



A case study of American Indian students at the College of Great Falls  
by Audrey Kay Thompson

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education  
Montana State University

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**Abstract:**

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The purpose of this study was to determine if available institutional data could identify the profile of academically successful American Indian students and if, through discriminate analysis, it could differentiate between the Academically Successful and the At-Risk students. Further, the research sought to identify if the data were sufficient for future retention program planning. Institutional data collected at the College of Great Falls is filed in the Office of Admissions and Records on the application for admission forms and recorded grades and grade point averages as retained on official students' transcripts.

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AT THE COLLEGE OF GREAT FALLS

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
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Montana State University  
1995

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This thesis has been read by each member of the graduate committee and has been found to be satisfactory regarding content, English usage, format, citations, bibliographic style, and consistency, and is ready for submission to the College of Graduate Studies.

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## ABSTRACT

The key challenge facing higher education today is not only meeting the learning needs of an increasingly diverse student population, but also responding on societal changes generated by dramatic economic changes, fast-paced technological advances, and a national population in which the traditional Anglo-American majority no longer exists. The College of Great Falls serves a region which contains a large American Indian population and which is within a two-hour drive of two of Montana's seven tribal colleges. Although the College of Great Falls has welcomed American Indian students since its inception, no institutional research has been compiled to determine if it is serving this minority well.

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## CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Differing Cultural Perspectives

In the year 1744 in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, following a treaty-making session between Indian people and early colonists, a spokesman for the colony of Virginia generously offered a dozen Indian youths a free education at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg. There, the Indian people were told that the young men could be instructed in all the learning of the white people. The Indian chiefs did not respond to this offer until the next day. At that time, their speaker expressed the Indian people's deep sense of appreciation for the opportunity extended by the government of Virginia, but they refused it with the following explanation:

We know that you highly esteem the kind of learning taught in those colleges, and that the maintenance of our young men, while with you, would be very expensive to you. We are convinced, therefore, that you mean to do us good by your proposal; and we thank you heartily. But you, who are wise, must know that different nations have different conceptions of things; and you will therefore not take it amiss, if our ideas of this kind of education happen not to be the same with yours. We have had some experience of it; several of our young people were formerly brought up at the colleges of the Northern Provinces; they were instructed in all your sciences; but when they came back to us, they were bad runners, ignorant of every means of living in the woods, unable to bear

either cold or hunger, knew neither how to build a cabin, take a deer, or kill an enemy, spoke our language imperfectly, were therefore neither fit for hunters, warriors, nor counsellors; they were totally good for nothing. We are, however, not the less obliged by your kind offer, tho' we decline accepting it; and, to show our grateful sense of it, if the gentlemen of Virginia will send us a dozen of their sons, we will take great care of their education, instruct them in all we know, and make men of them. (Block, 1975, p. 141)

Benjamin Franklin's account is the only historical record of this incident. Accurate or not, Franklin clearly recognized how differently the Indian and white cultures perceived the benefits of the formal education offered to the young Indian men. It is ironic that for the next 200 years, white leaders continued to approach the education of American Indians with the same charitable attitudes and misguided expectations. To demonstrate these misunderstandings, a 1969 report identified several important factors that contributed to the lack of success of federally-funded programs for American Indians in both private and public education. The key factors delineated in the Joseph Study were as follows:

1. Basic deficiencies of knowledge about Indians resulting in actions and programs which bear no relation to the realities of what a tribe fashioned by a particular history and culture, needed, desired, or could accept and carry out with success.
2. A general lack of vision and historical perspective resulting in non-Indians ignoring certain basic truths about Indians:
  - a. Indians have been here for thousands of years.
  - b. This is their homeland.

- c. They evolved their own distinctive cultures and did not share points of view, attitudes, and thinking that came to the rest of the American population from Judeo-Christian and Western Civilization legacies.
  - d. Although the Indians were conquered militarily, they are confirming the lesson of history that no people has ever been coerced by another people into scuttling its own culture.
  - e. Although acculturation and assimilation do occur, they occur only on an individual's own terms.
3. Lack of self-government.
  4. Lack of understanding of the Indian experience and the Indian point of view.
  5. Inability to listen or accept Indian recommendations for change. (National Advisory Council on Indian Education [NACIE], 1992, p. 47)

The similarities between this analytical report and Franklin's historical account clearly indicate that the education of the American Indians has been negatively influenced by cultural misunderstandings for more than two centuries. The extent of this situation has been researched thoroughly, and researchers have found that the American Indians have achieved the lowest educational results of any other ethnic group (Lin, LaCounte, & Eder, 1988, p. 8) and that the Indian drop-out rate is higher than that of any other ethnic group (Astin, 1982, p. 51). Statistically, less than one-third of American Indian ninth graders attend college. Worse yet, out of every 100 American Indian ninth graders,

only three will earn a baccalaureate degree (Wright & Tierney, 1991, p. 18).

In an effort to attract and retain more American Indian students, a few non-Indian colleges have attempted to improve their environments by providing curricula which include Indian Studies programs and special support systems for the traditions of the various ethnic groups (Wright, 1987, p. 69). The existence of such programs allows American Indian students to feel more a part of an educational institution. Similarly, the colleges also seem more responsive to their interests. However, even with these institutional changes, nearly 90% of the total population of American Indian college students still drop out (Boyer, 1989, p. 25).

#### Federal Policy as a Socialization Instrument

Between 1778 and 1871, the United States negotiated a total of 389 treaties with the Indian people. During this process Indian tribes ceded a billion acres of land in exchange for pledges made by the federal government concerning the security of their remaining lands and promised federal services in human service areas such as education and health care (Fuchs & Havighurst, 1973, p. 4). The need for these services was not indigenous to the Indian culture but was a result of interactions with the encroaching white society. It is interesting to turn to Benjamin Franklin once again for a description of Indian society. His observations demonstrate

the success with which Americans Indians had lived during the hundreds of years prior to the arrival of the white Europeans.

The Indian men, when young, are hunters and warriors; when old, counsellors; for all their government is by counsel of the sages; there is no force, there are no prisons, no officers to compel obedience or inflict punishment. Hence they generally study oratory, the best speaking having the most influence. The Indian women till the ground, dress the food, nurse and bring up the children, and preserve and hand down to posterity the memory of public transactions. These employments of men and women are accounted natural and honorable. Having few artificial wants, they have abundance of leisure for improvement by conversation. Our laborious manner of life, compared with theirs, they esteem slavish and base; and the learning on which we value ourselves they regard as frivolous and useless. (Van Doren, 1938, p. 705)

Although anthropological evidence of Indian cultures dates back 50,000 years, life for America's natives has changed most dramatically since 1,500 A.D. when approximately 6,000,000 people lived in several hundred societies throughout North America (NACIE, 1992, p. 41). Europeans bestowed the name "Indian" on all of these natives despite the fact that they differed dramatically in their economic, social, and religious lives. No place were differences more evident than in the realm of linguistics. Native Americans spoke more than 200 different languages (Fuchs & Havighurst, 1973, p. 2). The number of American Indians dropped to an all-time low of 220,000 by 1910. Although the American Indian population has now grown to over 2,000,000, the story that accompanies these statistics is a tale of disillusionment and disappointment.

America's natives have come to envision themselves as an insignificant minority in the land they once claimed (NACIE, 1992, p. 41).

Greed drove many white settlers to acquire more and more of the land until finally the Indian people were allotted reservations that comprised only 2.9% of their original 2,000,000,000 acres of land holdings (NACIE, 1992, p. 40). Reservations were and still remain isolated and chronically neglected places. Life on reservations is comparable to existence in Third World countries in respect to unemployment, poverty, life expectancy, infant mortality, and educational opportunities (Boyer, 1989, p. 2).

With the continual failure of others to understand the culture of the diminishing Indian race, hopelessness and despair increased among the American Indian population. The white culture typically criticized Indian people for not being willing to fit into the white society and to compete on the terms of the dominant culture. The solution appeared to be assimilation, and education was offered to the Indian people as the quickest, easiest way to assimilate into the American society (Makofsky, 1990, p. 36).

#### American Indians and Higher Education

Proponents of higher education have expressed a commitment to working with American Indians since the earliest colleges were founded. Gifts of more than 2000 pounds enabled

the East India School to open its doors in the colony of Virginia in 1621 (Cremin, 1970, p. 209). The stated reason for educating Indian students was to "draw the best disposed among the Indians to converse and labor with our people for a convenient reward that they might not only learn a civil way of life, but be brought to a knowledge of religion and become instruments in the conversion of their countrymen" (Boyer, 1989, p. 7). A year later during an Indian uprising, the East India School superintendent and some of the residents were killed. The "college for the Children of Infidels" was forced to close by the natives it was designed to serve (Wright & Tierney, 1991, p. 13).

Three other early independent colleges--Dartmouth, College of William and Mary, and Harvard University--were also founded with the vision of contributing to the education of Indian youth. Harvard's charter in 1636 declared the purpose to educate the English and Indian youth of this country in knowledge and goodness. A college-within-a-college was created in 1656 with the construction of the Indian College building for 20 Indian students on Harvard's campus; however, the response was poor. Never did more than two Indian students occupy the Indian College at any given time (Wright, 1988, p. 7). Most of the time the building was used as housing for English students and a convenient location for the college printing press (Wright & Tierney, 1991, p. 12).

According to its charter, the College of William and Mary was "to teach the Indian boys to read and write . . . and especially to teach them thoroughly the catechism and the principles of the Christian religion" (Boyer, 1989, p. 8). In 1723, the college opened special facilities to house Indian students even though no Indian students were in attendance. Rather than concern for housing Indian students, it appears that the president revived the appearance of a commitment to Indian education in order to use funds left to the college for that purpose (Wright, 1988, p. 10).

Dartmouth College, chartered in 1769, was founded for the purpose of "education & instruction of Youth of the Indian tribes in this Land in reading, wrighting [sic] and all parts of Learning which shall appear necessary and expedient for civilizing and Christianizing children of pagans . . . and also of English Youth" (Wright & Tierney, 1991, p. 13). Dartmouth also became the first college to receive federal assistance for the education of Indian youths with a 1775 act of the Continental Congress which established an appropriation of \$500 for that purpose (Reyhner, 1992, p. 37).

As for the sincerity of the desire to advance Indian education and convert the natives to Christianity, doubt has been expressed concerning the true motives. The possibility exists that the colonists were cunningly appealing to the stay-at-home Englishmen for money to support political, economic, and educational agendas of which Indian education

was of secondary importance (Wright, 1988, p. 12). Even if the efforts were sincere, no attempts were made to incorporate Indian languages, culture, or history into the curriculum (Fuchs & Havighurst, 1973, p. 3). To illustrate the results of such an oversight, one contemporary analyst capsulized the perspective on Indian education as follows:

Indians and non-Indians are who they are because of the cultural heritage influencing their outlook on life. A need to identify with a group or a subgroup has led to the faithful rendition of ancient customs and rituals. A culture becomes paralyzed when it is not accepted by the dominant culture, however, and coexistence is an unsatisfactory solution. Total assimilation is usually the goal of a dominant culture, and it can involve the absolute destruction of a people's ideals, tradition, and language. Indians have been fighting this battle for centuries. (Pepper, 1985, p. 2)

The Meriam Report in 1928 was the first study to acknowledge that the educational, social, and economic problems of the American Indians possibly resulted from trying to force them to conform to an alien culture. As a result of that study, congressional legislation was passed in 1934 which allowed Indian people to participate in the development of educational programming. However, World War II and a resurgence of patriotic "Americanism" brought a quick end to such progress, and Native American schools were criticized for becoming too pro-Indian. Not until the 1960s was further progress made. Then the Civil Rights Movement and the Higher Education Act of 1965 provided the environment in which the

American Indian voices were finally heard (NACIE, 1992, p. 41).

### Tribal and Independent Colleges

The 1968 opening of Navajo Community College, the first tribally controlled community college, represented a significant event in the history of American Indian education. Since that time, more than two dozen tribal colleges have been founded, and a new era for American Indian education has begun (Olivas, 1982, pp. 42-44). Tribal colleges, primarily two-year institutions, are unique in that they are controlled by the Indian people and strive to meet the specific needs of reservation residents. Their success is based on the ideal of self-determination and a firm commitment to reclaim the Indian cultural heritage. Up until this time, education at every level had been largely controlled by the non-Indian society. Its pedagogy and curriculum were unchanged for the American Indian students, and assimilation into the dominant culture was the goal (Fuchs & Havighurst, 1972, p. 19).

On July 8, 1970, President Richard Nixon clearly characterized the ideal of self-determination when he communicated to the U.S. Congress his recommendation for Indian Policy. He stated:

The goal of any new national policy toward the Indian people must be to strengthen the Indian's sense of autonomy without threatening his sense of community. We just assure the Indian that he can assume control of his own life without being

separated involuntarily from the tribal group. And we must make it clear that Indians can become independent of federal control without being cut off from federal concern and federal support. (Lankford & Riley, 1986, p. 31)

This recommendation acknowledged a change from two false assumptions in which early government policies were founded. First, the practice had been to remove American Indians from their own culture supposing that such removal had no negative impact. Second, that in order to bring about the necessary assimilation, the dominant society had a right to unilaterally impose this separation for the sake of education--the instrument of change (Boyer, 1989, p. 39).

Because of the tremendous optimism resulting from self-determination, tribal colleges are succeeding where the independent colleges and public institutions have failed Indian populations in the past. The tribal colleges located in 11 western and midwestern states are basically autonomous. Although they receive federal funding, their success lies in the fact that the colleges are controlled by the Indian people who design the programs to meet the needs of the community. The programs are designed to be culturally relevant, and role models can be found on the campus. These colleges provide hope for the future not only for Indian people but also for the American nation (Stein, 1992a, p. 89).

Contemporary independent colleges share many of the characteristics which make the tribal colleges so successful. Therefore, they too are in an excellent position to positively

address the needs of Indian students. Because independent colleges are similar to privately owned businesses, the vision and direction of these institutions are flexible and adaptable. Since tuition provides much of their funding, funding sources do not determine the mission. Boards of Trustees of such institutions are chosen by the college and are less apt to be politically influenced than their public school counterparts. Therefore, within the independent college structure there is the ability to focus on American Indians with greater success than usually found at public institutions.

Independent colleges also share several other significant features. They serve fewer students than the public institutions so they are capable of providing more individual attention. Independent colleges and universities enroll only 21% of all college students, yet they award 33% of all bachelor's degrees and 42% of all master's degrees. In 1990, for example, 40% of all doctoral recipients in the United States received bachelor's degrees from independent institutions (National Institute of Independent Colleges and Universities, 1992).

The College of Great Falls (CGF) is one of three independent colleges in Montana. Founded in 1932 as a Catholic institution, its mission was designed to serve the needs of people in the Great Falls area with a special interest in serving the under-represented (CGF Mission

Statement, 1994). Because Great Falls has a high percentage of American Indian people within its population, Indian students have traditionally attended the college. Many of these students are attending college for the first time while others are transfer students. Because of its proximity to the Blackfeet and Rocky Boy Indian Reservations, the college also attracts a considerable number of students who have earned associate degrees from tribal colleges.

Because the College of Great Falls has an open admission policy and a dedication to serving the under-represented, providing higher education opportunities to American Indians could be one of its greatest strengths. Although many Indian students have attended CGF over the years, no institutional research traces their academic progress, and the college lacks a profile of the Academically Successful Indian students.

#### Statement of the Problem

CGF has the potential of becoming a leader in the field of educating American Indians because of its geographic location and its mission. Situated in a region with a high percentage of American Indians, it is only natural that the college should encourage these students to become an integral part of the campus.

The CGF traditions of service to under-represented populations and to individuals seeking to improve their career potential are further reasons to justify commitment to

American Indian education. Yet with an environment that could be highly supportive of American Indian students, the College of Great Falls has no research to determine if it is serving well the largest cultural minority on its campus and in its service region. Although the number of American Indian students who enroll at the College of Great Falls is available, little is known about drop-out, stop-out, transfer, and completion rate.

At the present time, an assumption has been made that non-traditional American Indian students who have completed a 2-year program at a tribal school and have transferred to CGF will likely be successful in completing a bachelor's degree. No data have been collected to support that assumption. Theory would suggest that these students have known success at a tribal school and therefore will tend to be more confident in their ability to complete a bachelor's degree than first time students. For the American Indian students who are not transfer students, the drop-out and stop-out rate is unknown. Statistical profiles have never been developed to identify the characteristics of either Academically Successful or At-Risk American Indian students. Also, the graduation rate for American Indian students is unknown.

Because small independent colleges tend to respond to needs of special groups more readily and easily than large public institutions, it is especially important that these institutions look to the tribal colleges as successful models.

A vital part of developing programs to better meet the needs of designated minority groups is accurate institutional data. Therefore, in order for private colleges to implement a program which is sensitive to the needs of American Indian students, knowledge is needed related to (a) tribal colleges and successes of self-determination, (b) independent colleges and student minorities, and (c) the importance of adequate and accurate institutional research in higher education.

#### Purpose

Indian people have distinct educational needs, but higher education has historically failed miserably in addressing these needs. Nevertheless, self-determination has provided a new hope for education among Indian people, and they see a way to relate education to their cultural needs. The purpose of this study is to determine if existing demographic data at CGF are adequate and useful in identifying success factors for American Indians who attend the school. The data which are available are the data gathered on all students by the Office of Admissions and Records.

#### Research Questions

1. What is the profile from available institutional data of American Indian students attending the College of Great Falls?
2. What is the profile of American Indian students attending the College of Great Falls who are defined as Academically Successful?

3. From the data available, is it possible to discriminate between those Indian students who are defined as Academically Successful and those defined as At-Risk?
4. Is available institutional information at the College of Great Falls adequate for future program planning?

#### Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will be far-reaching if CGF can utilize its institutional research to determine factors related to academic success among its American Indian students. The college will then be able to accurately and systematically analyze the unique needs of these students and how to better meet these needs.

Administrators in academic affairs and student services at the College of Great Falls can use results of this study to determine the future role of educational services to American Indian students. Retention can be enhanced through knowledge of the student profile most likely to be Academically Successful, and special attention can be given to those who are determined to exhibit At-Risk characteristics. Student Services programs can be developed to enhance the social life of these Indian students on a predominantly white campus. Similarly, academic programs might be launched to enhance the chance of Indian students for economic success both on or off the reservation. The college will be able to redirect its focus from trying to encourage Americans Indians from becoming

more fully integrated into the mainstream--the historical error of most prior formal educational ventures--to concentrating on helping faculty and staff to become more oriented to the particular learning needs of American Indian students.

By acknowledging the profile of the Academically Successful Indian student and by addressing the barriers faced by the At-Risk, instructors will have more opportunity to design their classes and programs to include elements that might enhance the chance for Indian students to perform well. This will make it possible for more sensitivity to emerge in how teaching and learning styles could be accommodated for all students.

The American Indian student population may profit immensely as CGF better understands and adapts programming to identified cultural differences and thereby provides better opportunities for them to succeed in higher education. This current lack of understanding is one of the key issues related to poor Indian student retention (Tierney, 1992, p. 153). By improving the continuity of American Indian presence, the college will also benefit immensely from the cultural diversity that native peoples have to offer.

In order to determine future educational directions, CGF needs to look to its past. This step is vital. Without the use of institutional research, any adjustments designed to meet the needs of current Indian students would be made

without recognition of factual, data-based patterns contributing to the academic success or failure of its largest minority population.

### Definition of Terms

Academically Successful student: For the purpose of this study, a student enrolled in college who has maintained at least an accumulated 2.0 grade point average on a 4.0 scale or has completed a degree program.

American Indian: A descendent of people native to America or anyone who claims that ethnic origin.

At-Risk student: For the purpose of this study, a student enrolled in college who is failing to maintain an accumulated grade point average of at least 2.0 or a previously enrolled student who did not earn at least a 2.0.

College: An institution of higher learning with educational programs leading to associate or bachelor degrees.

Graduation: Successful completion of all institutional requirements for an associate or a bachelor degree.

Higher education: Learning activities pursued at accredited institutions which offer programs leading to associate or bachelor degrees.

Independent college: An institution of higher education supported by an organized churches or private benefactors which does not rely upon public support.

Institutional research: The systematic, objective method of inquiry into the nature, meaning, and results of educational programming through the use of collected data.

Post-secondary education: Learning experience beyond high school that takes place in an institutional setting which leads to a professional certificate, an official license, or an academic degree.

Private college: An institution of higher education established and supported by independent benefactors

without financial assistance from state or local governments.

Public college/university: An institution of higher education established and supported by state authorities and funded by tax dollars.

Self-determination: A guiding principle for a group or organization that allows the membership to establish its own policies and procedures.

Tribal college: An institution of higher education established on an Indian reservation designed by the Indian community to preserve Indian culture and to provide academic programs leading to associate or bachelor degrees.

## CHAPTER 2

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

Historical research confirms the pledged commitment of independent colleges to educate American Indian students. Attempts to fulfill this pledge began with the first Europeans that settled in this country in the 17th Century. Throughout the next 300 years, however, colleges failed dismally in their efforts to assimilate American Indian students and further failed to recognize their own cultural misconceptions about tribal life. Looking toward the 21st Century, some independent colleges remain verbally committed to the education of American Indians. Yet, very little research has been conducted or published that details either the anticipated or achieved learning outcomes or even the graduation rates of this student population. In fact, few research studies even include American Indians in general comparisons with other racial/ethnic groups (Davis, 1992, p. 24).

Significant data concerning American Indian enrollment, matriculation, or graduation rates in higher education are sparse. Reliable numbers prior to 1900 are nearly impossible to locate. One of the earliest 20th century studies, a survey

conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute, indicates that in 1932 only 385 American Indians were enrolled in colleges and that only 52 Indian college graduates could be identified. Three years later a total of 515 Indians had entered college. According to the same historical survey, by 1965 Indian enrollment had grown to 1,718, and by 1972 it had jumped to a staggering 12,748--a 724% increase. This number then reportedly changed very little up to 1980 (Wright, 1985, p. 1). According to a similar study by the American Council on Education, 76,000 American Indian students were enrolled in higher education in 1976; this increased to 93,000 in 1988, and to 103,000 in 1990 (O'Brien, 1992, p. 1). Attempting to reconcile these statistics makes it readily apparent that accurate numbers, and accurate interpretations of such diverse figures, are hopelessly illusive.

One possible problem in assembling accurate data on American Indian participation is the interpretation of the words "college," "higher education," and "post-secondary education." Although these terms are usually used interchangeably, the discrepancies in the numbers cited provide reason to question the requisite interpretations. No foundation definitions are included in any of the studies.

Statistical surveys of the American Indians are very difficult to assess for three additional reasons. These reasons are as follows:

1. American Indians are a relatively small group so a researcher sometimes cannot generate a reliable sample from which to generalize.
2. Nearly half of the American Indian population is difficult to survey because they live in some of the most rural and isolated areas of the United States.
3. The diversity of tribal peoples and variety of educational programs defy simple categorization. (Tierney, 1992, p. 11)

American Indians account for less than 1% of all higher education students in the country. This extremely small percentage represents all tribes. Relating that number with the listed difficulties in surveying the Indian population further defines the limitations created for research concerning Indian students and post-secondary education.

American Indian students attending independent colleges are totally unrecognized as a research population. The 1990 census figures illustrate that 88% of the identified Indian students are attending public institutions. Exactly what type of institution the other 12% are attending is not clearly described, but certainly independent colleges are represented. It is further known that 53% of the total number of American Indian students in post-secondary education are enrolled in 2-year institutions (O'Brien, 1992, p. 1). Recent research suggests that between 75% and 93% of the Indian students attending post-secondary institutions drop out, most within their first year of enrollment (Hill, 1991, cited in Bowker, 1992, p. 6). This suggests that traditional post-secondary

educational systems are failing to adequately serve the needs of American Indians.

Disregarding the previous statistics and the miserable conditions they reveal, the last 25 years illustrate remarkable successes in American Indian education for which the Indians themselves are responsible. In the same year that the first tribal college opened, President Nixon decreed that "the right of self-determination of the Indian people will be respected and their participation in planning their own destiny will actively be encouraged" (Boyer, 1989, pp. xi, 21). Since that time, institutionalized self-determination has provided the opportunity for American Indians to demonstrate success on their terms. Ironically, the achievement has even more graphically demonstrated the reasons for the past educational failures.

#### Self-Determination

A common definition of self-determination involves the right of a community to decide its own form of government and political relations (Fuchs & Havighurst, 1973, pp. 19-22). On reservations throughout the United States, the term implies the right of the Indian people within the designated area to provide the government and leadership for its people without outside interference.

Historical events promoted adoption of the concept of self-determination, but realization of the importance of this

philosophy and practice was painfully slow in unfolding. American Indian students across the nation had suffered from cultural misunderstanding and from forced assimilation for three centuries before tribal colleges asserted the new principle of Indian self-worth and historical continuity. Examples of any other successful philosophical approaches to educating the American Indians are rare and non-existent in statistically documented format. An early example of self-determination existed in the Oklahoma region in the late 19th century when the Cherokee Nation established a Cherokee-controlled educational system. The result was that the Cherokee population became better educated than the surrounding white population. Predictably, when Oklahoma became a state in 1906, the Cherokee education system was abolished by law (NACIE, 1992, p. 44).

To demonstrate further the irony of their plight, not until an Act of Congress in 1924 were all American Indians allowed to become full citizens of the land which they had inhabited long before Europeans arrived. States such as Arizona and New Mexico, however, continued to deny Indians the right to vote in local, state, and national elections until forced to grant the franchise to them in 1948 by a Supreme Court decision (Fuchs & Havighurst, 1973, p. 10). Facing such legally enforced powerlessness, the ability of American Indians to resist total assimilation is genuinely remarkable.

The Meriam Report on "The Problem of Indian Administration" was made public in 1928. It was an investigation of Indian affairs conducted on behalf of the federal government by Lewis Meriam under the guidance of the Brookings Institute. This report, written by Swarthout College education professor W. Carson Ryan, Jr., argued for "individualistic, nonauthoritarian, decentralized education in which the focus would be on the whole child and his relationship to his family and community" (Fuchs & Havighurst, 1973, p. 226). Two major findings of the report were that (a) Indians were being excluded from the management of their own affairs and (b) Indians were receiving a poor quality of social services--especially in respect to health care and formal education (NACIE, 1992, p. 41). The report discouraged the government from focusing on financial economy and, in part, encouraged making available scholarships and loans for Indians in higher education (Fuchs & Havighurst, 1973, p. 11).

As a result of the Meriam Report, the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, also known as the Wheeler-Howard Act, was passed and eventually became known as "The Indian Bill of Rights." This legislation sought economic stabilization for American Indians on tribal lands, a discontinuation of forced assimilation, and recognition of civil and cultural freedom for all Indians (NACIE, 1992, p. 41). This act and other related legislation also provided \$250,000 in direct loans for college expenses to encourage

American Indian enrollment. These ideals were strongly supported by John Collier, who became Commissioner of Indian Affairs under Franklin D. Roosevelt in the early 1930s and served in that post until 1945 (Fuchs & Havighurst, 1973, p. 13). The Johnson-O'Malley Act of 1936 was passed to provide state reimbursement for educating American Indian children in public schools. Under Commissioner Collier's innovative and sensitive leadership, programs were begun in bilingual education, adult basic education, and the training of American Indian teachers. For the first time Indian culture was being emphasized rather than degraded within the formal education setting (Lankford & Riley, 1986, p. 30).

With the outbreak of World War II, the progress toward Indian self-determination not only stopped, but the pendulum of national patriotism and social conformity swung toward a renewed effort to force all Indians into the American cultural mainstream. According to the report of the 1944 House Select Committee on Indian Affairs, the goal of Indian education needed to be directed toward making all Indians into better Americans, rather than equipping them to become better Indians. This assimilationist approach was described as the final solution to the Indian problem (NACIE, 1992, p. 41). It was not unlike the philosophy of Captain Richard Pratt, founder of Carlisle Indian School in 1879, who fervently believed that it was necessary to take away the "Indian-ness"

of the American Indian in order to save the human being (Wescott, 1991, p. 45; also see Pratt, 1987).

Termination became the new governmental policy with the stated intention to get rid of Indians as a special group by discontinuing both federal recognition and government-sponsored services. Efforts were made to eliminate financial assistance by separating Indians from their tribes and their reservations. A 1951 policy featured a program designed to relocate Indians from traditional reservations into cities. Federal officials familiar with Indian problems and the Indian people themselves were neither consulted nor given opportunities to challenge this relocation mandate (NACIE, 1992, p. 42). Termination policies instituted between 1951 and 1958 resulted in numerous Indian groups losing federal aid and legal protection. In 1954 alone, ten termination bills were introduced, six of which resulted in the demise of six tribes. Although Secretary of the Interior Fred Seaton proclaimed a formal end of termination practices in 1958, the fear of legalized extinction lingered for another decade (Lankford & Riley, 1986, p. 30).

Despite the fear of termination policies and the reversal of political progress during the 1950s, the 1960s brought several positive changes for the American Indian people. By the end of the 1950s, an estimated 2,000 American Indian students were enrolled in some type of post-secondary education. That enrollment expanded to 7,000 by 1965.

Sixty-six American Indians graduated from 4-year institutions in 1961, and that number nearly tripled by 1968. Yet, only 1% of the total Indian population was enrolled in college during the sixties (Wright & Tierney, 1991, p. 17).

In 1961, Indian leaders at the American Indian Chicago Conference designed "The Declaration of Indian Purpose." In part it read:

In order to give recognition to certain basic philosophies by which the Indian People live, we, the Indian People, must be governed by principles in a democratic manner with a right to choose our way of life. Since our Indian culture is threatened by presumption of being absorbed by the American society, we believe we have the responsibility of preserving our precious heritage. We believe that the Indians must provide the adjustment and thus freely advance with dignity to a better life. (p. 4)

The Economic Opportunity Act of 1965 became the American Indians' first authorized chance to plan and operate their own programs. Tribal councils were elected, and funds were granted directly to each council for the entire reservation. The new Head Start Program was of particular significance because of its philosophy of assisting disadvantaged children within the framework of their own cultures. This approach contrasted dramatically with previous practices of placing minority children in a "foreign" culture in an attempt to provide them with greater socialization (NACIE, 1992, p. 42). Other programs developed at this time with Indian participation were Upward Bound, Job Corps, VISTA, and the Indian Community Action Program. The Elementary and Secondary

Education Act of 1965 also provided funds for improving educational opportunities of disadvantaged children. Title I and Title III of the 1965 Act were later amended to include Bureau of Indian Affairs schools. By 1966, the first modern day school funded by the federal government had opened on the Navajo Reservation (Lankford & Riley, 1986, p. 31).

A Special Senate Subcommittee on Indian Education was established in 1967. It released a study entitled Indian Education: A National Tragedy--A National Challenge in 1969. This subcommittee had determined: (a) Indian education was of poor quality; (b) Indians needed to have their latent fear of politically motivated tribal termination alleviated; and (c) Indians needed to control their own social destinies. This study provided much information which supported President Richard M. Nixon's eventual move to further empower the American Indian people (Lankford & Riley, 1986, p. 31).

Additional federal assistance was promised by the U.S. Congress through the Indian Education Act of 1972. This action was followed by the most important piece of Indian legislation since the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act--the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1974. On January 4, 1975, President Gerald Ford signed this act into law, giving Indian people greater potential for the control of Indian education than ever before (Lankford & Riley, 1986, p. 31).

The emergence of the tribal college system coincided with the federal government's recognition of the need for Indian involvement in all Indian affairs. Following the 1968 opening of Navajo Community College, the first tribal college, several more reservations initiated colleges. Montana with seven tribal colleges, boasts the greatest number. Other tribal colleges are located in Arizona, New Mexico, California, Washington, Nebraska, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan. These institutions serve nearly 14,000 American Indian students and feature a full-time equivalent enrollment of more than 6,000 students (O'Brien, 1992, p. 3).

Tribal colleges demonstrate the success of the self-determination ethic by responding directly to the needs of American Indians. They recognize, for example, that the percentage of American Indians who live below the poverty level is three times the national average. Thus, tribal college tuition is kept as low as possible. They also acknowledge that many American Indians will not leave their reservations for a formal education. Therefore, the educational opportunities are provided on the reservations. Finally, the tribal colleges note that 50% of the total American Indian population above 30 years of age has not yet completed high school. For that reason, many tribal colleges have developed special adult basic education courses to assist students in earning a GED (Wright & Tierney, 1991, p. 18).

American Indian students attend tribal colleges for many of the same reasons that non-Indians attend non-tribal colleges. They desire to better themselves intellectually, to improve their chances of securing meaningful and rewarding employment, to provide better standard of living for their families, and to strengthen their abilities to manage their own futures. Many students are older, have failed at non-Indian higher education institutions, and have family responsibilities. Nearly 90% are the first in their families to enroll for higher education classes (Stein, 1992a, p. 90).

Each tribal college's mission statement vows to preserve, enhance, and promote both the language and the culture of its particular tribe as a tenet of existence. This unifying purpose builds the core of identity and pride which helps the Indian students overcome lack of self-esteem, the struggle with poverty, and the lack of positive educational experiences. Tribal colleges also strive to provide 2-year academic programs for students seeking vocational or technical training. The goal of this practice is to ensure better jobs within their own community. In addition, some of these programs will transfer to non-tribal 4-year institutions as partial requirements for completion of bachelor's degrees. Upon completion of a degree many of these students can assume positions currently held by non-Indians to further the economic self-determination of the reservations (Hill, 1991, p. 25).

Tribal colleges are dedicated to the success of American Indian students. Because most of these colleges are located in rural, isolated parts of the United States, transportation must sometimes be provided by the colleges. In addition, child care is offered to reduce absenteeism, to increase time to study, and to overcome insufficient family funding for such a service (Stein, 1992a, p. 90). Child care needs are especially significant since more than half of the students attending tribal colleges are women (O'Brien, 1992, p. 5). Other supplementary programming includes special support groups, adult basic education programs, personalized instruction, tutoring, counseling, and community education.

Results of this targeted programming have been impressive. Retention rates at tribal colleges are in the 75% to 80% range. Tribal college graduates who elect to go on to complete baccalaureate degrees have a 75% greater likelihood of academic success than Indian students who bypass the tribal colleges and go directly to 4-year institutions (Stein, 1992a, p. 93).

The average expenditure per student for all publicly-supported 2-year colleges in 1992 was \$5,129. Federal expenditures per American Indian student declined from \$3,000 in 1980 to \$2,672 in 1991 due to increases in tribal college enrollments. Although total federal appropriations demonstrate sizeable dollar increases, the funding rate has

not kept pace with the growth in tribal colleges (O'Brien, 1992, p. 8).

Independent colleges need to look to the methods and philosophies of tribal colleges to formulate a more positive model for serving minority students. In spite of insufficient funding, low paid employees, and inadequate buildings, tribal colleges are achieving success. Without the severity of these fiscal limitations, independent colleges should be able to emulate these helpful practices and to attain similarly constructive retention levels and graduation rates.

#### Independent Colleges

Between the arrival of the first European settlers in the New England colonies and the end of the War for Independence, nine colleges were founded within the English-controlled portion of the North American continent. These colleges were established by various Christian denominations to fulfill sectarian educational needs in respect to pastoral care and missionary service. Harvard, founded in 1636, was a Puritan institution. Anglicans established the College of William and Mary in 1693. Yale, originally named the Collegiate School of Connecticut, was created by Congregationalists in 1701. Princeton, formerly the College of New Jersey, was founded by Presbyterians in 1746. King's College, also instituted by Anglicans, was launched in 1754 and later became Columbia University. Brown University, originally the College of Rhode

Island, was founded by Baptists in 1764. Congregationalists established Dartmouth in 1769. Queens College, later renamed Rutgers College, was founded by members of the Dutch Reformed Church in 1766. The only college established during this period that did not have sectarian ties was The College and Academy of Philadelphia as chartered in 1755. This institution later became the University of Pennsylvania (Domonkos, 1977, p. 2033).

Financial support for colonial independent colleges was established through endowments and sustained by annual tuition and fee assessments. Funding was a serious challenge. It is easy to imagine frequent pleas for donations to help support the fledgling institutions of higher learning from the colonists to those British subjects who had remained in England. It is also easy to imagine how tales of educating the "savages" of North America became a key marketing point for those concerned with fund raising (Wright, 1988, p. 12).

Following the American Revolution and the establishment of an independent political system, the creation of a national university was discussed. However, this idea was never implemented. Instead, in addition to the previously cited nine sectarian institutions, a new type of state-based university system emerged. The first of these state-supported schools was the University of Virginia. Under the leadership of Thomas Jefferson, this post-secondary institution opened its doors in 1825. It offered students a broad curriculum in

both the humanities and several professional fields (Wagoner, 1986, p. 155).

The model for most American state-supported schools came from Germany, a nation that boasted the most successful and widely copied system of national higher education in Europe. During the late 17th century the University of Halle, often referred to as the "first modern university," was founded. This university differed from other colleges in that lectures were delivered in German rather than in Latin, separation between theology and philosophy was allowed, and the study of mathematics along with scientific investigation was broadly promoted. In 1779 Halle was the first university to establish a chair of pedagogy and promote the training of teachers. The greatest intellectual contribution of the University of Halle, though, was the concept of academic freedom. Prior to this time, sectarian affiliation usually determined the nature of "truth" being taught at a given institution, and professors rarely encouraged genuine freedom of thought (Domonkos, 1977, p. 2032).

Following the advent of state-supported schools, two other major educational developments occurred. First, the Morrill Act of 1862 provided public lands to states for the specific purpose of increasing the number of state-supported institutions of higher education. This law encouraged the founding of nearly 70 public universities and colleges which

became known as "land grant" institutions (Johnson, 1981, pp. 333-334).

Following the American Civil War, a third type of educational institution was initiated--independent schools established and generally supported by wealthy benefactors. These colleges and universities were commonly referred to as private colleges, although this same terminology eventually also included those institutions of higher education initially linked to sectarian affiliation. Among the most famous private colleges and universities are Cornell, John Hopkins, the University of Chicago, Tulane, and Stanford. The influence of German universities on these and other institutions of higher education in the United States was profound. Many 19th century American professors had studied in Germany. They returned from the Continent with ideas that were revolutionary in U.S. education, including the seminar system, graduate programs, and German methods of scholarly investigation. Although a few church-affiliated schools retained their original parochial outlooks, the move toward freedom of thought throughout American higher education enabled the United States to become the undisputed world leader in a number of scientific disciplines by the 20th century (Domonkos, 1977, p. 2036).

State-supported, sectarian-affiliated, and private colleges and universities all experienced dramatic increases in numbers of students after 1900. This growth trend was

interrupted by World War I, but the most far-ranging transformation in American higher education followed World War II. The G.I. Bill introduced a new population of non-elite, non-traditional students to campuses throughout the United States. Needs for the expansion of scientific education and technical knowledge also prompted a new drive toward mass education in many post-secondary schools. Institutions of higher education were forced to acknowledge and respond to the demands of an increasingly complex urban, industrial society. In addition, 2-year technical institutes and vocationally-oriented junior colleges and community colleges were established to meet specialized job training demands beyond the secondary school. Vocational orientations even became more evident at the baccalaureate degree level. This alienated more than a few traditional professors who believed that the pursuit of vocations invariably diluted academic standards (Domonkos, 1977, p. 2038).

Today higher education institutions are challenged as never before by the diversity of their student population and by the complexity of their learning needs. People of all ages are enrolling in post-secondary education with great optimism, believing that higher learning will provide a better standard of living for them and their families.

This research project focuses on the higher education pursuits of American Indians as a minority population. However, American Indians' experiences in higher education

parallel that of another much more sizeable minority group in many respects: American women in college and university settings were also misunderstood, required to become more like the white male majority in order to be considered "successful," and often achieved their greatest learning gains only by attending separate institutions designed to meet specific needs neither recognized by nor addressed in traditional institutions. It is undeniable, of course, that women's issues have received much more attention during the past four decades than the concerns of American Indians. This shifting higher education agenda may result from the economic fact that women have been considered better risks than other minorities as tuition-paying students.

Puritan culture was generally suspicious of women, especially intelligent, independent women. They were considered "evil." Since formal education was ostensibly designed to produce male lawyers, doctors, and ministers, women were effectively barred from formal learning in the 17th and 18th centuries. But women's cultural roles slowly began to evolve in the 1820s. A new national philosophy idealized women's capacities to be pure, moral, and sentimental. In addition, this belief posited that women were best equipped for roles of passiveness, domesticity, and political innocence. These traits, plus blatant emotionalism, were viewed by college faculty as universally anti-intellectual characteristics. Although the new image appears on the

surface to be intellectually stifling, it did allow women to be viewed as potential school teachers, language translators, or social reformers. Young women were also less likely to be needed on farms in most rural areas, so while awaiting marriage many of them taught school. This occupation pursuit eventually dictated a need for a limited normal school education. During the Civil War, women served an additional role outside the home. They provided care as nurses, which also later resulted in the need for specialized college preparation (Palmieri, 1987, pp. 51-53).

Women's first opportunity to become college students was realized just 25 years before the outbreak of the Civil War. Oberlin, the first college to permit women to enroll, accepted female undergraduate students in 1837. This practice was soon followed by a limited number of other colleges and universities. By the end of the Civil War, women so far outnumbered men in the total U.S. population that most college administrators finally viewed women as viable students who would pay tuition. Soon a number of colleges designed strictly for women were springing up, often adjacent to men's colleges that continued to refuse to admit women (Graham, 1978, p. 764). In 1865, Vassar became the first women's college, followed by Smith and Wellesley in 1875 (Church, 1976, p. 25).

Doctors and professional educators were among the most outspoken opponents of women's involvement in higher

education. Dr. Edward Clarke of Harvard University published Sex in Education: A Fair Chance for the Girls in 1873. Professor Clarke asserted that higher education damaged women's health and negatively affected their reproductive capacities. Within a year his book went through 12 printings, illustrating its popularity and public influence. Several women's colleges responded to Clarke's report by compromising their curricula and reinforcing the accepted image of "genteel domesticity," thus upholding (rather than revolutionizing) the traditional roles for which women were being culturally groomed (Palmieri, 1987, p. 52).

By the end of the 19th century, women's participation in higher education was not uncommon. In fact, several women students flourished academically. These early pioneers, driven by the challenge to prove their intellectual abilities, were staunch scholars. As ever greater numbers of women became educated, however, their relative academic stature of females as scholars naturally diminished. To some this became additional evidence that most women were not well-suited for higher learning. In addition, some critics proclaimed that a university education prepared women for frustrated spinsterhood rather than a satisfying marriage (Hall, 1908, p. 314). In a 1905 Congressional Address, President Theodore Roosevelt expressed the fear of potential "race suicide" as he reflected on women's involvement as university students. His argument ran that if fewer and fewer educated women married, fewer

American children would be produced (Gordon, 1976, p. 48). In a 1914 American Statistical Association report entitled "Education and Fecundity," Nellie Seeds Nearing even asserted that a college-bound woman already knew, or privately at least feared, her lack of popularity among men because of personal unattractiveness. The notion also circulated that a woman holding a doctoral degree could be hired for a lower salary than a man with the same academic credentials and that college teaching positions traditionally occupied by men would be threatened by recently educated women (Palmieri, 1987, pp. 61-63). In 1904, Harvard philosopher Hugo Munsterberg had strongly affirmed that department chairmanships ought to be specifically reserved for men (p. 5).

Philosophical trepidations about college-educated women not marrying became a statistical reality in 1922 when economics professor Mabel Newcomer surveyed Vassar alumnae. She found that of 4,424 women graduates, only 55.6% had married compared with a national marital rate of nearly 90% (Newcomer, 1923-24, p. 431). Women who elected to pursue professional careers rather than marriage were depicted by one angry male observer as a race of "warped, dry creatures" (Howes, 1922, p. 453).

Female faculty members did not fair any better than their non-married professional women counterparts. Until well after World War II, women were not even considered for full-time faculty positions at most prestigious higher education

institutions. Alice Hamilton, an internationally respected industrial toxicologist, was allowed to join the Harvard Medical School faculty in 1919 only after agreeing that she would not robe and march in any of Harvard's ceremonial processions (Graham, 1978, p. 765). The first woman to serve as a tenured professor at Harvard was astronomer Cecelia Payne-Gaposhkin. This status was attained as recently as 1956. Yale appointed Chinese History specialist Mary Wright to the faculty in 1959. At Princeton, sociologist Suzanne Keller gained a faculty appointment in 1969. Columbia appointed Marjorie Nicolson to the English faculty in 1941. Prestigious independent colleges such as Yale and Princeton did not even allow female students to attend until 1969 (Graham, 1978, p. 766).

The quality of formal education that women have received throughout American history has also been challenged by many feminist authors. In Revolution from Within (1992), Gloria Steinem contends that the biased post-secondary education which women receive is a major roadblock. To Steinem, women are insidiously undermined through traditional education for the following reasons:

1. Being taught to revere "the classics" of Western civilization, most of which patronize, distort, denigrate, or express hatred for the female half of the human race.
2. Learning systems of philosophy that depend on gender dualisms at best and female inferiority at worst; surveying a tradition of art in which women are rarely artists and often objects;

studying biology that focuses more on human differences than on human possibilities; absorbing ethical standards that assume masculine values; and learning theologies that assume all-male deities.

3. Reading history books in which almost all power and agency is assigned to men and being graded for memorizing male accomplishments--with the deep message that we can learn what others do, but never do it ourselves.
4. Seeing fewer and fewer females in authority as we climb the educational ladder: fewer as faculty, fewer still as deans and presidents, and fewest of all in the fields of science, engineering, politics, business, foreign policy, or other specialties valued by the world at large. And if we are of the "wrong" race or class or sexuality, perhaps seeing no one we identify at all.
5. Being told we are "subjective" if we cite our own experience; that the "objective" truth always lies within the group--and the group is never us.
6. Finally, being isolated from other women--perhaps resented by them--because we are educated like men. (p. 115)

There are several distinct parallels between Steinem's six reasons for women's difficulties in higher education settings and the problems faced by American Indians in their college and university experiences. A similar listing of Indian complaints might read as follows:

1. Being taught to consider the entire Anglo-American culture to be superior, humanistic, and Christian, despite the historical reality of military barbarisms, the longstanding unwillingness to either acknowledge or tolerate tribal spiritualism, and the blatant practices of isolationism, hatred, disrespect, and racism toward innumerable indigenous peoples of North America.

2. Learning philosophies that ignore the eternal truths of nature and engender ideas of cut-throat competition, the work ethic, and materialism rather than cooperation, contemplation, and spiritualism; learning theologies that assume Judeo-Christian morality to be a universal absolute and that condemn non-Christians to eternal damnation.
3. Reading history books that glorify barbarity by cavalry units, that justify hypocrisies of slavery, racism, and even termination policies, that either stereotype or totally ignore American Indian leaders, and that omit the achievements of Indians in respect to art and dance.
4. Seeing fewer and fewer American Indians in positions of authority as one ascends the educational ladder, with fewer faculty, fewer still deans and presidents, and fewest of all in the fields of science, engineering, politics, business, foreign policy, or other academic specialties valued by the world at large.
5. Being told that attention to conformity of Anglo-American dress (coats and ties, skirts and blouses), promptness, long-range planning, objectivity, and rejection of spirituality is required for intellectual credibility, while subjective experience, tribal myths, and family traditions are totally unreliable sources of truth and knowledge.
6. Once graduated from an institution of higher education, an American Indian may be rejected by reservation Indians as becoming too westernized, too Anglo-like in thinking and speaking, and too much of an "apple" (red on the outside, white on the inside). At the same time well-educated American Indians are often rejected by the Anglo-Americans for not being "white" enough.

It is also interesting to note that many of the negative experiences identified by women and American Indians were also visited upon young upper class males during the 18th century.

Alexander Astin (1977) tends to support Steinem's perspective by stating:

Even though men and women are presumably exposed to common liberal arts curriculum and other educational programs during the undergraduate years, it would seem that these programs serve more to preserve, rather than to reduce, stereotypic differences between men and women in behavior, personality, aspirations, and achievement. (p. 216)

The ability of American families to adequately discipline sons was publicly questioned during the 18th century. Princeton president Aaron Burr noted that corruption was brought about by "want of proper government and instruction in families." One of Burr's successors, John Witherspoon, demanded that young men seeking university training be removed from their families. During a fund-raising trip to the West Indies in the 1770s, Witherspoon asserted that "those who come from the greatest distance have in general behaved with the most regularity." This contention meant that without either the support or comfort of a family close by, students could be forced to behave more directly as the college prescribed. It was also understood that at a greater distance parents were less likely to ask for special considerations for their sons (Vine, 1976, p. 411). Weak leadership was thought to be brought about by too much parental indulgence. All-male faculties, most often ordained ministers, were expected to become male mentors of irreproachable character, replacing misdirected, fawning family influence. Parents were often willing to turn their sons over to institutions of higher

education for stricter discipline and social training, rather than just intellectual enlightenment (Vine, 1976, p. 413).

The liberal arts institutions that most young men attended were sectarian schools designed to perpetuate theological doctrine, physical discipline, and an elite social class of educated gentlemen. Developing mental faculties--reason, memory, imagination, judgment, and attention--was to be achieved primarily through drill in classics of Western civilization. Attendance in class and at chapel services was compulsory. Discipline was paramount. Faculty members and students were ideally isolated from the real world throughout the rigorous educational experience of higher learning (Church, 1976, pp. 84-95).

What has been presented above demonstrates the progress which has been made in the education of males and females over the last two centuries. During the 17th and 18th centuries the formal educational system was narrowly defined, rigid, and male-dominated. Even though education was offered only to the males, they too were often treated with social rigidity and intellectual objectivity. The changes that have occurred during the 19th and 20th centuries create hope and optimism for the future. The evolvement of education from its early elitist, sexist, and racist posture toward a system no longer dependent on a narrow, fixed curricula, externally enforced discipline, or limited career choices following graduation is truly amazing. Institutions of higher education now feature

"women's studies" and "ethnic studies" rather than ignoring gender and race differences. Most institutions are striving for greater awareness of "cultural diversity" and the need to celebrate differences rather than to promote conformity. Several small independent colleges were established specifically to meet the learning needs of women and Afro-Americans. These colleges have been highly successful in fulfilling their missions and have even influenced many all-male schools to become more flexible in their educational approaches. Small, independent colleges have the capacity to adapt to the needs of minority groups with greater ease than the larger, public supported institutions. This is a key element in the expectation that the College of Great Falls might become a model institution for serving the education needs of American Indian students.

#### Institutional Research

Institutions of higher learning are continually improving methods for evaluating student services programs and curricula. Most investigations involve data collected within the campus system. However, data by themselves are useless. To be of value, data must be organized, analyzed, and interpreted. Only then does useful information emerge.

As an institution of higher learning evolves, practices designed to meet the needs of students are altered. To understand what dictates the direction of such change, one

must be cognizant of the values, the history, and other relevant philosophical dimensions of an institution (Dunn, 1990, p. 37). Institutional research offers a systematic, objective method of inquiry into the nature, meaning, and results of educational programming. It is a method of assessing institutional structure, functions, and effectiveness (Peterson, 1987, p. 286). Primary data collected as a part of institutional research are usually data related to the regular operation of the institution. These accumulated data results from standard transactions associated with (a) student recruitment, admission, and enrollment; (b) course registrations and the distribution of grades; and (c) daily business operations in the financial office, student services departments, academic administration, personnel offices, the physical plant and maintenance offices, and the purchasing department. This quantitative information is regularly collected for internal use; however, it may also be employed for external reports required for professional accreditation or for securing and maintaining federal funding (Sheehan, 1980, p. 513).

During the 1960s and early 1970s, most institutional research focused on enrollment data and faculty workloads. During the late 1970s and into the early 1980s, however, institutional research expanded to include campus management techniques, student advocacy issues, and institutional policy research. This shift in emphasis required institutional

research to move beyond relatively simple arithmetic operations and into comprehensive and systematic analytical reporting--including integrated data on individual program costs, space utilization, faculty and student loads, and credit hours generated. During the 1990s institutions are relying even more heavily upon institutional research for forecasting and planning (Dooris & Lozier, 1990, p. 19). Clearly, the demographic demand on higher education to move away from planning models designed primarily on traditional age students attending traditionally scheduled classes and to contract programs for more diverse student body operating in a variety of learning settings is shaping contemporary institutional research.

Data analysis conducted within the institutional research paradigm differs from other research methods. Generally, a researcher is not dealing with a small selected sample but rather with an entire student population. Another difference is that the researcher has little control over the initial data collection process since it is being accumulated for general internal purposes. As a result, institutional research is more often used to provide background information for immediate decision-making rather than for testing hypotheses related to long-range program planning (Yancey, 1988, pp. 7, 8).

A researcher utilizing the classic experimental paradigm follows several specific sequential steps. When pursuing institutional research though, a far more flexible, adaptable approach is necessary. Nevertheless, the following basic steps still adhere:

1. Identify a specific research question or institutional problem.
2. Design the study.
3. Collect the data.
4. Analyze the data.
5. Determine whether or not the analysis reveals an answer or solution. (Yancey, 1988, p. 8)

If a solution is not revealed by step five, then any or all of the steps between two and four may be repeated. One of the distinctive strengths of institutional research is that the data include the entire student population, which eliminates the need to identify a sample.

Use of institutional data is not limited to highly complex institutional research designs. Sometimes a single set of institutional data will signal that a problem exists. Information may also be used to set the context for decision making, or to measure the difference between what was ideally expected and what actually resulted. Once a decision has been made and action has been taken, subsequently gathered data can be used to sustain, promote, legitimize, revise, or overturn the original decision (Ewell, 1989, pp. 11-12).

The use of institutional data may be constrained in many ways. Constraints may be imposed by either incomplete information or missing components. One must remember that data are routinely collected by various offices in response to particular needs at a given time. Reconstruction of the collection process is often not possible, so additional related data are inaccessible. Constraints may also be imposed by campus politics. If there is little support on campus for either the assessment personnel or necessary technology to conduct institutional research, data accumulation will be limited. Finally, there may be constraints imposed by an institution's organizational culture. If administrators or staff members are unwilling to recognize the need to acquire information to support internal decision making, then little effort will be made to collect or share data (Ewell, 1989, p. 10).

All faculty members, administrators, and support staff should be involved in institutional planning. Unfortunately, much higher education decision making is reactive in nature. It attempts to immediately fix that which obviously does not work well or has failed completely. For this type of universally acknowledged change, extensive research is unnecessary. Remedies are simply responses to evident problems. However, genuine institutional planning must be proactive. For an institution to move forward in a constructive direction, decision makers must understand the

organizational culture within which they operate. Every effort must be made to have institutional data that are accurate, comprehensive, and easily accessible (Ewell, 1989, p. 9).

Institutional research provides data that either support or negate the success of a particular program. Once appropriate institutional data have been identified, organized, and analyzed, information gleaned from the process can be extremely useful to a management team. Planning and programming can be carried out with much greater success if institutional research is used to inform and guide decision making. Without data to plan, monitor, and evaluate, programmatic activities are likely to be either continued or discontinued for unsubstantiated reasons (Delworth & Hanson, 1985, p. 118).

Much that has been written about institutional research focuses on program planning. The term "program" is widely used across college campuses, yet the term is rarely defined with clarity. A program can be identified as a "planned response toward an identified need for action" (Wirtz & Magrath, 1979, p. 29). Morrill says that it is a "planned, structured learning experience designed to meet the needs of students" (1980, p. 332). Either definition is appropriate for an institution of higher learning that is serving a specified group of students who need more than a random number of classes that will ultimately lead to a bachelor's degree.

Data and program planning are directly related. Institutional research is at one time a source of quantitative information and a process by which qualitative judgments can be made. This dualistic nature can best be illustrated by noting the kinds of generic questions which accompany the consideration of launching a new program. Among the fundamental management inquiries are:

Is there a genuine campus need for this program?

Which campus group will benefit most from this program?

When is this program needed?

What specific elements must be included in this program?

Who should deliver this program?

How should this program be delivered?

Will additional data be needed to determine if this programming is effective? (Delworth & Hanson, 1985, p. 138)

In order to determine if an existing program is achieving the desired results, managers employ institutional research to monitor ongoing activities as the next step in respect to data collection and analysis. General questions that are appropriate for gathering institutional data to monitor in-process program activity include:

Are all students for whom this program was designed participating?

Does the timing of this program seem appropriate?

Are the most appropriate, skilled personnel involved in implementing this program?

Is current staffing adequate for this programming?

What additional data need to be collected to more fully monitor this program? (Delworth & Hanson, 1985, p. 142)

Post-implementation program evaluation is the final step in the institutional research process. An institution uses accumulated data to determine whether a program has accomplished what it was originally designed to do. Examples of questions that are appropriate at this concluding stage of data gathering include:

Were the original goals and objectives of this program fully achieved?

How many students were assisted through this program?

Did all students in the targeted group know about and have access to this program?

What was the total cost of implementing this program?

What was the cost per student to participate in this program?

Were all participants in this program equally satisfied?

How could this program be improved?

Do major or minor parts of this program need specific improvement?

What additional data are needed to fully evaluate this program? (Delworth & Hanson, 1985, p. 142)

As demonstrated in the three data collection stages outlined above, the journey from program planning to program implementation to program evaluation is made on a river of flowing institutional research data. The constant

accumulation of information must be monitored and analyzed with great care and creative thought. From initial program objectives to the final data defining actual results, a researcher must be as alert to the process of program review as to the implementation of the program itself. There are many potential distractions. Numerous incidents where more or better data could have been provided but are not available can prove frustrating. Nevertheless, institutional research is an ongoing process of change and improvement. It is through careful planning, monitoring, analysis, evaluation, and re-design that appropriate higher education programs will be created to serve various groups of students including American Indians.

#### Summary

There are several sources of potential optimism concerning the ability of American Indians to be successful at institutions of higher education. Modifications in federal policies, encouraging tribal practices of self-determination, have provided Indian people with opportunities to shape their own destinies through empowerment. Tribal colleges, where staff and students alike seek to preserve Indian culture while promoting the vocation of American Indian people, constitute legitimate successes. Meanwhile, independent institutions of higher education like the College of Great Falls can begin to explore many tribal college practices as models for developing

and planning programs specifically designed for American Indian students. Without such illustrations of success, each independent college might continue to struggle blindly with the complicated facets of educating a minority population of which some intend to return to reservation life while others plan to live and work in the "white" majority culture.

Application of relevant institutional research is a key element to establishing campus programming for American Indian students in higher education. Institutional research can produce accurate, accessible data for appropriate program planning, monitoring, and evaluation. By identifying the profiles of Academically Successful and of At-Risk American Indian students, both groups can receive the necessary academic and student services program support to make their graduations a stronger probability (DuBay, 1990, p. 1).

















































































































































