



## Full Steam Ahead

LEVERAGING OUR WINS TO FUEL SYSTEM CHANGE

NISTS 2024 | St. Louis, Missouri • February 21-23

The following presentation was given at the 22nd Annual Conference for the National Institute for the Study of Transfer Students. Please cite responsibly and direct questions to the original presenter(s).

### *Solutions Showcase*

## **3333 - Building Equity and Transfer Success with Underrepresented Populations**

Fostering Inclusion, Engagement, and Community, Supporting Diverse and Special Populations

This session will cover the approaches small, rural colleges provide for student transfer. These approaches, focused on Indigenous student transfer success, create a foundation for more equitable support for all students. In this interactive session, attendees will learn how these approaches were created and how peer learning models across colleges can help small colleges in their capacity building to provide equitable transfer services at their institutions.

**Nicolette Weston**, *Transfer and Admissions Program Administrator*  
American Indian College Fund

**Juan Perez**, *Director of Admissions*  
Salish Kootenai College

**Joey R. DiTonno**, *Registrar*  
Chief Dull Knife College

# Tribal College Transfer

NISTS-National Institute for the Study of Transfer Students Presentation:  
*Building Equity and Transfer Success with Underrepresented Populations*

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**COLLEGES &**  
**UNIVERSITIES**  
Transfer Success



# Meet the Presenters!

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- Nicolette Weston, Transfer and Admissions Program Administrator, American Indian College Fund
- Juan Perez, Director of Admissions, Salish Kootenai College
- Joey DiTonno M.Ed., Registrar, Chief Dull Knife College

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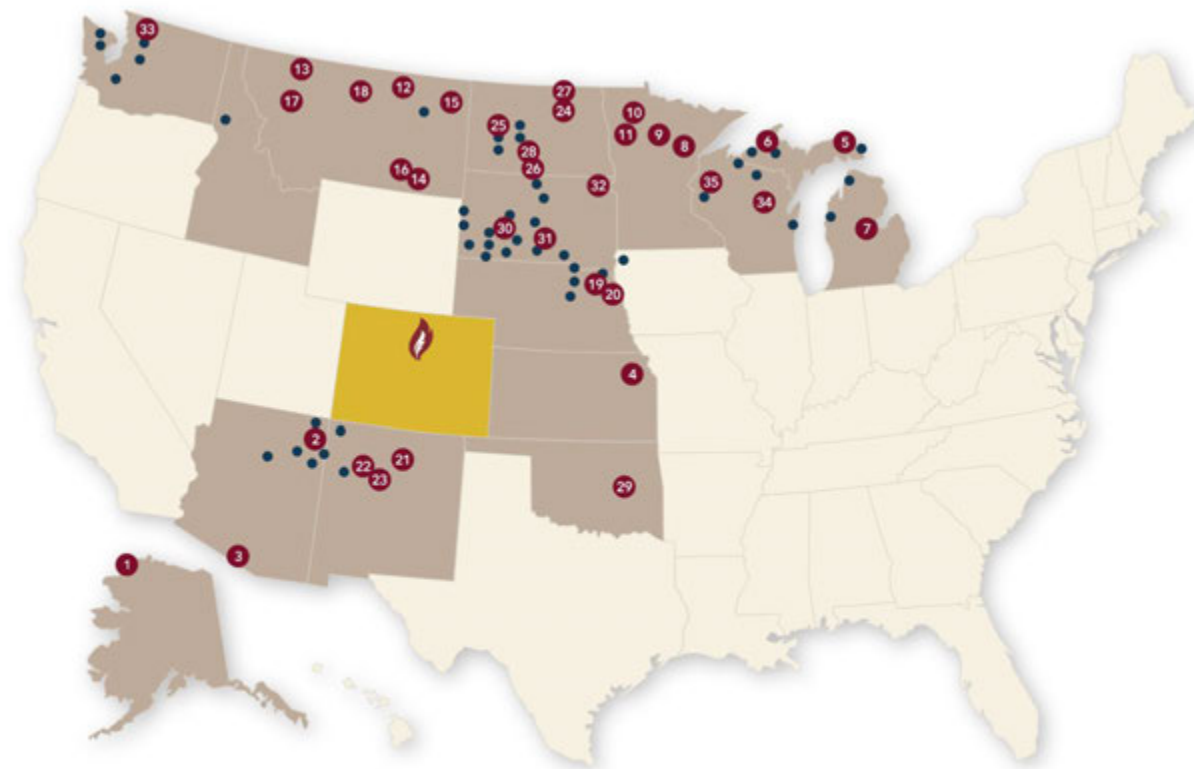
## **Our Mission**

**The American Indian College Fund invests in Native students and tribal college education to transform lives and communities.**

## **Our Vision**

**The American Indian College Fund was founded in 1989. For over 31 years, the College Fund has been the nation's largest charity supporting Native student access to higher education. We provide scholarships, programming to improve Native American student access to higher education, and the support and tools for them to succeed once they are there.**

- Engaged with advocacy and public education to increase general knowledge of indigenous contributions and support for visibility and representation.
- We currently serve 35 Tribal Colleges and Universities



- TCUs
- TCU Satellite Campuses

# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- The American Indian College Fund sits upon land in the territories of the Ute, Cheyenne, and Arapaho peoples. And further, 48 contemporary tribal nations are historically tied to the state of Colorado.

# Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCU)

- Tribal colleges and universities provide a dynamic higher education opportunity, most on or near reservation lands. Known for their remarkable programs, culturally-relevant curricula, and familial student care – tribal colleges allow students to further their careers, attain an advanced degree, or better support their communities.
- 35 TCUs are accredited colleges that have received their TCU accreditation status from AIHEC.



# Tribal College Transfer

|                                       | Graduated | Graduates who enrolled in Fall of the following year | Graduates enrolled at a Mainstream |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|--|------------------------------------|
| TCT Students 2018-19*<br><i>n=359</i> | 19%       | 40%  | 30%                                |
| TCT Students 2019-20<br><i>n=115</i>  | 16%       | <b>78%</b>   | <b>64%</b>                         |
| TCU Rate 2-yr Students                | 19%       |  |                                    |
| National Rate 2-yr Students           | 36%       |  | 31%**                              |

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|                                       | Spring to Fall Retention                  | Enrolled in the following Spring |
|---------------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| 2018-2019*<br><i>n=247</i>            | 69%                                       | 65%                              |
| 2019-2020<br><i>n=97</i>              | <b>90%</b><br><i>(n increased to 137)</i> | <b>84%</b>                       |
| TCU Retention Rate                    | 48%                                       |                                  |
| National Retention Rate 2-yr students | 63%                                       |                                  |

\*In 2018-2019, not all TCUs reported to National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) and some had incomplete data. (NCES, 2019)

\*\* (NSC Research Center, 2019; CCRC, 2013)



# American Indian College Fund- College Transfer Success

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- Support our Tribal Colleges & Universities (TCUs) with Scholarship opportunities for Tribal College students and Enrolled Tribal Citizens attending College or Transferring Colleges.
- Transfer Grants that support our TCUs with building their own Transfer resources, hosting Transfer events, and College visits.
- Transfer Advisory Committee, with seven seated members from TCUs who have College Transfer experience, currently developing a *Transfer Student Experience Course* focused on preparing our Indigenous Student population for Transfer Success.

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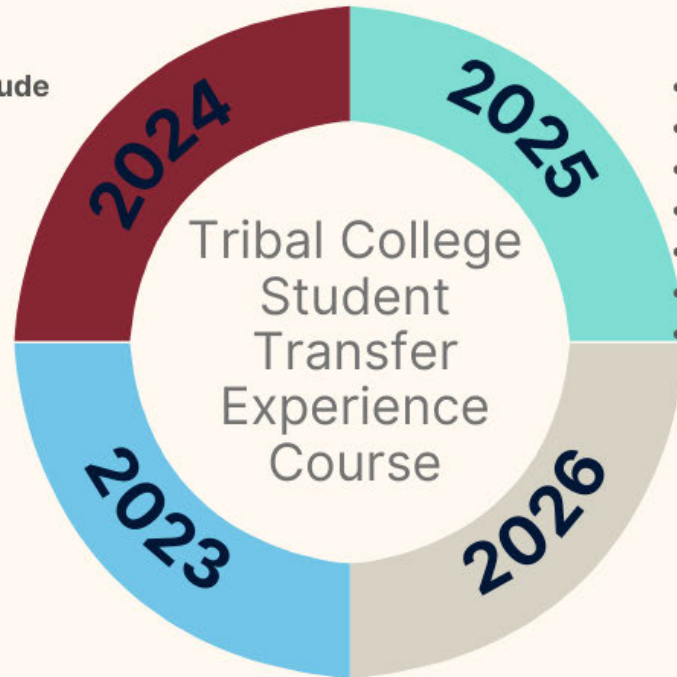
# Tribal College Transfer Advisory Committee Timeline

## Year 2

- Define contents to include in the transfer course
- Review student survey data
- Create first outline of Transfer experience course

## Year 1

- Create transfer advisory committee
- Review transfer experience course examples
- Collect research on college transfer
- Collect student surveys



## Year 3

- Develop the first draft
- Review the first draft
- Make changes
- Review
- Confirm final draft
- Publishing/Printing
- Identify where and how to pilot transfer course

## Year 4

- January 2026 Completion
- Pilot Transfer course in identified TCUs
- Evaluate





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EDUCATION IS THE ANSWER

2023 Transfer Faculty and  
Staff Survey: 31 responses

## Top 3 goals of surveyed TCUs over next four years



**1. Improve transfer coordination, support services, and application processes**



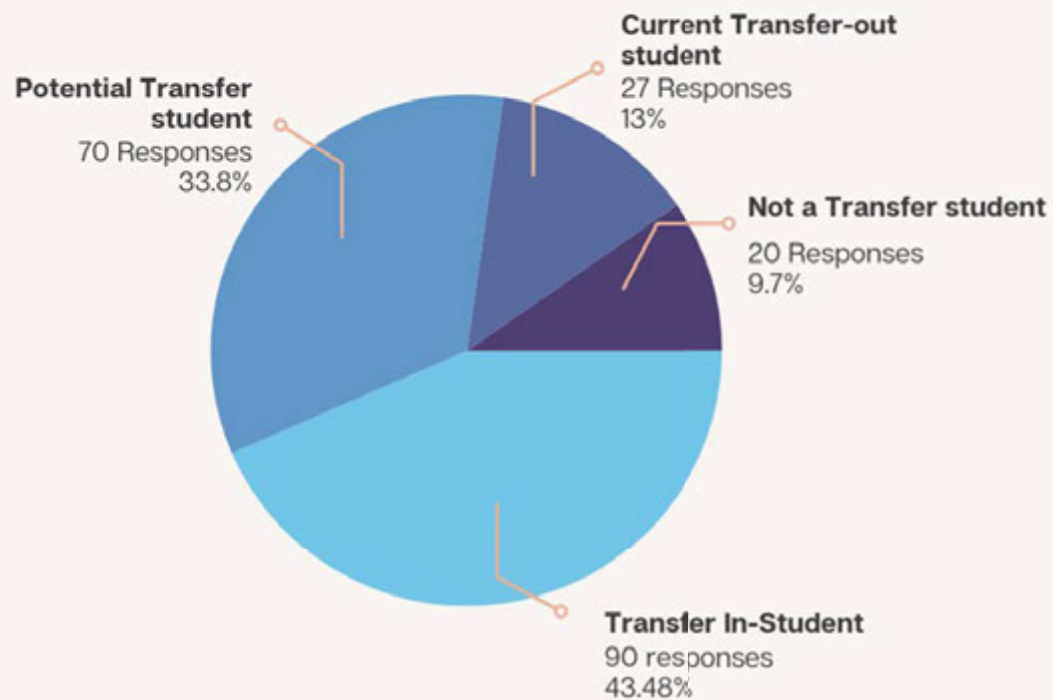
**2. Increase number of students who graduate with Associates degree from our TCU before transferring to a four-year institution**



**3. Develop field-specific transfer pathways that students can pursue e.g. nursing or teaching**

# 2023 TRANSFER STUDENT DATA

207 RESPONSES



# Transfer-Out Students

What type of college do you currently attend? Select the answer choice that best applies to you.

Answered: 98

Skipped: 109



Tribal College &  
University



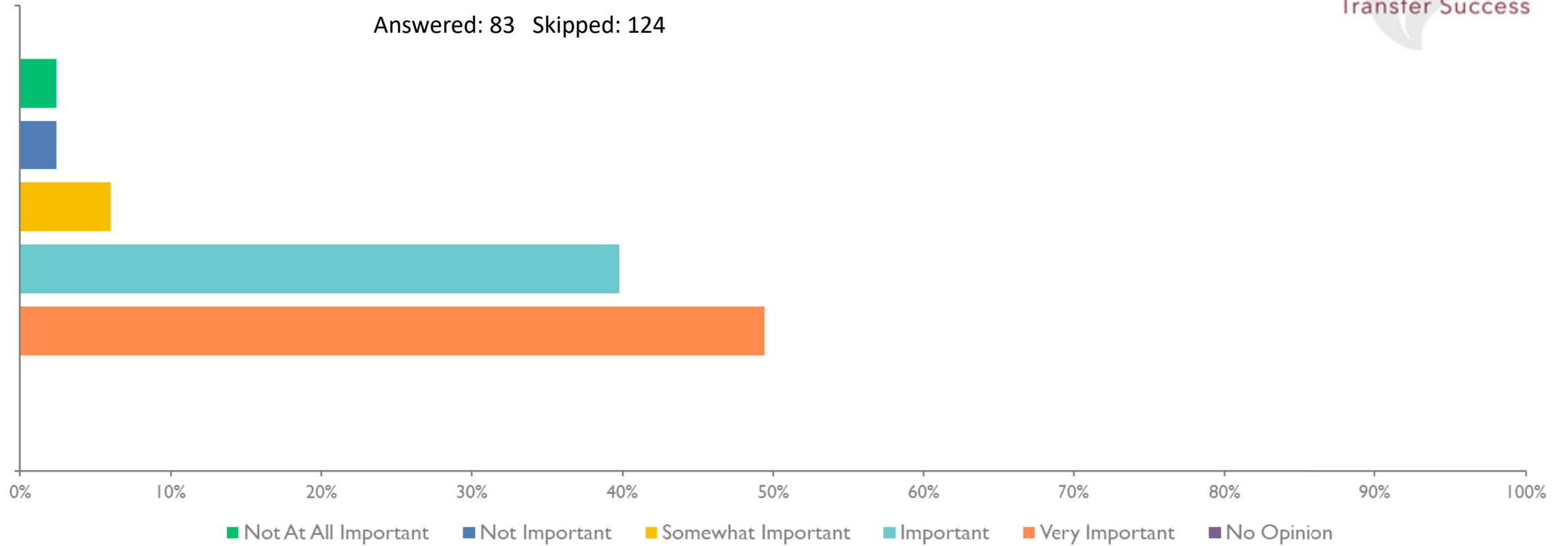
Other College or  
University

69 students reported attending a Tribal College & University (TCU). While 29 students report they attend another college or university.

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## How important to you is feeling supported and seen as a Native student when transferring colleges?

Answered: 83 Skipped: 124



# Transfer Student Experience

01

## Underrepresentation

Sense of "invisibility" due to the low representation of Indigenous students in Mainstream Universities



02

## Cultural Disconnection

Indigenous students may experience a cultural disconnect when transferring from Tribal Colleges to Mainstream Universities



03

## Social Injustice

Experiencing social injustice, including racism and discrimination, is a challenge that can affect the well-being and academic success of Indigenous students at Mainstream Universities.



04

## Family Dynamics

Leaving their community can also be a significant challenge for indigenous students



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05

## Navigating Transfer

Indigenous students who transfer directly to a Mainstream University may have a harder time navigating the higher education system compared to those who have the support of a Tribal College community.



06

## Diverse Faculty

Diverse faculty members at Mainstream Universities can contribute to mentorship and connection for indigenous students.



07

## Support Services

Indigenous students base connection and trust when reaching out for support. Having culturally competent trained staff can develop and support Indigenous transfer students.



08

## Financial and Housing

Financial Gaps when Transferring is a challenge many Indigenous students face. Along with affordable housing for those students Transferring as Single parents.




- 
- While Native people have made significant progress in recent decades, they remain the most educationally underrepresented racial or ethnic group in the United States. Only 15.4 percent of Native people 25 years and over have earned a bachelor's degree or higher, or less than half the national average.<sup>[2]</sup> <sup>[1]</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). *Educational attainment, 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates* [Data file].

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# TRIBAL COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

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# How do you connect this to your work?

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- Acknowledge and Learn about the historical impacts of underrepresented students transferring into your institutions
- Accept the many diverse voices and backgrounds of your underrepresented student populations
- Apply culturally competent practices and trainings among your campus staff and faculty
- Create a culture that not only celebrates but protects underrepresented students on your campus
- Build Equity = more success!



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# Thank You!

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## Presentation #

**Please complete a  
session evaluation**

(via the conference app)

*Thanks!*

