

Serving Native Students with Holistic Student Supports:

How Tribal Colleges and Universities Embed a Community Feeling into Academic Culture



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Executive Summary



DVP-PRAXIS LTD served as a learning evaluation partner for the Serving Native Students with Holistic Student Supports grant, conducting a participatory and culturally responsive mixed-methods evaluation informed by the American Indian Higher Education Consortium Indigenous Evaluation Framework that centers and elevates the voices of TCU students, faculty, staff, and administrators. The observations and stories within this report are organized by evaluative statements co-created by the evaluation team and the participating tribal colleges, based on data gathered through interviews and focus groups with college administrators, faculty, staff, and students; survey data from college leaders that provided feedback on the value of ATD's HSS services received by the six TCUs; and, student-level administrative records provided by the colleges to describe the students served and their progress on select academic outcomes over the course of the three year grant period.

Through the grant, six Tribal Colleges (TCUs) – Iłisaḡvik College, Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College, Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish College, Stone Child College, United Tribes

Technical College, and White Earth Tribal and Community College – built upon their strong community-oriented foundation and student-centered mission to redesign the student experience at their colleges with the goal of increasing student success. During the grant period, nearly 40% of first-time students were 25 years or older when they first enrolled, about a quarter of students enrolled part-time, and a considerable majority of students (64%) received either the Pell Grant or an American Indian College Fund scholarship. Placing these data in context, as learned through conversations with TCU students and staff, many students at these TCUs are parents or caretakers and have work obligations outside of school, making part-time enrollment more feasible. There were some key shifts in both student enrollment and student characteristics across participating TCUs during the grant period (i.e., an increase in students ages 25+, part-time students, and female students), which can be attributed in part to the COVID-19 pandemic that began in 2020. In conversations with the evaluation team, TCU leaders shared that many students were opting to take fewer classes so

Stone Child College

“Attitudinal change occurs when individuals understand their work and view work processes in new ways; structural change occurs when policies, structures, and procedures create a framework for new behaviors that improve the student experiences throughout the institution; and process change alters how people do their job and is transformative when enough individuals change their practices to ensure that large numbers of students encounter new student support interactions.”

— *ATD HSS Toolkit adapted and contextualized for TCUs*

they could fulfill childcare and elder care responsibilities, which are common responsibilities among Native American, Alaska Native, and adult students.

The TCUs received support from Achieving the Dream (ATD) from Fall 2019 through Spring 2022 to address three areas of transformative change (attitude, structure, and process) posited as necessary to implement holistic student supports (HSS). Prior evaluation of HSS implementation in other college contexts suggests that attitudes are often the most difficult to cultivate and are the critical foundation for HSS redesign; structure requires resources and buy-in to reshape the college experience and is an actionable first step toward HSS redesign; and processes compose the complex network that allows the structure to function.

The TCUs entered HSS redesign with a strong pre-existing foundation of attitudinal support for serving students holistically, and therefore focused redesign efforts on addressing HSS structures and processes. To support TCUs in

addressing HSS structures and processes, ATD provided coaching, network supports, and subgrant financial support. As a way to share their perspectives on ATD supports, 53 faculty, staff, and administrative leaders across the six TCUs completed a survey rating ATD services on a five-point scale of not at all useful, a little useful, moderately useful, very useful, and extremely useful. From their feedback, 85% of respondents shared that constructive feedback received from coaches on their redesign plan and design were “very” or “extremely” useful for implementing changes to HSS structures and processes; 84% reported that constructive convenings facilitated by ATD were “very” or “extremely” useful; and 82% reported that constructive feedback on the launch and rollout of HSS changes was “very” or “extremely” useful. Importantly, survey respondents also indicated that ATD’s HSS coaching was highly aligned with the values and priorities of TCUs.

Focusing on TCU’s structural and process changes, the report details the following six key areas of TCUs’ HSS reforms that were common across a majority of the colleges:

1. TCUs broadened capacity of support staff by creating new roles to enable staff to know students on a more personal level and provide proactive, personalized support.
2. TCUs improved orientation by focusing energy on relationship-building with incoming students and, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, moved content online for easy reference.
3. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, TCUs strengthened the availability and quality of online learning, giving students flexible ways to stay engaged with their courses, even when challenges get in the way.
4. TCUs redesigned advising to share ownership between faculty and staff, and to ensure students are engaged at the right times to achieve key milestones.
5. TCUs implemented and leveraged new technology that facilitates how faculty and staff keep track of student progress and allows leaders to make decisions based on large-scale trends in student demographics or academic outcomes.
6. TCUs bolstered students’ basic needs supports to allow students to navigate personal and academic challenges and stay on track to achieve their goals.

The COVID-19 pandemic affected TCU's HSS implementation schedule, including the capacity of personnel to plan for and manage whole-college reform along with student academic and co-curricular engagement. Despite the disproportionate and devastating impact of COVID-19 for Native American and Alaska Native communities, including TCU faculty, staff, and students, these institutions adapted to serve students through a remote model and continued or accelerated the planning, design, rollout, and refinement of HSS structures and processes. HSS redesign efforts, coupled with TCU's student-centered culture, provided a critical foundation for students to maintain academic momentum during the pandemic. For example, first-time students enrolling in the final year of

the grant period (AY 2020-21) – in the midst of a pandemic – made similar progress on retention compared to students first enrolling in academic years 2018-19 or 2019-20. That these outcomes remained consistent is a testament to the TCU's efforts to support students as they navigated the effects of the pandemic and is notable given declines in public 2-year student outcomes in recent years at the national level.

The evaluation team observed that TCUs increased their capacity to holistically support a diversifying student population, keeping students engaged and on track despite massive challenges brought on by the pandemic, and centered and elevated student voices by their inclusion in the redesign process, making students



Ilisagvik College



*White Earth Tribal and
Community College*

feel more empowered by and connected to their campus communities. Additionally, throughout the grant period, faculty and staff were resolute in their student-centered approach, strengthened their academic and student supports collaboration, and maintained an emphasis on mutual care and professional courtesy in the face of pandemic challenges.

This final evaluation report points to four key lessons from the TCU's HSS redesign efforts:

1. Prioritize proactive outreach and relationship development with students, using new technologies and paired or co-advising models to provide students with additional support.
2. Empower students to be co-owners in their educational journey, including and elevating student voices to improve college supports, and arming students with the knowledge and tools they need to make informed decisions about their personal, educational, and career goals.

3. Provide students with flexible, virtual learning methods to accommodate their caretaking and other responsibilities, while prioritizing a return to the in-person experience in which students say they learn better, feel more connected to the college, and can more easily build meaningful relationships with peers, faculty, and staff.

4. Coaching supports and regular facilitation of this network by ATD were useful to TCUs, especially ATD services that provided colleges meaningful feedback on HSS redesign planning, launch, and rollout, and connected colleges with one another as peer institutions to share best practices.

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*United Tribes
Technical College*



Foreword by John Gritts and Kathy Johnson: The Tribal College movement and what makes these institutions unique



*United Tribes
Technical College*

The Tribal College and University (TCU) movement began with ceremony and a prayer.

Why is the tribal college movement so important? The TCUs are an answer to the sad history of Native American and Alaskan Native students' education; they are post-secondary institutions and are changing the history for Native American and Alaskan Native students. The U.S. Higher Education system fails to address the needs of Native American and Alaskan Native students, and the history of Native education is one of tragedy starting with the signing of treaties between the U.S. Government and Indigenous Nation Tribes. One of many promises made through the treaties was an education for Indigenous children. That education was deferred initially to churches, then to the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Boarding Schools who believed that Native children should be educated to learn the European ways

and to forget who they were and where they came from. The churches and government took children forcibly from their homes to schools located great distances from their homeland. The schools stripped the children's tribal identity; children were not able to wear their own clothing, have long hair, or speak their language; they were marched to classes, lived in terrible dorms and fed poor food; children were required to work. Many children tried to escape and run away to home and others died from disease, suffered from sexual and physical abuse, and endured home sickness. After the boarding school movement, the BIA took over the tribal education by governing them with typical government oversight that was complicated to navigate, had many rules, and was unresponsive to the needs of Native American and Alaskan Native students. Children graduating from government-run high schools

generally were not adequately prepared to attend college, let alone achieve a college degree. Some students persevered in obtaining a college degree, but that was not easy because they were expected to attend mainstream institutions – that failed to account for their unique identity or teach them from a culturally relevant curriculum – to obtain a higher education. Then came other government-sponsored efforts to erase Native Nations including termination of tribes, relocation of Native Americans from the reservation to work in urban areas, and assimilation efforts aimed at getting rid of Native identities completely.

Who are the tribal colleges? The Tribal College movement was founded in self-determination, where the U.S. government finally turned over the management of education and other programs to the tribes. Self-determination allowed tribes to determine the direction of education, make their own decisions, operate autonomously, and build cultural aspects into the curriculum. Through self-determination tribes decided they could build their own tribal colleges. The TCU movement began with the Navajo Nation who established their own college for many reasons: to address the very low retention and graduation rates for Navajo students at mainstream colleges, to offer Native students a college option close to home, and to preserve Native language and culture. They received a lot of push-back from many people and organizations, including the BIA and other naysayers. The Navajo Nation was relentless in the formation of their own college. They were visionaries. After being told countless times by many people “you cannot have your own college,” they established and developed their own tribal college opening in 1968 on the reservation named Navajo Community College (now Diné College) in Tsaile, AZ.

Very soon after and following the lead of Navajo Community College, in 1969 the United Tribes Technical College was established in Bismarck, ND by the North Dakota tribes, and



Ilisagvik College

six more tribes chartered and established their own tribal colleges in the early 1970's. Standing Rock Community College, Standing Rock Indian Reservation, Ft. Yates, ND (now Sitting Bull College); Sinte Gleska College, Rosebud Indian Reservation, Rosebud, SD (now Sinte Gleska University); Lakota Higher Education Center, Pine Ridge Reservation, Pine Ridge, SD (now Oglala Lakota College); Nebraska Indian Community College, Omaha Reservation, Macy, NE; Turtle Mountain Community College, Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians, Belcourt, ND; and DQ University, on a site that was previously used as a United States Army Communications Facility, Davis, CA (closed in 2005). Currently there are 38 accredited institutions of higher education with colleges located on rural and isolated Native American Reservations or Corporations (Alaska) from



Michigan to California, Arizona to Alaska. When originally opened, schools were housed in abandoned buildings and store fronts on their reservations. When the TCUs started constructing new buildings, it added to the belief of the local reservations that TCUs were going to be serving students for a long time.

How do funding sources make TCUs affordable options for students? TCUs are committed to making college an affordable option for both Native and non-Native students to earn their college credential. Most TCUs are chartered by their tribe with five exceptions, two that are funded by the BIA, one that is congressionally chartered and two that are funded by the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act. All TCUs offer Associates degrees, 14 offer Baccalaureate degrees, 5 offer master's degree programs. In 2020, the median undergraduate tuition at Tribal Colleges and Universities was \$3,320 and was significantly lower than the national median tuition of \$10,080. The cost of out-of-state tuition at TCUs is \$3,426 compared with two-year colleges where the median out-of-state tuition was \$3,984, and to the national median

out-of-state tuition of \$14,585 for public and private colleges.ⁱ These cost savings are important because it makes the TCU affordable for more students. TCUs participate in the Federal Student Aid Programs which allow students access to the Pell grant, federal college work-study programs, and the federal supplemental educational opportunity grant. Only two TCUs participate in the federal student loan program and except for these two institutions, student can graduate from a TCU with no debt.

Tribal Colleges' core operational funding comes from Public Law 95-471 Tribally Controlled College or University Assistance Act of 1978 (TCCUAA), which is administered by the U.S. Bureau of Indian Education, and most TCUs do not receive state funding.ⁱⁱ Additionally, Title III Part A and F Programs – Strengthening Institutions by the Department of Education provides funding for TCU's construction and other infrastructure.ⁱⁱⁱ Another important milestone is the Land Grant status that was obtained by TCUs in 1994 with the passage of the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act that opens access to additional federal funding sources.^{iv}

In addition to government support, there are other organizations who ensure TCUs and their students are supported including the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC), the American Indian College Fund (“The College Fund”),^v and the Tribal College Journal. The TCUs established AIHEC in 1973 whose offices are now based in Alexandria, VA. AIHEC provides advocacy with the Federal Government that is critical in gaining and keeping support for TCUs on Capitol Hill. Established in 1989, The College Fund in Denver, CO effectively raises support for student scholarships and other programs from the private sector.^{vi} Also established in 1989, the Tribal College Journal plays an important role in telling the story of the TCUs on a quarterly basis.^{vii}

What makes the TCU institutions unique?

TCUs are chartered by their respective tribes with the tribal language, culture, and spirituality at the heart of their missions. Each is governed by an all-Native Board of Regents appointed by the tribes. When the tribe or the college has a specific need for certain educational programs, specialized training, or degree, the TCU reacts instantly. They are the truest community college. The TCU pedagogy includes curriculum taught by respected Native Elders who often do not have a terminal degree; however, through an agreement with higher education accreditation agencies, Elders can teach language and culture at TCUs because they are the cultural keepers.

Today TCUs serve more than 30,000 students. The average TCU Student is a single parent with two children.^{viii} Important to TCU culture is that TCUs are close knit communities where each student feels welcomed and taken care of holistically. At TCUs, students become confident in who they are. Some of the students attending a TCU are unable to leave home to attend a mainstream college because of various reasons but mainly family responsibilities. The TCUs make it possible to stay home and succeed with a quality education. At TCUs, students have hardly any competition between each other to

see who is best, because they value helping each other versus competing with each other... except when it comes to traditional hand games.^{ix} The students help each other to succeed in the academic sessions and there are many study groups that go hand in hand with classes. The TCUs have a small student to faculty ratio that allows faculty the opportunity to teach and students the opportunity to learn not only the facts about a certain topic but also the importance based on Native American culture and practice.

One of the highlights at any TCU is graduation day. The ceremony is memorable, with graduates marching into the event to a drum or traditional Native song (rather than Pomp and Circumstance), with some students wearing traditional regalia, some wearing a cap and gown. Prayers are offered for the graduates in the tribe’s language, and at many of the TCUs graduates are gifted an eagle feather or eagle plume. It is a proud moment to see graduates and families celebrate a milestone that 50 years ago would not have happened but today is possible because of TCUs.



Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College

Introduction: Tribal College Culture and a Holistic Student Support Journey



Ilisagvik College

Through the Serving Native Students with Holistic Student Supports grant, six tribal colleges and universities (TCUs) – Ilisagvik College, Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College, Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish College, Stone Child College, United Tribes Technical College, and White Earth Tribal and Community College – worked to improve their students' college experience by enhancing a holistic approach to student supports. The grant was led by Achieving the Dream (ATD) who provided coaching, network supports, and subgrants for colleges around holistic student supports (HSS) redesign. These supports cultivated a community of practice among the TCUs during virtual and in-person convenings where TCUs shared ideas, promising practices, and had the opportunity to network. ATD also provided individual college supports through the provision of HSS coaches who guided colleges through HSS (re)design, planning, and implementation based on colleges' actions plans. In responses to a survey on ATD's HSS services, TCU faculty, staff, and administrators affirmed that the most useful supports were related to coaching and convenings.

As envisioned by Achieving the Dream, implementing HSS involves a movement from discrete changes at a college to a whole-college, transformative change effort that addresses campus structures and processes as well as the attitudes of

faculty, staff, and administration.^x Prior evaluation of HSS implementation in other college contexts suggests that *attitudes* are often the most difficult to cultivate and are the critical foundation for HSS redesign; *structure* requires resources and buy-in to reshape the college experience and is an actionable first step toward HSS redesign; and *processes* compose the complex network that allows the structure to function.^{xi}

This evaluation report describes the approaches and experiences of six TCUs between the Fall 2019 and Fall 2021 terms to support students in advancing towards their academic, career, and personal goals. The observations and stories within this report are based on data gathered through interviews and focus groups with college administrators, faculty, staff, and students; survey data from college leaders that provided feedback on the value of ATD's HSS services received by the six TCUs; and student-level administrative records provided by the colleges to describe the students served and their progress on select academic outcomes over the course of the grant.

To understand the story of HSS redesign at TCUs, the learning evaluation partners at DVP-PRAXIS LTD conducted a participatory, culturally responsive, and mixed-methods evaluation that centered on qualitative evaluative statements and quantitative early momentum metrics^{xii} developed in partnership with the six TCUs and informed by the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) Indigenous Evaluation Framework^{xiii} (see Appendix A for a full description of the evaluation). The evaluative statements were areas of learning that TCU leaders identified as most salient to their work. These included a desire to understand how the HSS work unfolded; what changes occurred as a result of HSS work and what influenced these changes; and how faculty, staff, and students experienced the redesign. The early momentum metrics identified by TCUs as key interim measures of student progress toward increasing

credential attainment included completion of key credit thresholds, enrollment in and completion of college-level Math and English courses, and term-to-term and year-to-year retention.

The report begins with a student profile that reflects a TCU student's context and purpose for enrolling at a tribal college. Following this student profile, the report is organized by the co-created evaluative statements developed for this project, with sections that (1) describe the approaches

taken by colleges through HSS implementation to best serve their students; (2) elevate TCU faculty, staff, and administrators' perspectives and experiences with HSS redesign; and (3) explore how the student experience looks and feels different because of HSS efforts. The report concludes with a summary of common challenges TCUs faced during redesign and the solutions they employed, and points to additional supports to empower TCUs to continue innovating.

A Tribal College Student Profile

Judy is a Native American tribal college student in her second semester, majoring in social work and Indigenous studies. Her father had always told her, "You need to get an education, everything you have can be stripped, but an education can't be." She was living in the Midwest with her husband and young children when she decided, "I need to go home and be helpful in my community." Judy and her family moved to her childhood hometown to pursue a college degree at the local tribal college. Judy shared her motivation for returning to college as an adult and first-generation student: "I want to find my own knowledge and what I'm interested in. I see myself finding where my community needs me and what I can offer, but I don't know what that is yet."

Judy had taken college classes at "mainstream" colleges before, but she decided to pursue her degree at the tribal college to contribute to her community and because "the college does a good job of being close knit compared to my experience at other colleges. I was intimidated to ask for help [at other colleges] because there were so many other students. Coming here, seeing other Native American teachers and students, working with them, and getting help academically has been amazing." Her experience at the tribal college has been positive because the college "has teachers that are understanding and are willing to work with you as long as you are willing to make an effort. They are willing to bend over backwards, and that has been helpful for me and for many students. I think they really want you to succeed." Judy is excelling in school and looking forward to exploring how to give back to her community after graduation. "I have a 4.0 GPA now. I'm putting everything I have into this degree. After graduation, I want to translate what I've learned in my degree to help families here at home."

Judy's student profile – a composite of actual experiences and voices of four tribal college students – represents the diversity of students served by TCUs. Her profile captures a common perspective held by students regarding how TCUs effectively embed a community feeling into academic culture. Though Judy represents one perspective among many TCU student experiences, her profile communicates how a college's holistic approach to student supports can help students feel recognized, engaged, and empowered to pursue their goals.

As evidenced throughout this report, a holistic student supports *attitude* is nothing new for TCUs, which were developed around principles of self-determination, community-oriented mission, and student-centered organizational culture (see Foreword). Building upon their historical foundation and mission of serving students holistically, these TCUs sought to improve student retention and credential attainment through the Serving Native Students with Holistic Student Supports grant by examining and improving campus structures and processes to better provide student supports strategically, systematically, and proactively.

Evaluative Statement 1: We will track our HSS implementation to learn how it unfolded, what changes occurred, and what influenced changes



*Nueta Hidatsa
Sahnish College*

Key Observation: TCUs increased their capacity to holistically support a diversifying student population, keeping students engaged and on track despite massive challenges brought on by the pandemic.

This section provides an overview of HSS redesign efforts at participating TCUs, describing the students these tribal colleges are serving and detailing the progress made by institutions to keep their students engaged and on track through HSS implementation.

Students Served by Participating TCUs

To understand the holistic student support efforts pursued by these TCUs, it's important to understand who these colleges serve.

Administrative data provided by five of the six participating TCUs show the demographic and academic characteristics of students, providing insight into colleges' decisions on how to strengthen and target supports for their diverse student populations.¹ The evaluation analysis of student enrollment and academic momentum focuses on first-time students as colleges prioritized this group in designing HSS reforms.

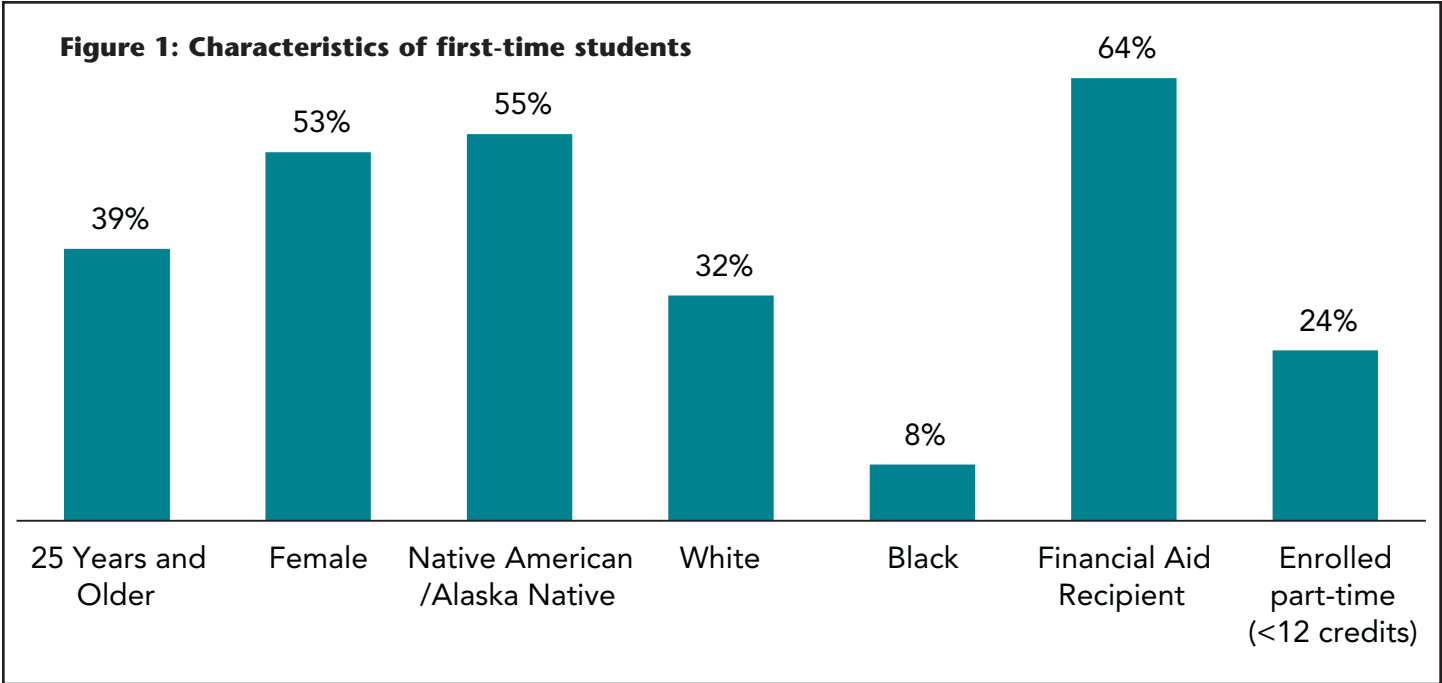
From Fall 2018 through Spring 2021, 1,902 students enrolled for the first time at the five TCUs for whom data is available.² Although the majority of students were Native American and Alaska Native students (55%), this demographic snapshot masks variation in the ethnic diversity of the student population across the colleges (Figure 1). For example, college-specific representation of Native American and Alaska Native students ranged from a low of 19% to a high of 92%.

Nearly 40% of first-time students were 25 years or older when they first enrolled, about a quarter of students enrolled part-time, and a considerable majority of students (64%) received either the Pell Grant or The College Fund scholarship. Placing these data in context, as learned through conversations with TCU students and staff, many students at these TCUs are parents or caretakers and have work obligations outside of school, making part-time enrollment more feasible.

There were shifts in both student enrollment and student characteristics across participating

¹ One participating college was unable to provide administrative data for this final analysis.

² The sample of first-time students includes both fall-start students (72% of sample) and spring-start students (28% of sample).



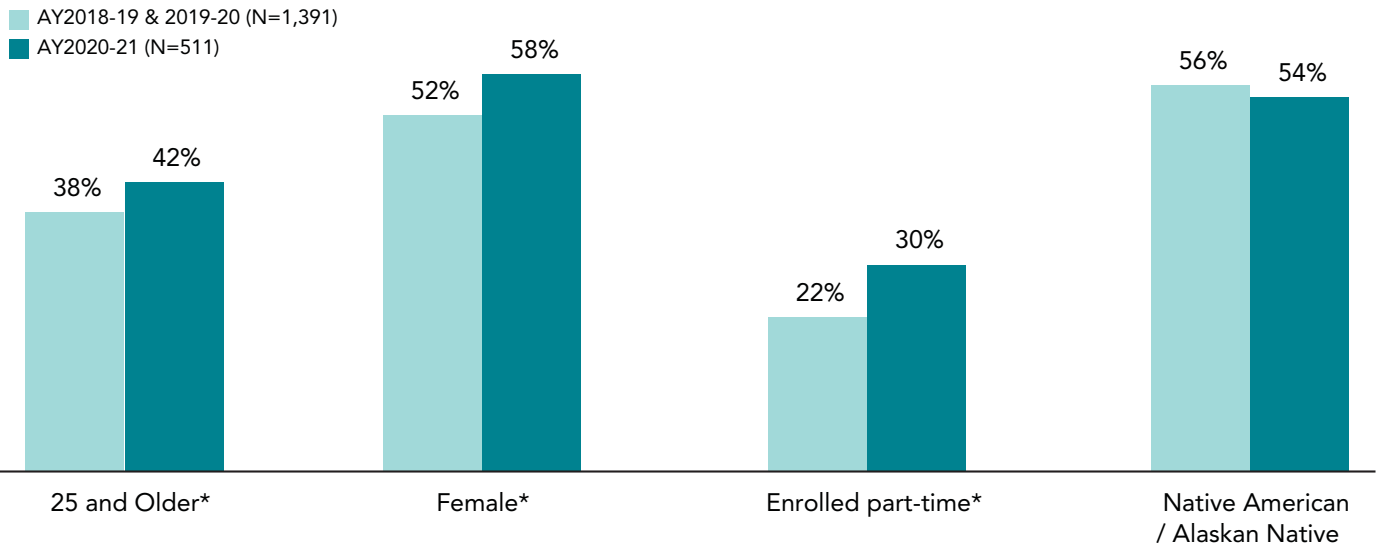
Note: Student characteristics are not mutually exclusive; financial aid recipients include those who received the Pell-grant and/or The College Fund Scholarship.

TCUs during the grant period, which can be attributed in part to the COVID-19 pandemic that began in 2020. Like other postsecondary institutions across the nation, student enrollment declined notably during the pandemic. In the final year of the grant period, academic year (AY) 2020-21, first-time student enrollment at these five institutions fell by 28% compared to enrollment in AY 2019-20.

Compared to first-time students enrolling in the 2018-19 and 2019-20 academic years, first-time students enrolling at the TCUs in the final year of the grant period were significantly less likely to enroll full-time. Students in AY 2020-21 were also more likely to be older (25+) and more likely to be female (Figure 2). Many of these trends align with observations made by faculty and staff on TCU campuses. In conversations with the evaluation team, TCU leaders shared a recognition that their overall enrollment declined and that many students were opting to take fewer classes so they could fulfill childcare and elder care responsibilities, which

are common responsibilities among Native American, Alaska Native, and adult students.^{xiv} TCU leaders also shared that during the COVID-19 pandemic, non-traditional students like college employees and other community members were encouraged to enroll in courses and could have influenced the enrollment percentages of part-time and adult students. TCU students noted that the flexibility to take courses online during the pandemic, a modality not previously available, made college enrollment more accessible to students who may not have the bandwidth to enroll in-person, such as students with caretaking or other responsibilities. One student shared, “Right now some of my classes are offering Zoom and in person. This has been really nice with my son in school, when he has a sniffle, because of COVID-19 he has to stay home and I’ve been able to go to class on Zoom and not miss.”

Figure 2: Changing characteristics of first-time students during HSS implementation



Note: Characteristics with an asterisk (*) indicates differences are statistically significant at $p < .10$

The COVID-19 pandemic and the changing characteristics of first-time TCU students are important context for the story of HSS implementation at the TCUs during this period. This context affected TCU's HSS implementation schedule, including the capacity of personnel to plan for and manage whole-college reform as well as student academic and co-curricular engagement. Despite the disproportionate and devastating impact of COVID-19 for TCU faculty, staff, students, and the broader Native American and Alaska Native communities,^{xv} these institutions adapted to serve students through a remote model and continued or accelerated the planning, design, rollout, and refinement of HSS structures and processes.

Holistic Student Support Implementation Progress

HSS implementation centers on three areas of transformative change (attitude, structure, and process), and TCUs entered HSS redesign with a strong pre-existing foundation of attitudinal support for serving students holistically. To support TCUs during their HSS redesign, which focused on structures and processes, ATD created a community of practice among the TCUs and provided coaching support. (For additional detail on ATD's activities see Appendix C). The community of practice was facilitated through virtual and in person convenings where TCUs shared ideas and promising practices and had the opportunity to network. HSS coaching provided individual colleges support to help guide their HSS (re)design, planning, and implementation.

Areas of Transformative Change Defined^{xvi}

- **Attitudinal change** occurs when individuals understand their work and view work processes in new ways. Attitudinal change is evident when academic and non-academic supports are naturally and commonly understood to be one interconnected process and essential for the effectiveness of the college's teaching and learning functions. Transformative attitudinal principles include:
 - Culture, norms, institutional priorities, and understanding
- **Structural change** occurs when policies, structures, and procedures create a framework for new behaviors that improve the student experience throughout the institution. Within an integrated student support approach this might yield organizational redesign or policy changes that encourage long-term relationships between students and advisors. Transformative structural principles include:
 - Policies, resource allocation, organizational hierarchy & roles, technology infrastructure, and institutional structures
- **Process change** alters how people do their jobs and is transformative when enough individuals change their practices to ensure that large numbers of students encounter new student support interactions. For an integrated student support approach, this might involve a) perceiving advising as a function of teaching and b) drawing on case management principles to support students. Transformative process principles include:
 - Workflow protocols, communication, training & professional development, and expectations

Overall, TCUs found ATD supports useful, particularly the coaching, convenings, and resources to support peer networking, program design and implementation. Based on a survey of TCU faculty, staff, and administrators, the services TCUs perceived as “very” or “extremely” useful *related to convenings and resources* included: facilitating constructive convenings through the HSS Institute, HSS webinars, and DREAM Conference (84%), and sharing information on best practices in HSS redesign (80%). The services *related to coaching* that were perceived as “very” or “extremely” useful included: providing constructive feedback on HSS redesign planning and design (85%); providing constructive feedback on HSS redesign launch and rollout (82%); and providing project management to hold the college's guided team accountable for next steps (80%).

In the evaluation survey completed by 53 faculty, staff, and administrators across the TCUs, respondents were asked about the extent to which ATD services were aligned with TCU values and context on a scale of not at all, to a small extent, to a moderate extent, to a large extent, and to the greatest extent. Importantly, survey respondents indicated that ATD's HSS coaching was aligned with the values and priorities of TCUs to a “large extent” or to “the greatest extent” where 80% of survey respondents said

that HSS coaching reflected the TCU's historical context; 70% indicated that HSS coaching celebrated tribal language and culture; and 68% said that HSS coaching aligned with their college's focus on family and community. Respondents reported that HSS coaches did a great job reflecting the assets and needs of the TCU student populations (81% to a large or great extent); provided effective strategies for increasing support for students (74% to a large or great extent); and reflected the unique assets and needs of TCU faculty and staff (73% to a large or great extent).

To help students meet their educational, personal, and career goals, TCUs took various approaches to addressing HSS structure and process changes. This work was supported by the existing community and student-centered culture at the college and by ATD's coaching and community of practice activities. The below chart outlines six areas of implementation progress for redesigned structures and processes and associated lessons learned, reflecting progress that occurred at the majority of the participating TCUs. This chart describes “early” progress in the fall of 2021 and “established” progress in the fall of 2022 – time periods that correspond with evaluation team interviews and focus groups with faculty, staff, administrators, and students.

TCUs broadened capacity of support by creating new roles that enable staff to know students on a more personal level and to provide proactive, personalized support.

Area of Reform Identified (Fall 2019)	Early Implementation Progress (Fall 2020)	Established Implementation Progress (Fall 2021)
<p>Student Support Staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior TCU leaders supported early HSS efforts by providing resources to hire new staff to add capacity for direct student engagement. • Staff capacity to execute redesign efforts was a common challenge TCUs faced. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several schools added success coaches, retention coordinators, or mental health counselors who proactively engaged students, getting to know them on a personal level and connecting them with needed supports.

Lesson learned: Adding support staff was particularly important, as faculty, staff, and students universally shared that many students have trouble asking for help or need to be reminded of available supports during stressful times, making proactive engagement by caring staff all the more valuable.

TCUs improved orientation by focusing energy on relationship-building with incoming students and, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, moved content online for easy reference.

Area of Reform Identified (Fall 2019)	Early Implementation Progress (Fall 2020)	Established Implementation Progress (Fall 2021)
<p>Orientation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colleges redesigned their orientation to include information about the college’s culture and values, introductions to faculty and staff, and overviews of resources and student supports in addition to the typical course planning and registration content. • Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, TCUs shifted orientation reforms to online platforms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colleges launched online orientation focused on first-time students. • Online orientation focused on informational items, so that when students visited campus in person the college could focus on relationship/community building between students and with faculty/staff.

Lesson learned: Having online orientation materials allowed students to easily revisit resources or services they learned about during orientation.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, TCUs strengthened the availability and quality of online learning, giving students flexible ways to stay engaged with their courses, even when challenges get in the way.

Area of Reform Identified (Fall 2019)	Early Implementation Progress (Fall 2020)	Established Implementation Progress (Fall 2021)
<p>Hyflex, Hybrid, and Online Classes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a response to COVID-19, colleges quickly pivoted to provide instruction online, allowing students to maintain academic progress and connection to needed resources. • Prior to the pandemic, online learning was not a common method of engagement across the six TCUs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having remote options for course delivery opened access for students who weren't previously able to attend college and allowed TCUs to extend their outreach into the high schools, and to adults, parents, and part-time students. • Faculty and students became more comfortable and proficient in the remote learning environment, having overcome the initial learning curve.

Lesson learned: Hyflex, hybrid, and online classes are good solutions to provide students flexibility, especially for adult students who are balancing caregiving responsibilities. Students and faculty shared that online learning works better as a supplement than as a standard delivery mode, because of the value that in-person learning provides.

TCUs redesigned advising to share ownership between faculty and staff, and to ensure students are engaged at the right times to achieve key milestones.

Area of Reform Identified (Fall 2019)	Early Implementation Progress (Fall 2020)	Established Implementation Progress (Fall 2021)
<p>Advising Redesign</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some TCUs created paired or co-advising models where faculty and support staff share advising roles for students, which adds capacity within a faculty-led advising model. • Other TCUs streamlined program pathways to ensure advisors and students are equipped with clear guidance on academic planning. • All TCUs defined advising roles so faculty and staff know what they are responsible for, and students know who they can rely on for academic, transfer, or career guidance. • TCUs identified key touchpoints with advisors to support students along their pathway, such as during the admissions process and prior to semesterly registration for classes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a co-advising or paired advising model, the staff member helped students with the nuts and bolts of course selection and registration, and faculty served as career mentors. • TCUs found new ways to communicate program pathways by sharing educational plans with students before they first register for classes, revisiting them each semester, and storing these individual students' academic plans electronically where both students and advisors have access to monitor progress toward graduation.

Lesson learned: Paired or co-advising is a unique method for supporting students that addresses faculty/staff capacity. Requiring touchpoints with advisors and defining the content of these touch points (e.g., academic advising, career planning) was important for getting students the information they need at the time in which it can help them make informed decisions.

TCUs implemented and leveraged new technology that allows faculty and staff to keep track of student progress more easily and allows leaders to make decisions based on large-scale trends in student demographics or academic outcomes.

Area of Reform Identified (Fall 2019)	Early Implementation Progress (Fall 2020)	Established Implementation Progress (Fall 2021)
Implementing New Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TCUs were in the early phases of adopting and implementing new technologies such as student information and early alert systems. • Colleges had not yet codified processes or implemented standard operating procedures associated with new technology. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TCUs that implemented new student information systems leveraged these systems to provide improved data infrastructure and capacity and used these data to guide decision making. • TCUs that implemented early alert platforms created new processes for communication between faculty and staff around financial aid, first week and midterm attendance, and student grades and grade-related alerts.

Lesson learned: Streamlining, simplifying, and automating processes (e.g., early alerts, admissions, course registration) enable more efficient and targeted outreach to students.

TCUs bolstered students' basic needs supports to allow students to navigate personal and academic challenges and stay on track to achieve their goals.

Area of Reform Identified (Fall 2019)	Early Implementation Progress (Fall 2020)	Established Implementation Progress (Fall 2021)
Supports as Retention Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TCUs were well-equipped to provide students support during the pandemic because of the prior basic needs resources that were already in place, including access to emergency funds as well as direct assistance for food, housing, transportation, and childcare. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the influx of COVID relief funds (from HEERF and The College Fund), TCUs loaned laptops and Wi-Fi hotspots to students, and offered free tuition and scholarships for students looking to enroll in college.

Lesson learned: TCUs leveraged these resources to support retention by allowing students to keep the laptops and receive continued scholarship funds if they successfully passed their courses.

During the Serving Native Students with Holistic Student Supports initiative, TCUs targeted grant resources to strengthen their capacity to support students and to design and integrate holistic student supports to effectively identify and meet students' academic and personal needs. When designed and implemented with intention, these types of systematic changes benefit students who are historically underserved by mainstream higher education institutions (e.g., from low-income families, of adult status, of color, with dependents), and who make up a growing population of students represented across these schools.^{xvii}

Resilience of TCUs in Supporting Students to Maintain their Academic Momentum

To provide early insights into the impact of the HSS redesign efforts in increasing student credential completion, TCU leadership focused on supporting students' progress on early momentum metrics (e.g., credit completion thresholds, enrollment in Math and English courses, and retention). These metrics were selected in partnership with the TCUs and based on evidence that academic progress

made within a student's first year is strongly associated with positive longer-term outcomes.^{xviii}

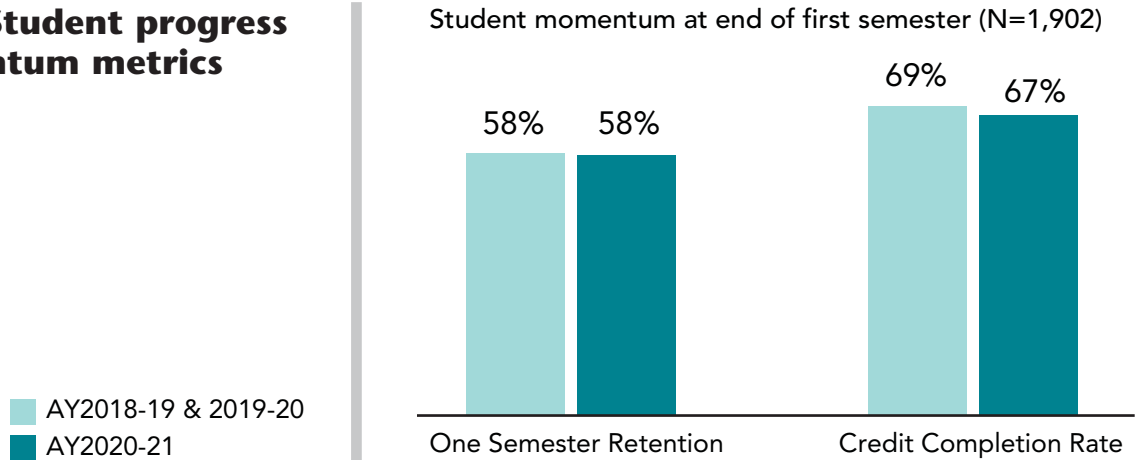
Examining these momentum metrics over the course of the grant period suggests that HSS redesign efforts, coupled with TCU's student-centered culture, provided a critical foundation for students to maintain academic momentum during the pandemic. As displayed in Figure 3, **first-time students enrolling in the final year of the grant period (AY 2020-21) – in the midst of a pandemic – made similar progress on a variety of momentum metrics compared to students first enrolling in academic years 2018-19 or 2019-20.** That these outcomes remained consistent is a testament to the TCU's efforts to support students as they navigated the effects of the pandemic. The relative stability of student outcomes within TCUs despite the pandemic is notable given declines in public 2-year student outcomes in recent years at the national level.^{3xix} (One-semester and one-year retention rates disaggregated by student socio-demographic and enrollment characteristics are provided in Appendix B.)

*Nueta Hidatsa
Salmish College*

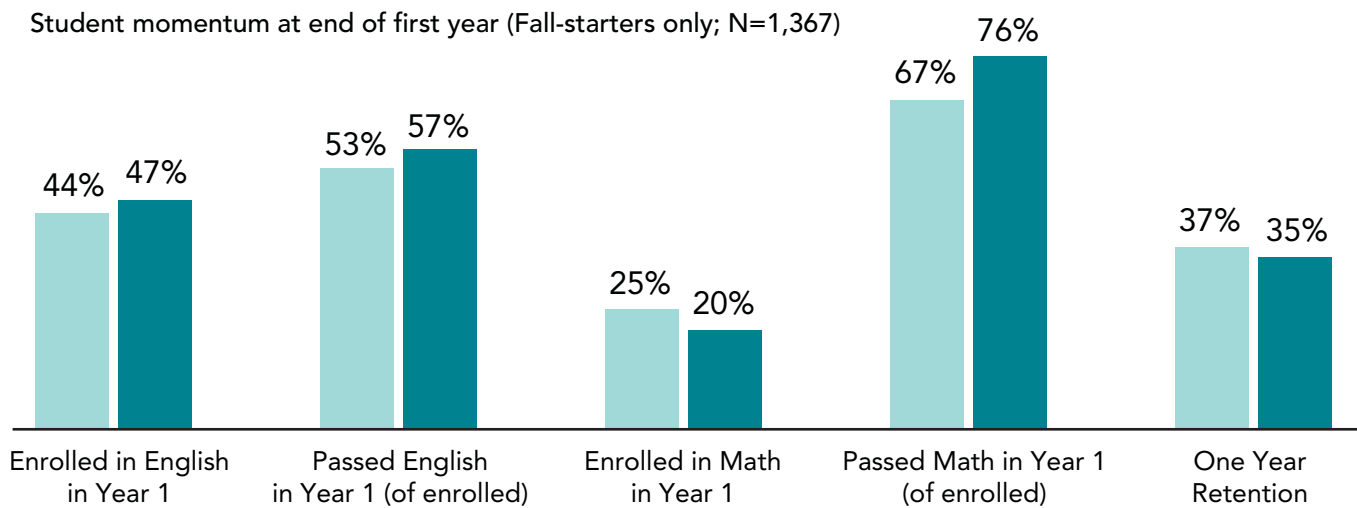


³ A study by the College Board points to a 5% decrease in one-year retention for students enrolling at public 2-yr colleges in Fall 2019 - whose first year of college was interrupted by Covid-19 - compared to retention rates for the Fall 2018 cohort of students in these colleges (Howell et. al, 2021)

Figure 3: Student progress on momentum metrics



Student momentum at end of first year (Fall-starters only; N=1,367)



Note: Progress on metrics at the end of students' first semester include fall and spring-start students while progress at the end of the first year is restricted to fall-start students as we cannot follow spring-start students in AY2020-21 for a full year. Enrollment in English and Math in year 1 is restricted to associate degree seeking students because shorter term credentials do not often require these courses.

The capacity improvements to staffing, orientation, advising, online learning, technology, and student supports outlined in this section were bolstered by the TCUs' student-centered culture, and supported by ATD's community of practice and coaching activities, ensuring that TCUs will enter the post-pandemic period with stronger institutional structures and processes to support students. The increased capacity and technology supporting data collection and

analysis by TCUs resulted in increased awareness of the academic outcomes for first-time students and their varied educational experiences and journeys. These capacity improvements and data informed understanding will continue to enhance students' academic experience and aid in the continued improvement of students' early momentum toward credential attainment.

Evaluative Statement 2: It is important to know the experiences of faculty and staff during the HSS redesign process so we can address any structural, process, or attitudinal concerns



Fond du Lac Tribal and
Community College

Key Observation: Throughout the grant period, faculty and staff were resolute in their student-centered approach, strengthened their academic and student supports collaboration, and maintained an emphasis on “mutual care and professional courtesy” in the face of pandemic challenges.

This section focuses on the experiences and perspectives of faculty and staff during HSS implementation. The observations and quotes below come from interviews and focus groups with TCU faculty, staff, and administrators.

During HSS redesign, TCU faculty and staff adapted their practices to a pandemic context and leveraged new data to better engage students. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, faculty and staff adjusted their work hours to accommodate students with jobs, those who got sick, or those who had caregiving responsibilities, and by helping students work through personal challenges in a role of “teachers who act as social workers.”

Students shared that they relied on trusted faculty and staff to process pain and trauma many faced both before and during the pandemic. Faculty and staff were more deliberate in the ways they reached out to students, texting with students because they “always get a response texting, more than email, and more than a call,” and using social media to reach students. Faculty and staff demonstrated a deep commitment to meeting students’ needs and adjusted their approach to supporting students in a remote environment to remain “professional, but also accessible.”

“We are more deliberate about what we are doing and how we are doing it. We were pretty good at supporting students anyway, but it is important to understand that for students it is their first time [in college] and it is important that [the support] we give them helps them reach their goal.”

— TCU staff

TCU leaders shared that the ability to use data was “key in all [of the HSS efforts]” because it gave decision-makers the “capacity to see and understand student needs more deeply.” Through new student information systems, faculty and staff were able to better tailor their support for students. However, there was recognition that the adoption of new technology does not always equate to having better data, with one administrator sharing “we tend to be

data rich and information poor.” This observation is an indication that while faculty and staff worked tirelessly to continue serving students in the middle of a pandemic, there were challenges in translating newly available data into timely action.

Faculty and staff fine-tuned collaboration between departments and are improving how they communicate with each other in a spirit of “personal care and professional courtesy.”

Faculty and staff across the TCUs agreed that while their relationships have always been strong, HSS redesign made “communication way better than it used to be.” Many report that faculty and staff “are less siloed than they have been in the past because they’ve broken down [divisional] barriers.” Faculty and staff attribute improvements in collaboration to HSS implementation teams comprised of “groups of people from different departments who make decisions on how to reach more students and help them succeed.” These teams, that one college calls “success huddles,” represent an organized effort to examine a broad range of student supports, and as cross-functional teams, it is “easier for [faculty and staff] to coordinate efforts and help to retain students.” Faculty and staff acknowledged that there are “some places that still need fine tuning” to collaborate better, such as who will reach out to a student prompted by an early alert but feel like “concerns [they] raise are being heard by colleagues in other departments.”

Just as new technology helped TCUs to better reach and serve their students, improved data systems also helped to further strengthen communication and collaboration among campus personnel. New early alert technologies allowed TCUs to increase and improve communication by leveraging the software’s communication, student attendance, and grade features to “bridge the gap between the instructor, the staff member, and the student.” These technologies provided faculty and staff more insight into

“The relationship building between departments is so important for how we do our [HSS] work. Faculty are the best at academic advising, that is their area and their expertise, and student services supports them. We have the opportunity to be teammates, it’s not about establishing relationships, now it’s time to maintain the relationships.”

— TCU administrator

“why students are not in class” and “not allow [students] to fly under the radar.” With this added insight, faculty and staff collaborated to make sure there was consistency and clarity in providing support for students. Importantly, technology provided an avenue to keep all stakeholders informed about student cases. One staff member shared, “I get responses from faculty who say I really appreciate your input on what happened with this student.” While faculty and staff appreciate the role of technology on increasing and streamlining communication, they also acknowledge capacity challenges for personnel to address alerts raised through the system and the importance of clarifying and refining the process for “who responds to what alerts.”

TCU faculty and staff remained steadfast in their support for students during HSS redesign, focusing most of their energy on structural and process-related changes.

Of the HSS changes outlined in the previous section, implementing new technology and advising redesign resulted in changes to faculty and staff roles that had the greatest effect on their day-to-day experiences and to support structures and process changes. One faculty member shared “My role has changed quite a bit. I used to just help students with computers, now my position is focused on the

“There are behind the scenes challenges as well. There’s turnover in positions and [key departments are] under someone new all the time. Hiring someone with a commitment to stay here is important. The college is doing what we can to move forward. [We] keep working hard and [are] keeping students in our vision line.”

— TCU faculty

first-year student. My whole mindset is not toward graduation, it’s how do I get [the student] to be successful this semester.”

Most TCUs implemented either a new student information system, early alert technology, or both during HSS redesign which was “a lot of work, and a learning process, to implement the technology but everyone is getting used to it.” Technology vendors provided some training for faculty and staff to bridge technological and informational gaps. Vendors often took a train-the-trainer approach that some faculty and staff report “didn’t work well,” because the training

did not prepare campus staff to be proficient enough with the technology to then train their colleagues; as a result, when colleges “rolled out [the technology], no one knew what was happening.” TCUs supplemented this external support with campus-specific training to help faculty and staff find the information they needed and to more effectively navigate the new technology. Colleges are also “refining [the technology] to make it more effective.”

Faculty and staff shared that technology also streamlined campus structures and processes. Implementing new technology illuminated college processes (e.g., admissions) that can be streamlined or distributed more efficiently among staff. With this new information on students that is readily available through new technology systems, TCUs reduced the number of steps for students or adjusted staff responsibilities “so that if a financial aid counselor is busy, no problem, the registrar will greet the student and give them basic information about financial aid and next steps.” While creating efficiencies for some staff, the implementation of new technology also raised capacity issues for small IT departments who were addressing system “glitches” and fielding faculty and staff questions while learning the technology themselves and maintaining

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other college systems. IT staff shared, “we were not prepared to increase our workload by 1000%.”

Paired or co-advising was a second area of structure and process change that had widespread effects on faculty and staff’s experience as their roles, responsibilities, and expectations related to advising shifted. The widely supported decision to move from a faculty advising model to a shared advising model was an effort to provide additional capacity for faculty to focus on career conversations with students, because “[faculty] advisors didn’t have time to do it all.” One faculty member stated that “it got to the point that all I was doing was counseling.” Paired or co-advising also increased accessibility to advising for students as faculty have periods of unavailability (e.g., in the summer). Through paired or co-advising, faculty and staff collaborated on “advising handbooks” that are “guides for how to advise a new student, returning students, and transfer students.” These guides help ensure high quality and consistent advising occurs across paired advisors or co-advisors.

In summary, faculty and staff demonstrated a strong commitment to the necessary changes resulting from HSS redesign, yet TCUs are facing personnel burnout and staff turnover – a challenge that is especially pronounced given the remote locations of the colleges. Despite challenges, faculty and staff are refining their communication with students and each other, collaborating to further break down divisional silos, and remaining resolute to their mission of being student-centered and community-oriented as they redesign campus structures and processes.

“I think our advising processes are getting better and we are staying up to date with students. Before, students meandered through their path – maybe they switched programs. Now they have more direction and [an academic] pathway because there are more advisors in general [to support them].”

— TCU faculty



White Earth Tribal and Community College

Evaluative Statement 3: It is important to know which activity or lesson (TCU HSS reform areas) had the most impact for students and how so that we can replicate its success and serve more students



Ilisagvik College

Key Observation: Student voices were further elevated during colleges' HSS redesign, making students feel empowered by and connected to their campus communities.

This section focuses on how the student experience at participating TCUs looks and feels different because of HSS redesign efforts. The observations and quotes below come from interviews and focus groups with new and returning students, TCU faculty, staff, and administrators.

Students largely feel supported because TCUs are engaging them early through orientation and advising redesign; however, students can be hesitant to ask for help if they haven't made a personal connection, underscoring the importance of relationship development and proactive outreach by campus faculty and staff.

Students shared that "the college is really supportive, and every staff member is willing to talk and support [us] emotionally and mentally." Students pointed to their college's open-door

policy as one important way that faculty create this supportive environment. One student shared, "Faculty are always talking about how their doors are open. [They are] willing to help, and if they don't know [how to help] they will send you to the right person."

Faculty and staff echoed their commitment to supporting students as part and parcel to the mission of TCUs: "[We] are a TCU, [we] take holistic care of the students." Developing personal relationships between students and trusted faculty or staff members is critical, given that students can be hesitant to ask for help without this connection, and may feel an associated sense of vulnerability or shame. One administrator reflected that students may need to be reminded of these supports by trusted personnel during stressful situations when they may not remember what is available to help them. Students reported feeling supported, because TCUs are building relationships with them through early and proactive engagement during orientation, and by requiring students to meet with an advisor one-on-one before officially

registering for classes. Additionally, student intake surveys are now used to identify students' needs and ensure campus resources are available to address these needs. As one student noted, when trusted faculty and staff "reach out and are proactive, [it] really helps [students] be a little more comfortable asking for help," making it easier to connect them with available supports.

Student voices were included intentionally in decisions about changes to structures and processes through HSS redesign that incorporated students' experience with orientation and on early alert software implementation. As small campuses, TCUs have regularly garnered feedback from students anecdotally, and through HSS redesign, the incorporation of student voices became more formalized. Faculty, staff, and administrators shared they value students' feedback based on their experiences, reporting that they "take the advice of their students" and share back with students the changes that were made because of this feedback. For example, one TCU staff member shared "I'm hearing 'Have we asked students about this?' more often this year than three years ago." At another college, staff reported that they thought they knew what student success looked like, but when "[the college] asked students what their definition of success was - [because] as administrators we think about retention and graduation - [students] told us that success was about being a role model, making a difference in their community. Now we're including their [definition of] success in our core curriculum." Including student voices in HSS redesign helped foster a shared understanding with faculty and staff of what students need. By asking students for their feedback, one leader reported, "[we have] more understanding of who our students are. Are they caregivers, do they have housing insecurity? We didn't know these things before."

"Students will support what they helped to create. Bringing them to us in a shared governance way is important. Students are powerful, and they give us honest, unfiltered versions of the truth. I'm excited about getting students at the table. It has the potential to be extremely helpful to us."

— TCU administrator

Many TCUs embedded student feedback loops into structures and processes connected to orientation, an HSS reform area that was moved to an online platform due to the pandemic. When TCUs launched their new student orientation, "[faculty, staff, and students] loved that it was responsive to student needs because students were involved in the creation." One student described how they felt after orientation as "really good, I got to talk to an instructor who made me feel like [the college] knows they have students who need more help." Students also shared they were asked for feedback during the orientation, and they felt valued because their opinions were included. Orientation staff reported they "have check points [during orientation] where they ask students to share what was useful and what they would change." Staff then "looked at the data and made changes for [the next year]." Students feel valued by this inclusive process because their opinions were sought out and acted upon. TCUs also sought student voices in the process of implementing new early alert software. One administrator shared "We offered student focus groups to get their input on the messages students would receive from [the early alert software]. We asked them 'What does this message sound like to you? How do you think you will use the software?' As we think about rolling the software out to students, we will refer back to this input."

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, students adjusted to online learning and welcomed the flexibility that hyflex, hybrid, and online classes provided, but many are relieved to return to in-person class.

COVID-19 had many impacts for students. One major change was the transition to hyflex, hybrid, and online delivery of courses, which students shared have benefits and drawbacks. A major benefit to the online delivery of courses is that this mode offers flexibility for students who might have to otherwise miss class given other commitments, which is especially true for students with caregiving responsibilities. One student shared “I think they’ve done well at supporting students during COVID-19. A lot of teachers have been understanding with absences, so when some of us may have not succeeded [because we were] absent, [faculty] worked with us to make sure we can [attend class online].” Students also shared some of the drawbacks of these new delivery modes because “it is harder to concentrate and study at home” and “it is hard to keep personal communication [with faculty] through email and Zoom.” Faculty agreed that online courses are more difficult because “anytime there is Zoom the interaction is gone and [they] don’t know if the student is actually [in class].” While TCUs are “getting better at offering classes online” and students recognize the benefits and drawback of online classes, most students shared that “online learning should be used in special circumstances and not relied on as a norm.”

Students are motivated to be back on campus and reengage in the TCU campus community.

When the TCUs closed because of the COVID-19 pandemic, faculty and staff leaned into their community-oriented mission and support for students. One staff member shared, “When on shutdown, we were reaching out to students and wanted them to know we are here. We were making food baskets and taking them to [students’] homes. What I love about [the college] is that everyone is here for our students and is willing to make an effort to

help out.” Before the pandemic, TCUs “used to have feasts on campus and college powwows,” and according to one faculty member, “[students] depend on that interaction.” Students shared that these “events feel like more personal touches and haven’t been happening [due to the pandemic].” These shared community and cultural events are an important part of campus life, and across interviews, faculty, staff, and students described how their TCUs are a “beautiful refuge for students.” Many of these out-of-class activities offered by TCUs embed local Indigenous language and culture for their students and for the larger community. One faculty member shared “Family is paramount, so I invite students’ families to join cultural teachings.” This community-feel embedded in the academic culture is a unique asset of TCUs that creates a strong web of connection and meaning within campus spaces.

TCUs also provide unique wellness supports for students to further instill the Indigenous language and culture at the college. One faculty member shared that “the wellbeing of our students is the core priority set by the President.” Through this priority, students can take advantage of counselors hired by the college, yoga and meditation rooms, vitamin infusions, tea bombs, and mini massages. At one college they created wellness kits with sage, sweet grass, and a prayer for students to take home. Though COVID-19 has been a challenging experience, students, faculty, and staff are finding way to continue connecting as a campus community.

Students are increasingly empowered to take ownership of their academic journey through the TCUs’ advising redesign.

HSS advising redesign allows students greater ownership of their education plans by more proactively connecting them with faculty for conversations about their academic, career, and personal goals. One student shared “We get an education plan now, the full thing, instead of picking and guessing which classes to take, and we talk with our advisors every semester.”

Students value the ability to connect with their advisor; as one student described it, “I can ask my advisor questions and they give me options to decide where I want to go, which is helpful.”

One TCU leader noted, “before HSS, [colleges] didn’t realize that having one advisor was an issue because the advisor wasn’t always available.” This realization led to TCUs adopting a paired or co-advisor model with a staff member working with students on course planning and registration topics and faculty discussing more career-related topics. Through paired or co-advising, students are “getting an advisor right away so students immediately have their person, and the relationship building is starting right away.” One administrator commented, “I have students come to me more than I ever have instead of having to reach out, they come right to my office and will ask me about things I don’t even do. We should be knowledgeable about everything so we can refer students to where they need to go.” Students are pushing for both of their advisors to help them further. One student shared, “we only have two advisors and so [for] many students [in the program], it is hard for them to keep track of everyone. It would be nice if they were like ‘we see you are on track for completing, this is what you need to do next.’”

“The amount of thought that goes into every student, I don’t know how to explain it. TCUs are very personal; we are small and every student matters. Every student is a story and those stories matter. The shift [because of COVID-19] was stark and hard. We [wanted] to stay engaged in students’ lives and provide more assistance, computers, hotspots, [and other tools for] distance delivery.”

— TCU staff

In summary, through the eyes of TCU students, HSS changes brought meaningful and lasting improvements. These improvements are manifest through a greater focus on relationship development and proactive engagement, an increasing inclusion of student voices in campus decision-making, acclimation to online learning necessitated by the pandemic, reconnection to the campus community, and empowerment in terms of planning and progression toward their goals.



Stone Child College

Challenges, Solutions, and Supports to Empower TCUs to Continue Innovating



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TCUs are exceptional at serving students through their student-centered and community-oriented approach, and their institutional missions served as a strong foundation for their HSS redesign efforts. There are **four key lessons** of progress based on the TCUs' HSS redesign efforts. The first is the importance of leveraging HSS redesign to **prioritize proactive outreach and relationship development with students**, using new technologies and paired or co-advising models to provide students with additional support. A second key lesson from TCUs' HSS implementation is the importance of **empowering students to be co-owners in their educational journey**, including and elevating student voices to improve college supports, and arming students with the knowledge and tools they need to make informed decisions about their personal, educational, and career goals. A third lesson is that in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, TCUs **provided students with flexible, virtual learning methods to accommodate their caretaking and other responsibilities, while prioritizing a return to the in-person experience in which students say they learn better, feel more connected to the college, and can more easily build meaningful relationships with peers, faculty, and staff.**

Finally, **coaching supports and regular facilitation of this network of TCUs by ATD were useful services** that provided TCUs meaningful feedback on HSS redesign planning, launch, and rollout, and connected the colleges with one another as peer institutions to share best practices. TCUs expressed that support for their engagement in the ATD network and with HSS coaches contributed to their progress. The coaching for individual colleges, and the community of practice created as a venue for colleges to share ideas, promising practices, and network, were reported by TCU leaders as the most useful for their HSS redesign efforts. When TCU faculty, staff, and administrators were asked how ATD's HSS services could be improved, they offered the following recommendations: "more coaching check-ins," "prioritize in-person meetings (when possible)," "provide forums for faculty to learn and share ideas about HSS," and "more opportunities for TCUs to learn from one another." These recommendations for more services around coaching and convenings reinforce that connecting TCUs in peer networks and providing constructive and critical feedback on whole-college transformation plans and implementation are the most valuable supports provided by ATD.

During the grant period and beyond, TCUs faced daunting challenges related to maintaining and growing faculty, staff, and administrator capacity; developing high quality data and capacity to utilize it; expanding reliable access to internet and necessary technology; and preserving Indigenous language and culture. These challenges were met with creative solutions by TCUs and can benefit from additional support. Policymakers, intermediaries, and philanthropic organizations can learn from the ways TCUs were supported through this grant by ATD's HSS coaching, convenings, networking, and subgrant funding to continue innovating in the following areas:

Faculty, Staff, and Administration

Capacity. TCU personnel are the heart and soul of students' college experience. They ensure that the feeling of community is embedded within the college's academic culture. During HSS redesign, TCUs experienced significant turnover in faculty, staff, and administration due to retirements and difficulty recruiting and retaining new staff who would remain as long-term members of the community. As a result, key leadership turnover and faculty vacancies put greater strain on existing faculty and staff to maintain college operations while improving the student experience through HSS. TCUs took many innovative approaches to addressing this challenge, including using subgrant funds and coaching support from ATD to "overlap" outgoing and incoming personnel to maintain institutional knowledge; funding "homegrown" community job programs where community members are sponsored to receive post-baccalaureate education with the understanding that they will return to the college to work; providing for faculty and staff wellbeing through resources like smudging rooms and potlucks; and hiring counselors, social workers, and coaches to provide support for students and alleviate pressure on faculty and staff.^{xx} These innovations can benefit from resources that provide sufficient, sustained, and flexible funding for positions where there is

turnover to ensure overlap between new and outgoing people, for homegrown programs, for new positions, for faculty and staff wellness, and for professional development around student success and teaching and learning. Funding for staff positions can also benefit TCUs so they can direct grant resources to where they are most needed.

Data Quality and Capacity. Through this grant and building upon existing support from ATD, TCUs adopted new technologies that improved their ability to systematically collect and use data. During colleges' transition to new student information systems and in responding to data requests from the evaluation team, data quality issues were revealed as were colleges' limited staff capacity to access and query the requested data. These issues stemmed from long-standing inconsistencies in the ways data were collected and recorded within colleges across departments, and having small numbers of staff, often one or two people, responsible for all aspects of the data lifecycle. Grant resources, ATD coaches, and support from the evaluation team helped colleges identify these issues, provided TCUs technical assistance to remedy data quality problems, and added capacity to help TCUs use data efficiently and effectively. For TCUs to increase their capacity to collect, analyze, and use data, additional financial support is needed for developing and implementing accurate and efficient data systems, providing professional development on standardized processes to collect the data which feed those systems, and hiring ample staff to analyze and share that data.

Internet and Technology. TCU campuses are internet and technology hubs that support students and the community; however, there are systemic inequities that make this service difficult because of the digital-divide as TCU campuses are in remote locations and often lack reliable access to affordable internet, cell phone service, or computers.^{xxi} The COVID-19 pandemic provided an influx of resources through the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund and

The College Fund that TCUs used to provide students, faculty, and staff with laptops and hotspots. TCUs were strategic in deploying these resources by using them as student retention mechanisms yet these resources were temporary. For TCUs to serve future cohorts of students with these digital supports, it is important to find ways for codifying pandemic-level funding as ongoing to provide sustained resources for IT support as well as support for larger internet and technology infrastructure improvements in these communities.

Preservation of Indigenous Language and Culture. TCUs serve as a place to bring together and support communities beyond the faculty, staff, and students on campus. TCUs host community events and are an important part of educating, preserving, and passing on tribal histories, languages, values, and traditions. During the COVID-19 pandemic, TCUs worked to replace these typically in-person community

events with drive-through versions, providing participants with items to take home. Additionally, with the support of ATD, TCUs had new opportunities to network, collaborate, and share ideas with each other, building on their “natural ability to work together” to support their students, communities, and further their mission of preserving Native language and culture. For TCUs to sustain the progress observed during the Serving Native Students with Holistic Student Supports initiative, these cultural events and practices should be seen as essential elements of the tribal college mission and as the foundation for effective tribal college education. Put simply, intentionally funding and supporting the ways in which TCUs serve as a gathering point for cultural activities and preservers of tribal language and culture with similar priority to curriculum and student services is an equitable and culturally affirming practice.

Ilisagvik College



ENDNOTES

- ⁱ Data USA: Tribal Colleges. <https://datausa.io/profile/university/tribal-colleges>
- ⁱⁱ Public Law 95-471. <https://www.congress.gov/95/statute/STATUTE-92/STATUTE-92-Pg1325.pdf>
- ⁱⁱⁱ Title III Parts A and F. <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/03/04/2021-04447/eligibility-designations-and-applications-for-waiving-eligibility-requirements-programs-under-parts>
- ^{iv} Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/103rd-congress/house-bill/4806>
- ^v AIHEC. <http://aihec.org>
- ^{vi} American Indian College Fund. <https://collegefund.org>
- ^{vii} Tribal College Journal. <https://tribalcollegejournal.org>
- ^{viii} White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Native Americans and Strengthening Tribal Colleges and Universities. U.S. Department of Education. <https://sites.ed.gov/whiaiane/tribes-tcus/tribal-colleges-and-universities/>
- ^{ix} Native American Hand Games. <https://www.nps.gov/articles/hand-games.htm>
- ^x ATD Holistic Student Support Toolkit adapted and contextualized for Tribal Colleges and Universities (2019)
- ^{xi} Drew Curtis, Sarah Deal, & Derek Price (2020). Achieving the Dream Holistic Student Support Services Continuous Improvement Evaluation Report: Takeaways from a two-year continuous improvement evaluation of the postsecondary HSS redesign process and ATD's HSS services. DVP-PRAXIS LTD. Indianapolis, IN.
- ^{xii} According to the Community College Research Center (Belfield, Jenkins, & Fink, 2019), early momentum metrics are measures that can be used to gauge whether college reforms are improving student outcomes. Research suggests that progress on these momentum metrics are positively associated with longer-term outcomes like credential completion and transfer rates (Jenkins & Bailey, 2017).
- ^{xiii} AIHEC Indigenous Evaluation Framework (2009). American Indian Higher Education Consortium
- ^{xiv} Parents in college by the numbers. (2020). The Aspen Institute and The Institute for Women's Policy Research.
- ^{xv} See for example: Victoria O'Keefe & Melissa Walls. (2021). *How we rise: indigenous communities demonstrate innovation and strength despite unequal losses during COVID-19*. The Brookings Institution.; Arrazola J, Masiello MM, Joshi S, et al. COVID-19 Mortality Among American Indian and Alaska Native Persons — 14 States, January–June 2020. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2020;69:1853–1856. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6949a3>
- ^{xvi} ATD's Holistic Student Support Toolkit adapted and contextualized for Tribal Colleges and Universities (2019)
- ^{xvii} Melinda Karp. (2013). *What we know about non-academic supports*. Community College Research Center, New York, NY.
- ^{xviii} Belfield, C., Jenkins, D., and Fink, J. (2019). Early momentum metrics: Leading indicators for community college improvement. Research Brief. Community College Research Center. July 20
- ^{xix} Howell, J., Hurwitz, M., Ma, J., Pender, M., Perfetto, G., Wyatt, J., & Young, L. (2021). College Enrollment and Retention in the Era of Covid. The College Board.
- ^{xx} See for example: Chippewa Heritage. Four Sacred Medicines. <http://www.ewebtribe.com/NACulture/articles/smudging.htm>
- ^{xxi} Katherine Mangan. (2022). The Cost of Connection. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. April 22.

Appendix A: Evaluation Design and Approach

The Serving Native Students with Holistic Student Supports (SNAHSS) evaluation was informed by the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) Indigenous Evaluation Framework and designed as a participatory and culturally responsive study.⁴ The evaluation team engaged with the six TCU leadership teams to co-develop the evaluation plan and to collaboratively interpret evaluative observations situated within the colleges' culture, values, and context.

The goal of the evaluation was to tell the story of student experiences across the six TCUs participating in the HSS initiative, highlighting the key capacities that empower TCUs to serve students holistically. To accomplish this, the evaluation team in partnership with the TCUs co-created qualitative evaluative statements and identified quantitative momentum metrics to guide data collection activities and analyses and to assess holistic student support implementation progress across the course of the grant (see Figure A1).

Qualitative Data

Qualitative data collected through virtual and in-person focus groups and interviews with administrators, faculty, staff, and students centered on the three evaluative statements that the TCUs identified as most salient to their HSS redesign work:

ES1: We will track our HSS implementation to learn how it unfolded, what changes occurred, and what influenced changes.

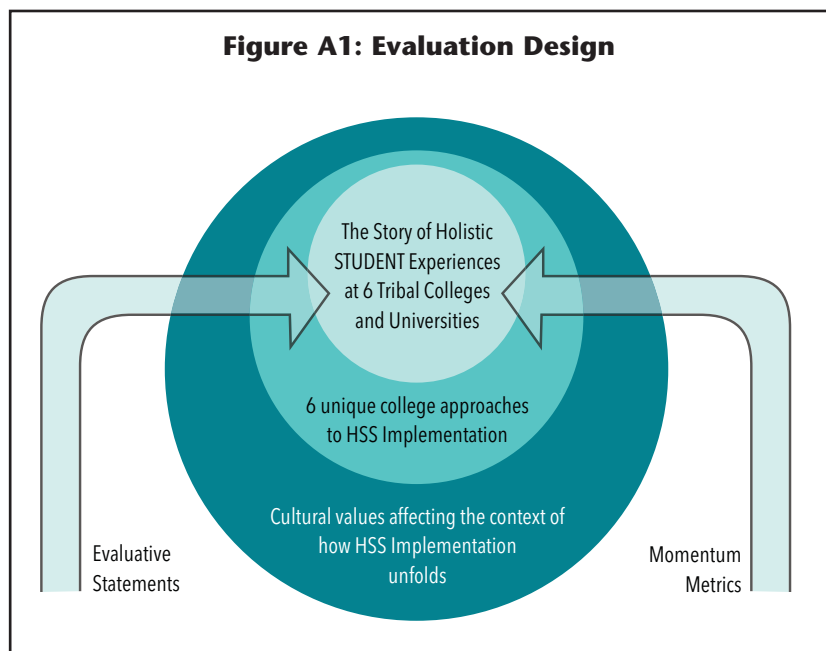
ES2: It is important to know the experiences of faculty and staff during the HSS redesign process so we can address any structural, process, or attitudinal concerns.

ES3: It is important to know which HSS activity or lesson (TCU HSS reform areas) had the most impact for students and how so that we can replicate its success and serve more students.

To understand how HSS redesign unfolded and how faculty, staff, and students experienced these changes, the evaluation team conducted virtual 'site visit' engagements with the six TCUs between September and November 2020. During these virtual site visits, the evaluation team engaged with 127 faculty, staff, administrators, and students across the six TCUs.⁵ Following these engagements, the evaluation team shared feedback memos with the TCUs and debriefed on our observations; these memos were then shared with ATD.

To understand how HSS redesign progressed towards the end of the grant, the evaluation team conducted five in-person site visits and one virtual engagement between September and November 2021. During this second round of engagements, the evaluation team held conversations with 126 faculty, staff, administrators, and students across the six TCUs. Following our engagement with each college, the evaluation team offered to reconvene the colleges' core team to share our

Figure A1: Evaluation Design



⁴ AIHEC Indigenous Evaluation Framework (2009). American Indian Higher Education Consortium

⁵ Administrators may also serve in faculty roles as they wear 'multiple hats' at the colleges.

observations and reflect with the college on the meaning of these observations.

Interviews and focus groups with faculty and staff explored HSS implementation progress in the context of the evaluative statements, including successes and challenges, and considered the influence of COVID-19. During the engagement with students, conversation topics focused on understanding the student experience and, specifically, their interactions with campus resources and supports.

Quantitative Data

Quantitative data collection activities and analyses were designed to understand characteristics of TCU students and to examine trends in enrollment and early momentum metrics among first-time students both before and during implementation of HSS redesign efforts (Fall 2018 through Spring 2021). To measure changes in student progress, the evaluation team and the TCUs agreed upon a set of early momentum metrics that are correlated with longer-term attainment outcomes:⁶

- College-Level Course Enrollment and Success: enrollment in and completion of college-level English and math.
- Momentum Credit Earned: earning specified credit thresholds in the first semester and in the first year.
- Credit Completion Rate: the proportion of credits attempted that were completed.
- Term-to-Term Retention: enrolling in the fall or spring term after initial fall or spring enrollment.
- Year-to-Year Retention: enrolling in the fall (or spring) term one year after initial fall (or spring) enrollment.

At two points in time (fall 2020 and fall 2021), colleges securely transferred de-identified student-level administrative data for matriculated students in credit-bearing courses between the Fall 2018 through Fall 2021 terms. The administrative data included student demographics such as gender;

race and ethnicity; financial aid receipt; and academic information such as program enrolled, course enrollment and completion, and credits attempted and completed. Colleges were also asked to request the National Student Clearinghouse StudentTracker return file to calculate persistence rates for first-time students; return files were transferred to the evaluation team to merge with the administrative data for analysis.

The analyses presented in this report includes 1,902 first-time students, as identified by five of the six colleges (one college was unable to provide data), who first enrolled in the fall or spring terms of the study-period (Fall 2018 through Fall 2021). All first-time students are included in one-semester outcomes. Outcomes measured at the end of students' first year are restricted to students who can be followed for one year and thus exclude Spring 2021 first-time students.

Community Evaluation Reviews

Key to the design of this participatory evaluation were a series of Community Evaluation Reviews (CERs) which allowed for collective review and sensemaking of evaluation observations. The first CER occurred in February 2020 at ATD's annual DREAM conference. The evaluation team facilitated a conversation with the TCU leadership teams that resulted in the co-created evaluative statements and early momentum metrics as well as consensus around the evaluation plan.

The second and third CERs were held virtually in February 2021 and April 2022, respectively, with members of the TCUs' HSS teams as well as coaches and HSS leaders from ATD. During these reviews, the evaluation team shared initiative-wide observations pulled from the qualitative and quantitative analyses. These CERs were an opportunity for TCU members to provide feedback and context related to our observations, in the context of their specific college experience, and to share lessons learned through their HSS efforts. Context and insights shared by TCUs during each CER were incorporated into both the implementation memo and this final report.

⁶ Belfield, C., Jenkins, D., and Fink, J. (2019). Early momentum metrics: Leading indicators for community college improvement. Research Brief. *Community College Research Center*. July 20

Appendix B: TCU Student Retention Trends

Increasing student retention was a central goal of HSS reform efforts. As with all momentum metrics, retention rates are commonly used indicators of student progress towards credential attainment. In this Appendix, retention outcomes are explored by key student characteristics, assessing any differences in outcomes among student groups. In addition, trends over time in retention outcomes are examined between students first enrolling in the baseline period prior to robust implementation (AY 2018-19 and AY 2019-20) and students enrolling in the final year of the grant when HSS redesign efforts were more firmly established (AY 2020-21). Analyses include 1,902 first-time students enrolled during the study-period (Fall 2018 through Fall 2021) and are limited to five of six participating TCUs given data availability issues at one college.

Retention Outcomes by Key Student Characteristics

Across all first-time students enrolled between Fall 2018 and Spring 2021, 58% remained enrolled in the subsequent semester and 35% remained enrolled one year later (Table B1). Students who first enrolled in a fall term were more likely than spring-start students to remain enrolled in the subsequent term (63% vs. 45%) and one year later (37% vs. 31%); additionally, retention rates were significantly higher for women, financial aid recipients, and students enrolled full-time. Notably, Native American/Alaska Native students were more likely to remain enrolled one year after their first

enrollment when compared to Non-Native American/Alaska Native students (37% vs. 33%).

As Tribal Colleges and Universities, many students often apply for and receive scholarships through the American Indian College Fund. Scholarships recipients are primarily Native American or Alaska Native who are largely expected to enroll as full-time students. As scholarship recipients, students have access to additional resources including personalized coaching. As previously noted, students who received either The College Fund scholarship or the Pell-grant were more likely than students who did not receive either of these forms of financial aid to remain enrolled in the subsequent semester. To further explore the benefit of The College Fund scholarship receipt, we examined differences in retention rates between Native American or Alaska Native students enrolled full-time who received The College Fund Scholarship (either in combination with Pell or without Pell) and compared retention outcomes with Native American or Alaska Native students enrolled full-time who received only the Pell-grant. Students who received The College Fund scholarship in their first term were significantly more likely than Pell-grant-only recipients to re-enroll one-semester later (76% vs. 61%) and one-year later (48% vs. 40%), suggesting that personalized coaching and additional financial aid can make a significant difference in Native American or Alaska Native students' outcomes.

Table B1: Retention rates for all first-time students, by key student characteristics

	One-semester Retention (N=1,902)	One-year Retention (N=1,759)
Overall	58%	35%
Fall	63%	37%
Spring	45%	31%
Aged 24 or younger	59%	36%
Aged 25 or older	57%	35%
Native American/Alaska Native	58%	37%
Non-Native American/Alaska Native	58%	33%
Women	62%	40%
Men	54%	30%
Financial Aid	66%	41%
No Financial Aid	46%	25%
Full-time	63%	38%
Part-time	42%	27%

Notes: One-year retention rates are restricted to students who can be followed for one year and thus exclude Spring 2021 first-time students. Financial aid recipients include those who received the Pell-grant and/or The College Fund Scholarship. **Bolded** percentages indicate that the difference in outcomes by student characteristic is statistically significant at $p < .10$.

Trends Over Time in Retention Outcomes for TCU Students

One-semester retention.

Table B2 compares one-semester retention rates for first-time students enrolling in the initial period (Fall 2018 – Spring 2020) versus the final grant-year (Fall 2020 – Spring 2021), disaggregated by socio-demographic and first term enrollment characteristics. As indicated in the table, for

most student groups, one-semester retention rates remain relatively consistent across time despite the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic. The exception is adults aged 25 or older, whose one-semester retention rates were significantly lower in AY2020-21 compared to the prior two years. This decrease in retention may be a function of increased enrollment among non-traditional students, including college employees and community members, as reported by TCU leaders.

Table B2: Comparison of one-semester retention rates between academic years 2018-19 & 2019-20 and the 2020-21 academic year

	AY2018-19 & AY2019-20 (N=1,391)	AY2020-21 (N=511)
Overall	58%	58%
Fall	64%	62%
Spring	44%	48%
Aged 24 or younger	58%	62%
Aged 25 or older	60%	52%
Native American/Alaska Native	58%	60%
Non-Native American/Alaska Native	59%	56%
Women	62%	62%
Men	54%	53%
Financial Aid	66%	65%
No Financial Aid	45%	46%
Full-time	63%	64%
Part-time	41%	44%

Notes: Financial aid recipients include those who received the Pell-grant and/or The College Fund Scholarship. **Bolded** percentages indicate that the difference in outcomes between students enrolling in AY2018-19 & AY201920 vs. AY2020-21 is statistically significant at $p < .10$.

One-year retention.

Table B3 compares one-year retention rates for first-time fall-starters between the initial period and the final grant-year, again disaggregated by socio-demographic and first term enrollment characteristics. Similar to one-semester retention

rates, one-year retention rates remain relatively consistent across time for most student groups; however, adults aged 25 or older and Non-Native American/Alaska Native students are the two groups who show a significant decline in one-year retention rates across time.

B3: Comparison of one-year retention rates among fall-start students

	Fall 2018 & Fall 2019 Cohorts (N=999)	Fall 2020 Cohort (N=368)
Overall	37%	35%
Aged 24 or younger	37%	39%
Aged 25 or older	37%	27%
Native American/Alaska Native	38%	41%
Non-Native American/Alaska Native	36%	27%
Women	42%	38%
Men	32%	31%
Financial Aid	41%	40%
No Financial Aid	29%	27%
Full-time	40%	39%
Part-time	26%	25%

Notes: Analysis is restricted to those who can be followed for one academic year. Financial aid recipients include those who received the Pell-grant and/or The College Fund Scholarship. **Bolded** percentages indicate that the difference in outcomes between students enrolling in Fall 2018 & Fall 2019 vs. Fall 2020 is statistically significant at $p < .10$.

Exploration of Student Persistence

Using data retrieved from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC), the evaluation team explored first-time student persistence, defined as subsequent enrollment at any college (i.e., not limited to the TCU where they started).

Four colleges requested and received data from the National student Clearinghouse for students enrolled on or after August 1, 2018; this analysis is restricted to these four colleges and includes 1,633 first-time students who appear in NSC data files.

Among first-time students included in this persistence analysis, 67% were enrolled at any college in the subsequent semester, 7-percentage points higher than the one-semester retention rate (60%) for the four colleges in this analysis. Further, among first-time fall-start students, the

one-year persistence rate was 47%, which is 10-percentage points higher than the one-year retention rate (36%). These data suggest that many students at these participating TCUs continue their education beyond the college in which they initially enroll.


Through this HSS initiative, TCUs increased their capacity to collect and use student data to better understand students' varied pathways to completion and to inform HSS design and reform efforts. The exploration of persistence data, made possible through NSC data requested by colleges, suggests that TCUs may have a greater impact on student success than can be determined solely through examination of within-institution retention data.

Appendix C: Achieving the Dream's TCU HSS Activities

To understand the types of work the six TCUs in the cohort used throughout the project, this table lists the types of activities the colleges conducted. For more information, TCUs interested can read the associated Achieving

the Dream TCU Holistic Student Support Toolkit Spotlight here: <https://achievingthedream.org/tcus-share-impressive-progress-with-atd-holistic-student-supports-project/>

TCU	Opportunity Assessment	Communication Audit	Process Mapping	Action & Evaluation Plan	Discovery Inventory	Professional Development & Training	Monitoring & Refinement Activities
Fond du Lac Tribal & Community College	X	X		X	X	X	X
Iłisaḡvik College		X		X	X	X	X
Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish College	X	X		X	X		
Stone Child College	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
United Tribes Technical College	X		X	X	X	X	X
White Earth Tribal and Community College	X		X	X	X	X	



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Achieving the Dream (ATD) is a partner and champion of more than 300 community colleges across the country. Drawing on our expert coaches, groundbreaking programs, and national peer network, we provide institutions with integrated, tailored support for every aspect of their work — from foundational capacities such as leadership, data, and equity to intentional strategies for supporting students holistically, building K–12 partnerships, and more. We call this Whole College Transformation. Our vision is for every college to be a catalyst for equitable, antiracist, and economically vibrant communities. We know that with the right partner and the right approach, colleges can drive access, completion rates, and employment outcomes — so that all students can access life-changing learning that propels them into community-changing careers.

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