**Collaboration and Engagement Focus Group Notes**

**UND Strategic Plan**

**Presidents of Tribal Colleges in North Dakota**

**Present for the discussion were…**

1. United Tribes Technical College (UTTC), Leander McDonald
2. Cankdeska Cikana Community College (CCCC), Cynthia Lindquist
3. Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish College (NHSC), Twyla Baker
4. Turtle Mountain Community College (TMCC), Donna Brown
5. Sitting Bull College (SBC), Laurel Vermillion

Tracey Bauer, Executive Director of North Dakota Tribal College System (NDTCS)

**Location: UTTC Administrative Building in Bismarck, ND**

**Facilitator and Notetaker: Co-Chair Thomasine Heitkamp:**

**Date: Wednesday, June 15, 2022**

The focus of the visit was to gain information in response to the aim of the Strategic Planning Sub-Committee on Collaboration and Engagement ***to examine how UND* *sustains and enhances meaningful collaborations with our Tribal Colleges and Tribal Nations*?** <https://und.edu/about/strategic-plan/new-strategic-plan/collaboration-engagement.html>

**1. General question about how UND is doing in this regard?**

The immediate needs are to **expand the number of undergraduate students with AA degrees who transfer to UND and are given the necessary support to successfully complete their degree**. Once completed and engaged, students will consider securing a graduate degree. UND is the premier institution of higher learning in North Dakota so collaboration and engagement are important.

Strong programs exist at UND like the CCCC’s partnership with UND’s Departments of Social Work and Indian Studies and possible future efforts to advance technology and advanced manufacturing. Also noted is the clinical support by Dr. Doug McDonald, Director of Indians Into Psychology Doctoral Education (INPSYDE) and faculty member in Psychology, in his providing telehealth support during the pandemic to faculty and staff, including Head Start families, at CCCC.

Concerns remain regarding how UND assists students who are American Indian (AI) in transitioning to campus. UND should consider **reinvigorating the American Indian Center (AIC) for a visible presence on-campus so students have a place to go when they feel lonely and isolated**. As stated, “It is hard for some students to be up there by themselves. They need a home base”. The Center should expand access to student support and tutoring services with a clear point of contact.

Suggestions for strategic planning purposes are to:

1. **Examines data on undergraduate enrollment of students who are AI and the trends**. Did the dismantling of the AIC have an impact?
2. **Examine the fragmented educational service supports** (e.g. financial aid and transfer credit) to ensure a less piecemeal system. This will prevent students who are AI from “falling through the cracks”.
3. **Consider more education on campus about boarding schools, poverty, and the culture and history of AIs**. Education should include topics that include gaining a deeper understanding of why there are tribes and why there are reservations. An understanding of cultural values, like generosity and family connections, will assist faculty and staff in serving students who are AI.
4. **Hire and retain more faculty and staff who are American Indian.**
5. **Encourage administration, faculty, and staff at UND to travel to visit Tribal Colleges to build relationships.**

Personal connections are critical – e.g. President Lindquist and Dr. Don Warne visited about the need for a physician in Spirit Lake and how they might collaborate on a pipeline at the premed level.

**2. Questions about the potential of long-term partnership opportunities**.

Long-term partnerships should be STUDENT focused. Suggestions include:

(1) **Collaboration on traditional language programs, faculty development**.

(2) **Provide tuition waivers for all students who transfer from a tribal college**. Make tuition waivers a priority. Data underscore that students do better academically when they are not worried about financial well-being.

(3) **Expand financial literacy programs** as a component of what UND does. Support students financially with knowledge about where and when scholarships are available but also personal budgeting, planning.

(4) **Know your students**. Tribal college students are generally older than average.

Efforts noted were:

1. The engagement with the President of Minot State University, Dr. Steve Shirley, who hosted the Presidents of the Tribal Colleges and included all his cabinet and students who are AI.
2. The Recent Government to Government (state-tribal partnership) event in Bismarck this week could include Higher Education. <https://www.governor.nd.gov/news/burgum-highlights-progress-outlines-challenges-fourth-conference-state-tribal-partnerships>
3. Engagement by UND President Andy Armacost in exploring needs.

Here is a link to Indian Related Programs at UND <https://und.edu/student-life/diversity/multicultural/indian-related-programs.html>