

HIGHER EDUCATION AND NATIVE NATION BUILDING: USING A HUMAN
CAPITAL FRAMEWORK TO EXPLORE THE ROLE OF POSTSECONDARY
EDUCATION IN TRIBAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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Native American Nations have perpetually had the highest rates of poverty and unemployment and the lowest per capita income of any ethnic population in the United States. Additionally, American Indian students have the highest high school dropout rates and lowest academic performance rates as well as the lowest college admission and retention rates in the nation. As Native Nations try to reverse these trends through sustainable economic development, they must do so with a limited number of educated, skilled workers in their own communities and with a complicated relationship with higher education that obstructs their ability to create a viable work force.

This qualitative study proposed to research American Indian postsecondary access within the context of Native nations' sovereignty and their social and economic development. Utilizing a theoretical framework of human capital and its role in rebuilding Native American economies, interviews were conducted with 19 education informants representing federally-recognized tribes in the Southern Plains Region. Major themes included financial issues related to college going in Native populations, familial and community influences, academic readiness, curricular development and delivery, the role of higher education in preparing students for tribal employment, and tribal economic development.

Increasing Native American college student success and preparation for tribal employment requires collaboration between the sovereign nations and postsecondary entities that serve their populations. Ultimately, tribes will benefit from developing, or continuing to develop, a culture of college going in their communities, educational institution partnerships that

create support services for their students, and curriculum to support the training of future tribal leaders. This study reinforces the importance of human capital in economic development for tribes and highlights the critical role that higher education can play in preparing American Indian students to serve their tribes.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION.....	1
Introduction and Problem Statement	1
Background	4
Purpose of the Study and Research Questions.....	6
Significance.....	7
Overview of the Dissertation	8
CHAPTER II REVIEW OF LITERATURE	9
History of Native American Higher Education	9
The Colonial Period (1568-1776)	9
The Federal Period (1776-1900).....	14
Self-Determination Period (1900-Present)	19
Current State of Native American Access to Higher Education.....	22
Economic Development for Native Nations	24
Theoretical Framework.....	31
CHAPTER III PROCEDURES FOR THE COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA	35
Methodology	35
Sample and Participants of the Study	36
Protocol	37
Procedures for the Collection of Data.....	38
Procedures for the Analysis of the Data	39
Research in Native Nations and Researcher Role.....	41
Limitations and Delimitations.....	43
CHAPTER IV EDUCATION INFORMANTS INTERVIEW FINDINGS	44
College-Going and Retention Contexts	50
Familial College Knowledge	50
Financial Issues.....	55
Academic Readiness	56

Higher Education Preparation for Tribal Employment.....	58
CHAPTER V ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR TRIBES.....	66
Economic Development.....	66
Strategic Plans for Economic Development	66
Barriers to Economic Development.....	70
Educational Development.....	74
Program Creation and Community Engagement	74
Getting Students into College	76
Assisting Current College Students	79
Recommendations for Higher Education.....	82
Coursework (Both Delivery and Content)	82
Financial Aid and Scholarships	86
Pre-Attendance.....	88
Retention	92
CHAPTER VI CONCLUSIONS	95
Financial Issues and College Going.....	95
College Going, Retention, and Engagement.....	97
Academic Readiness	101
Curriculum Development and Delivery.....	102
Higher Education Preparation for Tribal Employment.....	103
Economic Development.....	105
Implications.....	108
Implications for Tribes.....	108
Implications for Higher Education.....	112
Implications for High Schools	114
Implications for Future Research.....	115
APPENDIX: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL	118
REFERENCES	120

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Introduction and Problem Statement

Native American nations have perpetually had the highest rates of poverty, unemployment, and lowest per capita income of any ethnic population in the United States. (Cornell & Kalt, 1998, 2002, 2007; Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, 2008; Smith, 2000). As Native nations try to reverse these trends through sustainable economic development, they must do so with a limited number of educated, skilled workers in their own community and a complicated relationship with higher education that obstructs their ability to create such a work force (Cornell & Kalt, 1998, 2002, 2007; Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, 2008).

American Indian students have the highest high school dropout rates, the lowest academic performance rates, and the lowest college admission and retention rates in the nation (DeVoe & Darling-Churchill, 2008; Fann, 2009; Swanson, 2004). In spite of the multitude of national, state and institutional level initiatives aimed at increasing access to higher education for historically underrepresented students, the college pipeline for American Indians is largely unaddressed and the critical issues, conditions and college transitions of American Indian students are relatively unknown (DeVoe & Darling-Churchill, 2008; Fann, 2009; Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, 2008). This study proposed to research American Indian college access within the context of Native nations' sovereignty, social and economic development.

While tribes certainly need higher education, their relationship with higher education is complicated by the tribes' sovereign status, the importance tribes place on self-governance,

cultural preservation and economic development and the centuries of hostile and abusive experiences that they have endured from Western educational systems (Fann, 2009). According to the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development (2008), federal recognition is “the most important recognition that a tribe can receive” (p. 60). Currently, 565 tribes are granted federal recognition by the United States, meaning they have legal status as sovereign and can formally create political relationships with states and the federal government (Fann, 2009, Wilkins, 2000). Federally recognized tribes exercise both legal and physical control over the people, land and resources within a defined territory (Wilkins, 2000). In addition, they can enter into treaties, make laws and enforce laws, determine criteria for citizenship or membership, and may exclude people from territory (Wilkins, 2000). Tribal members are also unique from other marginalized ethnic or social groups because their ties to community are based not only on social and familial factors, but their dual citizenship to both their sovereign nation and the United States and their fight to remain outside of mainstream society and maintain their distinct heritage and sovereign status (Brayboy, 2000, 2004; Wilkins, 2001).

Research on economic development has generally revealed a direct positive correlation between an increase in the postsecondary education of community members and the resulting growth in the community’s economic development (Becker, 1994; Becker & Murphy, 2007; Fann, 2009). However, as Fann (2009) notes, “research on tribal economic development has thus far shown that sustainable economic development in Indian Country has not been dependent on human and educational capital” (p. 7). Economic development can only be sustainable in tribal nations when decisions about development and accountability for those decisions are held directly by the tribe, the development is culturally congruent with tribal values, and decisions are made based on the best interests of the tribe and not its leaders (Cornell and Kalt, 1998, 2002,

2007; Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, 2008). While tribal economic development research has found a need for more internally-developed human capital in the tribal work force, it is not addressing the role or potential role of higher education in training a professionally skilled Native work force (Fann, 2009). In addition, human capital has not played a significant role in successful tribal economic development because of the scarcity of higher education degrees among American Indians working for their tribes, forcing tribes to outsource certain jobs (Fann, 2009; Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, 2008).

College access research for Native Americans has not been intertwined with the nation building approach and could be enhanced by exploring college going in the context of tribal sovereignty and economic development (Fann, 2009). Successful tribal economic development, however, has only increased the critical need for Native professionals who can serve as tribal leaders and in all manner of occupations including, attorneys, teachers and education specialists, linguists, ecologists, business and financial managers and health care professionals (Cornell and Kalt, 1998, 2002, 2007; Fann, 2009; Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, 2008). Some tribes have begun to reverse the downward economic trend by assuming responsibility for their own economic development and adopting a nation-building approach to developing their economies (Cornell & Kalt, 1998, 2002, 2007; Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, 2008; Smith, 2000).

Nation building is a key component of fortifying the long-term health of sovereign nations (Cornell & Kalt, 1998, 2002, 2007; Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, 2008). It encourages tribes to look beyond simply bringing industry to reservations or starting small businesses in an attempt to create jobs (Cornell & Kalt, 1998, 2002,

2007). Nation building is creating an environment “that encourages investors to invest, that helps businesses last, and that allows investments to flourish and pay off” (Cornell & Kalt 1998, p. 7). It also helps build the social and economic infrastructure that increases the ability of tribes to maintain their sovereignty (Cornell & Kalt, 1998, 2002, 2007; Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, 2008).

The convergence of such a unique set of social and political circumstances creates a myriad of conflicting emotions and motivations for American Indians whose have to determine what role higher education will play in their development. Fann (2009) writes, “the political, historical and contemporary experiences of Native Americans include a unique set of circumstances and dilemmas that Native students face as they negotiate their way through high school and make choices about college” (p. 3). The drive for Native nations and their members to be sovereign both politically and economically is connected to the need to use resources, such as higher education, that they perceive to be threats to their cultural sovereignty and way of life. This relationship is key because tribal struggles to exercise sovereignty are the bedrock for which all research on American Indian education, economic and social development should be prefaced (Brayboy, 2004; Champagne and Goldberg, 2005; Cornel and Kalt, 1992; Lomawaima, 1999).

Background

Native Americans struggled during the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries to maintain unique cultures and political independence in the face of assimilationist, and blatantly hostile, policies by the United States government (Smith, 2000; Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, 2008; Wilkins, 2002). Smith (2000) notes, “Historically, federal Indian policy [was] aimed at reducing the cultures and sovereign powers of Native American tribes” (p. 3). The theory of “civilizing” Native Americans and making them

adopt Western culture permeated not just politics, but also higher education and caused a disconnect between Native Americans and main stream colleges and universities (Carney, 1999; Szasz, 1988; Wright, 1988, 1991). As Wright (1991) describes, “American Indians have adamantly refused to surrender to an institution which for centuries has sought to assimilate them, to remake them in the image of their European subjugators” (p. 429).

In light of these circumstances and the lack of opportunity for Native Americans to access colleges and universities, Native American participation in American higher education was nearly non-existent for the first two centuries of this country (Carney, 1999; Szasz, 1988; Wright, 1988, 1991; Wright & Tierney, 1991). Due to the GI Bill and the role of the Civil Rights movement in heightening the importance of improving low minority enrollment by colleges and universities, there was a gradual increase in Native American enrollment in higher education institutions during the last half of the twentieth century (Carney, 1999; Wright & Tierney, 1991). However, Native Americans still lag behind the national average in college enrollment and have one of the lowest retention rates of any ethnic group once they do make it to campus. (DeVoe & Darling-Churchill, 2008; Fann, 2009; Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, 2008).

The negative historical legacy between Native Americans and colleges and universities and lack of inclusion for Native Americans in higher education has had an adverse effect on Native college going by decreasing the perceived value of college degrees amongst tribes and even creating conflict between the formal education process and tribal culture and values (Brayboy, 2005; Carney, 1999; Fann, 2009, Smith, 1999). In addition, there is a void of culturally specific curriculum, such as tribal law, tribal languages, cultural resource management or other coursework that could make higher education more relevant to Native communities

(Fann, 2009; Brayboy, 2004). However, higher education plays a key role in the creation of a workforce educated in business, health care, tribal management, law, accounting, and numerous other specific career focuses (Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, 2008). Therefore, it is imperative to encourage connectivity between Native Americans and higher education to stimulate the creation of human capital for Nations as they become more viable both economically and politically (Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, 2008; Institute for Higher Education Policy, American Indian Higher Education Consortium, & the American Indian College Fund, 2007). Increasing degree attainment amongst tribe members will also help produce educated and experienced leaders and skilled workers that are a vital piece of nation building success (Cornell & Kalt 1998, 2002, 2007; Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, 2008).

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to replicate a study by Fann (2009) exploring college access within federally-recognized tribes in the Southern Plains Region and address the perceived role of higher education as a vehicle for strengthening Native nations' sovereignty and economic development. This includes taking stock of what tribes report as their goals for higher education, tribal perceptions of obstacles to college going, and the state of the art in tribal support for postsecondary transitions. To that end, the primary research questions are:

1. What role does higher education play in tribal sovereignty, economic and social development?
 - a. What are intrinsic individual and community-based economic and/or social motivations for pursuing higher education?

- b. How does or how might postsecondary education support tribal goals for economic development?
 - c. Has, and if so, how has higher education benefited tribal efforts in language revitalization, cultural preservation, business, law, government, etc.?
 - d. What areas of professional expertise are most needed by tribes?
 - e. What gaps, if any, are there in the ability of public colleges and universities to offer education and training relevant to tribal development?
 - f. How are tribes reckoning with formal, Western higher education in a way that compliments traditional tribal education and tribal citizenship?
2. What are tribal policies and practices for getting students into college?
 3. What services and programs are needed to support students' postsecondary transitions?

Significance

This study built on Fann's (2009) similar study of the California sovereign nations. This type of research had not been conducted with the Southern Plains federally-recognized tribes and continued to increase awareness about higher education and the current or future role that it could play in Native nation building. Cultivating an understanding of successful tribal practices and policies focused on increasing college attendance and creating congruence between economic and educational goals, as well as challenges inherent with these issues, provides learning opportunities for other tribes and a focus for continued research.

Every tribe has vastly different cultures, traditions, and tribal governmental structures and focuses. As such, it was important to determine if particular challenges or educational programs were consistent across such a diverse population. In addition, determining education levels and types of colleges the nation's members are attending helped ascertain the existence of trends

between educational attainment and economic development. It was also imperative that tribes made certain their educational goals were closely aligned with their economic development plan, if one existed. Delving into how their education departments were oriented in terms of educational emphasis and what role they play in tribal strategies for governance and economic development provided insights into the importance tribes place on the link between higher education and Native nation building.

Overview of the Dissertation

The dissertation consists of a review of the literature and a review of the procedures for the collection and analysis of the data. The review of literature is comprised on a history of Native American higher education, the current state of Native American access to higher education, an exploration of the potential between higher education and economic development of sovereign Nations, and the theoretical framework of the study. The procedures for the collection and analysis of data outlines how the data was collected using qualitative methodology, why qualitative methods were used for the study, and how the data was verified using peer review. In addition the interview questions are attached as Appendix A and the list of sovereign Nations that were surveyed are attached as Appendix B.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This review of the literature provides an overview of the history of Native Americans and higher education, a summary of the current state of Native American higher education access issues, and an economic development model for Native nation building. It concludes with the theoretical framework for the study.

History of Native American Higher Education

The inclusion of Native Americans in American colleges and universities has been accomplished using a variety of methods since the beginning of European colonization of North America. Carney (1999) divides higher education for Native Americans into the colonial period, the federal period, and the self-determination period. The colonial period was characterized by different religious efforts, mainly missions and colonial colleges, aimed at converting and educating Native Americans. Other than some tribal and private attempts, such as Oneida Academy and Choctaw Academy, the federal period was characterized by very few options for Native Americans in higher education. The self-determination period was highlighted by the founding of tribally controlled colleges and marked a new opportunity for Native American higher education.

The Colonial Period (1568-1776)

According to Lomawaima (1999), the earliest forms of colonial education were based on 4 tenets. These tenets were not based in fact, but created to serve the agenda of a colonizing nation. The first two tenets were the need to Christianize Native Americans and the need to civilize Native Americans. The third tenet was the need to subjugate the Native American people by eliminating their ability for self-governance, self-determination, and self-education, often

through resettlement. The final tenet was the need for special educational methods to address the natural deficiencies of the Native Americans.

The tenets used to justify attempts to civilize and Christianize the Native Americans were taken from models that Europeans had been employing well before they colonized North America. The Europeans had traditionally feared any group that they were unfamiliar with, a trait they had inherited from the Greeks (Lowmawaima, 1999). This fear of the unknown drove them to attempt to impose their cultural systems on the new civilizations that they encountered during the colonization process. As Lowmawaima (1999) noted, “Spain, Great Britain, France, and the United States were each intent on conquest of a continent, and the extension of power over Native nations was couched in the rhetoric of civilization versus savagery” (p. 8). This notion of the need for the colonizers to civilize the Native Americans gave them the opportunity to not only assimilate the population into their culture, but to cede the land into their colonies.

The European clergy, in connection to their political aspirations, had a history of attempting to convert the native people in every colonial territory they encountered. Because many of the educational institutions in America were founded on Christian values, it was only natural that conversion be an integral part of the educational experience for Native Americans. However, during the conversion process, the clergy attempted to eradicate the Native American culture because they saw it as heresy. In addition, the conversion process could often times be brutal, as it was when the Spanish tried to convert the Pueblo communities in the seventeenth century. The use of troops to squelch rebellions of those Indians that were not interested in being “Christianized” was commonplace and allowed colonies to strengthen their control over the region (Lowmawaima, 1999).

The third tenet was based on the need for the colonizing country to have control over the native people that it encountered. In North America, this often included relocating the tribes to different lands or taking them to John Eliot's isolated "praying towns," where they would be Christianized away from the white colonists. As Lowmawaima (1999) noted, "the creation of these new communities was all about imposing military, political, economic, and social power" (p. 8). In addition, the educational opportunities for Native Americans always involved some sort of boarding school aimed at stripping them of their culture and removing them from their familial support system.

The fourth tenet was founded in the colonial educators' view of the Native Americans as uncivilized savages with intellectual, mental, or cultural deficiencies. They believed that the only effective pedagogical methods for Native Americans had to be extremely rigid and militaristic. Carney (1999) writes, "...it was education on European terms, assimilationist in concept and curriculum, predicated on the assumption that it was the duty of civilized man to bring enlightenment to the less civilized areas of the world" (p. 19).

In this atmosphere, the first attempts were undertaken to introduce European higher education to Native Americans. Some efforts were noble, while others were based primarily on greed. Three of the original nine colleges founded in the United States during the colonial period claimed the education of Native Americans as one of the purposes in their charters. Harvard's charter listed one of its purposes as "...the education of the English and the Indian youth of this Country in knowledge; and godliness" (Carney, 1999, p. 1). William and Mary's charter included "...that the Christian faith may be propagated amongst the Western indians, to the Glory of Almighty God" (Carney, 1999, p. 1). Finally, Dartmouth's charter best described the way that Native American education was viewed during colonial times. Dartmouth stated it

existed “for the education and instruction of youths of the Indian tribes in this Land in reading, wrighting (sic), and all parts of Learning which shall appear necessary and expedient for civilizing and Christianizing Children of Pagans as well as in as in all liberal Arts and Sciences” (Carney, 1999, p. 1).

Early higher education for Native Americans revolved around conversion to Christianity and some sort of agricultural or vocational training (Wright, 1988). The first attempt, Henrico College at Jamestown, was founded on funds that were partially raised by Pocahontas on trips to England (Szasz, 1988; Wright, 1988). However, the money raised for the college was used to build an ironworks and to recruit future settlers (Carney, 1999; Wright, 1988). The investors and philanthropists openly questioned the use of the money, but were repeatedly rebuffed (Wright, 1988). However, any future support for the college was dashed when a major Indian uprising killed 347 people at Jamestown. The revolt actually led to a policy of Indian extermination by Jamestown until its charter was revoked (Wright, 1988).

The establishment of societies in Great Britain that supported fundraising for the education of Indians spurred the next round of attempts at higher education for Native Americans. The first society, the President and Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Among the Indians in New England and Parts Adjacent, was founded in 1649 and gave grants to colleges to educate Indians (Carney, 1999). Additionally, philanthropists like Robert Boyle, who served as one of the governors for the society, set up funds after their death to encourage Indian education at colleges (Szasz, 1988; Weinberg, 1977). This new revenue source and public debate about Indian education caused colleges to actively explore Native American education as an option (Carney, 1999; Szasz, 1988).

When Harvard wrote its charter in 1650, it included Indian education in an effort to receive a grant from the New Society or the Boyle Fund (Weinberg, 1977; Wright, 1988). Grants were awarded by both to build housing for twenty Indian students (Weinberg, 1977, Wright, 1988). However, the structure was not built until 1656 and only housed its first Indian student in 1660 (Carney, 1999). After forty years of use, the funded building was home to only four Indian students, and instead housed English students and the university printing press (Carney, 1999). It was torn down in 1693 and its bricks were used to build another building (Szasz, 1988, Weinberg, 1977, Wright, 1988). Although, Harvard promised that future Indian students would be able to live in the new building for free; this never happened (Carney, 1999; Weinberg, 1977). Harvard had only six Indian students from 1653-1776 and only one actually received a degree (Carney, 1999).

William and Mary opened in 1693 after incorporating Indian education into its charter because it appeared to be a profitable enterprise due to the Boyle Fund (Weinberg, 1977). The college received funding to educate Indians and to build a school to house them (Carney, 1999). However, the school was not built until 1723 and did not house its first Indian student until 1743 (Szasz, 1988; Wright, 1988). The large majority of Indian students who used the house were children who were there to learn English grammar to prepare them for college (Carney, 1999; Szasz, 1988). Only sixteen students were enrolled in the college level at William and Mary from 1705-1776 and none received a baccalaureate degree (Carney, 1999). The Indian college was effectively closed in 1776 when the Revolutionary War broke out and the Boyle Fund was no longer accessible (Szasz, 1988; Wright, 1988).

Dartmouth followed a different path to Indian education. In 1754, Dartmouth's future founder, Reverend Eleazor Wheelock, became interested in saving Indian souls by converting

them to Christianity (Carney, 1999). Due to the racist nature of the colonists, Wheelock found difficulty raising money for the school in the colonies (Carney, 1999). He instead sent his prized Indian pupil, Samson Occum, to England and by 1768, Occum helped raise nearly 12,000 pounds in both England and Scotland, the most ever for Indian education (Wright, 1988). Wheelock, however, chose to sell the Indian school property and instead used the money Occum raised to found Dartmouth in 1770 (Wright, 1988). Wheelock had spent the English portion of the fund by 1774 (Wright, 1988). However, Occum managed to save a portion of the fund because the Scottish contributors refused to give the funds to Wheelock and after numerous court battles, the fund was used on Indian education at Dartmouth well into the nineteenth century (Carney, 1999). Prior to 1800, Dartmouth had only twenty-five Indian students, three of which graduated (Carney, 1999).

The colonial period had not been very successful for Native American higher education (Szasz, 1988; Wright, 1988). Only fifty Indian students were enrolled in Harvard, William and Mary, Dartmouth, and Princeton before 1880; one graduated before 1776 and four by 1880 (Carney, 1999). The educational process itself had not been beneficial to Native Americans because the curriculum revolved around conversion to Christianity, rather than providing them the pathway to a career (Szasz, 1988; Wright, 1988). Even for those who were well educated, like Samson Occum, there would be no acceptance in the mainstream society and the only alternative was for them to do menial jobs to support their families (Carney, 1999).

The Federal Period (1776-1900)

The federal period was marked by a more paternalistic approach by the government toward the tribes (Carney, 1999). Several court cases established that Indian tribes were sovereign nations, but were also considered “dependent” nations (Carney, 1999). Sovereign

status meant that they could negotiate treaties with the United States and were under federal, not state, jurisdiction. However, the 1831 Supreme Court case, *Cherokee Nation versus Georgia*, created “dependent” nations, allowing the United States to claim Indian land and forbidding nations from treating or trading with other nations (Carney, 1999). Thomas Jefferson advocated assimilation of the Native Americans to gain access to their land (Carney, 1999). However, after the War of 1812 the focus shifted to Indian relocation and in 1830, Andrew Jackson passed the Indian Relocation Act. The act led to the removal of Native Americans from the Midwest and Great Lakes to Oklahoma and resulted in the infamous Trail of Tears for southeastern Native Americans who were also relocated to Oklahoma (Carney, 1999).

A shift was also taking place in Native American higher education. Jefferson considered Native Americans to be “equal in body and mind to the white man”; however, Jefferson and George Washington had been disappointed with the results of Native American higher education success in colonial colleges (Carney, 1999; Wright & Tierney, 1991). Therefore, they began to favor vocational training over higher education for Native Americans (Wright & Tierney, 1991). By 1831, the ability of Native Americans to succeed in colleges had fallen even further into question, as witnessed when the director of the United States Office of Indian Affairs wrote that the Native Americans were “incapable of coping with the superior intelligence of the white man; ready to fall into the vices, but unapt to appropriate the benefits of the social state” (Eder & Reyhner, 2004, p. 45). As Carney (1999) wrote, the shift would “severely affect the acceptance of white education by Native Americans, and limit the development of Native American higher education institutions” (p. 48).

The vocational training also relegated Native Americans to the lowest levels of wage earning in the United States (Carney, 1999). This focus on assimilationist and vocational

educational policy and a lack of acceptance in white society caused Native Americans to view the educational attempts of the federal government as unattractive (Carney, 1999, Wright and Tierney 1991). Some administrators, such as Reverend Jedidiah Morse who had been commissioned by Secretary of War John C. Calhoun in 1820 to investigate new methods for Indian education, did believe that Native Americans had to be given control over and funding of their own education and should be allowed to develop their own institutions of higher education (Carney, 1999). However, most administrators viewed higher education for Native Americans as a lost cause and very few Indians were enrolled in college during the nineteenth century (Carney, 1999 & Weinberg, 1977).

When the government tried to encourage some sort of vocational education, such as the Indian Civilization Act of 1819, which authorized \$10,000 annually to provide agricultural education for Indians, the implementation was never effective (Carney, 1999). In this case, the federal government did not oversee the funds nor empower the Native Americans to manage the funds, instead relying on religious groups to oversee the implementation of the fund (Carney, 1999). The schools quickly became tools of conversion with limited agricultural education (Carney, 1999). The schools struggled to recruit students because of resistance in the Native American community and the relocation of tribes (Carney, 1999). The program was finally terminated in 1870 because of the growing debate over funding religious schools when there was a need for the separation of church and state (Carney, 1999).

When tribes, such as the Choctaws and the Cherokee, took education into their own hands, they had success (Carney, 1999). By 1842, the Choctaws had created a system of twelve primary and secondary schools and, by 1852, the Cherokee had 1,100 students in twenty-one primary and secondary schools and two academies (Carney, 1999; Wright & Tierney, 1991).

However, by the late nineteenth century, in an effort to destroy tribal structure and force assimilation, the federal government took control of the schools and the schools eventually disappeared (Carney, 1999; Wright & Tierney, 1991). The government had dismantled an educational system that not only was superior to the ones for white students in Arkansas and Missouri, but also had a higher literacy rate and a higher proportion of college graduates than the systems in those states. (Debo, 1961; Szasz & Ryan, 1988).

The only two institutions of higher education that had a modicum of success at educating Native Americans during the federal period were Bacone College and Pembroke State University (Carney, 1999). Bacone College was founded in 1880 by Almon C. Bacone and is Oklahoma's oldest college. Bacone opposed the policies of the American government stating, "the extermination of a race is unworthy of a Christian people" (Carney 1999, p. 83). He wanted to found a liberal arts college that would incorporate the student's home life into their education, a stark contrast to the vocational boarding school approach of the federal government (Carney, 1999). By 1895, Bacone enrolled 703 Native Americans, but came under attack two years later when the federal government tried to cede the colleges land to a white landowner (Carney, 1999). However, U.S. Supreme Court upheld the colleges' right to the land after seventeen years of litigation (Carney, 1999). Bacone is now a two-year institution that is open to all students (Carney, 1999; Eder & Reyhner, 2004).

Pembroke State University, founded in 1887 in North Carolina, is the only state college established specifically for the education of Native Americans (Carney, 1999). It was founded to serve the needs of the Lumbee tribe and granted its first degree in 1928. The Lumbees never signed a treaty or went to war with the federal government and never came under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Their lack of interaction with the United States government

allowed them to maintain control over their land, their resources, and their educational system. In 1945, the school opened its enrollment to all Indians and, in 1953, to all races (Carney, 1999; Eder & Reyhner, 2004).

Peculiar reasoning and poor policy-making decisions by politicians and administrators characterized the federal period (Carney, 1999). For example, the decision by Washington and Jefferson to move to vocational training for Native Americans was based on the results of Native American higher education at colonial colleges (Carney, 1999; Wright & Tierney, 1991). However, only three of the nine colonial colleges participated in Indian education and the Native American students were poorly prepared for college and vastly under-funded (Carney, 1999; Szasz, 1988; Wright, 1988). The move to vocational education and federal, not local, control of the educational systems for Native Americans severely diminished the higher educational opportunities for Indians during this era (Carney, 1999).

Without Indian control and influence, the schools could never recruit or retain students and those who did attend were not trained to be leaders in their communities (Carney, 1999). When many Native American schools were successful, their ability to have a consistent impact on Native American empowerment was stunted by Indian relocation or federal interference (Carney, 1999). Carney (1999) writes, “the most reasonable inference seems to be that the educational policy existed as a token to assimilation during the early period otherwise guided by a removalist policy” (p. 92). He adds, “The only concern seems to have been a remarkably simplistic means of gaining access to Native American lands, while providing a minimal form of retraining to enable the Indians to subsist on what land was given back to them. As we normally interpret education to mean the expansion of one’s horizons and possibilities, such an educational program seems hardly deserving of the name” (p. 92).

Self-Determination Period (1900-Present)

The self-determination period began with the Native American population at an all-time low of 237,000 (Carney, 1999). The federal government had usurped some authority from the tribes and had been attempting to destroy the Native American culture for decades (Carney, 1999). Whites had taken over much of their lands and their only hope for economic development, education, was geared toward eliminating their cultural identity and did not offer them any of the necessary educational tools for success in the dominant culture (Carney, 1999). However, during the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, the Native Americans began to gain an ally in the federal government, as a number of the commissioners of Indian Affairs during those decades began to push for more Indian educational opportunity and self-determination (Carney, 1999; Eder & Reyhner, 2004).

In the 1920's, several influential reformers, including John Collier, took up the cause for the Pueblo Indians and even helped to defeat the Bursam Bill, which was the last bill aimed at giving Indian lands to white squatters (Carney, 1999). In 1924, the Indian Citizenship Act gave all Native Americans citizenship. Collier authored much of the Merriam Report of 1928, which was an attack on the government's Indian policy and was influential in leading to the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 (Carney, 1999; Smith, 2000; Wilkins, 2002). It once again recognized tribal governments and strengthened tribal sovereignty (Carney, 1999; Smith, 2000; Wilkins, 2002). Along with the Johnson-O'Malley Act, which allowed the government to authorize contracts for Indian education, medical care, and social welfare, the Indian Reorganization Act set aside funding totaling \$500,000 for college loans for Native Americans (Carney, 1999; Wilkins 2002; Wright & Tierney, 1991). In 1932, there were 385 Native Americans enrolled in college throughout the United States(Wright & Tierney, 1991). Just three

years later and after the Indian reorganization Act, that number increased to 515, a thirty-four percent jump (Eder & Reyhner, 2004; Wright & Tierney, 1991).

The number of Native Americans attending college continued to climb and was aided, like every other ethnic group, by the passage of the GI Bill (Carney, 1999; Wright & Tierney, 1991). However, the numbers really began to increase during the 1960's (Carney, 1999; Wright & Tierney, 1991). Due to tribal scholarship programs and the New Deal legislation, between 1961 and 1968, the number of Native Americans graduating from college tripled (Carney, 1999, Wright & Tierney, 1991). However, over 90% of the students that were sent to colleges off of their reservation dropped out, over half during their freshman year, due to poor academic preparation for college and a huge cultural gap between themselves and their predominantly white college counterparts (Stein, 1999; Carney, 1999).

The Navajo observed this trend with their students and believed that an institution of higher learning located on their reservation could assuage some of the cultural issues faced by students leaving the reservation to attend college (Carney, 1999). On July 17, 1968, Navajo Community College was established by a resolution from the Navajo tribal council and became the first tribally-controlled college (Carney, 1999; Wright & Tierney, 1991). The college was housed in a local high school until Congress passed an act in 1971, which gave \$5.5 million for the construction of a campus (Carney, 1999; Eder & Reyhner, 2004).

In 1978, acting on the success of several tribal colleges, Congress passed the Tribally Controlled Community College Act (Carney, 1999; Wright & Tierney, 1991). Thirty more tribal community colleges were founded in the next 25 years. Tribal colleges have seen an increase in enrollment from 2,100 students in 1982 to 13,820 in 2007 (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2010). In 1994, the Morrill Act was extended to grant land grant status to all tribal

colleges. Carney (1999) writes, “In light of the long history of white takeover of Indian land, it was more than a little ironic that this land grant support came in the form of endowments instead of land, due to a lack of federal land available to be granted” (p. 109).

Obviously, the efforts of the federal government to suppress, if not exterminate, Indian culture could have been successful if not for the change in policy during the 20th century (Carney, 1999; Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, 2008). Now many tribal colleges actually encourage their native tongues to be spoken on campus and in the classroom (Carney, 1999; Eder & Reyhner, 2004; Stein, 1999; Tippeconnic, 1999). In 1975, The Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act was passed, which gave tribes more control over primary and secondary education in their communities (Wright & Tierney, 1991). Now, more than 100 nations have education departments that oversee daily operations, funding, financial aid, and, most importantly, curriculum development (Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, 2008). Nations have more power to propagate their cultural traditions, create better learning environments for their students, and develop innovative ways to help students located in such a unique environment (Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, 2008).

Native American enrollment in all higher education institutions remained stagnant from the end of the 1970s through the early 1980s (Carney, 1999). There was a dramatic increase from 1984-2002, as the number of Native American students enrolled in colleges and universities doubled and the number of degrees granted has increased at a similar pace (Freeman & Fox, 2004). However, in 2003, only 17.7% of Native Americans aged 18-24 were enrolled in a higher education institution, less than half the American average (Freeman & Fox, 2005).

Current State of Native American Access to Higher Education

While there have been noted gains in Native American access to higher education in the last decade, there is still much room for improvement (Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, 2008). For example, the US Department of Education (2004) reported that 76% of Native American tenth graders stated that they expect to complete a bachelor's degree, indicating that many young Native Americans expect to participate in the higher education process. Indeed, Native American enrollment has doubled in higher education in the past twenty years (USDE, 2004). However, only 26% of Native American students between the ages of 18-24 are enrolled in college, which is 10% less than the national average (DeVoe & Darling-Churchill, 2008). There appears to be a disconnect between the perception of opportunity to attend college and the reality of entering the higher education system.

A primary culprit is the lack of high school completion. Native Americans have a 51% chance of graduating from high school, similar to Latina/Latinos (53%) and African-Americans (50%), and much lower than the national average of 68% (Swanson, 2004). Some factors leading to this are high transfer rates between high schools, the funneling of students to vocational courses, chronic absenteeism, and a lack of cultural connection to the curriculum (Fann, 2009). The low high school completion rate has caused many tribes to put more resources toward secondary school retention and completion, sometimes to the detriment of college preparatory classes and programs (Fann, 2009).

Even those students who complete high school are less likely to be prepared for college than other ethnic groups (Fann, 2009). Native students typically complete the fewest number of college-required courses and only 21% have college ready transcripts (Greene & Forester, 2003). In addition, only 15% of Native American students earn advanced placement (AP) credit, which

is the lowest of any ethnic group; and those that do score lower than White and Asian American/Pacific Islander groups (Fann, 2009). However, the number of Native American students taking AP exams nearly doubled from 1999 to 2007 (DeVoe & Darling-Churchill, 2008). Finally, ACT/SAT scores are still below average for Native American students, although they have followed the national trend of slightly rising scores over the past ten years (College Board, 2008).

Native American students who do attend college still have one of the lowest persistence rates of any ethnic group (DeVoe & Darling-Churchill, 2008). One problem is that many Native Americans fall in the category of low-income, first-generation students who are 4 times more likely to leave college after their first year than students who have neither of these risk factors (Engle & Tinto, 2008). In addition, Native Americans that do attend non-tribal colleges and universities can be perceived as sell-outs by those in their native communities (Jackson et al., 2003). Another factor, according to Jackson et al. (2003), is that most Native Americans are first generation college students who so strongly value their family that the time commitment necessary to pursue a degree can directly conflict with their familial responsibilities. Finally, Native Americans that do attend college struggle to persist due to home sickness, lack of a sufficient support system, a shortage of financial resources, and a perception of being excluded by their peers due to their culture or ethnicity (Brayboy, 2004; Carney, 1999; Fann, 2009; Freeman & Fox, 2005; Jackson et al., 2003).

Fortunately, there are also success stories that appear to provide evidence of opportunities for increased participation in higher education for Native Americans. There are 36 tribal colleges in the United States, whose rate of growth and enrollment are outpacing the growth of Indian enrollments at nontribal colleges and universities (Harvard Project on American Indian

Economic Development, 2008). Due to their proximity to reservations and unique mission, they encourage students' academic success, stimulate tribal workforce development, aid in 4-year degree completion, and provide students with the opportunity to transfer to other non-tribal institutions for degree completion (Fann, 2009).

There are also twelve early college high schools for Native Youth across the country that create remarkable learning environments for Native American students. They incorporate the community culture into the curriculum, engage family and community members in the school, teach college courses at the school to allow students to earn credit without leaving their communities, and have an open admissions process. Accomplishments of these unique schools include 100% graduation rates, having students earn up to 45 college credit hours before graduation, a 400% increase in college enrollment for graduates as compared to those enrolled prior to the introduction of the program, and course offerings for adults in the community (Fann, 2009).

As Native nations continue to experience increases in revenue from economic development and exert more control over education in their communities, they will have greater opportunity to increase higher education access for their citizens (Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, 2008). College preparation at the high school level and placing a greater emphasis and value on education will help increase the chances for Native Americans to enter college and complete a degree program (Fann, 2009). An educated workforce will, in turn, be a benefit to communities both socially and economically; and, perhaps, serve as role models for the next generation of leaders (Cunningham, McSwain, & Keselman, 2007).

Economic Development for Native Nations

The need for economic development on reservations is paramount. Unemployment and

poor health are incredibly high in Indian Country, while real median household incomes for Native Americans (\$37,815) lag far behind the national average (\$52,029), leading to a high reliance on welfare or other government subsidies (Cornell and Kalt, 1992, 1998, 2007; US Census Bureau, 2008). The federal government has tried a variety of ways to address this issue, including numerous social programs, assimilation, and termination of federal responsibility for tribes. However, “only one federal policy orientation has been associated with sustained economic development on at least those Indian reservations that have exercised de facto sovereignty through their own institutions: the self-determination policy that emerged in the 1970’s” (Cornell and Kalt, 1992, p. 28).

Sovereignty as recognized by the federal government has existed in many forms for tribes over the past two hundred years (Carney, 1999; Cornell & Kalt, 2007). In the early 1800s, Chief Justice John Marshall led the Supreme Court in establishing all federally-recognized Tribal nations as sovereign (Carney, 1999, Cornell & Kalt, 2007). Treaties, court decisions, and legislation gradually reduced the amount of sovereignty held by the nations and the federal government took control of much of the decision-making for the tribes (Cornell and Kalt, 2007). The Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) of 1934 attempted to open the door for Nations to regain power over their affairs by creating constitutions steeped in Western ideology to help tribes form their own constitution (Cornell and Kalt, 2007; Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, 2008). However, the same constitutions that attempted to standardize and bring structure to Native nations were counter to Native American traditions and lacked widespread support and understanding from many of the citizens and actually made tribes more reliant on the Bureau of Indian Affairs for leadership and funding (Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, 2008, Wilkins, 2002).

The Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 caused sovereignty to shift from a legal principle to federal policy (Cornell & Kalt, 2007). This policy of self-governance should have allowed the tribes to make determinations about how they want to develop as a nation (Cornell & Kalt, 2007). However, even with this policy, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and other outside government and private agencies have determined how the nations develop agendas and set criteria for policy making and strategic planning (Cornell and Kalt, 2007; Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, 2008). Cornell and Kalt (2007) studied the relationship between the federal government and Indian reservations and have identified two distinct approaches to how the government and the nations have undertaken economic development on reservations: the standard approach and the nation building approach.

The standard approach reflects the traditional relationship between the two entities (Cornell & Kalt, 1992, 1998, 2007). It is characterized by short-term, non-strategic decision making that has encouraged tribes to cede development agendas to outsiders, making the elected leaders nothing more than distributors of resources (Cornell & Kalt, 1992, 1998, 2007). Indigenous culture is viewed as an impediment to development and economic development is seen wholly as an economic problem (Cornell & Kalt, 1992, 1998, 2007). In all of their studies, the standard approach did not work on reservations (Cornell & Kalt, 2007).

Under the nation building approach, which is the antithesis of the standard approach, the federal government allows tribes to determine what is important to them politically, culturally, and financially and to set appropriate guidelines for how they want to achieve their goal (Cornell & Kalt, 1992, 1998, 2007). Tribes are responsible for their own decision-making and allowed to learn from their own mistakes and evolve as political entities (Cornell & Kalt, 1992, 1998, 2007). When the BIA or other outside entities make poor decisions, they do not bear the brunt of

the impact and the tribes are forced to grapple with the consequences while learning little in the process (Cornell & Kalt, 1992, 1998, 2007). The people in the community are the real stakeholders and learn to make better decisions because they suffer the consequences of their failures or benefit from their successes (Cornell & Kalt, 1992, 1998, 2007). In instances where nations have succeeded economically, they have followed the nation building approach (Cornell & Kalt, 1992, 1998, 2007).

The Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development found evidence that supported tribal control in their study that examined 75 tribes that had significant timber resources, examining the outcomes when resource management was shifted from the BIA to the Tribes (Cornell & Kalt, 2007). They learned that both the productivity of the operation and the prices that they received for the timber increased when they took ownership of the forests (Cornell & Kalt 2007). They concluded that, “On average, Tribes do a better job of managing their forests because they are *their* forests” (Cornell and Kalt, 2007, p. 14).

Under the nation building approach, tribes must have effective governing institutions. As noted earlier, under the BIA, elected tribal leaders have traditionally controlled most of the resources of tribes. No different than other politicians, they often are elected or re-elected based on how they distribute these resources amongst their constituency. Therefore, they often make decisions based on political expediency, not the welfare of the tribe. Nations have to focus on creating more effective governing institutions (Cornell & Kalt, 2007).

Cornell and Kalt (1992, 1998, 2007) found four primary ways to create effective governing institutions. First, there must be stable rules and strict policies and procedures in place to serve as a system of checks and balances against the whims of new political leadership (Cornell & Kalt, 1992, 1998, 2007). Second, tribal leaders have to be allowed to focus on

providing strategic planning for tribes and move away from being managers of the daily operations (Cornell & Kalt, 1992, 1998, 2007). Third, tribes must create a bureaucracy to run the daily operations and tribal programs in an efficient, effective and fair manner (Cornell & Kalt, 1992, 1998, 2007). Finally, there must be clear and defined laws that are followed by a tribal court system (Cornell & Kalt, 1992, 1998, 2007). Dispute resolution cannot come simply from a politician; they must be handled fairly through a consistent judicial process (Cornell & Kalt, 1992, 1998, 2007). This increases the likelihood of impartial decisions for both members of the tribe and any outside entities that conduct business with the nation (Cornell & Kalt, 1992, 1998, 2007).

The nation building approach dictates that any political development must be compatible with the cultural norms and values of the nation to ensure there are no conflicts between the two (Cornell & Kalt, 1992, 1998, 2007). Unfortunately, the culture has been seen as an impediment to development, even by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (Cornell & Kalt, 2007). There are 565 Federally-Recognized Tribes and roughly over half as many more unrecognized tribes, each with their own history, culture, and language (US Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2010; Fann, 2009). The culture must be used as a framework for government, because some forms of political development directly conflict with cultural values (Cornell & Kalt, 1992). Many nations followed the guidelines set forth by the IRA in 1932 to create constitutions and form their governments, even though they were the opposite of their traditional way of structuring their tribes (Smith, 2000; Wilkins, 2002).

The White Mountain Apaches and the Oglala Sioux are two tribes that have used the IRA form of government and have had vastly different results due to the clash between the IRA style and their traditional style (Cornell & Kalt 1998). IRA governments have several key

components: centralization of power in the tribal government; the executive officers have great power and oversee the business operations; and the judiciary has no independence (Cornell & Kalt, 1998). The White Mountain Tribe has been very successful with this model, while the Oglala Sioux remain one of the poorest tribes in the country (Cornell & Kalt, 1998).

The Sioux have fewer natural resources to exploit for profit, which contributes to the disparity between the two nations (Cornell & Kalt, 1998). However, Cornell and Kalt (1998) found that one of the other primary culprits was the similarity, or lack thereof, between the IRA constitution-based governments and the traditional ways that these tribes had governed themselves. Since the IRA system closely resembled the White Apache historical government model, it was much easier for members of the nation to support and understand (Cornell & Kalt, 1998). However, the Oglala Sioux traditional form of government was vastly different and the tribe members do not trust or support the government (Cornell & Kalt, 1998).

Reservations using the nation building approach focus their economic development around a strategic orientation for the long term health of their tribe (Cornell & Kalt, 1992, 1998, 2007). Jobs and resources cannot be viewed as political capital or a means for a quick fix for reservation problems (Cornell & Kalt, 1992, 1998, 2007). Tribal leaders need to determine what reservation resources can be used to create future growth and stability for the community and the culture (Cornell & Kalt, 1992, 1998, 2007). In addition, the development must have the support of the community and cannot be a source of cultural tension (Cornell & Kalt, 1992, 1998, 2007). For example, if the community sees a natural resource, such as the forest, as sacred to their culture, any use of the timber resources must be done in cooperation with entire tribe, if at all. Opportunistic gain for a few can lead to disastrous long-term mistrust between the Nation and its' leadership (Cornell & Kalt, 1992, 1998, 2007).

When all of the criteria above are in place, the tribe can only flourish if its elected officials truly focus on nation-building leadership (Cornell & Kalt, 1992, 1998, 2007). Such leadership serves as one of the key components in the nation building approach (Cornell & Kalt, 1992, 1998, 2007). Historically, when leadership resides in the hands of a few individuals, they are easily corrupted or prone to make self-serving decisions (Cornell & Kalt, 1992, 1998, 2007). The leadership team must be willing to put a system of checks and balances in place and cede power to tribal courts, the tribal constitution, and other administrative units for the good of the future on the Nation (Cornell & Kalt, 1992, 1998, 2007). This allows leadership to emerge from other parts of the community and will decrease the perception that the jobs and resources of the tribe are used for each political group's political expediency (Cornell & Kalt, 1992, 1998, 2007).

Higher education's role in Native nation-building is mitigated by several factors. Native Americans have had an antagonistic relationship with mainstream education due to the federal government's assimilationist policies, racism that Native students experience in public educational institutions, and lack of congruency between the goals of education and those of the tribes (Brayboy, 2005; Deyhle & Swisher, 1997, Smith, 2000). Therefore, some question the importance or relevance of college degrees to their community and culture (Brayboy, 2005, Fann, 2009). Reservation communities also do not confer the same social status on degrees as mainstream society and may view them at odds with their culture and values (Brayboy, 2005; Smith, 1999).

However, with the development of economies on reservations, there is a need for educated tribal leaders and professionals in many fields (Cornell & Kalt, 1992; Fann, 2009; Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, 2008). Fann (2009) notes, "tribes have indicated the higher education is essential to prepare their members to assume all manner of

leadership and managerial positions such that tribes can rely on the capacity of their own citizens and not outside agents” (p. 24). Therefore, tribal communities have to reconcile their mistrust of higher education with their need to develop a highly-skilled workforce comprised of their citizenry to better increase the odds of successful economic development on reservations.

Theoretical Framework

This study used human capital and its role in rebuilding Native American economies as the theoretical framework. The concept of human capital was introduced by Adam Smith in the eighteenth century; however, Gary Becker brought it to prominence when he won the Nobel Prize for economics in 1992. It quickly became a part of the 1992 presidential campaign between Bill Clinton and George Bush (Becker, 1994). Human capital is a person’s unique skill set, typically created through training and education, which increases the ability to be productive and receive compensation (Becker, 1994; Light, 2001). Becker (1994) believes that “schooling, a computer training course, expenditures on medical care, and lectures on the virtues of punctuality and honesty are capital too in the sense that they improve health, raise earnings, and add to a person’s appreciation of literature over much of his or her lifetime.” He points to countries, such as Japan and Taiwan, with little natural resources and facing Western discrimination – much like Indian reservations – that invested heavily in human capital post World War II and saw their economies become much more robust. As reservations look for ways to jump start their economies, investment in human capital is a critical component to their success.

According to Becker (1994), investing in education and training is the most important requirement needed to create human capital. More specifically, his findings support the notion that a college degree can have a greater impact on the earning potential and labor market

prospects of a worker now more than ever before (Becker & Murphy, 2007). They found that that people with college degrees earned 30% more than non-degreed people in the 1980s and that number has increased to seventy percent in the past decade. In addition, the premium on a graduate degree increased from 50% in 1980 to over 100% in the 2000s (Becker & Murphy, 2007). In addition, salaries for those without college degrees have remained stagnant since 1975, while salaries for degreed professionals have continued to rise during the same time span (Cheeseman Day & Newburger, 2002). Higher education provides not just the opportunity to increase annual income but also lifelong earning potential (Cheeseman Day & Newburger, 2002). Both women and African Americans have also seen their education premiums increase just as much, if not more, than the premium for all workers (Becker & Murphy, 2007). Increased wages are not the only benefit of promoting higher education for Native nations.

Higher education is a key component to economic development for states across the country (Berglund & Clarke, 2000; Shaffer & Wright, 2010). Research and development at colleges and universities have both an innovative and economic impact on businesses and state economies (Berglund & Clarke, 2000; Feller, 2004). In addition, the increase in earnings for college graduates adds to the communities in which they live and are taxed (Becker, 1994; Becker & Murphy, 2007). Finally, colleges and universities also create a skilled workforce that can drive economic development by attracting businesses to the areas where educated workers live (Berglund & Clarke, 2000). Tribal economies could also look to partnerships with higher education to develop a more educated and skilled workforce.

A joint report by the Institute for Higher Education Policy, the American Indian Higher Education Consortium, and the American Indian College Fund entitled *Path of Many Journeys* (2007) found that, “Investing in higher education results in widespread dramatic benefits to both

individual American Indians and the nation as a whole, including higher rates of employment, less reliance on public assistance, increased levels of health, and a greater sense of civic responsibility” (p. 3). In addition, Cornell and Kalt (1992) state that human capital, along with natural resources, institutions of governance, and culture, is one of the internal assets that tribes control that are critical factors in successful economic development on reservations. Finally, there is a dearth of educated, experienced managerial talent and a need for more education for tribal government leaders on reservations that can be addressed by greater investment in human capital (Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, 2008).

There are some cultural phenomena in reservation communities that must be considered as traditional development methods for human capital are introduced to reservations. Western culture tends to focus on training and education as the primary cornerstones in the creation of human capital (Ward, 1998). However, in tribal communities, there may be other forms of human capital unique to their populations that can strengthen the likelihood of successful human capital creation. For example, the development of human capital can be mitigated by ignoring the existence of “Native” capital, defined by Ward (1998) as “the cultural knowledge and social relations among extended family and community members” (p. 476). Ward (1998) found that in the Northern Cheyenne tribe, families had ‘sponsors’ in the community who helped them secure jobs on the reservation. These relationships may trump any form of education or training that another person may have and thus impede the growth of and perceived importance of human capital on reservations. As the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development (2008) notes, “these efforts are strengthened when combined with strategies to recognize, learn from, and integrate the vast wealth of traditional knowledge from elders and traditional leaders

so that the cultural norms of the community can be tapped to energize commitments and hold decision makers, managers and employees accountable in effective ways” (132).

The higher education experience can also create other forms of capital. Brayboy (2005) notes native students at Ivy League schools gained not only human capital (a degree), but also cultural capital (how to navigate in the white world) and perhaps even social capital (through fellow classmates and faculty that they may call on in the future). Once any form of capital obtained at an institution of higher education is acquired or created on reservations, it can be metamorphosed into financial or physical capital that can help tribes build their own economic base and retain control of their political and financial affairs. As Light (2001) notes, “those without any capital of any form cannot enter the trading system at all” (p. 5). Cornell and Kalt (1992, 1998, 2007) found that tribal nations will only become financially viable through sovereignty and self-determination, and human capital plays a significant role in building that foundation.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES FOR THE COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Methodology

Several factors made qualitative, rather than quantitative, methodology more appropriate for this study. Qualitative data collection allows the researcher to select participants based on unique knowledge of a phenomena being studied rather than trying to determine ways to find a sample that allows for the generalization of findings to a larger population (Patton, 2002). This study was focused on gathering specific information from a small number of participants to determine what unique relationship exists between higher education and economic development of Native nations. Qualitative research also allows the researcher to focus on a much broader experience instead of focusing on specific measurements of certain portions of the experience (Patton, 2002). Because every tribe will have different types of educational structures and cultural experiences, the researcher must have the flexibility to gather as much information as possible and allow that information to guide the line of questioning.

Qualitative techniques encourage exploration of a topic to gather very descriptive data to guide research and create further questions (Creswell, 1998). One of primary purposes of this study was to explore a topic that has been under-researched and the respondents' answers actually created the themes that framed the findings. In addition, Creswell (1998) found that qualitative study is the best way to determine the answer to "how" and "why" questions. The study was driven by questions focused on *how* tribes incorporate higher education into their educational programs and economic development and *why* higher education may or may not improve their economic development. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, qualitative data collection methods that involve listening to people's experiences (Isaac & Michael, 1995;

Lincoln & Guba, 1985) are more compatible with “traditional Indian ways of knowing,” (Brayboy, 2005; Deyhle & Brayboy, 2000; Smith, 1999).

Sample and Participants of the Study

The sample consisted of the 45 federally recognized Native nations in the Southern Plains region, which includes tribes in Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas and Missouri. The designation of tribes in the Southern Plains Region has been derived by the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI). The proximity to the researcher in the Southern Plains region and the fact that this study has not been replicated with these tribes were also factors in their selection. See Appendix B for proposed nations that were invited to participate in the study.

Education informants were selected to serve as the tribal participants in the interviews. Their experiences in both the educational and administrative realms of the nation made them uniquely qualified to answer questions about higher education and nation building. The job descriptions for these individuals ranged from the director of a tribal education department to the tribal historian who also handled scholarships and tribal registration. There were some respondents who worked specifically with higher education programs and others who actually had a different job responsibility, but were assuming the role due to a leave of absence or the lack of a qualified candidate to fill the open position.

Five of the nations’ education informants never responded to numerous attempts to contact them and 21 tribal education informants declined to participate in the study. The majority of those contacted who declined to participate simply did not believe that they had time to review the information and complete the interview. Several education informants were interested or agreed to participate in the study, but wanted to be contacted at a later date. When they were contacted later, they still did not have time to participate and opted out of the study. A few

informants expressed a lack of interest in participating during the initial conversation and were never contacted again. Finally, a limited number of education informants stated they were unable to share the needed information because they could not get tribal approval to release the necessary data for the study. Similar demographic composition between those who elected to take part in the study and those who declined to participate eliminated any non-response bias. There Nineteen education informants, located in three different states, did agree to participate in the study.

Protocol

The interview protocol built on Fann's (2009) study of the relationship between higher education and Native nation building in California nations. Her research examined the relationship between higher education, tribal sovereignty, and economic and social development. She also explored the tribal policies and practices used to get Native students into college and what services and programs were available to support their transition to college. This study built on the framework of her questions and further delved into the relationship between higher education and economic development for Native nations. In addition, there was some exploration of tribal online education programs and the technology available for tribal students.

The interview protocol included 25 questions separated into 4 subcategories: 1) tribal demographic and education information; 2) higher education and economic development issues; 3) higher education access and information; 4) and computer access and online education. Tribal demographic and education information focuses on determining the overall number of tribal citizens and those in educational programs, types of educational programs, funding sources for educational programs, and any educational issues that the tribe is focused on addressing. Higher education and economic development issues revolve around tribal economic and educational

priorities, types and locations of economic industries, source of control for economic industries, and the relationship between higher education and economic development in the Nation. Higher education access and information explores higher education enrollment trends, programmatic support for higher education, financial aid for tribal students, and information on degreed employees on the reservation. Finally, computer access and online education addresses the educational technology available to the tribe and any online educational programs that are offered. See Appendix A for protocol questions.

Procedures for the Collection of Data

Each nation was researched using their web sites to determine who the educational informant was and whether or not the tribe had an educational department. If there was no identifiable information for an education informant on the website, the tribe was contacted via telephone and asked who administered higher education programs for their students. Once the identity of the education informant was ascertained and verified, that individual was contacted, via phone and e-mail, if possible, to schedule a telephone interview. Prior to the interview, each informant received an overview of the study, protocol, and consent form. I chose to conduct telephone interviews because the 45 tribes within the sample are disbursed widely within the three states and it was not feasible for me to conduct site visits to each tribe for interview. Each interview lasted between 30 minutes and one hour. Interviews were documented using handwritten notes, which were transcribed following the interview. Following transcription of the handnotes, individual participants were e-mailed a copy of transcribed notes and had 4 weeks to edit the transcript. See Appendix C for research timeline.

Procedures for the Analysis of the Data

Creswell (1998) encourages qualitative researchers to first organize and get a broad overview of all of their narratives or transcripts. As the researcher reviews the transcripts, they should begin looking for themes that they can use as code to further organize their findings (Creswell, 1998). As the themes emerge, subsections of each theme should be created to allow the researcher to further winnow down the data (Creswell, 1998). The researcher must then interpret the data by using the “lessons learned” throughout the process of organizing and coding the data and developing the themes and subsections (Creswell, 1998). Finally, the data must be presented in some form of visual image or metaphor to enable the reader to follow the findings (Creswell, 1998)

My data analysis began with the reading of transcripts to determine an initial set of codes to allow me to categorize my findings. Transcripts were then coded based on themes generated from the research questions and insights that emerged during data collection. As new themes developed, the coding was altered to ensure that all responses could be categorized and measured. Given the scope of the historical, cultural, political, and economic conditions and contexts among tribes, and experiences between tribal individuals and mainstream educational institutions, there was a wide range of program development within and across participating tribes.

I also explored the responses of the participants through the framework of human capital to explore how human capital is perceived within these Native nations and how it converged or differed from traditional, Western understandings of human capital such as those developed by Becker (1994). The findings will drive future exploratory questions with other educational informants to determine any similarities or themes that may exist within and across tribes.

Finally, I coded responses that addressed technological or online resources the tribes offer for their members for the purpose of education.

Creswell and Miller (2000) stress the importance of using member checks to help create a trustworthiness in research for the participants, the researcher, and the external reader. Member checks use the participants of the study and external peers to review the findings of the research to ensure that the outcomes reflect their experiences and are correctly interpreted by the researcher (Creswell & Miller, 2000). These reviewers provide support, play devil's advocate, challenge assumptions, push researchers to the next step methodologically, and ask hard questions about methods and interpretations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Creswell (2009) encourages the use of themes and patterns that are developed during the research, rather than transcripts, to be used in member checks. Therefore, after coding my transcripts and developing a set of themes from my data, I used member checks to determine the veracity of my findings and what categories needed to be refined or added.

A draft of the findings was sent to four participants who agreed to conduct the member checks. They were given 4 weeks to submit their responses, including any concerns about the content. The solicited reviewers were diverse in gender, geographic location and tribal size. Specifically, there were 3 males and one female, one individual was from Texas and 3 were from Oklahoma, and all were from tribes of varying enrollments. One participant was unable to complete the review due to an extended illness and another was unable to complete the review due to time constraints.

Two actual reviewers were able to provide feedback within the requested timeframe. One respondent did not provide any recommendations and reinforced that his quotes were accurate, "I have read through your findings and the partitions referring to my input are accurate. Let me

know if you need anything else” (personal communication, April 17, 2012). The other reviewer noted he saw no problems with the findings and that the information was helpful to him, “I think it looks great. It’s easy to understand AND I got a few ideas out of it myself” (personal communication, May 8, 2012). Both responses supported the themes and findings and did not identify any additional information or data that was necessary to include in the study.

Research in Native Nations and Researcher Role

Tribal communities have had a very negative experience with researchers for centuries due lack of respect, subjectivism, and overall poor treatment by those who have studied them (Brayboy & Dehyle, 2000; Champagne & Goldberg, 2001). In addition, the most in the Native American community believe they have been researched to an extreme and are wary to participate in more studies (Champagne & Goldberg, 2005). Therefore, it was imperative that I not only established a trusting and open relationship with all participants, but also showed some form of reciprocity with every nation that I studied. One way to establish trust was to be as transparent as possible about the research project and process. To that end, I provided an overview of the research study and protocol to each interviewee ahead of time, along with the consent form, so that they were fully informed about the study purpose and the questions they were asked.

Reciprocity was an opportunity for me to develop trust with my participants and show my appreciation for their time and insight into my topic. It is especially important given the distrust that many Native American communities feel toward researchers and their lack of familiarity with me or my agenda. I addressed reciprocity with my participants during the interview phase and the primary feedback I received was that respondents just wanted to receive a copy of my findings and any other information about the study. Therefore, at the individual level, I provided

each participant with a copy of my completed dissertation highlighting the findings of my study. On a broader level, I will further engage in reciprocity by sharing findings of my study with stakeholders in Indian education by, for example, presenting at the National Indian Education Association, The Oklahoma Indian Education Association, and the Native American Student Advocacy Institute.

Reflexivity, or researcher role, is a key component to the qualitative process because, as Kleinsasser (2000) writes, “reflexivity gives qualitative research its pulse” (p. 155). My role as a researcher was complicated by the fact that I am a member of the Cherokee Nation, but was immersed in white culture throughout most of my life. I was raised for the first ten years of my life in a predominantly white suburb of Dallas and then spent the next ten years of my life in a small, rural town in East Texas that was predominantly White with a significant African American population. My upbringing was dominated by white culture and had I no knowledge of my Native American heritage and no interaction with Native American culture. My mother was adopted by her father, who was white, and did not begin to explore her Native American roots until her mother died and she was reacquainted with her biological father’s family. Both my maternal grandmother and my maternal grandfather were Native American, but my father and his family are English and French.

For the past 7 years, I had begun to explore this new part of my heritage, but still had minimal exposure to the Cherokee culture. Frankly, I had been uncomfortable about expressing my heritage to many Native Americans or becoming involved in the culture because I look and was raised white. In 2006, I attended the Indigenous Peoples Knowledge Community pre-conference at a NASPA conference in Washington, D.C. and began trying to have real dialogue with those in the Native American community. Therefore, my transparency about my life

experiences and my Cherokee culture was critical to building honest and trusting relationships with the participants.

Limitations and Delimitations

There were several limitations to this study. Educational informants were difficult to determine with some smaller nations, who either have no one serving in that role or have someone serving that role and numerous others. Some nations either choose not to participate in the study or the educational informant was not accessible enough to be interviewed. One delimitation was the inclusion of tribes located only in the Southern Plains. The primary rationale was that the location of the tribes, which are all located in Texas, Oklahoma, or Kansas, allowed for greater access for me due to my location, just north of Tulsa, Oklahoma.

CHAPTER IV

EDUCATION INFORMANTS INTERVIEW FINDINGS

This chapter will present the findings of the educational informants who participated in the study. The responses of the participants were impacted by their geographic location and cultural norms, the educational climate that influenced the expectations and experiences of their students, and the resources that their tribes allocated for their educational programs and services. The Native nations that were asked to participate in this study are located in Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, and Texas. The Native American demographics, college-going rates college readiness of Native Americans in Oklahoma are substantially different than the other three states.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2010), of the 4 states involved in the study, Oklahoma had the largest percentage of Native Americans residing in their state, 8.6%, while Missouri, Kansas, and Texas all had 1% or less Native residents. In addition, according to the National Center for Educational Statistics (2011), in 2009-2010, approximately one-fifth of all students in public primary and secondary schools in Oklahoma were identified as Native American. Kansas, Missouri, and Texas all had 1% or less in public primary and secondary schools that were identified as Native.

In 2010, roughly 11% of all students enrolled in colleges and universities in Oklahoma were Native American and the percentage for each of the other three states was 1% or less (Kansas Board of Regents, 2011; Missouri Department of Higher Education, 2012; Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, 2010; Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2011). Finally, Oklahoma had the top 3 institutions in the United States for total bachelor's degrees conferred to Native Americans in 2010 and 6 of the top 10 in the country (Diverse Issues in Higher Education, 2011). None of the other states had one university in the top 15 for total

bachelor's degrees conferred to Native Americans in 2010. The statistical comparisons are important to note because, due to sheer size, Oklahoma's Native population has a more prominent role in the state relative to the counterparts in the other three states.

The college readiness of Native American students is an important indicator for how well states are preparing their students for college. ACT releases an ACT profile report annually about the college readiness of students in each state based on benchmarks that they have set for each section of the test. In Oklahoma, the percentage of Native American students that were college-ready based on their ACT scores was twelve percent, which was lower than the percentage of all students (20%). In Texas, the Native American population that was deemed college ready (29%) was also higher than the state average (24%). In both Kansas (14% versus 28%) and Missouri (19% versus 26%), the percentage of college ready Native American students was lower than the percentage of the overall student population.

Another indicator for college readiness is the number of students who take advanced placements tests before they enter college. The College Board publishes the AP (Advanced Placement) Report to the Nation annually to help identify the number of students who are taking AP tests and the success rate of the test takers. College Board created an equity and excellence ratio for each state and minority group by dividing the percentage of the successful Native American AP exam-takers in the class of 2011 by the percentage of Native American students in the class. In Oklahoma, 19.8% of the graduating class was Native American and 7.6% of the successful AP takers were Native students. The percent of equity and excellence achieved for the state (7.6% divided by 19.8%) was 38.4%. Oklahoma had the highest equity and excellence ratio of any state with at least 2% Native American population in the 2011 graduating class. Texas, Kansas, and Missouri each had roughly 1% or less of their overall student population identifying

as Native American and their proportion of equity and excellence achieved varied from 50% to 100%. On average there is an inverse relationship between the size of the Native American graduation population percentage a state has and the percentage of successful test takers for the graduating class. Typically, as the population gets smaller, the percentage of successful test takers increases.

A total of 45 tribes were identified to participate in the study. Five of the nations' educational informants never responded to numerous attempts to contact them and 21 tribal educational informants declined to participate in the study. The majority of those contacted who declined to participate simply did not believe that they had time to review the information and complete the interview. Several educational informants were interested or agreed to participate in the study, but wanted to be contacted at a later date. When they were contacted later, they still did not have time to participate and opted out of the study. Some informants expressed a lack of interest in participating during the initial conversation and were never contacted again. Finally, some educational informants stated they were unable to share the needed information because they could not get tribal approval to release the necessary data for the study.

Nineteen educational informants did agree to participate and their nations were located in three different states. Each nation varied in many ways, but there were several commonalities. The overwhelming majority of Pre-K through 12th grade students attended local public schools, while a few attended Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools that were located near the tribe. Almost all tribes had education programs that manage Johnson O'Malley (federal funded programs for K-12 students), BIA and some tribally-funded programs for primary, secondary, and post-secondary students, in addition to some vocational education and adult training. All

tribes also had some variation of financial aid for their students in higher education that were funded by the BIA and/or the tribe.

The primary differences between the Nations were the size of the tribe, range of services provided for their post-secondary students, and financial aid options for their students. Six of the participating tribes had less than 1,500 citizens, with the smallest Nation having roughly 250 citizens. Nine tribes had between 2,500 and 6,000 and four had over 10,000 citizens, with the largest topping 300,000 members. For the purposes of this study, the Nations will be grouped as moderate (0-1500 members), intermediate (2500-6,000) and expansive (10,001 and above).

The services that were provided were not predicated on the size of the tribe, but varied based on funding and staffing. Some tribes offered only financial aid for their students, with no counseling or support services. In addition to financial aid, some tribes offered a mix of services such as informal counseling, financial aid or college testing workshops, college fairs, and summer youth and leadership programs for their high school students. Other tribes were more deliberate in their programming and have unique relationships with universities to provide their students with special educational opportunities, such as on-site classes and cohort groups that take classes together and live in the same residence halls.

Funding for students ranged from a BIA stipend that was only available to students who could prove need to a full scholarship including books, room and board and a computer with internet access. The majority of tribes offered federal funding of some sort, such as BIA or Pell grants, and subsidized students with scholarships of their own. Several tribes did offer more money for graduate students and differentiated between full-time and part-time enrollment. In addition, several tribes increased their funding for students with higher GPA's or for students as they moved from their freshman year through their senior year of college.

The role, responsibilities, and experience levels of the educational informants were as diverse as the tribes that they represented. Some were responsible only for higher education programming for their students and worked for an education department that was staffed with several members serving distinct roles. Others were responsible for every aspect of education from Head Start, to Johnson-O'Malley and even funding and counseling higher education students. There were some participants who served not only as the primary education administrator, but in several other roles in the tribal administration. Finally, some of the respondents had served in their capacity for several years or at least had several years of experience working with tribal education departments, while others had just recently assumed their roles, with no prior tribal education experience.

There were several interview questions that explored the employment patterns of tribal citizens and the economic development plans for the nation. One limitation for questions about economic development is because the participants in this study were educational informants and not focused primarily on economic development in their roles, many were not directly involved in strategic planning, but some did have a good working knowledge of the plans of the tribe. Most tribes did have some sort of plan in place for economic development and were primarily focused on diversification of their revenue streams or creation of new economic streams through small businesses or construction projects. The primary employer for most tribal citizens was internally-controlled by the tribe and was usually gaming. However, for many tribes, the tribal administration was a major employer due to the scope of the services (legal, education, law enforcement, environmental protection, and numerous other social services) that the nation provides its' members.

Three interview questions focused on determining how many tribal members were enrolled in college, how many had been to college, and how many degreed members of the nation worked for the tribe. In almost all cases, educational informants were only able to give estimates on the number of tribal members who were enrolled in college based on the number of students that they funded each year. In addition, for larger tribes, it is more difficult to identify, track and communicate with every student from their tribe who is enrolled in some sort of post-secondary institution. Smaller tribes tend to have a much greater ability to initiate individual contact with their students who are enrolled in colleges or universities. Therefore, I am only able to report the number of students funded as opposed to number of student enrolled in post-secondary education.

There were no records of how many tribal members had attended college, so most informants provided a percentage that they estimated from their own experiences when interacting with tribal members. The number of degreed tribal members working for the nation was typically either relatively low (10% or less) or between 30% and 50% of all tribal employees. Again, these were all estimates from educational informants, although some felt much more confident in their estimates and one received their statistics from their employment office. Some tribes employed roughly 8-10 people in their tribal administration, while other employed several hundred, so it was easier for informants from smaller tribes to give a more accurate representation. According to respondents, the primary causes of lower number of degreed tribal members working for the tribe was either lack of qualified applicants or because the members of the tribe were spread out geographically and many did not want to move to the location of the tribal headquarters.

The responses from the educational informants were reviewed and several major codes were created: lack of finances, lack of skilled professionals to work for the tribe, existent and non-existent college partnerships, familial issues, location, economic development for the tribe, strategic plans for educational development for the tribe, difficulty getting tribal members to work for tribe, inability of college to develop human capital for the tribe, and lack of distance education. From these findings, 4 main themes emerged: college-going and retention contexts, higher education preparation for tribal employment, economic and educational development for tribes, and recommendations for higher education.

Each of the themes, except for higher education preparation for tribal employment, were also broken down into sub codes. College-going and retention contexts were further delineated into sub-themes that included: familial college knowledge, financial issues, and academic readiness. The themes economic and educational development for tribes include the sub-themes: program creation and community engagement, getting students into college, and assisting current college students. Finally, recommendations for higher education were delineated into coursework (both delivery and content), financial aid and scholarships, pre-attendance and retention.

College-Going and Retention Contexts

In recorded phone interviews, educational informants were asked general questions about their students' experience trying to attend and persist at colleges and universities. Responses were divided into three subgroups: familial college knowledge, financial issues, and academic readiness. Highlighted below are their quotes that speak directly to the obstacles that their students face as they try to matriculate to college and complete a degree.

Familial College Knowledge

Familial college knowledge was the most important influence on student matriculation to

post-secondary institutions. Many family members have limited experience with colleges and have little knowledge about how to navigate the system or what funding possibilities are available for their students. In addition, student aspirations for higher education vary based on the cultural norms (both within the tribe and externally) that they experience on a daily basis, so some families are in need of information and support to help their children access higher education. One higher education specialist who works for an expansive tribe in Oklahoma stated:

We [tribal members] are in a very rural area and in smaller towns. I get a lot of students, especially because I go every year and talk to graduating seniors at the different high schools, and the majority of them have a desire to go to college, but they are being raised by their grandparents and many of their grandparents did not finish high school and don't put a priority on education. Still, to this day, I see that as a major barrier to getting our students into college. They don't have that family support because maybe they just had one family member who went to college and they didn't finish, but maybe went to school for a few semesters. I get students who come in and are 23 or 24 and they say I wanted to go to school, but my grandmother needed me to work or I wanted to go to school but my dad was unemployed and I needed to work to pay bills.

Many times, it's not that parents do not care or are not interested in their students' future, but there is a true lack of knowledge about how they can get their children access to higher education. One of the respondents, who works as education director for an intermediate tribe in Oklahoma noted:

There is a lack of understanding of the parents. For example, the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program (OHPLAP), which will pay for college in Oklahoma for you if your household income is \$50,000 or less and you enroll in a college bound track in 8th,

9th or 10th grade. Many of the parents here don't even know about it even though a lot of them qualify.

Another education director for an intermediate tribe in Oklahoma further explained the extent to which students and their families can be in the dark about the higher education process:

A lot of times our teenagers straight out of high school and have not had any family members who have attended college, so they have no idea what to expect and are on their own. I have actually driven students to college to help them enroll because no one else in their family knew how to.

Other participants agreed that their students seemed to follow the educational and employment patterns of their parents and other tribal and non-tribal community members. However, a director of education for an intermediate tribe in Oklahoma also noted that those who did choose to further their education seemed to have no problems with persistence:

We live in very rural areas with small schools and small student enrollments. A lot of our students come from low and middle income families who are not educated beyond high school. We have to share with the students the importance of education and help break the cycle of poverty. Family support is important because most family members just have high school degrees and are blue collar workers. Very few have family members who have been to college, so they are not encouraged to go to college. It is probably harder to get them to want to go. The students in this area, both Native and non-Native, tend to get out of high school and go and get jobs instead of going to college. The students that do want to go [to college] stick with it until they graduate. We have very few students who drop out.

Lack of parental involvement was even more directly addressed by an education director with an intermediate tribe in Oklahoma.

Parental participation and involvement is the issue. I see at risk students who don't really have parents who are involved or follow up with what they are doing in school. There is no encouragement and their parents are not aware of what is going on until it is too late or the efforts that we make to keep the kids in school are not going to go very far.

Parental and familial expectations and even the work schedule of parents, were barriers to students matriculating to post-secondary institutions according to a tribal administrator with a moderate tribe in Texas:

[We're] no different than other ethnic groups. We're a partner for a parent, not a replacement. The entertainment industry's [the tribe's biggest employer] work hours are not always conducive to raising a child and helping them get through school. When I grew up, discussing higher education wasn't the norm.

However, some respondents found that families are very supportive and have noticed a shift in the importance placed on higher education by the current generation of parents. A higher education program administrator at an intermediate tribe in Oklahoma stated:

I think a majority of the time there is a good support system for them. It is our job to help our young people be self-sufficient, so we need to coax them into talking to financial aid people and counselors and once you get them moving in that direction, they do get the support that they need.

One participant discussed the critical role that her family played in encouraging her to attend college and the impact it had on her children:

I'm lucky. I have two children who are college graduates. I am asked why I have two kids who finished school and I say my mother always harped on education. There were 9 of us and even though only two of us got degrees, she paid for all of us to go to college. I engrained that in my children. I let them know that education was important and made that a priority.

Another higher education director for an intermediate tribe in Oklahoma was also heartened by the role that current and former students are playing in the lives' of future and new students:

I do have two students who won Bill Gates scholarships and they are great about trying to help other students. One, who is now in graduate school, actually asked me to send her e-mail address out to all students and is willing to help anyone who needs it.

Regardless of familial college knowledge, lack of college going for their students was driven more by a reluctance of students to leave their communities and move to an unfamiliar place. One educational specialist, working for a moderate tribe in Oklahoma explained:

For most of them, it seems like a hard process to go from a small town that is very family oriented off to college. Leaving that security for them is very overwhelming. We try to guide them through the process, but they have a hard time overcoming their shyness and going up and talking to someone at the schools. The colleges around here are aware of that. For example, Rose State College is having a college awareness day and they are inviting all of the area schools to bring their seniors and they walk them through what the first day of college will be like and walk them through the enrollment process. They want to keep kids from being scared and intimidated because they can be bombarded with what they need to do and it is very fast paced when they arrive on campus. If students will take

the first step of getting away from the security of home, they will be okay. It's scary for them to leave home for the first time.

An education director for an intermediate tribe in Kansas agreed:

It's mainly just culture shock because they are going to a different place. This is like a small town, so leaving the reservation can be hard.

Financial Issues

Financial issues were almost as prevalent as familial college knowledge when educational informants discussed the obstacles that they believed barred their students from attempting or completing college. One higher education program administrator noted that even though they provide funding for their students in conjunction with Pell grants, many still cannot afford to pay their college expenses:

A lot of our undergrad students have to pay out of their own pocket because they cannot afford to go. Our fund is only a certain amount every semester and if it is not enough, they may have to drop.

An education director also noted that they have to be very deliberate in helping their students and their families understand how to finance college:

[The biggest problem is] lack of funding. The scholarship we give does not pay for everything so many of them have to work or take out loans. We offer different workshops for the kids and their parents to let them know how they can pay for college.

Financial responsibilities at home are especially challenging for non-traditional students. For example, one participant, who works at an intermediate Oklahoma, explained:

Since my student base is getting older, I have a lot who have to keep their jobs while they go to college so many of them like online programs or going at night or they can't go at

all. Also, family responsibilities also make it difficult to get into school because to go, they have to put their child in daycare. When I first got here full-time students got \$750 per semester and part-time students got \$450 per semester. Then, we went to \$100 per credit hour and then \$150 per credit hour in less than a year and added summer school. It will always be an issue, but our leaders here have decided to thoroughly invest in higher education. However, tuition continues to go up, so it will always be an issue.

Some tribes remote location and the need for transportation can be barriers for their students. An education director in a rural part of Oklahoma shared:

We provide them with funding for college, but it is impossible for many of them to attend regularly because they come from low income families who have only one car.

A lot of them have chosen not to go to college right away because it is impossible for them to keep up with the course work and home work due to a lack of transportation.

Even those students who come from college-educated families struggle to gain access to higher education. Where in the past a student could afford college with a combination of Pell and tribal grants, today this may not be enough, especially if the student is not living at home:

Even the ones whose parents went to college, their parents' financial situation was much better since they had Pell grants and tribal grants that were sufficient to cover college costs. If it's need-based, they may only have the tribal grant and Pell grant, but they'll still need to borrow more money to go to college.

Academic Readiness

Academic readiness, defined as students having completed academically rigorous, college preparatory courses that make them minimally eligible for 4-year institutions was also an obstacle that participants believed hampered their students' ability to not only gain admission to

college, but also to be successful once they were admitted. One higher education program administrator of an expansive tribe in Oklahoma explained how they have switched their focus from primarily providing college assistance to addressing college readiness, especially ACT test preparation:

Academic preparedness and ACT scores [is the biggest obstacle]. We do have workshops for those things, but this is basically our first year to do it. We were really proficient in writing checks to students, but not proficient in making sure they were prepared and getting them the support they need to stay in school and not drop out. We have switched our focus to help get them prepared for college and testing. By and large Native American students have trouble with standardized testing, so it may take longer. We were having such a large attrition rate and that has been our focus.

One participant pointed out that a lack of academic readiness is not a new phenomenon with Native students or many of their Non-Native peers in high school:

What I see is not necessarily just with Native students, but with students in general. They do not have the basic Math and English skills that they need to be prepared for college. They're being put in remedial courses when they first get to college just to get caught up. It has always been a problem and continues to be a problem.

One former education director for an expansive tribe in Oklahoma tribe believed that their students aren't prepared for college by high school counselors and the impact for the tribes is tremendous:

The advisement in the public school system is spotty at best. I think the counselors find it easy to work with the high achieving academic students and by doing that, we lose the potential of those students who just needed to be encouraged or given an opportunity to

go forward to college. We are losing a lot of potential tribal leaders, managers, and employees because they are not being prepared to go to college at an early level.

Higher Education Preparation for Tribal Employment

In recorded phone interviews, educational informants were asked general questions about their tribe's satisfaction with the readiness of college graduates to work for the tribe. This topic was the most polarizing for study participants. Many believed that colleges and universities were simply not preparing college graduates to work for tribes. However, many believed the exact opposite and listed numerous colleges and universities that had programs and services, such as Native American studies and Native American centers, which adequately prepared students to work for a tribe.

For those that believed college graduates were ill-prepared for tribal service, the primary concern was a lack in most college programs of college content directly relevant to tribal issues, such as governance, law, sovereignty, and tribal-federal government relations. Two respondents working for intermediate and expansive tribes Oklahoma relayed similar thoughts when discussing the need for a more relevant curriculum:

There should be more focus on the Native American law studies and looking all the way down through our CFR (Code of Federal Regulations). There are not enough classes or programs in colleges today that are geared towards that since there are so many Native Nations across the United States. You would think that studying and understanding the governmental policy would be a big issue.

Even though someone may come out of college with a business degree, they have to get up to speed with how a tribe operates and how the government operates. Culturally, tribes

need more courses for tribal governance, history, culture, language and those types of things. There's a lot of work to be done between colleges and tribes.

A higher education director at an intermediate tribe in Oklahoma agreed that colleges must be more deliberate in what they do to encourage and prepare college students to work for tribes and even relayed her own college experience to reinforce their concerns:

Higher education can help tribes develop economically since some students are interested in coming back to work for the tribe to help build its sovereignty. Most colleges don't teach anything about sovereign nations and that would be very helpful. They need to teach this in all sociology and political science classes, not just Native American cultural classes. I went to college and never even knew about sovereign nations until I got my job here. Even Native American studies programs may need to be revamped so that the students understand all of the issues about tribal governance, sovereignty and compliance and not just history.

Some respondents pointed out that understanding the tribal governance and law is very important, but there are other factors that are just as crucial for people who want to work for tribes to comprehend. A tribal administrator in Texas explained:

Students go to the public school system and they understand the Texas and federal government, but not their own government. It's almost foreign to them and they will not be prepared to take leadership positions in the tribe. I got a bachelor's degree and was not prepared to come in and work for the tribal government. I sit on the tribal council and it took me a year to understand how everything operates. There has to be an educational process about tribes and what's unique about them.

The same administrator also touched on a key issue for tribes who must rely on non-Natives with little knowledge of tribal culture and traditions instead of tribal members to fill roles for the tribe:

It will take a long time for outsiders to understand some things about our tribe and there will be some nuances that they will never understand. They just have to be humble to that. Everything you do must be culturally relevant or people do not see it as legitimate.

An education specialist at a moderate tribe in Oklahoma believed that colleges and universities could really help tribes with economic development if they would just be more deliberate in the preparation of students who wanted to work for their tribes:

They [colleges and universities] could guide the students into Indian law and other areas that we need. The Indian education people in college could help them get the correct classes so that they could come back and help the tribe operate and be educated in the issues that affect the tribe. I don't think that the majority of colleges really do prepare students to understand tribal issues unless they have chosen that to learn about it because they want to come back and work for the tribe in a certain field. If they tell their counselors that they are interested in working for their tribes, they would probably steer them in the right direction.

The same participant also contrasted how tribal colleges are preparing students to work for tribes with the absence of guidance that they are seeing in other colleges and universities:

The problem is that most of these kids, especially when they are right out of high school, don't really know what they want to do. Some of them do and stick with it, but often they don't know for sure what they want to do and I don't think that the majority of colleges, right now, really push them or guide them in the direction of going back to work for their

tribe. There are some colleges that are getting started by the tribe, like the Creek Nation and Pawnee Nation, which teach the language and the tradition, and make sure that they are guided in the way that they need to be if they want to work for their tribes. I think it's great because if tribes have their own schools and they can go and get college courses and they can guide them in that way. I definitely think there are issues there that need to be addressed because it's a really different environment working for a tribe than it is working for the public.

A director of education programs at a moderate tribe in Oklahoma explained that if colleges would just encourage more students to go back and work for any tribe, the opportunities are there for them to get a job since nations are sovereign and have the freedom to use American Indian hiring preferences for their positions:

I do see the shortcomings because they don't come back. I think colleges and universities should push them to go back and help the tribe. I don't care what tribe you are because a lot of tribes will hire you even if you are not in their tribe. Colleges need to give them the confidence to do that.

One higher education program administrator of an expansive tribe in Oklahoma discussed how his tribe has become more proactive in trying to prepare students to work for their nation:

Our students go to school and when it comes time to find a job they don't have the experience needed to get the entry level jobs here with the nation. We have been trying to work with our business entities and the tribe to create internships so that our students get experience and make a little money and will be more qualified for those jobs when they graduate.

A tribal administrator of an intermediate tribe in Texas also explained how they combined some programs to provide more efficient and effective job assistance to their members:

We consolidated our educational programs with the workforce investment act program through the Department of Labor because they used to compete with each other and it gives us more flexibility to give them stipends. When they graduate, we use the workforce investment program to help them find a job or find an internship inside the tribe.

Several respondents agreed that colleges could help prepare students, but that the uniqueness of working for a tribe cannot be understood without first-hand experience. An education director from an intermediate tribe in Oklahoma explained:

It would be helpful to understand sovereignty and understand how that applies to what we do. However, just general business degrees can help handle budgets and manage programs. However, with elected officials, it is hard whenever you go to a university because you can't ever really plan or describe what it is like to work for a tribe. When you work for a tribe it is important to understand customer service because, even if you're a member of the tribe, you still have customers and tribal members that you serve. I think some people are ill-equipped to do that. I'm not sure how higher education can cater to that. I went to college and got a degree in business and some of my basic skills prepared me for working here, but not for the majority of what I have encountered since I have been working here.

A former education director in Oklahoma believed that both tribes and post-secondary education institutions need to do a better job of forming partnerships to help educate students about tribal needs.

In certain states, there is a lack of understanding of the tribes. Colleges may have tried to reach out to tribes and not had the response they needed from a particular tribe and then they decide not to contact other tribes because they believe they are not ready for it and they don't want to put forth the effort annually. Tribes have changed and grown and operate more programs and have more partnerships with universities and a lot can be done by colleges to reach out to tribes and establish these partnerships.

He then suggested that since there are tribes with similar needs, university initiatives could be designed to serve several tribes:

Tribes with like needs can put forth a request to colleges to create more graduates educated in the way that tribes need. If colleges and universities would reach out to tribes and create programs it would create more graduates.

However, some educational informants believe that colleges and universities in the region either already do a good job of preparing students to work for tribes or are moving in the right direction. One education director for an intermediate tribe in Oklahoma stated that tribes have to do a good job of making their students aware of existing programs:

The programs are out there and we need to get our students connected with those. We need to give the youth the opportunity to see all the aspects of tribal operations so they could understand what training or education they need to get to come back and help their community like they want to. Oklahoma University has a great Native American program, so we just need to guide them in the right direction.

One higher education specialist for an expansive tribe in Oklahoma not only sees numerous programs that are offered in their region, but also believes they will continue to become more commonplace at colleges and universities in her area:

Actually, where the majority of our students go in our area, a lot of the universities offer Indian studies degrees and they can learn about tribal government and how to be a tribal administrator and gaming. University of Oklahoma has an Indian studies degree, USAO in Chickasaw has one and Cameron was working on one. It is important in this area because there are a high number of Indian students and a lot of the colleges are gearing degrees toward Native studies. There is a lot of positive movement toward it, it is definitely not stagnant.

A former education coordinator of a moderate tribe in Oklahoma concurred and believed that a number of post-secondary institutions were providing good training for tribal employment:

In Oklahoma, they are. Northern Oklahoma College (NOC) in Tonkawa has created several programs to increase education for students working in the gaming field. The Pawnee tribe has a college with a Native studies degree. OSU and OU, the tribal college in Lawton (Comanche Nation College), NOC and the Pawnees all appear to be doing a good job.

One participant discussed how the local tribal college has taken the lead in preparing students for both leadership positions and has even created a unique gaming certificate program for students who want to work for tribes in that capacity:

Right now, Native American studies is really popular at Pawnee Nation because so many kids want to learn because it is empowering to them. They also learn about tribal sovereignty and many of them did not even know what that meant. The tribal college has

one of the only programs focused on gaming. It is called the Tribal Gaming Regulatory Initiative and is a short term certification program that is one, two or four days long. It is designed to help students receive class completion and certification that provides them the training to be a tribal gaming commissioner, in gaming management positions or gaming regulatory positions. It's great because gaming is such a huge thing for many tribes and we want to hire tribal members in these roles instead of having to bring someone else in. Members of other tribes take the courses and they have even gone to other tribal communities and taught the courses.

A tribal administrator at an intermediate tribe in Texas summed up the need for the partnership between higher education and Native nations to help tribes strengthen their ability to become more self-sufficient and assert their sovereignty:

Higher education is the key because we need to be in the decision making positions so that we have a say in how our tribe runs. The Harvard studies support that. We need to be educated in both worlds. People don't fully understand the role of higher education when it comes to cultural retention. People argue with me and say that I'm trying to say that higher education is more important than our culture. What I'm trying to say is that higher education is a door to proliferating your culture more. More educated people have a higher income. You are no longer focused on subsistence to support your family. You can focus more on culture and the arts and learn the language. It would lead to a cultural renaissance.

CHAPTER V

ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR TRIBES

Participants were asked general questions about their tribe's plans for both economic and educational development. The results are separated into plans for economic development, followed plans for educational development.

Economic Development

Some of the respondents were not privy to their tribe's economic plans and did not feel comfortable responding to questions about their strategic plans, although the purpose of asking them such questions was to understand their perceptions of the connections between economic development and higher education. However, many respondents did have knowledge of their tribe's economic goals and most centered on the need to diversify what the tribe currently does, either through small business or other ventures. In addition, some respondents spoke of the barriers that their Nations faced when trying to create a plan for economic development due to the lack of human capital in many areas needed to implement their plans.

Strategic Plans for Economic Development

A tribal administrator at an intermediate tribe in Texas discussed how his tribe had created numerous ways to diversify their economy, even mirroring other communities that they had observed having success in lending, credit and commerce:

[We are] trying to diversify the economy by building up a private sector within the reservation to promote intertribal commerce, much like other ethnic communities have done in (a large major metropolitan area). They lend to each other and buy from each other. Members have a hard time getting access to capital because people cannot mortgage their homes because the bank cannot foreclose on them.

The participant also discussed their tribe's efforts to increase the business and finance knowledge base of community members to try to develop more small business for tribal members:

[We are] trying to do financial literacy programs to get people credit worthy. Also, [we are] doing a community development financial institution to try and give them their first loan and make them bankable and build the economy that way. To be eligible they have to go through a series of financial literacy programs and some credit management to help prepare them.

Finally, the tribe is also diversifying through existing and future government contract and expanding their ability to provide more opportunities for professionally-trained tribal members

The tribally-owned sector is getting into more government contracts, with 8A certified-government set aside program for minorities [this program is part of the Small Business Act, and was created to help small and disadvantaged businesses compete in the marketplace. It also helps these companies gain access to federal and private procurement markets]. We have an advantage because we can sole source contracts because we don't have the same limits of individual entrepreneurs since we are supporting an entire tribe. We do information technology, facilities maintenance, oil and gas distribution. We are trying to expand our North American Industry codes to get more contracts. It's helped us diversify our economy and allowed us to access some more professional employment opportunities, like the IT world. We want to have a rich, thick, diversified economy that has tribal enterprise and a government sector and then has some entrepreneurship as well.

The education director of an intermediate tribe in Oklahoma discussed the importance of education in helping their tribal members start their own businesses and become less dependent on outside revenue:

The main goal is self-sufficiency for the tribal members. Education is a big part of that because we provide paid training for our participants and one of the goals of our 477 program [a government grant program designed to educate and train tribal members] is to provide assistance to a client trying to start their own business.

The same tribe is also hoping that by increasing their gaming revenue, they can provide more education and training for their tribal members to combat the unemployment rate:

Gaming is important because we want to be able to generate as much money as possible for education and training. The tribe also wants to get community members employed because there is a high unemployment rate here.

A few tribes do not have gaming and are either attempting to add gaming to their economy or develop more small businesses for their members and the tribe. A higher education program administrator at an intermediate tribe in Oklahoma explained the tribe's goals:

We have no gaming, but we are working on gaming and also looking into other business ventures that tribal members have been successful at to see if we can work with them to generate more revenue.

Many tribes that rely primarily upon gaming for revenue are looking to move beyond gaming and create a more diversified economy. An education specialist from a moderate tribe in Oklahoma that uses gaming as its primary revenue stream explained their tribe's efforts to find more ways to generate revenue:

The tribe recently set up an economic development director position and wants to expand outside of just gaming. They have properties and are looking at different options and even visiting with other tribes to make sure we don't have everything based on casinos. They are looking at what businesses other tribes are being successful at and are being very open-minded and looking at all sorts of other options. I think in the next five years we'll have several other businesses going. They do already have gift shops, a couple of casinos, and smoke shops. We did have a mall in (a local town), but a tornado destroyed it. There is still a huge parking lot there and the electric and water lines are still intact and they are talking about putting a tribal plaza on that area.

Some tribes are struggling with developing a consistent economic plan because of the impact of increasing memberships on their services and budgets. A higher education director outlined their tribe's plans in the face of a population boom, nearly thirty new members per month:

The tribe is struggling because it is difficult to plan a budget when the number of tribal members is growing so rapidly. They want to make sure and have a smart budget plan since the tribe membership is growing by leaps and bounds. They are currently using marketing campaigns to try and maximize their casino and resort monies by having different things to sell, different programs to have and different services to provide.

Some tribes do not appear to have an organized approach to economic development. One respondent explained their tribe's struggles with a consistent approach to economic development:

Unfortunately, they have not been well-defined since the 60s when the constitution was done by a business committee, which is similar to a city council. They started small and

then had to think strategically and then a new administration would come in and change direction, so there are no long term goals.

Barriers to Economic Development

Several respondents explained that the lack of human capital to fill needed roles within their tribe hampered the nation's attempts at economic development. They described an inability to retain their own tribal members who had become educated and skilled in certain areas and the impact of being forced to hire non-Native to fill these roles. The most common expertise needed by tribes was in the medical fields, legal fields, business, finance and construction engineering and construction crews. In addition, some believed that the tribe needed more control over the educational process itself to increase the odds of successful degree completion for their students. These members could provide much needed human capital to allow the tribe to expand their economy and services.

An education director for an intermediate tribe in Oklahoma discussed their tribe's plans to diversify and expand services, while trying to overcome a lack of business experience among tribal members:

It is in the plans for our tribe to build other businesses and facilities to assist our members. We are building an assisted living center and, in the future, a recreation center for our younger people. We are really focused on our youth and our elders. We are looking into starting small businesses locally. We also need more tribally controlled businesses in the community instead of the casinos. We need more experience and opportunities to learn about businesses to help our community.

A respondent discussed the struggles of the tribe to retain people who could have a positive impact on growing their economy and providing critical services to tribal members:

A lot of the students go into the fields [that the tribes needs] and are very successful, but it is hard for them to stay in the area and be successful. When they go to get an education they are looking to make a better life and provide for their families and the incomes around here are just aren't what attracts people, so they go off and make money someplace else. I know several (tribal) members who are successful doctors and lawyers, but they do not come back into the area and service the tribe. I wish that it would change and that those members that go off and get that professional training would come back and serve the community, but right now we just do not see that happening. That's what I did. I could have left and had a greater income somewhere else, but I wanted to come back and serve my tribal members.

A director of education programs for a moderate tribe in Oklahoma shared the same concerns about the lack of human capital and the propensity of educated members to work for non-tribal entities:

I do have students who are going to be doctors and lawyers, but they are not coming back and helping the tribe. They are elsewhere.

Many respondents wanted to find more tribal members to fill open positions because they believe members are more invested in the success of the tribe than outsiders. One tribal administrator for an intermediate tribe in Texas explained that even though they were seeing an increase in tribal members coming back to work for the tribe, there is still a large need for certain professionals and the margin for error when hiring outsiders is slim:

There is a growing trend [of tribal members coming back to work for the tribe], but it may have to do with the economy. The tribe may be their refuge. It [having to employ outsiders] has hurt us overall as a tribe because the people in management do not know

the tribe. The skill set that we need can be difficult to find because either we can't find them or the members with that skill set are not interested. We have to compete with (a large major metropolitan) job market. People from outside tend to come in and judge us, we do have problems but you have to get to the community before you make any decisions. If you work in a big community, you can afford to make some hiring mistakes. When you work with a 1600 member community and make mistakes it can be devastating.

A higher education director of an intermediate tribe in Oklahoma that is currently undergoing an increase in facilities construction echoed the desire to find tribal members who are engineers and construction workers for their projects:

We are undergoing a lot of construction with a new gas station and elder houses being built to put our elders in. We would like to have construction engineers and workers who are tribal members to build instead of hiring out. We would like to have our own crews for all of these building projects.

One participant explained that his tribe has begun to aggressively pursue ways to fill the human capital void that many tribes are experiencing:

Directed studies out of our office looks at positions at the Nation that we need tribal members to have the jobs, but we cannot find qualified tribal members with appropriate degrees for those jobs. We sponsor their schooling in return for them working at the Nation for a certain amount of time to help get those positions filled with tribal members. We try to guide how our dollars are spent. We educate our students on what jobs are local and here within the Nation and what jobs are going to be available and what degrees will be needed for those jobs. We try to help them understand what degrees are needed for

those jobs. We direct our resources to help them get them prepared academically for those degrees during high school and help them get funding for college. We also have programs for specialized jobs that need graduate school, Ph.D.s or M.D.s. We are trying to grow the economy here locally and help prepare our citizens for the jobs that we will have.

In addition, the same tribe is trying to identify which occupations most suit members of their tribe based on their culture and preferences. The same administrator explained:

We are trying to align the education and economy with what our people like to do. We have conducted studies with our citizens and found that we are nurturing people. So what people want to do and are good at are things like hospitality and healthcare. What we want to do is build an educational foundation to help get degrees in those fields so that they can get jobs that they like to do so they can stay in their communities and do something that they like to do. It builds and makes our communities stronger and helps our language revitalization effort and keeps young people from leaving to get jobs and creating a never-ending cycle where we lose our language.

One former education director for an expansive tribe in Oklahoma believed that tribes need to take a more proactive role in the education process in order to create their own human capital so that they can further their economic development:

Ninety-five percent of students are in public school, so tribes have to influence how their students are educated. Sometimes tribes stand on the sideline while education takes place on the field because the funding goes from the federal government, to the state, to the local district and they administer the funds. The U.S. Department of Education has recognized the sovereignty of tribes. So, all tribes could establish their own K-12 school

and get it accredited and run it the way they want to. They could pass their own education laws because the schools are on their lands. They could operate different degree programs and certificate programs that would be very helpful. We have four tribal colleges that are emerging in Oklahoma, but they do not have stand-alone accreditation. I think that is going to be the future. Tribes need to establish their own institutions as well as work with the current colleges to serve their students.

Educational Development

Educational informants reported many diverse strategic plans for their educational programs. Their responses have been grouped into three sub-categories: program creation and community engagement, getting students into college, and assisting current college students.

Program Creation and Community Engagement

Several educational informants described their efforts to rebuild or maintain programs in the midst of tribal administrative change or a new emphasis on higher education by their tribes. A key component was educating both the tribal and education communities about the improvement of existing services or the addition of new programs.

A higher education specialist for an expansive tribe in Oklahoma discussed their efforts to try and take over their programs from the BIA, create more relevant programs and services for their students and build relationships with the community:

Before [I was hired], the BIA was administrating the grant for our students, so we're new. Used to be, people had not heard of us, but we have gotten better. We're learning what everyone else [other tribes] is doing and trying to make those contacts. We just got a new director and she is great and is really big on education, so she's making our department a

priority. She's going to go visit colleges and get out there and let them know that we're here and if there and see if there is any way that we can work together.

According to the same respondent, they have used several methods to educate their tribe about their office and it appears to be paying off:

We have a PR guy who gets information out about us. We have a radio station here and we were just on there this past Sunday. We do newspaper ads and we are really trying to get the information out there about what we do. With more funding, we can do more outreach. Right now we are doing much better. The first semester I was here, three years ago, we only funded 90 students, so we have more than doubled and we are growing.

Some tribes have a propensity for high turnover in their tribal leadership, with elections every two years for several tribes. An education specialist in Oklahoma discussed how a lack of consistency in leadership had impacted their ability to develop a strong strategic plan for their education programs:

There are a lot of ideas that are being considered, but it really depends on what administration is in office. A few years ago we had a tribal chairman in place who was really pushing for more economic development to help give more funding to education to decrease the amount that we had to rely on the BIA. But once the administration changed, it was put on the back burner. The administration right now is younger and has a lot of things they are trying to do economically, so hopefully we'll be able to develop and grow our education programs like we would like to. If we can get the money put into the programs that we need, we can educate people about what we do and how they can get a degree and come back and help the tribe. If we got the funding we needed to do more outreach, we could definitely help it turn around.

The same educational informant explained the need to not just educate their community about the services, but also other tribes about ways that they can now serve their students:

We just got our programs back [from the BIA] three years ago. I have contacted every Indian education counselor or director in our schools and spoke to them about getting the word out there about our services and trying to help kids that are in any tribe. The federal programs allow us to help any student in our jurisdiction go to school even if they are in another tribe and while we couldn't use tribal funding, we could still use federal funding to help them go to school.

Another education director for an intermediate tribe in Oklahoma explained that they have just begun to re-instate many programs for high school students they serve:

We are trying to institute some tutoring and other programs, but our Johnson O'Malley hasn't been active for a few years. We do have some things like our summer youth employment program where we push college and some training at technology centers. We do offer to pay for the ACT and SAT and we have an online tutorial that helps prepare for the test, but we are trying to get some tutoring and other services.

Getting Students into College

Many educational informants discussed programs and services that their departments were either implementing or planning to implement that were geared toward college matriculation and major selection for their tribal members. The primary focus was to develop programming and partnerships with colleges and universities and other tribes to help increase college going for their students.

An education director for an intermediate tribe in Oklahoma discussed the extensive programs they have to expose their students to colleges and universities and prepare them for the higher education experience.

We have a week-long teen camp that is a college readiness program and covers funding and how to apply to college and what to expect. We visit the local colleges and the recruiters sit down and talk to students like they were enrolling so they can understand the process. We drive different places every day and do this. Right now we have a youth program that we use to target not just formal education, but life skills as well. I do partner with other people [education administrators from other tribes] to have college fairs and we take our students to those college fairs.

Their office is also working to connect high school students with tribal professionals to encourage more young people to see college as a real opportunity and to pursue degrees in fields that would be beneficial for the nation:

We hope to have a mentoring program in place this summer to place our high school students with tribal members in business, the [tribal] court and the health center to help students learn about these areas. Our young people have great imaginations and have new and fresh ideas and we need to educate them so we can have that in our community.

A tribal administrator at an intermediate tribe in Texas outlined their tribe's strategy to help build a college-going culture among their students through programming and partnerships with other tribes:

We are having more college fairs here, instead of jobs fairs like we used to do, to try and make it more a part of the everyday discussion so it is what they say they are going to do instead of not seeing themselves as college material. Also, [we will prioritize] visiting

college campuses. On our college days, we do scholarship writing workshops, financial aid workshops and college application workshops. We are also inviting other [sovereign nations of the same tribe] down to participate so that we can get more universities here because they can recruit all at once and it builds more solidarity between (our) people. We also had some (other tribes) come.

Another respondent explained the programming and a partnership that their office has developed with a local college and the other tribes in their area:

Through the higher education program, we do leadership courses with Northern Oklahoma College where we focus on the importance of education, staying in school, and trying to get everyone through college. We are actually working with NOC [and the Native American liaison there] to set up a board called Native American leadership that will work with all five of the tribes in the area.

A former education director at an expansive tribe in Oklahoma echoed the necessity for increased partnerships, spearheaded by tribes, at all educational levels to help students succeed and, in turn, fulfill needed roles within the tribe:

There needs to be cooperation between, schools, scholarship programs, colleges, summer programs and other entities so that they could put forward a model where students could benefit at all age/grade levels. I think the tribe is the centerpiece because they do have enrollment offices that keep track of the enrollment of their members, which usually happens during the first year they were born. The cradle to career approach that was mentioned in President Obama's executive order for Indian education promotes this concept. The idea has not really taken foothold because there are so many silos and people that are operating separately from the other. Higher education could serve an

important role in this. It could serve a great need in creating more students going to college, staying in college, graduating and producing more graduates in fields that each tribal nation would need.

Assisting Current College Students

Tribal education departments are focused on moving away from just providing traditional BIA, need-based financial aid for students, with no other support services. Many are attempting to offer financial aid that is predicated on academic achievement and degree progress and allows more flexibility to help non-traditional students. In addition, tribes are trying to develop supportive learning communities for their pre-college students locally and at post-secondary institutions.

A higher education administrator at an expansive college in Oklahoma explained the new living-learning community that they are partnering with a local university to create for their students:

We were having such a large attrition rate and that [retention] has been our focus. We have started a program at Northeastern State University where our students are together in a cohort and take classes together and live in the same dorm. NSU also houses our language program. The kids really like the cohort at NSU, so what we are trying to do is add a class every year and in three years it would be a residence hall comprised of our students from our nation. The cohort program is our pilot program for that and we would like to replicate it at other universities and there are several universities that are interested in it.

Some tribes are creating more mentoring opportunities for their students and are trying to find creative ways to encourage them to stay connected with the tribe. A tribal administrator for

an intermediate tribe in Texas explained how the education office for their tribe is working to create a strong sense of belonging among their students using mentoring, internships and developing an academic culture:

We are setting up peer mentoring groups based on major [i.e. health students]. We are having the upperclassmen mentor the freshman and incentivizing it using gas stipends to get students to participate. We are encouraging students to write their research papers about the tribe and trying to collect those academic papers to develop an academic culture here that comes from the tribe's perspective. We consolidated our educational programs with the workforce investment act program through the department of labor because they used to compete with each other and it gives us more flexibility to give them stipends.

Tribal education departments are also trying to use incentives to keep students enrolled and to reward students for strong academic performance. One tribe rewards students for degree completion by giving them \$1000 for completing a high school or postsecondary degree. A director of education programs at a moderate tribe in Oklahoma explained the move to more incentive-based scholarships for their tribal members:

I did write more programs for the tribe for higher education. One is the incentive program that will start in the fall and we really needed it because we had a lot of students dropping out of college. It begins with sophomores and based on their GPA they will receive incentive award. If they have a 2.0 to 2.49, they will receive \$1250, 2.5-2.99 will receive \$1500, 3.0 to 3.49 is \$1750 and 3.5-4.0 is \$2000.

An education director for a moderate tribe in Kansas pointed out the need for her tribe to find better ways to track students, increasing the likelihood that they are making informed

decisions about enrolling in college and to allow non-traditional students to avoid being penalized because of their inability to meet certain financial aid guidelines:

We need more specific guidelines and policies regarding what rules students must follow to get funding. We get tribal and BIA funds and we need stricter guidelines for how you get funding. Right now, the only guideline is that you have to complete in ten semesters. We need to make sure they follow GPA guidelines and are not switching schools all of them time. Also, I would like to see the tribe extend the funding for more than 10 semesters. For some parents it takes more than 10 semesters to graduate.

Another respondent also discussed the importance of allocating funds to non-traditional students who are trying to navigate higher education with additional responsibilities:

Education is very important to the nation because they have created programs to help students who are not eligible for federal funding. They do want education to be available for those who want to further their education. Tuition increases and household incomes have not gone up in this area, so that is a concern. The students may need funding because of the economy, especially single parent households who are going back to school because they have been laid off or are looking at going into another field. Sometimes, students can't afford to go even with our funding. Basically, we fund everyone who applies through one program or another. It's not real often that we turn someone away who is eligible. It's here if they want to go to school.

Several tribal education departments are trying to get on-site classes or more distance education opportunities for their students. A higher education program administrator at an intermediate tribe in Oklahoma explained the need for any online programs for their students:

We are working in-house trying to get more classes here using distance learning at the tribe, but it is difficult because we are rural. We would like to have just general courses and then some adult education, things like basic application software and GED.

An education director at an intermediate tribe in Kansas discussed the benefit of having on-site classes for their students who often struggle with leaving the reservation in order to attend college:

We do have Friends University that provides on-site courses to help our members get their undergraduate degree. It allows them to go to school without having to travel off the reservation.

Recommendations for Higher Education

In interviews, educational informants were asked general questions about their opinions on the efficacy of higher education in recruiting, admitting, and retaining, their students and preparing students to return to work for the tribe in needed positions. The results will be separated into suggestions for coursework (both delivery and content), financial aid and scholarships, pre-attendance, and retention.

Coursework (Both Delivery and Content)

Educational informants identified several ways that higher education could either alter degree programs or content or create more accessible course delivery. Online education and distance learning were the two most prevalent ways respondents believed colleges and universities could better serve their students. A tribal administrator for an intermediate tribe in Texas explained:

Tribal governance would be helpful for our students and universities could reach out because people are very rooted here and many degrees are not offered here. You have to

leave your tribe. The closest law school is 300 miles away. Gonzaga does a Native American entrepreneurship degree online. With technology, why can't you learn from a remote location or even in your home? Rural tribes would really benefit.

A common response from participants was that colleges could provide basic online courses so that more students could at least begin their degree programs without having to travel. An education specialist for a moderate tribe in Oklahoma explained their plans to become proactive in providing the courses for their students:

We are trying to get that [online courses] set up right now. We are just starting out with the classes they have to have starting out like English and Algebra and it would keep people from having to drive to get the classes. The classes would be offered in the evening.

A higher education administrator for an expansive college in Oklahoma even discussed the possibility of providing advanced courses for their high school students to enhance their college readiness:

[A critical thing for us] would be online education for the high school students who are rural because many of the higher science math classes are not offered and they are not as prepared for college.

The education director for an intermediate tribe in Oklahoma discussed the numerous course offerings and degree programs needed by those working in every area of the tribal government offices. Access to those courses is crucial not just for the Nation's students but also tribal leadership:

There are so many different departments and they each have their own need. We have such a wide range of interests and needs and it would really benefit us and put us one step

closer to higher education. There are so many courses [online] that could be useful to the tribe.

Several respondents believed a key to preparing students to work for tribes is the availability of online courses in areas where the students might be deficit. A former education director summed up this concept:

There is a need [for online education to prepare people for tribal employment]. Students who graduate from college have a learning curve once they start working for tribes. There are some [courses] that are available, but a lot of tribes' personnel systems aren't favorable to allowing those folks to take those. A lot of folks don't realize that they may want to go work for a tribe when they graduate, so they don't know to take them while they are in school. There is a need for distance learning and the willingness of higher education institutions to listen to what they [the tribes] need is important. A policy has to be set in place where the tribe and the institution try to make it more flexible. Distance education is coming it's just a matter of when and who will bring it.

The most common request by educational informants revolved around the need for colleges and universities to offer course content and degree programs that are more relevant to tribes. As higher education program administrator at an intermediate tribe in Oklahoma said:

There should be more focus on the Native American law studies and looking all the way down through our CFR (Code of Federal Regulations). There are not enough classes or programs in colleges today that are geared towards that since there are so many Native Nations across the United States.

According to some participants, Tribal colleges are also becoming more effective in preparing students to serve their tribes. Many of their students perceived that mainstream

colleges and universities were not addressing their needs as future tribal leaders. As one participant from Kansas explained:

We do have a lot of students that go to an Indian college and I think if they continue to go there, they have classes on many topics about tribal governance and sovereignty. If they continue to go to those schools that would help us. [Higher education needs to] reach out more to Native Americans. A couple of schools have programs for Native Americans, but not many.

The higher education director for an intermediate tribe in Oklahoma summed up the realities many of their students face when deciding which college to attend and what degree to obtain:

There needs to be a better link between what kids are learning in colleges and available employment. I have a completely changing profile of my students because I have fewer majoring in philosophy or history and fine arts and more getting degrees that will get them a job. For example, I have more students getting two-year associates degrees, like a nursing assistant degree, because that is what will get them a job and that is what they need. Fewer students are learning for learning's sake. We need to make sure what they are being counseled to get degrees in will help them get a job. The practicality of having to have a job has taken over the luxury of a college education.

According to the same respondent, the tribe has an abundance of career opportunities for graduates; however, most are not getting the skills they need from the post-secondary institutions that they are attending

[Colleges need to offer] courses that would lead to employment in areas that the tribe needs to fill. Also, [they need to offer] courses about Native American sovereignty, tribal

law, and compliance training. We need people who are trained formally and sophisticatedly so that they can work with governments when the time comes. There is a real lack of those courses that would allow people to get trained in those areas so that they could come to the tribe and say I am versed in that. Those folks would be hired immediately.

Financial Aid and Scholarships

Many educational informants believed that higher education institutions could do a better job of either providing more financial aid, offering other financial supplements for testing or other student needs, or simply helping find a way to centralize the scholarships and grants that are available to students.

One of the crucial problems for respondents was the inability of students to afford tuition, even with the combination of scholarships that the tribes could offer them and any Pell grants or need-based scholarships that were available. A higher education program administrator at an intermediate tribe in Oklahoma discussed the lack of opportunity for their students locally and the need to make it affordable for them to attend schools away from their area:

I would like to work with colleges to get more scholarships and tuition waivers to get more tribal members into school since our local colleges are relatively small. The cost of education is so high and just being able to afford to go to school and be productive members of society is very important.

Several educational informants discussed the importance of providing distance education for their students, but lamented about the cost, especially in regard to private institutions online. The director of education for a moderate program in Oklahoma discussed the need for more affordable online courses for students who use it as a primary method of course delivery:

Online courses are very expensive. If they could get training or credits for free or at a lower cost, that would be awesome. We don't get a lot from the BIA and I have 3 or 4 students who do online courses, but they can only afford a couple per semester.

Tribal education departments are also looking for creative ways to meet the unique financial needs of their students. The higher education administrator at an expansive tribe in Oklahoma wanted to find more partnerships with colleges or other entities to assist non-traditional students and other students who cannot find funding sources for required college entrance exams:

We are able to find funding and fill in the gaps, but one area that I have looked for is that if a student is going to high school and needs to take an ACT test and has financial need, they can request a voucher from their high school to pay for that. After they graduate, it is no longer available. Our older students run into issues with paying for all of these tests and applications. They come and look for help for us, but we have not found a funding source to provide that to our students.

Many educational informants discussed the need to find a way to streamline the process of identifying and applying for scholarships. One respondent described a solution that he would like to see colleges and universities adopt:

I would like to see a scholarship database. We have built it up, but none of our students have been awarded scholarships from outside. It may be because the internal scholarships are easier to get. My goal is to award four external scholarships this year.

The education director for an intermediate tribe in Kansas also wanted to see a better scholarship and financial aid process from the federal and non-profit entities that influence funding for their students:

I would like to see something from the FAFSA website to help students and us with that process. I would actually like to get a representative from the Gates Millennial Scholarship program to come and visit our nation. We have only had about two students receive that scholarship. I know the AIGC (American Indian Graduate Center) could maybe help with that.

Pre-Attendance

Respondents would primarily like to see more outreach from colleges and universities to tribes. Many educational informants perceived that higher education institutions had inadequate programming geared toward recruiting, admissions, orientation, and career and academic counseling for their students.

An education director of an intermediate tribe in Oklahoma expressed her frustration with the lack of outreach from colleges and universities:

I don't have a lot of college recruiters that come here. I don't know if it is because we are relatively small. My students do it on their own and visit with me about what their options are based on where they live and what their economic situation is and whether they are going to get funding from us. I am proactive, especially with my youth, and I have taken them to UCO (University of Central Oklahoma) in the spring and I will be taking them to OSU (Oklahoma State University) in a couple of weeks, but that's just a few of my students and that's me taking them. I don't really know why colleges are not proactive with us because I know some of them and usually it is because I meet them at conferences, but I don't have anyone coming to speak with me.

Another education director at an intermediate tribe in Oklahoma echoed the same sentiments and noted that only a couple of higher education institutions are proactive with their students:

Colleges don't really invite our students to come on their campus other than Oklahoma State University and, of course Pawnee Nation College does a lot with our students.

One respondent noted that she doesn't even get literature from college and universities and relies on local colleges to reach out to their students:

They used to send a lot of stuff from colleges, but I don't get anything anymore from colleges. We work with our Native American liaison at NOC (Northern Oklahoma College) and with Pawnee College.

One of the most common shortcomings that participants noted was the lack of a central contact at colleges and universities that they, parents or students could contact with questions about admissions, financial aid, and other basic services. A higher education program administrator at an intermediate tribe in Oklahoma explained:

A lot of schools could do a better job of giving us the contact information of specific people for our students to work with. Instead of calling to visit with just any person they get, it would help to have one person to contact who could lead them in one direction.

An education specialist for a moderate tribe in Oklahoma is beginning to see schools be more proactive when recruiting their students and building relationships with tribal education departments, believing this to be very beneficial:

Rose State College in Oklahoma City is having a college awareness day and they are inviting all of the area schools to bring their seniors and they walk them through what the first day of college will be like and walk them through the enrollment process. Rose State

is also having a luncheon for all of the education directors from the different tribes around to come and share ideas on how to make it easier for high school students to transition to college to make it more comfortable for them. That's a very big step for them and it's good to have that. They [local colleges] do send college reps around to talk to high school students to tell them about their schools. Some colleges around here will have a summer orientation to show them what their dorms look like and where they would go to class. I don't think they did that before and I think it's really done to help with the transition from high school to college. Having people on campus to help students make the transition from high school to college is really important.

A common theme from educational informants was the lack of an individual staff member or office at colleges and universities designated for Native students and tribes. A respondent in Kansas explained:

We are familiar with all the schools and they understand our funding process and get the paperwork we need to us quickly. A lot of them do have a point of contact in the financial aid office that I can work with consistently, but I am starting to see more with someone in a multicultural office. University of Phoenix actually has a Native American liaison who works with tribes. They are one of the only schools I'm aware of that has a specific office designated to work with tribes and their students.

A higher education director of an intermediate tribe in Oklahoma also agreed more colleges and universities are creating offices specifically designed for Native students, but was still concerned that many try to funnel Native students to a generic minority affairs office:

An increasing number of universities have created Native American departments to help students and more need to do that. When I am helping students and especially parents

who are worried about whether their students will make it, I make the initial contact to the school for them and ask if they have a Native American center. If they do, I immediately ask to be transferred there and then I can make a helpful contact for them. Some just have minority centers, but they don't really have anyone that may understand the Native American student.

Some respondents were more concerned with a perceived deficiency in certain programs or offices at post-secondary institutions. One higher education specialist at an expansive tribe in Oklahoma explained that the biggest weakness that they see with colleges and universities is the orientation process.

They [colleges and universities] need to change the orientation process. They could be a little more in-depth and make it more than a one day event. Make it two days and go over housing and what they need to do to get into housing. Explain meal plans and how to do FAFSA and what to do if you get audited. For many high school students, orientation is like a day off from school and it needs to be more than that.

The respondent also explained that she often has to be the intermediary between parents and post-secondary institutions because the admissions process is so overwhelming for first-generation families:

I'm lucky that I know a lot of this stuff through my job because I was able to understand what needed to be done when both my kids went to college. I had two parents in my office because their son just graduated from high school and they had no idea what they needed to do. They were lost. I walked them through it, but without me they wouldn't have known where to turn. I try to be the go between for my students when they have problems with their college.

Another education administrator for a moderate tribe in Oklahoma relayed their similar concerns about the nebulous admission process that many families face:

It would help if they would make their information online about admissions and their programs easier to find and access. If I have trouble finding the information online, I know that students and parents will struggle to find it. Some sort of tutorial to get access to the program and the school. The first semester is tough for students who are in a new place around new people and are sometimes in large cities. It would be helpful to help students understand where everything is and what the need to do during that first semester.

Retention

Retention was a key concern of many of the educational informants because many saw so few programs and services in higher education aimed at retaining Native students. Two educational respondents in Oklahoma discussed the importance of having people and programs specifically designated to provide support for students and answer questions that students or tribal education department may have:

More of them need to have more of a focus on Native American students. Universities that have high enrollments of Native American students need to hire a liaison for tribes and for parents and students. Now there would be someone both here and at the college to help them find resources and look for financial aid and be an advocate for them. NEO actually has a Center for Native American Excellence and a director who serves as a liaison and can help students with all sorts of things. I can call the liaison anytime and she will help. It's such a great help for people like me who are doing this by myself.

[Other colleges need] someone whose job it is to smooth out the rough places and foresee what the bumps in the road will be to help them [students] avoid them. I don't believe in handouts, but I do think it would be helpful to have someone at these schools to help students because they have been there before and know what the students may be going through.

A lot of schools could do a better job of giving us the contact information of specific people for our students to work with. Instead of calling to visit with just any person, they get, it would help to have one person to contact who could lead them in one direction.

Another respondent explained that their students, who come from rural areas where everyone is connected and familiar with one another, sometimes feel like a number once they arrive at college:

The colleges don't seem to do a better job of making them feel at home than they did years ago, if anything it is even more impersonal. I don't know if it's because of them number of students that they have and they have to remain more business-like, but I do think colleges are aware of that and are trying to do better.

One thing that several educational informants discussed was the need to be able to help students who are in trouble before the situation reaches a critical point and students have to sit out for a semester. Many explained that FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) can be a barrier to having access to academic information for their students, but they are working to find ways to better help at-risk students. An education director for an intermediate tribe in Oklahoma discussed their experiences:

Now I don't have problems with my students getting into college but I do work with them very hard to keep their GPA up. Most of them do very well, but every semester, we have

10 or so that struggle. I am working with my liaisons at colleges to try and get the colleges to allow us to do a grade check so we can get in there before the end of the semester and address and grade issues they are having before they fail the course.

One other cause for concern for many leaders in tribal education offices was the fate of their students who do not graduate or have to stop out for a time. A former education director for an expansive tribe in Oklahoma shared this concern:

The majority of students that go to college do not graduate, maybe 1 in 5 do; and what happens to the rest of them? The non-graduates are an untapped resource of future graduates, people who did not finish college. They may have quit school and then got a job and had bills to pay, then started a family. We need to find a way to reach out to them.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

Successful economic development for Native Nations is predicated primarily on the ability of tribes to exert control and direction over the economic strategic planning and implementation to ensure cultural fit and long-term sustainability (Cornell & Kalt, 1992, 1998, 2007). Higher education helps create human capital, which is one of the key components of economic development, so Native nations must rely heavily on colleges and universities to provide them with skilled employees to drive their economies (Cornell & Kalt, 1992; Institute for Higher Education Policy, 2007). This study collected feedback from tribal education informants to understand the obstacles that their departments and students face related to postsecondary access and completion. The following chapter synthesizes the findings and will include implications for practice, policy and research.

Financial Issues and College Going

Funding for higher education, or lack thereof, was an important issue raised by education informants. Even with tribal scholarships and Pell grants, students still lack the funds needed to attend college. Tribes varied in the amount of assistance that they could offer students as well as the guidelines for eligibility. According to the NCES (2011), the average cost for room and board at a public institution in 2009-2010 was nearly \$13,000, while private schools averaged just over \$32,000. From 1999-2000 to 2009-2010, after adjustment for inflation, the cost of a public school education increased 37% and a private school education increased 25% (NCES 2011). The average award for Pell grants in 2011 was \$3,800, with a maximum of \$5,550 (US Department of Education, 2012). Most tribes offered between \$500 and \$1,500 per semester to assist their students with college. A maximum Pell grant award of \$5,550 and the high end of

tribal funding, roughly \$3,000, would still leave students with over \$4,000 in costs to attend college.

The majority of tribal education departments are limited in how much funding they can offer their students. When their scholarships and grants are unable to meet the needs of Native students, education informants mentioned that they would like to see colleges offer more tuition discounts or waivers for both classroom and online coursework. They noted that some colleges, like the University of Arkansas, offer in-state tuition to all Native American students who belong to tribes that formerly lived in the state before relocation. Sometimes, post-secondary financial support for things other than tuition or fees, like assistance for college entrance exams and even test preparation, are things that respondents would like to see.

Many tribal departments make no distinction in funding for students outside of whether they are enrolled full-time or part-time. For example, funding needs for students attending community colleges or private schools are very different, which could make it much more prohibitive for students to attend the latter. In addition, non-traditional and graduate students typically face different financial hurdles than their traditional undergraduate counterparts which some tribes seldom recognized during the funding process. Several education informants talked about the unique challenges that non-traditional students faced because of their families, their jobs, and their schedules. They noted that many of their students can only go to school part-time or in the evening and can only take more expensive on-line courses, so paying for school is even more difficult without financial assistance. Tuition is certainly higher for graduate students and, based on this study, only 4 of the 19 tribal education departments adjusted their funding to meet these students' needs.

Some students do not have the ability to attend college due to familial responsibilities. When families are struggling to meet their financial obligations, students may be expected to work during high school and once they graduate to provide any assistance possible. Parents and students are not discussing college in these situations because they do not perceive it to be a reality due to cost or the lack of financial health of the family. Once many of these potential students begin to consider college, they have families of their own and their own financial obligations, so it makes it very challenging for them to return as non-traditional students.

Even if tuition and fees are covered through financial aid and tribal funding, there may be a lack of family income to provide the necessary tools for students to attend college. For example, student may not have access to transportation to travel to a university to take courses because their family only has one car and it is used for transportation to and from work for another family member. In addition, they struggle to afford other incidentals, such as books, a computer, or internet access. A few tribes in this study did try to address this by offering stipends directly related to incidentals, such as a Visa gift card for books or incidentals, a stipend for gas or incidentals, and even computers.

College Going, Retention, and Engagement

One of the key obstacles for Native student college going was a lack of familial knowledge of financial aid or the admissions process. Family members had often never attended college, so their higher education experience was very limited. In addition, respondents noted that when there was minimal parental involvement, students struggled to find guidance and encouragement to attend college. However, the primary feedback received from tribal education administrators was not that parents or family elders did not want their students to attend college, but that they just did not understand the importance of discussing or planning for higher

education for their students at an early age. In addition, for some families, college does not seem like a reality, so it is not a priority for them to invest the financial and time commitment required to prepare students for college.

Students may also have a difficult time leaving their families and their communities and parents may be reluctant to encourage them to move away for college. In addition, in some rural communities most high school students, both Native and non-Native, get jobs out of high school instead of attending college. Native students and their families in these communities sometimes seem to settle for the community norm and students are not pushed to, nor do they consider, attending college.

Because some tribal members do not perceive college as a realistic option for themselves or their families, many tribes are creating programming to increase college going expectations among Native high school students. They are attempting to form partnerships with other tribes, as well as college and universities, to create more programming aimed at recruiting and developing students to be better prepared for college. One tribal education administrator was attempting to implement a summer bridge program pairing several local tribes and the local college to provide summer employment and college courses. Another group of tribes were attempting to work with a local college to create a leadership program aimed at recruiting high school students from the different tribes to strengthen their leadership skills while receiving college credit. Asking current college students to come back to the tribe to mentor pre-college students or community members interested in higher education, and organizing campus visits and orientations were also programs that several participants mentioned they were implementing to try and begin building a college going culture.

Tribal education departments are also attempting to create more of a collegial community at home in addition to college to help provide current students with a support system. They hope that this will perpetuate a belief among their current and future students that college attendance is more of the norm, instead of an exception. One tribe has worked with a local college to create a living/learning group of their students who live in the same residence halls and attend the same classes as a cohort. The tribe is hoping to expand this model to other universities and would like to have an entire residence hall designated for their students.

Tribal education departments, or the primary education administrator, are often responsible for many facets of education and training for a wide range of tribal members of all ages. Many times it is difficult, if not impossible, for tribes to send representatives to college campuses across the state and region to create relationships with admissions or financial aid departments. Native students are more likely to be first-generation and have little knowledge of how to apply to college or attempt to get financial aid, so it is imperative that they get the appropriate guidance for admissions and the financial aid processes of the colleges that they would like to attend.

Many education informants believed colleges and universities must become more proactive in reaching out to Native nations to assist their students in navigating the process that each university has for admittance. Since there is often a cultural disconnect between Native students and the college environment, it is important to create an atmosphere on campus to help Native students feel like they are part of a community and not just another student on campus. Programs and events aimed to connect Native families with their students and the college culture could help nations break down the mystique of college for family members in the future. Informants would like to see more colleges hold workshops on admissions and financial aid

either at their nation or nearby in conjunction with other nations. This would alleviate the burden placed on the tribal education administrators and provide better communication directly between the colleges and students and their families. It would also help reduce the anxiety that families have about sending their students college because they would be able to have a representative to contact if they had any questions or concerns.

A future focus for some tribal education departments is ensuring that both internal and external communities are aware of and understand the programs and services that they offer. These tribes are often hindered by a lack of consistent funding for strategic educational development and they often experience frequent changes in staffing in both their offices and the tribal administration in general. Without consistent leadership and planning, their programs can be reactive and struggle to build momentum because they change so often. Three education departments had chosen to take over control of certain programs from the BIA because they believed they can manage them more effectively or the programs had been discontinued because the tribe lacked the funding or staffing to execute them. Under these circumstances, the education administrator had to completely reintroduce the programs to the tribal members and educate them about their existence and what they offer themselves or their students.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) can be a barrier to allowing tribal education departments to have information about the performance of their students. If students begin to struggle early in the semester, colleges and universities may have no way of notifying the tribes to determine if the students can be assisted before the semester is lost. Some tribal education administrators mentioned the need for a change in FERPA to allow schools to release information to tribes or a need to determine ways to increase communication between schools and tribal education departments (TEDs) to cultivate earlier intervention.

When Native students stop out or drop out, the impact to tribes is greater because they have already overcome significant odds by even enrolling in college. With the dearth of nation members who are degreed professionals able to fill the human capital needs of the tribe, each student who fails to persist can be catastrophic. Therefore, education informants saw a huge need for tribes and colleges to create incentives for students who stop out or drop out to return to college. In addition, they believed that there must be some programming geared toward re-engaging these former students with the tribes and the higher education process.

Academic Readiness

Students struggle with academic readiness for post-secondary institutions. Tribal education administrators discussed their concern about the lack of success that their Native students had on college entrance exams. Nationally, American Indian students averaged an 18.6 on their ACT in 2011, while the average for all test takers was 21.1 (ACT, 2012). While the Native students have struggled with standardized testing, part of the problem lies in the lack of “fairness” of such tests for students of color (Fann, 2009). It should also be noted that many Native students do not have the opportunity to take practice tests because of their rural location or a lack of funding (Fann, 2009). This was certainly mentioned by several education informants in this study and some are creating new ways to prepare their students to do better at standardized testing. Education informants also believed that Native students, much like their Non-native counterparts, tend to lack the basic English and Math skills required by college and are forced to take remedial courses when they first enroll in a post-secondary institution.

Some respondents expressed the opinion that high school counseling is often ineffective for Native students and geared towards students who are seen as more likely to attend college. The role that high school counselors play in the success, or lack thereof, of Native students to be

college ready cannot be understated because of the first generation status of many of these students (Fann, 2009). Students often rely solely on the advice and support of their counselors because no one in their family has any experience with the higher education process or the academic courses and tests that need to be taken to prepare students for the admissions process and academic rigor of higher education (Fann, 2009).

Curriculum Development and Delivery

Many Native students struggle with the logistics of attending college. Because of their rural location, a lack of transportation, or the inability to leave their families for an extended period of time, on-line programs and the availability of distance education are even more critical to their ability to attend college. Some institutions provide on-site coursework for tribal members and several respondents suggested creating more partnerships with tribes to continue to increase these types of arrangements. Post-secondary institutions were also encouraged to offer more specialized degrees or certificates online that are relevant to tribal employment

Tribal education administrators explained that they are beginning to see many more of their students, especially non-traditional students, placing an emphasis on getting degrees that will result in employment. The impact of the recession and higher unemployment are certainly factors, but some respondents explained that their students no longer view college as a way to learn and simply get a degree for the sake of getting a degree. A post-secondary degree is now seen as a means to an end and several education informants believed that universities can provide coursework that is more relevant to job attainment.

Several respondents discussed their desire to have more on-site or distance education courses to offer to their students. Some tribes have been aggressively pursued by for-profit online colleges to encourage their students to enroll in their programs. University of Phoenix has

created a tribal liaison to work solely with Native nations and their students to help increase enrollment opportunities; however, cost is an enormous obstacle for the students and more students default on loans from for-profit institutions than any other degree granting institutions (Deming, Goldin & Katz, 2012). Some tribes are attempting to create partnerships with colleges and universities to provide distance education, but there were no reports of any formalized discussions or plans.

Higher Education Preparation for Tribal Employment

Perceptions about the effectiveness of higher education in preparing students to serve their tribes varied depending on which tribal education representative was interviewed. Some respondents were very satisfied with the programs that colleges and universities in the region offered for their students. However, there is no doubt that the need exists for coursework more relevant to tribal issues, such as governance, law, sovereignty, and tribal-federal government relations. Tribes are in dire need of employees skilled in many fields and the dearth of qualified Native applicants speaks to the disparity between available jobs and the experience level and education of graduates.

One problem appears to be the lack of appropriate counseling at the college level to encourage or prepare students to work for tribes. The perception of several participants in the study was that unless it is ingrained in a student by the tribe to come back and work for nation, there is nothing in place at the college and university level to educate students about the possibility of tribal employment. Many of the tribes that participated in this study do not have all of their members clustered in a centralized reservation community. Therefore, students are not interacting with their tribal offices very often and are not aware of the occupational needs of the tribes. The lack of counseling at the college level that encourages students to explore working for

their tribes is even more impactful for these communities because of the infrequent contact between Native students and the tribal education offices.

As tribes expand their membership and diversify their economies, they are becoming more aggressive in trying to solve their own human capital deficiencies through educational and vocational programs. Many are focusing primarily on workforce investment and providing mentoring between future and current post-secondary students and Native employers to create awareness about the jobs that are available and the skills and or degrees that are required to obtain positions. In addition, they are offering fiscal responsibility and small-business training for members who are interested in starting small businesses.

One crucial facet of creating a workforce that meets the needs of nations is productive partnerships between tribes and educational institutions. Too often there is a lack of communication and feedback between tribes and the post-secondary institutions that serve their students. Several tribes have created partnerships with local colleges aimed at increasing college going, but there were very few respondents who discussed specific examples of partnerships with colleges and universities that influenced curriculum development. Some education informants noted progress within some institutions with the creation of Native American centers and at least the implementation of Native American studies degree programs, which they hope will evolve into more relevant courses for tribal employment. No examples were offered of meaningful partnerships or dialogue that was ongoing with colleges and universities to address the lack of relevant courses and degrees.

Tribal colleges are taking the lead in developing more relevant curriculum and support for students who want to work for tribes. Pawnee College's gaming certificate program was cited multiple times as an excellent example of a degree program that was specifically created to fill

an employment void for tribes. Respondents indicated confidence in the ability of a tribally-controlled college attendee to be prepared to work for a tribe than the ability of a graduate from a non-tribally-controlled college. While culturally it makes sense that a tribal college may help immerse a student in Native culture and better prepare them to understand how a sovereign nation functions, these institutions may not yet have the diversity and depth of degree programs to meet all tribal employment needs.

Economic Development

Tribes are attempting to diversify their economies, either through small business, government contracts or other ventures. Many tribal education administrators, including those who were not privy to specific details about their tribe's strategic development plans, discussed the push by their tribes to move away from a solely gaming-based economy and find other ways to add long-term stability to their economies. Many nations are investigating what other tribes are doing successfully to determine if it would be a good fit to help their own economic development. Some tribes currently do not have gaming and are working to add it to their economy.

One participant noted that their tribe struggled in creating a strategic plan for economic development. Moreover, plans and programs that have been developed are dependent on the favor of the elected tribal council. It is not uncommon for tribal elections to be held every two years, so in tribes with constant turnover in leadership, strategic planning can often be difficult. In addition, some tribes are struggling with budgeting while tribal enrollments are growing, making resource allocation to expand or diversify economies difficult because of the soaring costs related to increased program use by new members.

One of the key obstacles to economic development for tribes is the lack of human capital to fill the roles many tribes need to expand their economies. As their economies and services grow, the lack of doctors, lawyers, engineers, and other skilled professionals is magnified because tribes either cannot fill those positions or must fill them with outsiders. There is a struggle to effectively integrate outsiders into tribal employment so that they can fill roles to encourage economic development. Therefore, tribes have a vested interest in having their citizens go to college and come back to serve the tribe. They are also doing things such as educating members on financial literacy and running small businesses to attempt to create other ways to create economic development and manufacture their own human capital.

While human capital for tribes is similar in many ways to traditional human capital, it also is very unique to Native communities (Ward, 1998). Tribal informants routinely mentioned the importance of hiring individuals who not only possess the necessary skillset or education, but also understand tribal culture and values. It is important to note that every tribe has very distinctive cultures and traditions, so simply understanding the inner machinations of one Native community does not negate the need to explore the values and culture of any new Native community to ensure full understanding of that culture.

This illustrates the importance of Native nations being able to target, recruit, and facilitate the education of their members who have at least some understanding of their values. However, several participants explained the learning curve they had when they returned to work for their tribes. Even though they grew up in the community, they did not fully understand how their tribal government operated and the unique needs of all of their tribal members. While there will always be things that one must learn on the job, partnerships between tribes and

postsecondary institutions to create programs to educate future tribal employees are crucial in making the transition from college student to tribal employee as seamless as possible.

Human capital or lack thereof, plays a key role in the ability of tribes to expand and diversify their economies, as well as provide essential services for their tribal members (Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, 2008). Higher education is critical in not just helping develop human capital, but in creating individuals who are skilled in how to work for tribes. Native students often struggle financially to gain access to colleges and universities and must overcome unique social hurdles to manage the intricate path to post-secondary schools. However, they are also typically first generation and must rely substantially on information and guidance from high school counselors, tribal education departments, and higher education institutions, which can be catastrophic if the students fail to receive the proper direction at any level.

This study reinforces the importance of human capital in economic development for tribes and highlights the critical role that higher education can play, and sometimes fail to achieve, in preparing American Indian students to serve their tribes in various capacities. The study also sheds light on ways that tribes are striving to increase both college going and the creation of human capital to support economic development for their nations. The traditional view of human capital is also complicated by the unique relationship that Native culture has with Western culture and the importance of cultural retention for tribes and their citizenry in order to flourish socially, politically, and economically. One study participant explained the dual knowledge base that is crucial for his students:

We tell them [students] they need a tribal education and a Western one. Once upon a time, our warriors fought in battles to protect our land and now we fight in court rooms

and the legislative halls to protect our people. It's not the same, so you have to arm yourself differently.

Implications

There are numerous opportunities for tribes and postsecondary institutions to improve the ability of students to increase their college going and retention rates. The resulting increase in Native college graduates will have a positive impact on the amount of human capital available to tribes to further their economic development. The following sections will discuss how tribes, higher education institutions and high schools can better serve Native students and prepare them for college access, success and tribal employment.

Implications for Tribes

Tribal education departments should design strategies to better educate parents about college and college-going. Many tribes are currently doing more community outreach to educate members about their programs and services, but there must be more deliberate programming aimed at reaching families. More funding must be allocated to TEDs to create programming and events to help educate their communities about the financial aid and admissions process and what support is available through the tribe for potential students. An effort that could help immediately is for tribes to allocate staffing or other resources to allow TEDs to train individuals so that they can start college advising for tribal students as early as possible.

Tribes must provide adequate staffing to allow their education departments to create programs aimed at increasing college going and retention, design effective ways to research and track their students, and aggressively pursue outreach in their tribal communities and with post-secondary institutions across their region. Staff may need to be trained in specific aspects of higher education, such as admissions and financial aid, or possibly funded to attend different

regional conferences on retention and college going to search for more programming ideas.

Creating human capital for a tribe is a grass roots process that requires financial commitment from the tribal leadership to stimulate a change in the way some tribal members view their ability to access and benefit from higher education.

Tribes must also create an efficient way to track the college going of tribal members. They need to utilize their tribal rolls and all of the reports that they must generate for the BIA and other federal programs to capture as much rich and diverse data as possible. For example, tracking their student demographics, enrollment status, major, institutions attended, and degrees conferred would give tribes a way to measure the effectiveness of their funding, the ability of different institutions to retain their students, the enrollment patterns of their members by various demographics, and the types of degrees that their members received. One suggestion would be to increase funding available to students attending those institutions that retain and graduate their students at a higher rate. It would also be helpful for TEDs to identify unique programs or services provided at institutions that graduate a higher percentage of their Native students and assist in replicating them at other institutions.

More direct research on tribes' students could also be beneficial. Tribal education departments could survey their students about their experiences both with the TED and the post-secondary institution that they attended to determine how they could be served better or what programs or services were most effective. Regardless of the type of evaluation completed, simply asking students for their feedback and implementing their suggestions when possible would create a stronger sense of belonging for them and help them feel valued by the tribe. These students may also become potential employees for the tribe, so strengthening the bond with them would be beneficial in the event that the tribe desires to recruit them into service.

When possible, tribal administrations should consider increasing funding and commitment to tribally-controlled schools at all levels. The Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development (2008) shows that more tribal control results in more long-term economic development for tribes and it is possible that more tribal control of the education process could result in better outcomes for Native students. Based on responses from the education informants in this study, tribally-controlled colleges appear to be doing a better job of preparing their students to work for tribes. Therefore, there may be justification for tribes to increase funding for these institutions or explore the possibility of starting their own tribal college if one does not exist.

Another important step that tribes can take to is to explore increasing higher education funding and tie it to identifying, training, and recruiting students for necessary positions in the tribe. For example, if tribes need construction engineers, they could offer more funding for students who choose those majors or begin educating high school students about the opportunity to get a job with the tribe in this capacity. Tribes may also want to consider incentives to encourage tribal members to come back and work for tribes, especially in areas of need. Perhaps they could offer to reimburse their loans or offer them the ability to further their education through scholarships.

Tribal education departments must find ways to link their local communities with colleges and universities so they will begin to demystify college going for their local students. Programs like college fairs, summer bridge programs for their high school students that include some college coursework or interaction, field trips to colleges, and leadership programs in conjunction with local institutions are all activities that several tribes already do for their members. It would also be beneficial to link current students in the community who attend post-

secondary institutions. An awards banquet, scholarship recognition ceremonies, or simply send-off parties for students could help connect them with their community and each other and highlight the value that the tribe places on college going and higher education attainment.

Coordinating mentoring opportunities for students with community members who have attained degrees or matching upperclassmen and lowerclassmen could also be effective in making a collegial environment exist for these students. If tribes can acquire the resources, they could also offer workshops on writing and researching papers, putting together resumes for internships or on-campus jobs, and even programs aimed at educating students about job or intern opportunities within the tribe could help increase a sense of belonging for their students. Some of these programs could be done in partnership with local post-secondary institutions to help defray the cost and possibly provide necessary staffing or expertise.

Tribal education departments should work to build a sense of community for students currently attending college. They could arrange for tribal education representatives to attend on-campus lunches for students who attend local colleges and universities. For students who attend post-secondary institutions that are farther away, TEDs could organize on-campus events for their students to attend or work with other local tribes to try and build connections for all of their students on remote campuses.

There are many colleges and universities that education informants were complimentary of regarding their degree programs and student services. Tribal education administrators should develop partnerships with institutions offering exemplary Native degree programs and services to address curriculum deficiencies for tribal employment and to help create more effective ways to recruit and retain students. In addition, these partnerships could open doors with other institutions that are not as effective in serving tribes and students. Showing a college

administrator programs or services that have high efficacy in recruiting, retaining, and placing students in jobs with tribes would be an effective way to attempt to introduce them to new institutions.

Tribes would be well-served to develop more coalitions and partnerships with each other to not only share effective and promising practices and devise more effective ways to increase college attendance and retention, but to increase the amount of bargaining power that tribes would have with higher education institutions. Colleges and universities may be more likely to alter their coursework, degree programs or students services if they hear unified messages from tribes about improving Native student access, postsecondary preparation and success. Institutions that are not as proactive in serving Native students and their communities must understand the potential impact on their enrollment and economic development at the tribal, regional and state level.

Nations should also consider rewarding institutions that serve students more effectively. For example, if a university has excellent retention for tribal students and is willing to expand programs and services to better develop future tribal leaders, more scholarship money could be offered to students who choose to attend that college. If another university has poor retention and is unwilling to work with the tribe, decrease the funding for students to attend that college. It does not make sense to continue to send tribal funds to colleges and universities that fail to deliver a positive experience or a quality education to Native students.

Implications for Higher Education

Post-secondary institutions must be more proactive with tribal education departments when recruiting tribal students. Several education informants mentioned that they never heard from college recruiters or that they had to drive their students to campuses meet with colleges.

Because of the rural location of many tribes and the limited staffing of TEDs, it is imperative that higher education institutions actively recruit students and travel to rural areas to meet with students and their families. Postsecondary institutions must also understand the uniqueness of each tribe's staffing and funding for their departments and not generalize among tribes. While one tribe may have the means to provide higher education administrators to spearhead the admissions process for their students, university administrators must understand that the vast majority of tribes do not.

Postsecondary institutions need to designate a singular representative or department to work with Native students, their families and tribal education departments. One of the most common concerns of respondents in this study was that there was no central person or office that was responsible for their students on many campuses. A single liaison for Native American students would eliminate confusion and apprehension and provide consistent feedback for students and administrators who need direction. In addition, the liaison(s) would be trained to understand the unique needs of Native families and tribal education departments and could also serve in many capacities for students as they prepare to arrive on, and transition to, campus.

To help increase enrollment and supplement the limited financial resources of tribal education departments, colleges and universities should consider creating more financial aid packages for Native students. In addition, a real need exists to work with tribal education departments and look for funding opportunities for testing, orientation, and admission costs. Perhaps students who have unmet need could receive partial fee waivers or be offered free housing in an effort to provide the opportunity to attend college.

Colleges and universities must also cultivate relationships with tribes to not only create better programming and curriculum for Native students, but to determine ways to help decrease

anxiety or misunderstanding about the higher education experience. They need to provide specific programming and staff charged with the creating and delivering these programs and services. Simply referring Native students to multicultural centers is insufficient.

Tribes struggle with not having the human capital to meet the needs of health and human services and economic development. Higher education institutions play a critical role in developing both Natives and Non-Natives to serve tribes. They must work closely with Native Nations to develop relevant coursework and curricula that can help prepare students for tribal employment in various capacities. Courses exploring tribal law, governance, economic development, sovereignty, and the uniqueness of working for a tribe would all greatly improve the job prospects of graduates and the ability of tribes to incorporate them into their administrations.

Postsecondary institutions should also focus on providing online or on-site classes if possible, especially for rural tribes. Colleges and universities can afford tribes opportunities like this to have access to higher education and an ability to develop human capital on a local level. On-site classes could also be open to the general public, so the entire community would benefit from the availability of classes for areas that have been historically underserved.

Implications for High Schools

Public schools must create more college advising for Native students, possibly as early as middle school. They must also work closely with parents to help educate them about college going, the admissions process, financial aid and what to expect from the college experience. Earlier intervention and education would reduce the anxiety related to the unknown about college going for Native students and their families.

In addition to working with students and their parents, high schools must forge strong partnerships with tribes to facilitate proactive interventions for at-risk Native students. For example, TEDs and the schools could have parents sign forms that give them permission so the tribal education liaisons could gain access to grades and disciplinary records and reach out to students who are struggling socially or academically. The partnership could also lead to more programming and services designed specifically to create more college ready Native students. This could tangentially have a positive impact on the creation of a collegiate culture among younger Native students.

Implications for Future Research

One of the key components of the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development (2008) was the positive correlation between increased tribal control of their economic development and sustained and improved long-term economic development for the tribes. More research needs to be done to determine if students from tribally-controlled primary and secondary schools matriculate to college at a higher rate than those who attend public schools. If students are consistently graduating high school and attending postsecondary institutions at a higher rate than their counterparts in public schools, this could corroborate the need for tribes to assume more control of their students' education.

Tribes must increase the amount of research they do regarding their students and how they matriculate to, persist at, and graduate from postsecondary institutions. There is a wealth of information that could guide programming and practice and determine what gaps need to be filled to help their students increase college going and degree completion. In addition, tribes could determine what postsecondary institutions are best serving their students and identify what

factors may be responsible for the results so that they can attempt to identify or implement them at other schools.

Tribes are very heterogeneous so it is imperative that this study be replicated with other Native nations across the United States. The results of this research were influenced by the fact that the majority of the participants were located in and around Oklahoma, which has the second largest Native population of any state in the country (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). The relationships between native Nations and postsecondary institutions in other parts of the country will certainly differ and could produce different programs and services for Native students that may be replicable in other states. In addition, it is important to determine if human capital in other regions of the country impacts economic development the same way it does in the Southern Plains.

Several respondents described the difficulty that their tribes have in recruiting their own members to come back and work for the tribe. Further research should be done to delve deeper into what obstacles tribes face in getting their members to return to serve their tribes. It is also important to determine what, if anything, nations are doing to make it more attractive for tribal members to return home to work. Since human capital for Native Americans is so rooted in understanding culture and values that are unique to each tribe, it is imperative that strategies be identified to help nations effectively recruit their own members who are qualified for tribal employment.

Colleges and universities need to track their Native students that graduate to determine if there are any student support programs that they used to help them complete their degrees. If they find specific departments or services that consistently increase persistence and degree completion, they could not only expand or provide more funding for those areas, but share the

practice with tribes and other colleges to determine if they can be replicated. In addition, they must study those that drop out and determine if there are any trends or factors that can be further researched to determine if there are programs or services that could help reduce attrition.

APPENDIX
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

TED = Tribal Education Department

TEO = Tribal Education Office

Tribal Demographic and Education Information

1. How many citizens are enrolled in your tribe?
2. What are your major education programs?
3. How many students in what type of schools does your TED/TEO serve?
 - a. For example-public schools, tribally controlled school, BIA school, etc.,
4. How are your education programs funded?
5. Do you have a Title VII liaison and/or work with a regional/State Indian Education Office? If yes, please describe.
6. What are the most important education issues?

Higher education and Economic Development Issues

7. What are your tribe's educational and economic strategic priorities?
8. What areas of expertise are most needed in your tribe?
9. What is the major industry or employer within your tribe? Is it externally or internally controlled?
10. What is the major industry or employer within your local community?
11. How can higher education support your tribe's plans for economic development/language revitalization, etc.?
12. Do you feel that higher education can support tribal sovereignty and nation building/economic development efforts? Why or Why not? Please describe.
13. What are the shortcomings, if any, do college and university programs in helping to prepare citizens in your tribe for needed positions within the tribe?

Higher Education Access and Information

14. How many of your tribal citizens are currently in college? What institutions are they enrolled in?
15. How many of your tribe's citizens have been to college?
16. How many tribal citizens with higher education degrees currently work for the tribe?
17. What are the major issues in getting your students into college?
18. Do you offer any workshops, tutoring or other types of support programs to help get your students into college? If yes, please describe.
19. Does your tribe have a partnership with any organizations, agencies, or colleges and universities that help get students into college? If yes, please describe.
20. Does your tribe offer any type of financial assistance for college students? If yes, please describe.
21. Does your tribe offer any workshops, counseling or other support (non-financial) to your citizens while they are enrolled in college?
22. What information and/or resources would be useful to your efforts in getting tribal citizens into and/or through college?

Computer Access and Online education

23. Do you have a computer center with access to the Internet?
24. What type of online courses or programs would be most useful to the tribe?
25. Do you have any questions for me?

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