from the direct interpretation of the individual interviews. The one overall theme was the Coming together of the Tribal Colleges, the three sub-themes were:

1. Student needs were the driving factor for each TCU in making the decision to transition to offering a targeted four-year baccalaureate degree(s).
2. The TCU was responding to an identified community need for certain skills within that particular community, and
3. Leadership and the resources available at the time of the inception of the newly formed targeted four-year degree(s) were also a common element in the responses to the interview questions.

The participants also emphasized the TCUs that developed targeted four-year degree(s) program came together to support one another through their initial growth processes with articulation agreements among themselves. This is an important overall theme in that it shows the “coming together” and support the TCUs have amongst themselves as a higher education movement.

TCUs Have Come Together to Support One Another

This is an important theme in that it shows the “coming together” and support of TCUs for one another. There is a rich history within the tribal college movement of TCUs banding together to form a united front when exploring and developing new areas of higher education and Indian education. This characteristic of individual TCUs is a direct reflection of the traditional value system American Indian tribes exhibited prior to their subjugation by the United States. The best and most visible manifestation of the TCUs “coming together” to carry forward their educational agendas is their formation of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC to provide a support network as they worked to influence federal policies on American Indian higher education (www.aihec.org, 2010).

SBC and SKC began their journey as TCUs offering targeted four-year degree(s) program by developing articulation agreements with other TCUs or a branch of a larger mainstream state university. TMCC began their journey solely on their own and sought accreditation initially through the North West Commission of Colleges. All three TCUs did this while maintaining the essence of their mission to serve their students’ and their community’s’ needs, educationally and culturally. SBC and SKC built from and on their initial articulation agreements with mainstream institutions and they were able to begin offering their own targeted four-year degree(s). These two TCUs have since gained an independent status from those articulation agreements and their targeted four-year degree(s) are now fully accredited by the Northwest Accreditation Association or the North Central Accreditation Association. For example, SKC had an elementary education program that was a 2+2 agreement with a branch of a mainstream institution in Montana. There were many challenges with the 2+2 degree program such as the geographical location of the two institutions being quite far from each other and other such barriers that caused real difficulty in

meeting the needs of their elementary education students. It was difficult to manage these types of challenges for all the TCU.

TMCC has itself become a provider of targeted four-year degree(s) to another TCU by offering its secondary science education four-year degree program through Ft. Berthold Community College and Little Hoop, they also offer elementary education to Little Hoop. An interviewee from TMCC stated, ‘Turtle Mountain Community College is not just meeting its immediate needs for American Indian teachers for our reservation, but we look to help all of Indian country here in North Dakota meet its need for American Indian teachers.’

Responding to Unique American Indian Student Needs

Sub-Theme One: One TCU President stated,

We have a lot of success because our students feel comfortable coming to us. The ratios of instructor to student are smaller at our institutions than at larger mainstream institutions. I think our students feel that they are really a part of the learning process at our schools. At larger mainstream institutions they don’t feel like they fit in and even if they are a top-notch student they don’t do well because emotionally and socially they are not comfortable in that setting, so they don’t succeed. Our school engrains a quality education with their culture and helps them be proud of who they are as an American Indian. And, that to me is huge. The president went on to recount how she was a former student at the TCU she is now president of, but had also attended a large mainstream institution and had experienced firsthand many of the difficulties that American Indian students face when they attend large mainstream institutions of higher education. The president then stated, The students are very proud of their (TCU) campus”.(TCU President #1 interview)

Another tribal college president reiterated the above by stating,

As a whole they (the students) feel more comfortable here. They know more people here at the TCU. They know they may even have family members working here, where in a mainstream institution they don't have that; so it becomes more of a personal thing for them and that's why they are successful. I've always said that 60% of our students that come here to college would not go to a college if it was not for the tribal college here on the reservation. Also, our faculty and staff work here because our students are here, and so here is where they can help them succeed in getting an education. The students feel this and they know they are attending a friendly college and they can basically talk to anybody. (TCU President #2 interview)

The director of one of the targeted four-year degree(s) programs spoke of one important reason TCU's students have the opportunity to succeed. She stated, "many of our students, both Native and non-Native, would not go to college ever if the TCUs in their community weren't there because of the geographic isolated location of where the students live on the reservation and surrounding area." She then reiterated the reasons above why American Indian students drop out of mainstream institutions and thrive at TCUs; "It's a case of where they do thrive more, at their own tribal college because of the values at their community college and the student support I spoke about"

A person that was instrumental in directing the current targeted four-year programs at TMCC stated that,

I have seen students that received nice scholarships to go to the mainstream schools and then come back. I've seen an AP scholar go to Dartmouth, a four-year Ivy League university, and then come back here (to the Turtle Mountain Chippewa Reservation) and

decide to finish here at TMCC. It's not because they were academically compromised at all, they maintained their scholarship; it was because they weren't validated as a person at Dartmouth. Those who go to our in-state universities come back and say that they are so racist there at the state institution. They become isolated and when they're isolated they become more withdrawn and then they leave the school. Here the family connection is very strong and so they want to pursue their bachelor's degrees here at TMCC. The students that go to a four-year mainstream institution have issues with self identity and that affects their academics.

Each person that was interviewed indicated that the environment their TCUs provide is instrumental to their students' success. For example, one interviewee shares that

They (students) have a family here, TMCC operates as an extended family for them. For instance, they (students) truly speak about their cohort in their learning community and the family. You know it is when they say it's my extended family and they call each other, check upon one another. There are little groups of students across the entire campus that operate that way. There are family for one, but operate as a family they have a close knit relationship that is not nearly as common in the mainstream institution. We understand our cultural protocols and you can't understand unless you live it and those that live it are here.

The environment each strives for is about traditional tribal values and support systems that enhance their student's journey through higher education. This was a recurring theme throughout each site visit and each individual interview. Many of the interviewees stressed that student's success is an inherent part of their TCUs' philosophy about student support and sense of community. As stated in earlier quotes on student needs, there is a clear reflection of TCUs

meeting the needs of their students and their students' success rates at higher education increasing because of the environment provided by TCUs.

TCUs Building Intellectual Capital

Sub-Theme Two: SBC, TMCC, and SKC each indicated they were also responding to their community's needs by developing a targeted four-year degree(s) program. Each TCU's communities and reservation has unique needs, thus, the type of targeted four-year degree(s) offered by the TCU is in response to those specific needs. As stated in Theme Two, many of the interviewees spoke to the pressing needs in their community for teachers because of high turnover rates and high needs for teachers in their remote reservations. There was also a need to grow their own intellectual capital. One interviewee stated, "It's building intellectual capital. We start them out in the associates and we know they can do it, and they go onto the bachelors and it empowers them more and more." The same interviewee stated,

The curriculum is relevant and something our students can relate to. It's local, it's community-based. It provides students with security. Sitting Bull College wants our students to stay because we need to build that intellectual capital. There are many of us that started at a tribal college and we're committed...it's that circle that comes back around and the idea that we had to give back to where we started. It's an engrained value we were born with.

There was also a need at Salish Kootenai College for trained professionals that could obtain a specialized curriculum within their four year degree by offering a Nursing degree and business degree. For their specific community, this was the need.

TCUs are about building intellectual capital within their own institution and responding to community and reservation needs by offering community-based programs that have a direct benefit to their reservations.

Sitting Bull College offers a bachelor degree of business in business administration, a bachelor of science in computer engineering, early childhood education, elementary education, environmental science and general studies science. Turtle Mountain Community College offers a bachelor of science in elementary education and secondary science. Salish Kootenai College offers a bachelor of arts in business/entrepreneurship, social work, a bachelor of science in computer engineering, early childhood education, elementary education, environmental science, forestry, information technology and nursing.

There have been a number of innovative programs developed by educators on reservations to address the high dropout rates and low testing scores among American Indian students with TCUs also working to combat this problem. At Turtle Mountain Community College (TMCC) the need for elementary teachers was the defining factor that led to the development and offering of a bachelor degree in elementary education. An TMCC interviewee stated,

We have a huge number of Indian students in our community; we have about five schools in our community that have a majority population of Indian students. So to teach teachers how to become teachers of Indian students was very critical to us.

The director of the elementary education program states,

We have the highest dropout rate and the lowest testing scores; there is obviously something was not working and so funding agencies are aware of this and are willing to take some risk in seeing what would happen if the TCUs developed their own educators.

We incorporate our native ways and have culturally responsive deep teaching modes for elementary education. This could be the answer because clearly what has been brought to the Native American classroom prior to this was not working. One of the tactics to our approach was answering the question, ‘how do we make it [the educational program] meaningful and specific to the culture and languages of our community’? Fortunately we were able to use the Native ways of knowing to model our philosophy around. The response from the administrators of the community’s schools is outstanding. The District Superintendent of the largest school here in Belcourt (ND) made the comment that he is very satisfied and very impressed with our targeted four-year degree(s) program and with our college in general. He was making a reference to the four-year elementary degree program and how it’s starting to help address the real academic and social needs of the American Indian students. From an academic stand point, yearly adequate student progress, which many of our schools had failed to achieve in the past, has been improved by our graduates now teaching in the elementary school system. We take the extra steps to make it more meaningful.

On the Standing Rock Sioux reservation there was a need in the community for teachers because of the high turnover rate of teachers within the public school system. American Indian Reservations (including the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation) located in the western United States are generally in very rural areas that are geographically and culturally isolated places that outsiders find difficult to reside in for long periods of time. Another occurrence on the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, according to the Division of Education Chair of Standing Rock College (SBC), was that, “there were many paraprofessionals that were in the schools and who were from the community, lifelong paraprofessionals within the school system.” In fact, the interviewee

had graduated from SBC in its four –year elementary education program and was a former teacher’s aide for many years in the local public schools. She stated, “If it had not been for SBC’s four-year degree program I probably wouldn’t have finished my bachelor’s degree.” She says,

There was a need for teachers in the community and a need to home grow teachers and at the same time paraprofessionals who had the experience, but did not have an option to move away or go to a university. We have a rich cultural content in our program, and when I went through my teacher training program my classmates were 98% American Indian and I felt like I could relate to them better.

By developing teachers unique to the community needs, SBC created success within in the community by graduating American Indian teachers in the field of education and by helping to place them into the local public schools. The Division Chair then stated,

It makes a difference because children can see people who look like them in decision making positions. The other difference it makes is in consistency because now there are fewer turnovers among local school teachers. Our program did this by providing home grown graduates that are now teaching locally, they’re making their life here, they’re going to stay. We needed a program to do this.

TCUs are offering relevant hands-on learning and developing programs that directly benefit the traditional learning styles of American Indian people and are helping place them into positions that can contribute to the community. SBC responded to a community need by developing a hands-on biology and wildlife study program. The environmental program at SBC has grown from a double wide trailer to having three Ph.D.’s on campus and building new facilities to accommodate the growth of this targeted four-year degree in environmental science.

The students enrolled in the environmental program are able to work in the field with the instructors, which provide them an outdoor classroom that is relevant to the actual environment they will work in upon graduation. The students upon graduation are able to get jobs with the Tribal Environmental Department and with the Tribal Fish and Wildlife Department. The Environmental Program is preparing better employees for the tribe by requiring the students to do research projects in their upper division classes, which are relevant to the community and reservation environmental needs. A faculty member in the science department states:

we get a lot of community members just coming over and watching what we are doing, so we have that kind of interaction and there is constant interaction with the landowners on the sites we are located. We test local water samples and this kind of research builds better relationships between our school and community. We are building educational and professional capacity within the tribe through our students that become tribal employees. We have done an especially good job of that.

The research our students do is more meaningful and more impactful because the research questions that the students have developed are more focused on their reservation lands and what they can do to make it better. There is an overall gap in the data on wildlife living on reservations in general so we have had a major impact there; we have even found new species living in North Dakota. We also study such issues as trying to control prairie dog expansion. These types of research projects done by students while still in school are impacting the community in a positive way. By being able to study environmental science in their homelands, they are more prepared to make an immediate impact upon graduation with the skills they have learned at the tribal college

This particular program has also created partnerships with other agencies in the state and with other wildlife organizations. The interviewee tells of one example, “

We are really active in the North Dakota Wildlife Society Chapter and they stated we are on par educationally with the other four-year universities and colleges in the state. We have given oral presentations at conferences and everyone is really impressed. I have a contract within the Forest Service so now our students can do biological surveys on the Cedar River grasslands which are within the borders of the reservation on the southwestern corner of Sioux County. We obtained this contract because the man that manages the grasslands saw our student’s presentation. In addition, we have pursued and developed many opportunities for internships for our students to further their hands-on experiences.

Salish Kootenai College (SKC) has responded to an important need within their community by establishing a targeted four-year degree in Nursing. There was a critical demonstrated need for more educated four-year nurses on the Confederated Salish and Kootenai (Flathead) Reservation. The former Assistant Director of the Nursing Department was instrumental in the development of the targeted four-year degree nursing program for SKC. She states,

Our students were just not doing well when they left the reservation for their bachelor’s in nursing degree, so we wanted to provide them a reservation based education that included more Salish and Kootenai cultural components. The other piece is that mainstream programs at the time didn’t include the information, which is specific to the tribal health care settings and we wanted to include that as a part of the curriculum in our program. In addition, we wanted to design a program that when the students graduated

they really would be prepared to work well in a tribal health setting and could assume leadership positions in the future.

SKC also developed a targeted four-year degree in business studies in response to a growing community need; well trained business persons that know how to do business on an American Indian reservation. A professor in the Business Department states,

Most tribal students who leave the reservation to attend mainstream institutions intend to return home to the reservation upon completion of their degrees. However mainstream universities were not preparing them adequately for the situations they would face on the reservation from a business and economic standpoint. The mainstream institutions focus a lot on international businesses and the corporate world. Most of the students that come back to Indian country will face a very different legal environment than that, the cultural environment will be different than they have been educated to expect, and the political environment is vastly different on the reservation. SKC provides curriculum that addresses all those issues in a way that the mainstream colleges really can't provide. Our business degree is very versatile in that we prepare our students to work in tribal governments as well as start their own business. I believe that our students have really strengthened the local economies.

*Leadership Drove SRC, TMCC, and SKC to be Among the First of the TCUs to Offer
Baccalaureate Degrees*

Sub-Theme Three: One TCU interviewee felt that they were among the first of the TCUs to offer a targeted four-year degree because of their college's enrollment numbers. "Our enrollment ranges consistently between 600-700 students each semester; most other TCUs do not have such a high enrollment numbers. We (TCUs) are not all the same; I think there is more

prosperity here on this reservation than others.” Another interviewee states, “Education was considered important here on our reservation 50 years ago, and that led to the creation of a pool of individuals that were more highly educated than on other reservations.”

In addition, a participant stated, “I believe we have been among the first to develop targeted four-year degree because of the high level of education of the staff at our college.” The interviewee adds,

We do have a good number of people that have gone out and received higher education degrees. We have more people with doctorate degrees in this state as far as Native Americans are concerned than any other. We also have a number of faculty and staff that have our masters and are working on their doctorates.

There does seem to the participants to be some relationship between the rising level of education of personnel teaching at TCUs and the growth of targeted four-year degree(s) programs that are developed in response to American Indian students’ and community needs. Over the past twenty-five years TCUs have been providing financial opportunities for their personnel to pursue advanced degrees, especially in the academic fields. This assistance allows schools to expand their degree offerings, increase their intellectual capacity by offering professional development assistance to faculty and staff, increase the number and dollar amount of scholarships, offer language and cultural preservation programs, and more (www.aicf.org, 2010).

One TCU interviewee said,

It is leadership that determined the transition from a two-year degree granting institution to a targeted four year-degree granting institution at our college, it goes back to our

President. He had this vision to grow and expand our college's offerings and he has the skills to enlist other people to help carry out his vision.

Another interviewee at this same tribal college states,

I give credit to our administration and to our President. They have had a lot of vision to see this to completion. We have also been able to attract PhD prepared faculty because we are located in a beautiful area and people don't mind moving here.

At another TCU interviewees also felt their TCU was among the first of the TCUs to offer a targeted four year degree(s) program because of their college's leadership. For this college, the desire to develop and implement a targeted four year degree(s) program was an outcome of their strategic long range planning committee. The President of the TCU stated,

Our institutional long range strategic plan, which is put together with our Board of Trustees (BoTs) and college's administration sit down and developed a strategic five year plan that takes into consideration the students and communities needs in the near and long range future.

Another interviewee at the same TCU said, "We had leadership at our institution that was willing to take the risk to go forward with a targeted four-year degree(s) program". In this TCU's case the strategic planning process is organized by the President but, the BoTs and other college administrators are included in the decision making process. At each of the TCUs in this study the leaders of the TCU (President, BoTs, and others in the institution) took the initiative, and/or nurtured the necessary support needed to begin the process of developing and offering a targeted four-year degree(s) program.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENTATIONS

Introduction

Stake states, “Included within the report often are one or several vignettes, briefly described episodes to illustrate an aspect of the case, perhaps one of the issues.” The story of SRC, TMCC, and SKC’s journey, and the continued growth of the tribal college movement were articulated by associates of the selected institutions in the form of vignettes.

Each of the three TCUs had patterns that define the reasons and success of their movement toward offering a targeted four year-degree(s) program. The vignettes allow each TCU to tell its own story about the processes they used to develop and implement a targeted four-year degree(s) program. This will be helpful to TCUs across the United States and allow each insight into the strategic planning and the effort it takes to develop their own targeted four-year degree(s) program.

This chapter presents the analysis of data and connects it to the *Literature Review* in Chapter Two providing an enhanced sense of understanding of the need for this study. This study will also be an important addition to the current literature concerning the why and how of TCUs developing targeted four-year degree(s) program. It also shows why the Central Question was selected as illustrated in Chapter One and fleshed out in Chapter Three. Finally, the study will conclude with conclusions and recommendations for further research.

Connections to the Literature

In the review of the literature, it became clear that there was a compelling need for a study exploring the “why” of TCUs getting involved with targeted four-year degree(s) program. Also needing more study in conjunction with the “why” was the “the how” a TCUs might begin

the transition from only awarding two-year associate degrees to awarding targeted four-year degree(s). The antecedent literature leading to this study addressed tribal college history, contemporary issues facing tribal colleges, understanding the American Indian's place in the United States and about the tribal college movement in general. One important fact that the literature review reveals is; because TCUs are still developing and maturing there is a plethora of topics that should be further researched and studies concerning the TCUs and their movement's place in higher education. However, because of the developing nature of the TCU movement often times TCU administrators, staff, and faculty wear multiple hats and are nearly overwhelmed with multiple tasks in addition to the one(s) they were originally hired to carry out for the college. TCUs can impart be described as the underfunded but highly important institutions of higher education. So, due to the above situation at the TCUs there is little time for employees within TCUs to sit down and write about their experiences explaining their personnel, student's and TCU's successes.

Each of the three institutions are a good example of a typical TCU and each had the necessary vignettes, which illustrated, in small and large ways that can be used by any other TCUs needing to develop a targeted four-year degree(s). The SRC, TMCC, and SKC personnel interviewed for this study represented a solid sampling of the individuals' working through-out the TCUs that have developed and now offer targeted four-year degree(s) program(s). Although TCUs have similar histories, it must be remembered each reservation is unique and each community has its own unmet needs that its TCU is trying to address. This study highlights differences and commonalities between the three reservations educational needs and the educational processes its TCU used to address the students and communities need(s) for a targeted four-year degree(s) program.

The tribal college movement in its detail shows the versatility of each TCU and illustrates the paths taken by each to meet the higher educational needs of its students and community. However, no TCU remains static; TCUs are constantly changing and evolving as they strive to meet the challenges that face their students and communities in these ever changing times. Often, the leaders of the college were instrumental in beginning the processes of the targeted four-year degree(s) program and were effective in gaining help from key staff and faculty. Tribal colleges have mastered solving problems and moving forward.

The feeling of unity and the helping of one another among the TCUs was reinforced by all those interviewed for this study at each of the selected TCUs, as they spoke of their TCU's efforts to develop targeted four-year degree(s) program (s). Each TCU when developing its targeted four-year degree(s) program received assistance from other TCUs such as ideas for proceeding, curriculum, and examples of articulation agreements to begin their respective programs. Important connections were made between TCUs built around the success and the struggles that each faced as it developed targeted four-year degree(s) program(s). This cooperation between TCUs reflects well on the spirit demonstrated when the TCUs founded their national organization AIHEC (American Indian Higher Education Consortium) in 1973. Unity and cooperation among TCUs now developing targeted four-year degree(s) programs, stems directly from the leaders of AIHEC recognizing that unity among the small number of TCUs is imperative in promoting TCUs as a viable option for American Indian higher education; and in stifling those who would use tribal differences to create havoc within this movement (Stein, 1992, p. 109).

These findings further connected to the *Literature Review* by showing the positive economic impact TCUs have had on American Indian reservations. Reservations continue to

struggle with an alarmingly high percent of unemployment among their people, up to 80% in some northern regions during the winter months. This study showed that the TCU are educating skilled professionals (teachers, nurses, and business persons) that join the workforce in their communities and reduce the high turnover rates among professionals, which affects their educational system, health system, and business sector, and helps reduce the high unemployment rate among American Indians. As stated in Chapters Two and Four, each reservation is geographically isolated, the case study illustrates that SRC, TMCC, and SKC have used their development of targeted four-year degree(s) program(s) to help reduce that problem by educating local students who want to stay in the community. The three TCUs in this study are meeting some important reservation community needs by improving the quality of the education within the k-12 school systems and helping create stability in the workforce. As stated in the Literature Review, “TCUs are part of a movement for fundamental social change within reservations...Their mission is to rebuild cultures and, in the end, create new and stronger nations” (Boyer, 1997, p. 16).

Conclusions Regarding Questions

The central question for this study was: what is the process that two-year associate degree offering TCUs used to transition into offering targeted four-year baccalaureate degree(s)? From this central question came the sub-questions designed to illuminate the ways in which this process occurred. The study shows how individuals at SRC, TMCC, and SKC engaged their TCU to design and implement targeted four-year degree(s) program(s).

Central Question

Given the lack of information and literature about TCUs, which are now beginning to offer targeted four-year degree(s) program, the following central question focused the study:

What is the process that two-year associate degree offering TCUs use to transition into offering targeted four-year degree(s) program?

Sub-questions

As stated in Chapter One, the sub-questions were designed as open ended questions to highlight the interviewees' roles and activities by using examples and vignettes to tell their story. The sub-questions were designed to have the interviewees discuss the importance of TCUs offering targeted four-year degree(s), impacts on students and community, student successes at TCUs versus failures at mainstream institutions, the desire to offer baccalaureate degrees, why so few examples of TCUs are offering targeted four-year degree(s), and what compelled their institution to be among the first to offer targeted four-year degrees. There are five specific interview questions, as shown in Chapter Three, and their sub-questions, which were designed to extract a rich context of stories and experiences from each interviewee to effectively identify a model for other TCUs to emulate if they too have a need to develop targeted four-year degree program(s) for their students and community.

The themes and redundancies of the research began to emerge from within each interviewee's answers and the connections between TCUs began to surface as each study site was visited by the researcher. From the interviewees responses emerged: (1) the importance for each tribal college to make the effort to offer a targeted four-year baccalaureate degree, (2) tribal colleges were responding to the students' needs, (3) tribal colleges were responding to and community's needs, and (4) the reasons behind each of the three TCUs being among the first of the TCUs to offer targeted four-year degree(s) program especially strong leadership.

As discussed above in regard to the Literature Review, the Central Question and sub-questions, SRC, TMCC, and SKC were responding to student and community needs and by

doing so they identified the ways in which their motivations emerged, some of their strategic planning, and the role of leadership at their TCU. Each of the three TCUs had a unique way(s) in which it made the transition from offering two-year associate degrees to offering targeted four-year degree(s); but, each also had traits similar to those occurring in the other TCUs of the study also transitioning from offering two-year associate degrees to offering targeted four-year degree(s). This study provides important information to TCUs also contemplating developing and offering targeted four-year degree(s) program in the effort to meet the higher education needs of their students and communities. This study affords the reader more explicit knowledge about Tribal Colleges and Universities and enlarges one's perspective of higher education.

Recommendations and Implications for Further Research

During the study several implications for additional studies did surface revolving around four major conceptual areas:

1. What is the impact a TCU offering a targeted four- year baccalaureate degree(s) have on fellow in-state mainstream institutions? Does this increase competition between higher education institutions within a region? Will there be a decrease in the population of American Indian students at mainstream universities? Will these degrees at TCUs have an economies impact on the towns and cities of the mainstream institutions?

Recommendation: it is recommended that an examination(s) of the various impacts the development of TCU targeted four- year baccalaureate degree(s) on mainstream institutions be conducted.

2. How much have TCUs' targeted four- year baccalaureate degree(s) impacted the unemployment rates, strengthened the current workforce, created new job opportunities, impacted the job market competition, and strengthened the economy of their reservations.

Recommendation: it is recommended an in-depth study be done of the economic impact(s) TCUs have had on their reservations due to their development of targeted four-year baccalaureate degree(s).

3. What is the viability of TCUs offering online and/or distance learning targeted four-year baccalaureate degree(s) among the AIHEC membership? Where would the funding and resources be found to carry forward an AIHEC membership wide online and/or distance learning targeted four-year baccalaureate degree(s) project? Would such a system impact student count numbers and federal dollar amounts for individual TCUs? Would such a system work with each TCUs unique tribal culture?

Recommendation: it is recommended that AIHEC, or a like minded group, organize and conduct a comprehensive study to answer the above questions.

4. Is the offering of a targeted four-year degree(s) a stepping stone for TCUs becoming four-year institutions and/or universities, and is there currently a movement among American Indian higher education leaders advocating TCUs begin offering graduate degrees?

5. Is there cultural change theory that can help TCUs in this process? Are there ways in which this transition can take place very smoothly and with more ease by incorporating strategies in change theory?

6. Are there professional development opportunities for leaders and other staff within TCUs to help with this transition?

7. Are there opportunities for mentorship programs for TCU employees with other TCU institutions or mainstream institutions surrounding the area of offering bachelor degree programs?

8. Is there a viable study for TCUs offering Master and Doctorate degrees? If so, what would a researcher focus on? There are many possibilities for this area of further research.

Recommendation: it is recommended that research be done to answer the above important questions facing the resurgent American Indian peoples of the twenty-first century as they continue to develop their higher education institutions.

This multiple case study illuminated 3 TCUs transitioning from offering two-year associate degrees to offering targeted four-year baccalaureate degree(s). The study identified a number of possibilities for related research in areas concerning TCUs such as tribal economic development, a distance learning system connecting all the targeted four-year degree(s) programs and making them available to all the members of AIHEC, possible competitions between TCUs and mainstream institutions, further cooperation between mainstream institutions and TCUs, and finally, exploring all the possibilities for future growth of the TCUs and their movement.

As one Tribal College director states,

It is our time to offer bachelor degrees in addition to the associate degrees. It is time to go onto the next step because as more of our people are becoming trained and educated in Higher Education, the more doctorates we have. We know we should be able to train our own people in higher education and do a better job of it. It is a natural progression for our tribal colleges; we should, it is our turn. Forty years ago there wasn't even a tribal college. Tribal Colleges have had the biggest impact in Indian country as far as higher education; it just can't be denied. It's our turn!

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Appendix 1



November 12, 2009

Ms. Lynette Chandler
PO Box 159
Harlem, MT 59526

1341 92nd Street
Fort Yates, ND 58538

Administration:
(701) 854-8000

McLaughlin Center:
(605) 823-4318

Fax:
(701) 854-3403
www.sittingbull.edu

Dear Mrs. Chandler,

Please accept this letter as documentation of my approval regarding your request to include Sitting Bull College in your doctoral research which is entitled, "A Qualitative Study of Tribal Colleges and Universities in Transition: From Only Two-Year Associate Degree Granting Institutions to Targeted Four-Year Bachelor Degree Granting Institutions".

We are delighted to be included in your research and look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Laurel Vermillion, PhD
President
Sitting Bull College

Appendix 2



Salish Kootenai College

P.O. Box 70
Pablo, MT 59855
Ph. (406) 275-4800
Fax (406) 275-4801



November 6, 2009

Ms. Lynette Stein-Chandler
Fort Belknap College
PO Box 159
Harlem, MT 59526

Dear Ms. Stein-Chandler:

This letter provides my permission to conduct your doctoral research, "A Qualitative Study of Tribal Colleges and Universities in Transition: From Only Two-Year Associate Degree Granting Institutions to Targeted Four-Year Bachelor Degree Granting Institutions." This permission is contingent upon approval of your project by the Salish Kootenai College Institutional Review Board.

Please contact Alice Oechsli, Academic Vice President (406-275-4972) to obtain names of potential interviewees. You may also contact Stacey Sherwin, IRB administrator (406-275-4931) for further information about the SKC IRB process. Stacey may also be able to provide you with additional institutional data to assist in your study.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Joe McDonald, EdD
President, Salish Kootenai College

Appendix 3



Turtle Mountain Community College

P.O. Box 340
Belcourt, North Dakota 58316

Telephone: (701) 477-7862

Fax: (701) 477-7870

Email: <http://www.tm.edu>

November 11, 2009

*Dr. Jim L.
Davis
President*

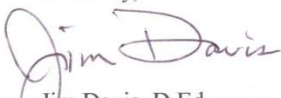
Ms. Lynette Chandler
P.O. Box 159
Harlem, MT. 59529

Dear Ms. Chandler:

This letter provides you with approval to use the Turtle Mountain Community College (TMCC) as one of your tribal college sites for your dissertation. I understand the topic for your dissertation is focused on best practices in the successful design, development, and implementation of four year degree programs at tribal colleges and universities.

Congratulations on pursuing the topic you have chosen for your dissertation. I am sure it will serve to help other TCUs in their quest to eventually develop and implement similar type degree programs at their institutions. Good luck.

Sincerely,


Jim Davis, D.Ed.
President, TMCC

Turtle Mountain
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Indians

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Suite 2400
Chicago, IL 60602

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Turtle Mountain
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Employer

Appendix 4

Informed Consent Form

Title: A Qualitative Study of Tribal Colleges and Universities that have transitioned: From Only Two Year Associate Degree Granting Institutions to Targeted Four-year Bachelor Degree Granting Institutions

Project Director(s): Ms. Lynette Chandler –The University of Montana-Missoula
Fort Belknap Community College
406) 353-2607 ext. 299
P.O. Box 159
Harlem, MT 59526

Dean Roberta Evans
College of Education and
The University of Montana-Missoula
(406) 243-5877

Dr. Frances L. O'Reilly
College of Education and Human Sciences
The University of Montana-Missoula
(406) 243-5608

Special instructions: This consent form may contain words that are new to you. If you read any words that are not clear to you, please ask me to explain them to you. If you participate in this study you will be interviewed by this researcher who will ask you a series of questions pertinent to the transitioning of your selected programs to baccalaureate degree programs.

The interview will take approximately 1 hour.

Confidentiality: Only the researcher and her faculty supervisor will have access to the files.

* Your identity will be kept confidential.

* If the results of this study are written in a scientific journal or presented at a scientific meeting, your name will not be used.

*The data will be stored in a locked file cabinet.

* Your signed consent form will be stored in a cabinet separate from the data.

* The audiotape will be transcribed without any information that could identify you. The tape will then be erased once the dissertation is successfully defended.

Although we believe that the risk of taking part in this study is minimal, the following liability statement is required in all University of Montana consent forms.

In the event that you are injured as a result of this research you should individually seek appropriate medical treatment. If the injury is caused by the negligence of the University or any of its employees, you may be entitled to reimbursement or compensation pursuant to the Comprehensive State Insurance Plan established by the Department of Administration under the authority of M.C.A., Title 2, and Chapter 9. In the event of a claim for such injury, further information may be obtained from the University's Claims representative or University Legal Counsel.
(Reviewed by University Legal Counsel, July 6, 1993)

Voluntary Participation:

*Your decision to take part in this research study is entirely voluntary.

* You may refuse to take part in or you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are normally entitled.

* You may leave the study for any reason.

* You may be asked to leave the study if the Project Director thinks it is in the best interest of your health and welfare.

Statement of Consent:

* I have read the above description of this research study. I have been informed of the risks and benefits involved, and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. Furthermore, I have been assured that any future questions I may have will also be answered by a member of the research team. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study. I understand I will receive a copy of this consent form.

Printed (Typed) Name of Subject

Subject's Signature

Date

Appendix 5



Informed Consent Form

Title: A Qualitative Study of Tribal Colleges and Universities that have transitioned: From Only Two Year Associate Degree Granting Institutions to Targeted Four-year Bachelor Degree Granting Institutions

Project Director(s): Ms. Lynette Chandler –The University of Montana-Missoula
Fort Belknap College
406) 353-2607 ext. 299
P.O. Box 159
Harlem, MT 59526

Dean Roberta Evans
College of Education and
The University of Montana-Missoula
(406) 243-5877

Dr. Frances L. O'Reilly
College of Education and Human Sciences
The University of Montana-Missoula
(406) 243-5608

Dr. Carole Falcon Chandler
President
Fort Belknap College
(406) 353-2607

Dr. Deborah His Horse is Thunder
Dean of Academics
Fort Belknap College
(406) 353-2607

This researcher has permission from the University of Montana IRB Committee, as well as the Fort Belknap IRB Committee to conduct this research.

Special instructions: This consent form may contain words that are new to you. If you read any words that are not clear to you, please ask me to explain them to you. If you participate in this study you will be interviewed by this researcher who will ask you a series of questions pertinent to the transitioning of your selected programs to baccalaureate degree programs.

The interview will take approximately 1 hour.

Confidentiality: Only the researcher and her faculty supervisor will have access to the files.

* Your identity will be kept confidential.

* If the results of this study are written in a scientific journal or presented at a scientific meeting, your name will not be used.

*The data will be stored in a locked file cabinet.

* Your signed consent form will be stored in a cabinet separate from the data.

* The audiotape will be transcribed without any information that could identify you. The tape will then be erased once the dissertation is successfully defended.

Although we believe that the risk of taking part in this study is minimal, the following liability statement is required in all consent forms.

In the event that you are injured as a result of this research you should individually seek appropriate medical treatment. If the injury is caused by the negligence of the University or any of its employees, you may be entitled to reimbursement or compensation pursuant to the Comprehensive State Insurance Plan established by the Department of Administration under the authority of M.C.A., Title 2, and Chapter 9.

Voluntary Participation:

*Your decision to take part in this research study is entirely voluntary.

* You may refuse to take part in or you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are normally entitled.

* You may leave the study for any reason.

* You may be asked to leave the study if the Project Director thinks it is in the best interest of your health and welfare.

Statement of Consent:

* I have read the above description of this research study. I have been informed of the risks and benefits involved, and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. Furthermore, I have been assured that any future questions I may have will also be answered by a member of the research team. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study. I understand I will receive a copy of this consent form.

Printed (Typed) Name of Subject

Subject's Signature

Date