



American Indians in higher education : a case study of doctoral candidates at Montana State University  
by Johnel L Harrison

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

© Copyright by Johnel L Harrison (1997)

Abstract:

American Indians are faced with a bleak situation. They rank at or near the bottom of every social index used as measurement of human suffering in the United States. These conditions are often described as “third world” and are not a reality of the American dream although they are within the physical boundaries of the country in which this dream is portrayed. Education is viewed as the only means of survival for the American Indian to overcome this bleak situation. To realize higher education, American Indians must navigate through a system that ignores their language, culture, and traditions. Although education has been recognized as a means of self determination for American Indians to combat the conditions faced by their tribes, American Indians have yet to account for less than 1 % of all post-secondary degree recipients in the United States. The purpose of this study was to examine the success of American Indians in Montana State University, Department of Education doctoral programs, to identify the barriers/obstacles and strategies used by the doctoral candidates to succeed and to demonstrate how other American Indians may also succeed in post-secondary education.

Qualitative data collection techniques of open-ended, individual interviews and focus groups were conducted with the 12 doctoral candidates who composed the participants of this study. Findings were arranged by the doctoral candidates undergraduate experiences, masters programs, doctoral programs, and post doctoral plans. Three conclusions were uncovered in the study: (1) desires changed from the participants undergraduate programs to their doctoral programs, (2) the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) was found not to be a barrier, but an obstacle for the study participants, (3) there were differences found in the post doctoral plans of the reservation and campus site groups.

The experiences of the 12 American Indian doctoral candidates revealed not only their presence in post-secondary education but that they can be successful in higher education. They have provided a path with strategies to navigate through the barriers and obstacles for other American Indians to follow.

AMERICAN INDIANS IN HIGHER EDUCATION:  
A CASE STUDY OF DOCTORAL CANDIDATES  
AT MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

by

Johnel L Harrison

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

Doctor of Education

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY—BOZEMAN  
Bozeman, Montana

December 1997

D378  
H2464

APPROVAL

of a thesis submitted by

Johnel L. Harrison

This thesis has been read by each member of the thesis 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.

Robert Fellenz

Robert A Fellenz  
(Signature)

12-1-97  
Date

Approved for the Department of Education

Gloria Gregg

Gloria Gregg  
(Signature)

12-1-97  
Date

Approved for the College of Graduate Studies

Joseph Fedock

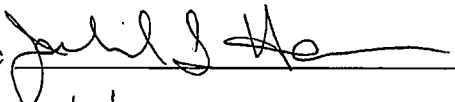
Joseph Fedock  
(Signature)

12/4/97  
Date

## STATEMENT OF PERMISSION TO USE

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a doctoral degree at Montana State University—Bozeman, I agree that the Library shall make it available to borrowers under rules of the Library. I further agree that copying of this thesis is allowable only for scholarly purposes, consistent with "fair use" as prescribed in the U.S. Copyright Law. Requests for extensive copying or reproduction of this thesis should be referred to University Microfilms International, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106, to whom I have granted "the exclusive right to reproduce and distribute my dissertation in and from microform along with the non-exclusive right to reproduce and distribute my abstract in any format in whole or in part."

Signature



Date

12/1/97

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge and extend my gratitude to my committee chair, Dr. Robert Fellenz, and my committee members, Dr. Ardy Clarke, Dr. Gary Conti, Dr. Douglas Herbster, Dr. Wayne Stein, and Dr. Cliff Bond, for their mentoring, encouragement, and unwavering support.

I also extend my gratitude to the 12 American Indian doctoral candidates, who are also my friends, peers, and colleagues. I am truly honored that they entrusted me to tell their stories and to share their experiences.

Finally, I thank my parents, John and Eula; my sisters, Nema and Rhonda; and my brother Sheldon for their support, encouragement, and their belief in my educational pursuits. I also extend my thanks to my daughter, Katelyn, for the precious time she sacrificed for me to achieve this goal.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Education As Assimilation .....	1
The Conditions of American Indians .....	2
Statement of the Problem .....	5
Statement of Purpose .....	9
Significance of the Study .....	9
Delimitations .....	10
Definitions .....	10
2. BARRIERS AND OBSTACLES .....	12
Introduction .....	12
Undergraduate Barriers and Obstacles .....	14
Graduate School .....	22
Post Doctorate .....	28
3. RESEARCH DESIGN .....	30
Population .....	33
Role of the Researcher .....	35
Procedure .....	35
4. UNDERGRADUATE EXPERIENCE .....	38
Introduction .....	38
Undergraduate Experience 1 .....	39
Undergraduate Experience 2 .....	42
Undergraduate Experience 3 .....	45
Undergraduate Experience 4 .....	47
Undergraduate Experience 5 .....	49
Undergraduate Experience 6 .....	52
Undergraduate Experience 7 .....	55

TABLE OF CONTENTS—Continued

	Page
4. UNDERGRADUATE EXPERIENCE— <u>Continued</u>	
Undergraduate Experience 8 . . . . .	60
Undergraduate Experience 9 . . . . .	61
Undergraduate Experience 10 . . . . .	64
Undergraduate Experience 11 . . . . .	66
Undergraduate Experience 12 . . . . .	68
Summary . . . . .	70
5. GRADUATE EDUCATION . . . . .	76
Masters Program . . . . .	76
Doctoral Program . . . . .	82
Reservation Site Group . . . . .	83
Campus Site Group . . . . .	88
Post Doctorate Plans . . . . .	96
Summary . . . . .	101
6. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS . . . . .	103
Introduction . . . . .	103
Summary . . . . .	103
Undergraduate Experiences . . . . .	104
Masters Programs . . . . .	105
Doctorate Programs . . . . .	105
Post Doctorate Plans . . . . .	106
Conclusions . . . . .	107
Recommendations . . . . .	113
REFERENCES CITED . . . . .	115
APPENDICES . . . . .	120
Appendix A—Participant Information Form . . . . .	121
Appendix B—Questionnaire . . . . .	123
Appendix C—Interview Questions . . . . .	126

## ABSTRACT

American Indians are faced with a bleak situation. They rank at or near the bottom of every social index used as measurement of human suffering in the United States. These conditions are often described as "third world" and are not a reality of the American dream although they are within the physical boundaries of the country in which this dream is portrayed. Education is viewed as the only means of survival for the American Indian to overcome this bleak situation. To realize higher education, American Indians must navigate through a system that ignores their language, culture, and traditions. Although education has been recognized as a means of self determination for American Indians to combat the conditions faced by their tribes, American Indians have yet to account for less than 1% of all post-secondary degree recipients in the United States. The purpose of this study was to examine the success of American Indians in Montana State University, Department of Education doctoral programs, to identify the barriers/obstacles and strategies used by the doctoral candidates to succeed and to demonstrate how other American Indians may also succeed in post-secondary education.

Qualitative data collection techniques of open-ended, individual interviews and focus groups were conducted with the 12 doctoral candidates who composed the participants of this study. Findings were arranged by the doctoral candidates undergraduate experiences, masters programs, doctoral programs, and post doctoral plans. Three conclusions were uncovered in the study: (1) desires changed from the participants undergraduate programs to their doctoral programs, (2) the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) was found not to be a barrier, but an obstacle for the study participants, (3) there were differences found in the post doctoral plans of the reservation and campus site groups.

The experiences of the 12 American Indian doctoral candidates revealed not only their presence in post-secondary education but that they can be successful in higher education. They have provided a path with strategies to navigate through the barriers and obstacles for other American Indians to follow.



## CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Education As Assimilation

Prior to the founding of the United States of America, education was seen as a means to deal with the indigenous people of the new world, thus giving American Indians the longest history of "formal" education of any minority group. Missionaries from many European countries held the responsibility of civilizing and bringing Christianity to many American Indian tribes. The first school for the indigenous people of the new world was established by the Jesuit missionaries in 1568. This "formal" education of Indians was intended to assimilate them; to destroy their culture, language, and way of life; and to mold these "savages" into the "civilized" image of the white man. A large number of the treaties between the United States government and Indian tribes included provisions for the education of the American Indian. In the words of Captain Richard Pratt, the founder of the first off-reservation boarding school for Indians, "kill the Indian and save the man" became the creed for the education of the American Indian. To kill the Indian and save the man entailed more than just cutting their hair and outfitting them in acceptable clothing; it meant prohibiting the use of their native language and moving them far away from the cultural influence of their families.

For the American Indian, education was a means of survival. Without it came hardship and hunger. With it came the death of the way of life for the American Indian and the near extinction of many Native languages. This educational approach of assimilation to deal with the "Indian Problem" has failed the American Indian and the nation. Many American Indians are struggling to maintain their Indian identity in an educational system that continues to ignore their language, culture, and traditions. Two recent studies by Rowland (1994) and Still Smoking (1997) stressed the importance of the role of tribal languages, cultures, philosophies, beliefs, family, and elders in the education of American Indians. Education will continue to be a tool of assimilation and Indian students will continue to struggle with their identity until the recommendations from studies, such as Rowland's and Still Smoking's, are implemented into the education of American Indians.

### The Conditions of American Indians

The conditions of the American Indian reflect a growing, young population that represents half of the cultural diversity in the United States. This population is economically poorer, experiences more unemployment, and attains less education than the rest of the nation. In fact, American Indians rank at or near the bottom in nearly every social index used as measurement of human suffering in the United States.

The 1990 census reported more than 1.9 million American Indians in the United States. This was a 37.9% increase from the 1980 census report, a higher growth rate than the total United States population rate of 9.8% (U.S. Bureau of the Census). The

Statistical Record of Native North Americans projects that the American Indian population for the year 2040 will be 4.1 million (Reddy, 1993, p. 421). This population is projected to be the second fastest growing population in the West, second only to the Hispanic population (Campbell, 1995). This growing population is an average of seven years younger than the overall United States population (O'Brien, 1992). In 1990, 39% of the American Indian population was less than 20 years old, compared with 29% of the Nation's total population (Paisano, 1993, p. 50).

Although American Indians make up only 0.8% of the total 1990 United States population, they do represent 50% of the diversity, with approximately 500 tribes, each with its own distinctive culture (Hodgkinson, 1992). This diversity can be seen in the number of American Indian languages alone. The 1990 census reports that there were more than 281,000 major American Indian languages that were spoken at home by American Indian persons five years and over (U.S. Bureau of the Census). The majority (233,711) of these languages were spoken in the western region of the United States (U.S. Bureau of the Census).

This growing, young, and diverse population is economically poor, with a higher incidence of unemployment. The median family income in 1989 for American Indians was \$21,619, as compared with the national average of \$35,225. A majority, 75%, of this work force earned less than \$7,000 per year (Russell, 1994). The 1990 census report indicates that approximately 13% of the U.S. population fell below the poverty level; however, that percentage exceeded 32% for American Indians (U.S. Bureau of the Census). Many Native American reservation communities are impoverished. For

example, the Pine Ridge Reservation located in Shannon County, South Dakota, was the poorest county in the entire United States in 1990, with 63.1% of the population living below the poverty level (Reddy, 1993, p. 813). A 1989 Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) study of 949,075 American Indian and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) living on or adjacent to reservations, who represent the service population of the BIA, reported 233,476 AI/ANs were employed, and 211,886, who were able to work, were unemployed (Hodgkinson, Outtz & Obarakpor, 1990). The employed and unemployed are almost equal in number in this study.

Educational attainment of American Indians is less than the rest of the nation. It is estimated that the dropout rate of American Indian students is at 50% or above. The 1990 Census reports that 65% of 18-24 year old American Indians were high school graduates or higher compared with 84% of the nation (U.S. Bureau of the Census). Nine percent of American Indian adults completed four years of college in 1990, compared with 20% of the total United States adult population (O'Brien, 1992).

Russell in The American Indian Digest: 1995 Edition states the following health conditions faced by American Indians:

- Fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) is thirty-three times higher than among non-Indians.
- One in six adolescents has attempted suicide; a rate four times that of other teenagers.
- Alcohol mortality is ten times the rate for all other races combined.
- Tuberculosis is 7.4 times greater than among non-Indians.

-Diabetes is 6.8 times greater than among non-Indians (1994, p. 49).

These health conditions combined with the inadequate and substandard housing typical of most reservation communities mirror conditions found in third world countries.

A survival existence is prevailing in nearly every American Indian community in the United States. This existence consumes people to meet their immediate needs, basic needs such as food and shelter. For many American Indians, these conditions are the norm, not the exception. Clearly the economic, employment, educational, and health conditions of the American Indian do not reflect the American dream.

#### Statement of the Problem

Considering the foregoing description of the American Indian, a new educational approach is needed, a method created by Indian people and their tribes. Through the Indian Self-Determination and Educational Assistance Act of 1975 (P.L. 93-638,88), the control of Indian education has been returned to the American Indian. The idea of self-determination is that Indian people, not the U.S. government, should decide what is best for Indian people. Recognition of the importance of culture and language in Indian education was also enhanced by the Native American Languages Act of 1990, the release of the final report of the U.S. Secretary of Education's Indian Nations at Risk Task Force in 1991, and the White House Conference on Indian Education in 1992. In the Indian Nations at Risk Task Force (1991) final reports' transmittal letter, the co-chairs wrote:

The Task Force believes that a well-educated American Indian and Alaska Native citizenry and renewal of the language and culture base of the American Native community will strengthen self-determination and economic well being and will allow the Native community to contribute to building a stronger nation--an America that can compete with other nations and contribute to the world's economics and cultures (p. iv).

Along with the idea of self-determination, the investment in the education of people will decrease taxes, lower the crime rate, and benefit all American society. Between 1980 and 1990 the fastest growing group in the United States was prisoners, up 139% from 466,371 in 1980 to 1,115,111 in 1990 (Hodgkinson, 1992). Eighty-two percent of these American prisoners were high school dropouts (Hodgkinson, 1992). A prisoner will cost the tax payers \$22,500 a year (Hodgkinson, 1992). Furthermore, college graduates are less likely to be a burden on social programs such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and their salaries increase the tax base (Tijerina and Biemer, 1988). American Indian college graduates are not only role models, but a majority "have a cultural need to give back to the community in time and money" (Tijerina and Biemer, 1988, p. 91). Clearly, more educated American Indians and Alaska Natives are needed not only to bring self-determination to their own tribal communities, but the education of these Native people will bring benefits to the nation as a whole.

Two positive aspects have emerged as examples of Indian self-determination: tribally controlled colleges and the increase of enrollment and degrees awarded to American Indians by higher education institutions. Navajo Community College, the first tribally controlled college, was founded in 1968 after it became apparent that higher

education "was not able to meet the needs or overcome the culture differences Navajo students brought with them to college" (Stein, 1992, p. 9). In 1978, the Tribally Controlled Community College Assistance Act was passed. This act allowed American Indian tribes to charter their own post-secondary institutions. There are currently 29 tribally controlled colleges in the United States. These colleges contribute a community tribal base for American Indians to reclaim their cultural heritage through education. A two-year study by the Carnegie Foundation (1989) of tribal colleges reported "the idea of Indian-controlled higher education is both valid and long overdue. . . . [Tribal colleges] offer great hope to the Native American community and the nation as a whole" (p. 87). The study cited the following four areas in which tribal colleges are critical to the survival of American Indians, and the nation:

First, tribal colleges establish a learning environment that encourages participation by and builds self-confidence in students who have come to view failure as the norm. Second, tribal colleges celebrate and help sustain the rich native American traditions. Third, tribal colleges provide essential services that enrich the communities surrounding them. Fourth, the colleges are often centers for research and scholarship (p. 3-5).

While the Carnegie Foundation hailed tribal colleges' successes, they were amazed at how these colleges operated financially, because they were consistently under funded. Tribal colleges "receive only a fraction of what they should receive from the federal government to carry out their tasks" (Wright and Tierney, 1991, p. 18). In 1996, tribally controlled colleges received \$2,900 per Indian student, compared to \$12,000 per student at historically Black colleges, \$8,000 per student at Hispanic colleges, and \$6,000

per student at the average non-minority community college. Such minimal funding of these institutions offers proof of how Indian people have learned to survive against all odds.

The National Center for Education Statistics reported that in the Fall of 1988, 92,500 American Indians and Alaska Natives were enrolled in higher education (U.S. Department of Education, 1995). This was 0.71% of the total higher education enrollment in the United States (U.S. Department of Education, 1995). This percentage increased to 0.74% in 1990, to 0.79% in 1991, to 0.82% in 1992, and to 0.85% in the Fall of 1993 (U.S. Department of Education, 1995). Degrees awarded to American Indian/Alaska Natives in 1988-89 totaled 8,230, or 0.48% of the total degrees awarded nationally (U.S. Department of Education, 1993). In 1992-93, 0.54% of the degrees awarded in the country were awarded to American Indians/Alaska Natives (U.S. Department of Education, 1993). In spite of the fact that the American Indian population increased 28% more than the United States population rate, higher education enrollment and degrees awarded to American Indians have yet to reach 1% of the total population of enrollment and degrees awarded. Although minimal, a positive increase in numbers is noted. This is an indication that self-determination is not just an Act of the United States Federal Government, but truly a movement at the very heart and survival of the American Indian.



### Statement of Purpose

To build on these two positive aspects of tribally controlled colleges and the increase of enrollment and degrees awarded to American Indians by higher education institutions and to see the self-determination movement in full force is to look at the success of American Indians in higher education. The aim of this dissertation study is to examine the successes of American Indians in Montana State University Department of Education doctoral programs, to identify the barriers/obstacles and strategies used by the doctoral candidates to succeed, and to demonstrate how other American Indians may also succeed educationally. Given the bleak situation of the American Indian status, as well as the years of oppression and failure of the Indian educational system, this study will seek to determine how these American Indian doctoral candidates at Montana State University are forging this path of self-determination. Considering that American Indians are the minority of all United States minorities and the many obstacles and barriers faced by them in education, these doctoral candidates truly demonstrate success.

### Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is not only that it can be used by other American Indians who are considering doctoral study, but also for the interest and use of those students in Masters programs, undergraduate programs, and in high school. Employees in Indian higher education, as well as high school teachers and counselors who work with Indian youth, could also benefit from this study. A shortage of professors is predicted

for the next decade (Mooney, 1990). Montana State University and other institutions of higher education, who are attempting to increase their number of American Indian faculty, may also find significance in this study. The findings from this study can be utilized to train higher education faculty, advisors, and student services personnel on the recruitment and retention of the American Indian college student.

### Delimitations

This study was delimited to the American Indian doctoral candidates in the Department of Education at Montana State University. The small number of American Indians in doctoral programs at Montana State University is an indication of the small numbers of such students at most U.S. universities even though it is a much larger percentage of graduate enrollment than at most other universities. The study was also delimited to doctoral candidates who were part of a Northern Plains Indian Tribe.

Another limitation of the study was that the individual interviews and focus groups relied on the 12 doctoral candidates' recollections of events. The fact that all the participants were currently active students did much to alleviate this limitation.

### Definitions

For the purpose of this dissertation, the following terms were used as defined below:

Indian, American Indian, and Native American: All used as identifying the Indian of the United States.

**Barrier and obstacle:** Anything that obstructs, limits or slows down the educational process; e.g., costs, admission standards.

**Northern Plains Tribes:** Indian tribes in the geographical area of Idaho, Montana, North and South Dakota, and Wyoming. Tribes such as the Nez Percé, Blackfeet, Sioux, and Northern Arapaho are included in these tribes.

**Reservation:** A tract of land set apart for Indian people by the United States government through treaties, acts, and orders.

**Self-determination:** The right of a people to chose and decide what is best for themselves.

**Tribe:** A group of people, descended from a common ancestor, who share a common culture, traditions, and beliefs.

## CHAPTER 2

### BARRIERS AND OBSTACLES

#### Introduction

A review of the literature to identify the barriers and obstacles for American Indians in higher education and how they have been overcoming these barriers and obstacles provided a basis for this study. The small number in this population could explain why most studies of success in graduate programs have not provided separate data on American Indians. The small number and smaller statistical increments of change are, as Olivas notes, "not large enough or reliable enough to warrant anything but more carefully hedged analysis" (1992, p. 7). In fact researchers have all too often ignored American Indians or included them in an "other" category.

An examination of post-secondary students shows that 103,000 American Indian students were enrolled in higher education in 1990, which was a 36% increase from 1976 (O'Brien, 1992). Although this increase is impressive, American Indians did not make any gains in their proportional enrollments in higher education; they accounted for 0.8% of all students (O'Brien, 1992). In 1990, 53% of these American Indian students were enrolled in two-year schools (O'Brien, 1992). The increase in tribally controlled colleges could be a partial explanation of the concentration of American Indian students enrolled

at two-year institutions. Only Hispanic students had a higher enrollment in two-year institutions (55%) than the American Indian students (O'Brien, 1992). Wells, in a 1989 study, found that 53% of American Indian students left college after the first year and three out of four did not complete a bachelors degree (O'Brien, 1992). Twenty-nine percent of American Indian students who were first-time, full time freshmen in 1984 had graduated by fall 1990, compared to 53% of all students, 31% of African Americans, 40% of Hispanics, and 56% of Whites (O'Brien, 1992, p. 6).

The 36% increase from 1976 to 1990 of American Indians enrolled in higher education documented that American Indians were under represented in higher education (O'Brien, 1992). This lack of representation, as well as the retention of the American Indian, indicates that barriers and obstacles keep or impede this population from participating in higher education. Cross in Adults As Learners: Increasing Participation and Facilitating Learning (1981) recognized barriers and obstacles as deterring, discouraging, or keeping adult learners from participating in learning. By grouping barriers and obstacles into three categories (situational, institutional, and dispositional), this author illustrates one way in which barriers can obstruct learning (Cross, 1981, p. 99). According to Cross (1981), "situational barriers are those arising from one's situation in life at a given time" (p. 98). The cost of education, time, home and job responsibilities, no child care, transportation, and place to study or practice are included in the situational barriers category (Cross, 1981, p. 99). "Institutional barriers consist of all those practices and procedures that exclude or discourage working adults from participating in educational activities" (p. 98). Institutional barriers included not wanting

to go to school full time, amount of time required to complete a program, inconvenient course scheduling, lack of information, attendance requirements, availability of courses, and complicated enrollment procedures (Cross, 1981, p. 99). "Dispositional barriers are those related to attitudes and self-perceptions about oneself as a learner" (p. 98). Attitudes such as tired of school and classrooms, don't enjoy studying, and hesitate to seem too ambitious and self-perceptions such as afraid I'm too old, not confident of my ability, and not enough energy or stamina are examples of dispositional barriers (Cross, 1981, p. 99). To illustrate the available literature on barriers and obstacles that American Indians in higher education face, this chapter is divided into three sections: (1) a discussion of barriers and obstacles faced by the Indian undergraduate and recommended solutions on how to overcome them, (2) a discussion of barriers and obstacles faced by the Indian student in graduate education, and (3) post doctorate plans and how these plans involve working with Indian people.

#### Undergraduate Barriers and Obstacles

The majority of the literature on American Indian students in higher education focuses on the undergraduate. Overall, the literature identified the following barriers and obstacles as responsible for the lack of representation and success or retention of American Indian undergraduates: inadequate academic preparation, inadequate financial support, unsupportive institutional climate, and lack of role models (Astin, 1982; Benjamin, Chamber, and Reiterman, 1993; Falk and Aitken, 1984; Hill, 1991; Homett,

1989; McDonald, 1973; Tijerina and Biemer, 1988; Wright, 1991; Wright and Tirenny, 1991; Tirenny, 1992).

Astin in Minorities in American Higher Education, found that the student's average grade in high school or rank in class proved to be the most consistent and substantial prediction of measures of undergraduate persistence and were "better predictors especially for American Indian and White students than other minority groups" (1982, p. 92). In Falk and Aitken's (1984) study, educators ranked good academic preparation as the number one factor contributing to the retention of Indian students in post-secondary education. Other studies also indicated that adequate high school academic preparation was a necessity if American Indians were to succeed in higher education (Benjamin, Chamber, and Reiterman, 1993; Wright, 1991). American Indian students also agreed that they were not prepared to compete with others in higher education (McDonald, 1973).

Inadequate high school academic preparation of American Indians, as well as all minorities, relates to their under representation in higher education, especially in the fields of natural sciences, engineering, and mathematics (Astin, 1982; Hill, 1991). Several authors identified writing, math, and science skill levels of American Indian college students as problematic (Astin, 1982; Falk and Aitken, 1984; Hill, 1991; LaForge, 1996; Wright, 1991). LaForge in a 1996 study of Crow Indian college students identified math, science, biology, English, literature, and history as the top six courses Crow students considered most difficult (p. 61). Falk and Aitken's (1984) study also indicated lack of preparation in the areas of study, budgeting, and career-goal setting

skills of American Indian students (p. 27). Hill (1991) attributed the lack of high school preparation of American Indian college students to the lack of resources of many Indian communities to provide an adequate preparation for higher education.

Suggested solutions to the inadequate academic preparation of American Indian students range from summer bridge programs to institutions increasing or improving their support services to students (Beaulieu, 1991; Falk and Aitken, 1984; Hill, 1991; Tijerina and Biemer, 1988). Early intervention, with the use of programs such as the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES), assist Native American students in their academic preparation for college (Hill, 1991). Minnesota's Indian Post-Secondary Preparation Program assists Indian students while still in high school to become prepared for higher education (Beaulieu, 1991). Falk and Aitken (1984) suggest a reexamination of the student support services, to assure that they are appropriate and effective to American Indian college students.

A large amount of the literature pointed to inadequate financial support as a barrier for American Indian students (Astin, 1982; Benjamin, Chamber, and Reiterman, 1993; Falk and Aitken, 1984; Hill, 1991; McDonald, 1973; Tijerina and Biemer, 1988; Wright, 1991; Wright and Tierney, 1991; Tierney, 1992). Considering the high poverty and unemployment levels in Native communities, few American Indian students received support from their own resources or parents (Wright, 1991). In many instances, the Indian college student may provide financial assistance to their families back home, as illustrated in LaForge's 1996 study, "the families only had survival money and this they shared with extended family members as is the Crow tradition" (p. 118). This tradition



of sharing pertains to many of the Plains Indian Tribes, who put family, tribal, and community needs before their own personal needs (Oppelt, 1989, p. 168-169). Roland (1994) in a case study of Northern Cheyenne Elders stated, "There is a high premium for sharing both materially and spiritually. . . . Sharing was highly virtuous to support the community" (p. 74). "The rising costs of higher education and the decrease of financial aid resources has been a concern and a barrier for all post secondary students" (Tijerina & Biemer, 1988, p. 91).

Wright (1991) gave examples of state and private organizations that offer financial assistance to American Indian students. Tuition waivers in the states of Montana and South Dakota, Minnesota's scholarship program, and private organizations, such as the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES), were a few of the programs mentioned in Wright's article (1991, p. 9).

Another barrier and obstacle noted in the literature was unsupportive institutional climate which includes academic and social integration, cultural conflicts, as well as racism and discrimination. Tijerina and Biemer (1988) incorporated all of these areas of an unsupportive institutional climate, as well as the environment American Indians face in a non-Native climate when they state:

It is difficult to communicate what it feels like to be an Indian caught in a non-Indian system. Try to imagine being an American but your history is not in the American history books; your government--while a legal part of the structure of governments--is not recognized by other governments; you can vote but are not part of the party system; all the things which you value and which give you identity are belittled or alien to your classmates. In short, you may study America but in myriad ways you are excluded from it. Under these

circumstances, consider whether *not* enrolling is a rational act in an irrational situation (p. 89).

Academic and social integration and cultural conflicts were identified as components of unsupportive institutional climate. To achieve in college, the American Indian student must successfully integrate, academically and socially, into the college culture, leaving their own Indian culture at the gate. Non-Native higher education institutions generally have viewed students as coming to the university to partake in what the institution has to offer (Kirkness and Barnhardt, 1991). When colleges look at the high attrition rates of American Indian students they "have located the problem in the students. The focus remains, 'How do you fix the students?' But it should be 'How do we train people to deal with this population?' or 'How do you reorient the organization?'" said Tierney in an article by O'Brien (1990, p. 29).

Racism plays into academic and social integration, cultural conflicts, and the entire unsupportive institutional climate barrier. Racism, according to Bennet's 1995 article, is defined by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights that it "refers to attitudes, actions or institutional structures that subordinate a person or group because of their color" (p. 672). Bennett (1995) separated racism into three categories, individual, institutional, and cultural, to illustrate racial issues in American higher education (p. 672). For the purposes of describing this barrier of unsupportive institutional climate, individual racism will not be discussed, only to point out that "When university officials and faculty do not take a stand against racial harassment, ethnic minority and White students get a clear message that racism will be tolerated" (Bennett, 1995, p. 674). Institutional racism is

“often hidden in established policies and practices . . . these can sometimes occur unintentionally, without conscious prejudice and can be based on ignorance,” (Bennett, 1995, p. 672). Bennett (1995) cited Gay’s definition of cultural racism when it referred to the “elevation of White Anglo-Saxon Protestant cultural heritage to a position of superiority over the cultural experiences of ethnic minority groups” (p. 673). Institutional and cultural racism can also be seen in the research on the low achievement of the American Indian student. Throughout the history of Indian education there have been numerous explanations for the low achievement of Native American students, explanations that place the blame of failure outside of the institution onto the Indian student or the Indian student’s culture. Although these explanations are geared at American Indian youth in elementary and secondary education, researchers have applied them to the Native American college student as well (O’Brien, 1990). These explanations range from genetic defect theories to the most recent, most popular, and most utilized theory of cultural discontinuity. Clarke (1997) declares this theory “maintains that cultural differences in communication and learning styles of minority students result in conflicts and misunderstandings with the Euro-American culture of the school, leading to failure for students” (p. 70). Ledlow’s article (1992) reviewed the literature and argues that there simply is not enough evidence to conclude that cultural discontinuity plays a significant role, but there is overwhelming evidence that economic and social issues which are not culturally specific to being Indian (although they may be specific to being a minority) are very significant in causing students to drop out of school. Clarke (1997) also hits on these areas when she suggests:

that it is not the 'alien' Indian cultures, traditions, and values, nor is it cultural discontinuity between the schools and the home environment, but rather the state of poverty of American Indian households, the hidden curriculum of the schools, and the stereotypical attitudes toward Indian children that are the major factors impeding the success of Indian youth (p. 68).

Other authors, such as Deyhle (1989) and Chan and Osthimer (1983), provide evidence that a strong sense of traditional cultural identity (as defined by speaking the native language fluently and engaging in traditional religious and social activities) provides a student with an advantage in school.

It is clear that higher education's very nature and purpose needs to be reexamined to enhance the post-secondary education of American Indians. Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991) suggest considering the four R's:

What First Nations people are seeking is not a lesser education, and not even an equal education, but rather a better education--an education that respects them for who they are, that is relevant to their view of the world, that offers reciprocity in their relationships with others, and that helps them exercise responsibility over their lives (p. 14).

Falk and Aiken (1984) recommend the development of Indian student organizations, and reexamine the appropriateness and effectiveness of support services offered to Native American college students (p. 29). Tierney in Official Encouragement, Institutional Discouragement: Minorities in Academe-The Native American Experience (1992)

suggested listening to the voice of the American Indian and that:

Academe must do more than officially encourage students to attend college on mainstream society's terms, for when this is done Indian students generally encounter institutional discouragement. Instead, participants in academic organizations need to develop rituals of empowerment that enable American

Indian students to celebrate their culture and become critically engaged in the life of the institution, their tribes, their families, and themselves. To do so offers American society vast potential for the 21st century and fulfills an obligation to Native Americans that has yet to be met (p. 165).

The last barrier and obstacle identified in the literature is the lack of role models. Because of the low number of American Indian students, higher education faculty and administrators, and professionals in Native communities "constitutes a psychological and social barrier to participation and success" (Wright, 1991, p. 7). The lack of Native role models puts non-Native faculty in a unique position of playing a significant role in the retention of American Indian students. According to Hornett (1989), faculty awareness that "Indian students for the most part do not want to relinquish their Indian entities and become part of the Anglo mainstream to be successful," is the first step to finding a solution to attrition (p. 12). Considering that higher education institutions are basically oriented to the white middle class population, "places an incredible barrier to success in higher education for the Indian students" (Hornett, 1989, p. 12).

Increasing the number of Indian faculty and Native American student population would be the ultimate recommendation of post-secondary institutions, but considering the small number of American Indians, this is not always possible. Falk and Aitken (1984) suggest that "non-Indian faculty and staff who support and show interest in Indian students are important elements in assisting these students with their college education" (p. 29). These authors also suggest that recruitment of American Indian administrators and retention of all Indian personnel is critical (Falk and Aitken, 1984).

Graduate School

Literature on the American Indian graduate student is for the most part nonexistent. In the United States, the enrollment of American Indians in graduate programs in 1993 was 7,000, 0.4% of the total graduate enrollments (Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac). In the Fall of 1995, 26 American Indians were enrolled in graduate programs at Montana State University, 2.8% of the total graduate program's enrollment (C. Johnson, personal communication, August 1996). The MSU masters program had a total of 612 students with 18 of those being American Indian. The MSU doctoral program totaled 30, with eight of those being American Indian (C. Johnson, personal communication, August 1996).

Graduation of American Indians from graduate programs for the nation in 1993 was 1,450; 1,344 masters and 106 doctorates out of 410,672 total graduates (U.S. Department of Education, 1993). For that same year, 15 American Indians received graduate degrees in Montana; 14 masters and one doctorate out of a total of 817 graduate degrees (U.S. Department of Education, 1993). In 1995, at MSU 15 American Indians received graduate degrees, all masters, out of 303 total MSU graduate degrees (C. Johnson, personal communication, August 1996). These low numbers indicate that few American Indians are in graduate education, fewer yet in doctoral programs.

The National Research Council (1995) provided a statistical profile of the American Indian doctorate recipients in a Summary Report 1993. According to this report the American Indian doctoral recipient was 39.9 years old, older than all other minorities

doctorate recipients (National Research Council, 1995). Male and female Indian doctoral recipients were almost equal, with females making up 49.2% of this population, while females in the total doctorate recipients population made up only 38% (National Research Council, 1995). In 1993, over 42% American Indian doctorates were in the education field (National Research Council, 1995).

The scarcity of literature available on American Indians in graduate education suggests that this low number can be attributed to the low pool of American Indians who graduate from bachelor programs, lack of financial resources, lack of role models, and low scores on graduate school entrance exams, such as the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) (Kidwell, 1986, 1989; Ottinger, Sikula and Washington, 1993; Williamson, 1994). The majority of these studies have been conducted on why American Indian students do attend graduate education, signifying the need for studies that examine how American Indians are succeeding in graduate education.

Considering the aforementioned barriers and obstacles of the American Indian undergraduate student, it is not surprising that the literature would include the low pool of American Indians who graduate from bachelor programs as attributing to the small number of Indian graduate students. American Indians, as well as all minority students in graduate education, are under represented. The reasons are deeply rooted in the American educational system, where few minorities graduate from high school, and those that do receive little encouragement and inadequate preparation to continue on to college (Wagner, 1992). At the college level, few minorities make it to graduate school. In 1990, while African Americans, Hispanics and American Indians made up 9.5%, 5.9%

and 0.8% of undergraduates respectively, they only accounted for 5.4%, 3% and 0.4% of graduate and professional school enrollments (Wagner, 1992, p. 7). Although the national movement to improve minority elementary, secondary, and undergraduate education is growing, the nation has yet to reap the benefits in terms of graduate school enrollment and graduation.

In what little literature there is on American Indians in graduate education, it does affirm that financial assistance is essential in the recruitment and retention of this population (Kidwell, 1986; Ottinger, Sikula and Washington, 1993; Williamson, 1994). There is still a misconception in the larger society that American Indians receive federal monies to finance all of their education. This misconception appears to be based on the false impression that all American Indians are taken care of by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. What is true is that American Indians, more than any other group in the nation, rely on personal sources of support. Over 62% of the Native American doctorate recipients in 1993 relied on personal sources of support, compared to 36.8% of all 1993 doctorate recipients, 58.3% of Black recipients, and 46.9% of Hispanic recipients (National Research Council, 1995). In 1993, over 55% of American Indians completed their doctorate in debt, compared to 47.6% of all 1993 doctorate recipients (National Research Council, 1995). Pelavin Associates (1994) did a report on the Indian Education Fellowship Program and found that 54% of the Graduate Indian Fellows ranked insufficient financial means as the reason for studying part time. To motivate American Indians, as well as any minority, more fellowships and special programs are needed.



Lack of role models continues to be a barrier and obstacle that American Indian students faced in their undergraduate studies. This deficiency of role models is even more detrimental in graduate education where faculty are an even greater influence on doctoral students. Williamson (1994) cites a Girves and Wemmerus (1988) article in which the interaction between a faculty member and a student is noted to be the key element distinguishing doctoral study from undergraduate study (Williamson, 1994). Indian students at the undergraduate level see few Indian graduate students and even fewer Indian faculty. Results of a study by Williamson addressed in an article also by this author (1994) stated "Minority students preferred an advisor/mentor of similar ethnicity and like-gender" (p. 7). The small number of American Indian faculty in higher education are faced with many demands. Kidwell in a working paper presented at the Opening the Montana Pipeline: American Indian Higher Education in the Nineties Conference discussed the demands of teaching a broad range of courses, sometimes outside of their field, and representing Indian viewpoints while being isolated from their support group, and how this has led many American Indian faculty to burnout (1991). It is critical that higher education institutions listen to their minority students' and faculty's needs for more minority faculty.

Low scores on the graduate school entrance exams, such as the Graduate Record Exam (GRE), have also been identified as one of the reasons why few American Indians enter graduate school (Kidwell, 1986, 1989; Williamson, 1994). The GRE is a widely used measure of a student's potential to complete a graduate program. Tests such as the GRE are used by many universities as part of the decision making process for admission

to graduate school. Undergraduate grade point average (GPA) is another criteria that is also widely used as part of this admission process. Zwick (1991), in a study that included 5,000 doctoral students at three major universities, found that the GRE and undergraduate GPA were unrelated to the achievement of candidacy and graduation of the doctoral students. Entrance tests have often been viewed as tools of gatekeeping, in that the tests have presented cultural biases to American Indians and other minorities. Many testing services are working with minorities to assure that these instruments are not tools of gatekeeping, but instruments that recognize the true diversity of America. The products of this work may be a long time in coming. Higher education institutions need to re-evaluate their graduate school admissions procedures to determine if it is truly a process or a barrier.

An unsupportive institutional climate was another barrier and obstacle that continued to affect the American Indian student (Williamson, 1994; Wagner, 1992). Universities have also been urged to provide an environment which will support and increase the success of minorities in graduate programs. Wagner (1992) provides a type of check list for institutions of higher education to utilize in their quest to provide this environment. Her study of six institutions found the following components are of support for African Americans, American Indians, Hispanics, and U.S. born Asian Americans in doctoral programs:

- (1) Aggressive and targeted recruitment efforts that incorporate personalized outreach;
- (2) Substantial, multi-year fellowships and assistantships that allow graduate students to focus on their academic studies;

- (3) A locus of academic and social support services: a special office of minority graduate programs associated with or part of the graduate dean's office, and a minority leader of stature (ideally an associate dean or professor) to lead the recruitment and environmental support efforts;
- (4) An atmosphere of expected success;
- (5) Department culture that encourages and supports mentoring by faculty;
- (6) Support groups that allow minority students to share life experiences and academic work, as well as other activities;
- (7) Curricula that encompass the new scholarship on ethnic, racial, cultural, and gender dimensions; and
- (8) A "critical mass" of minority students and minority faculty within departments (1992, p. 3).

To provide this environment of support for minorities will take the commitment of the total institution, as well as the university system, for diversity is here, growing, and no longer can be ignored.

In Williamson's 1994 study of Mexican American and American Indian doctoral students, a Mexican American female listed the reasons why she was able to complete her doctoral program. These reasons were similar to the other Mexican American and American Indian students (p. 26-27). Out of the nine reasons she stated, three had to do with the support she received from her chair, a chairwoman, and a faculty member. This indicates the importance of the faculty and student relationship in graduate education. Another three out of the nine reasons this Mexican American female gave indicated that the support of family and friends, as well as having access to resource people, such as counselors and doctors, were critical factors to her success. The last three reasons had

to do with her own "faith, determination and strong conviction that (her) belief would sustain her, and because she worked, she was able to afford the costs" (Williamson, 1994, p. 26-27). It is interesting that her personal abilities were just as important and critical to her success as outside forces of relationships with family, chair, and faculty.

### Post Doctorate

Post doctorate plans of American Indians in 1992 indicated that 21.3% of doctoral graduates planned to do post doctoral study, 49.3% planned to work in educational institutions, 8.7% in private industry, 6% in the government, and 11.3% in other areas (Ottinger, Sikula, and Washington, 1993, p. 9). It is encouraging to see that nearly half (49.3%) planned to work in educational institutions, to assist in providing role models and mentors to other Native Americans. American Indians had the lowest percentage of unknown plans, 3.3%, of all the 1992 doctorate recipients (Ottinger, 1993). One reason for this low percentage may be that there was such a small number of American Indian doctorates, while the demand for American Indians with doctorates was very high.

What these statistics do not tell us is how many of these Indian doctoral graduates are in positions to assist Indian people, more over, how many of them return to the reservations. Although Pelavin Associates (1991) study on Indian Education Fellows did not distinguish doctoral fellows from masters fellows, they found that 63% of the graduate degree recipients held at least one job that involved them with Indians or with issues concerning Indians. Considering the third world conditions that exist on American Indian reservations, obtaining employment on the reservation can prove to be very

difficult for the Indian with a doctorate, especially for the Indian doctorate who relied on personal sources of support and loans to finance his/her graduate education. Coupled with this challenge of obtaining employment, the American Indian graduate may be apprehensive about returning to the reservation. To expose themselves, as well as their families, to the substance abuse, poverty, and oppression common to most reservations can lead many graduates away from the reservation and their people who desperately need them.

American Indian undergraduate barriers and obstacles such as the lack of financial resources, few role models, and unsupportive institutional climate, continue to obstruct the educational process of American Indian graduate students. This trend will only progress if researchers and the nation as a whole continue to put Indians into "other" categories. The plight of the American Indian college student and the American Indian population will continue to mirror the third world until more concise research is done and more importantly disseminated.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH DESIGN

The two major realms used in social science research today are rationalistic inquiry and naturalistic inquiry. These two research realms are often viewed to be at opposite ends of a continuum. This is not to say that one realm is better or worse than the other, only that they are different. Rationalistic inquiry seeks the “scientific” facts and their relationship to each other in a controlled laboratory setting, with a predetermined hypothesis on the relationship of the variables (Guba, 1978). The design of rationalistic inquiry is preordained and fixed, with the treatment being stable to determine the effect in the relationship of the variables (Guba, 1978). Quantitative statistical techniques, such as the t-test, analysis of variance, and regression, are the general tools of rationalistic inquiry (Guba, 1978). The naturalistic method of inquiry is concerned with describing and understanding a social phenomenon in its natural environment, with a holistic view to permit understanding of the phenomena as wholes (Guba, 1978). Naturalistic inquiry takes a more flexible, pluralistic view of the reality of the world, with the design varying as new information is gained and new insights are formed, with the phenomena being considered as the “treatment” (Guba, 1978). Qualitative data techniques, such as

interview, focus groups, and observations, are tools used in naturalistic inquiry (Guba, 1978).

Whatever realm a researcher uses, be it rationalistic or naturalistic, depends on how to best answer the question of a study. Patton (1990) provided six questions to assist a researcher in making a decision on which method will best answer the question of a study. These questions are:

- (1) Who is the information for and who will use the findings?
- (2) What kinds of information are needed?
- (3) How is the information to be used? For what purposes is evaluation being done?
- (4) When is the information needed?
- (5) What resources are available to conduct the evaluation?
- (6) Given answers to the preceding questions, what methods are appropriate? (p. 12)

The aim of this study was to examine the success of American Indian doctoral candidates in Montana State University Department of Education programs. To understand the phenomenon of the success of these doctoral candidates and to answer Patton's questions above, led this researcher to the use of the naturalistic inquiry method for this study. The use of the naturalistic method gave a face and voice to a small diverse population who have often been forgotten, ignored, or shuffled into the "other" category in studies. In combination with the naturalistic method, part of the study relied on a quantitative method of data gathering. A questionnaire was utilized as a tool to provide quantitative data to describe the participants and to assure confidentiality of the identity of this small study population. The questionnaire also provided information on the participants' families, elementary and secondary school backgrounds, and to a better understanding

of the participants. Qualitative case studies of the 12 Montana State University Department of Education doctoral candidates were used to investigate the phenomenon of how they were successful. Case studies are used when researchers need to understand some special people or unique situations in great depth, where they can identify cases rich in information of the phenomenon in question (Patton, 1990). Qualitative data collection techniques of individual interviews and focus groups were used to answer the following research questions:

1. How have the doctoral candidates successfully completed a bachelor and masters program and entered a doctoral program?
2. What resources and how were these resources used for the candidates to complete a bachelors and masters degree?
3. What barriers and obstacles have the doctoral candidates experienced in their doctoral programs?
4. What resources are the candidates utilizing and how are they being used to overcome the identified barriers and obstacles?
5. What are the candidates post doctoral plans, and how do these plans relate to working with Indian people?

The interview techniques that were utilized are a combination of the standardized open-ended interview and the general interview guide approach. The standardized open-ended method assisted in reducing the effects and bias of the interviewer (Patton, 1990). All the questions were predetermined, standard in wording and sequence (Patton, 1990). This method increased comparability of the responses with the data complete for each person on the topics addressed in the interviews (Patton, 1990). A general interview guide approach, which was basically a checklist of issues to be covered in an interview, was utilized in combination with the standardized open-ended method (Patton, 1990). Patton (1990) suggested that with this combination of the two methods a number of basic



questions may be worded precisely in a predetermined fashion, while permitting the interviewer more flexibility in probing and more decision-making flexibility in determining when it is appropriate to explore certain subjects in greater depth. Using the standardized open-ended questions in combination with the general interview guide approach reduced the possibility of bias influencing the responses of the participants, yet allowing for probing into areas or subjects that may lead to a better understanding of the interviewees, their circumstances, and this phenomenon of American Indian successes in doctoral programs.

Focus groups were used in this study to clarify the interview data and to provide triangulation. Triangulation is a combination of data collecting methods which strengthens the design of the study (Patton, 1990). Focus groups are basically group interviews on a specific topic (Patton, 1990). Although the main purpose of the focus groups was to clarify the data from the individual interviews, it also provided an opportunity for the doctoral candidates to interact and share information with each other on barriers, obstacles, and resources to overcome them.

### Population

Twelve doctoral candidates were identified by the means of public knowledge and the assistance from the Montana State University Department of Education. All 12 of the participants had been accepted into the Department of Education doctoral program at Montana State University, with 75% accepted in 1996. Eleven of the participants were in the Adult, Community and Higher Education program and one in the School

Administration program. The original criteria of tribal membership was that the participants had only to identify themselves as a member of a Northern Plains Tribe to avoid the often heated issue of tribal enrollment and blood quantum. It turned out that all of the participants were enrolled members of a Northern Plains Tribe. Half of the doctoral candidates were female, similar to the gender trends of the 1993 American Indian doctorate recipients on the national level. The average age of this study population was 42 years, with a range from 28 years up to 51 years. Five of the participants were married, and ten of them had at least one child. Over 66% of the doctoral candidates planned to complete their programs in 1997. The participants made up two unique groups, in that one group had the opportunity of having the Montana State University Department of Education doctoral program brought to their residing reservation. The other group relocated to Montana State University campus to attend graduate school. Consequently the eight participants on campus were full time students, while the other group attended the doctoral program part time, while maintaining their full time employment.

Individual interviews were held with each of the participants. Each interview was taped and lasted from 50 minutes to 2.5 hours. Two focus groups were held, with half of the doctoral candidates participating in the groups. Each focus group was held after the individual interviews had been completed and the notes and tapes transcribed and analyzed for each group. The average time for the focus groups was 1.5 hours.

### Role of the Researcher

The utilization of qualitative inquiry for this study also calls for information about the researcher, since the researcher is the instrument in qualitative inquiry (Patton, 1990). The aim of the study and the study design were developed by the researcher because she was also an American Indian doctoral candidate in a Montana State University Department of Education program. Although the researcher did not include herself in the study, she did share the experiences of both the groups. She relocated to Montana State University campus and attended graduate school full time. While in the process of completing the requirements of the doctorate degree, she returned to her home reservation where the other group had the opportunity of having the doctoral program brought to them. She had also worked full time, while completing the doctoral degree requirements. Both locations gave the researcher the opportunity to share similar experiences as the study participants. This gave the researcher an in depth opportunity to study this phenomenon of the success of the doctoral candidates.

### Procedure

The location and unique grouping of the participants required that the study be carried out in two sites where this naturalistic phenomenon was occurring. Respecting the cultural norms of the participants, a respected individual was contacted on each site to provide spiritual guidance and blessings for this endeavor. The 12 doctoral candidates were contacted to obtain their agreement to participate in the study. A participant

information form, which inquired about a convenient time and place for the interviews, was also completed at this initial contact. (See Appendix A.) An interview schedule was then set up with the campus doctoral candidates, and six individual interviews were held. A questionnaire which inquired about the candidates early educational experiences was filled out at the beginning of each interview by the participant. (The questionnaire is located in Appendix B.) This procedure was done in the effort to assist the candidates in remembering their past educational experiences. The remaining two MSU campus participants were in the field, where their interviews took place two weeks later. While the interview tapes of the campus group were being transcribed, interviews with the reservation site group were held and conducted in the same fashion as the campus group. Interview data were analyzed across the cases to formulate the focus group questions. A focus group was then arranged and held with the MSU campus group, with half of the MSU campus candidates attending. When the participants from the reservation site interviews were completed, transcribed, and cross case analysis was done, the focus group took place on their reservation. The focus groups discussed different questions in relationship to the candidates unique group and the interview data.

The open ended interview questions began with the undergraduate experience of the doctoral candidates. Eight of the next interview questions were taken from the literature on the barriers and obstacles of American Indian undergraduate students. Two additional questions dealt with the participants' masters program experiences. The majority of the questions (13) dealt with the participants' doctorate programs in an effort to identify how these students are successful, the barriers and obstacles faced by these

students, and how they overcame these. The last two questions were on the candidates post doctorate plans. A copy of the interview questions can be found in Appendix C.

## CHAPTER 4

## UNDERGRADUATE EXPERIENCE

Introduction

The aim of this study was to show that there are American Indians who have been successful in post-secondary education and to demonstrate how other American Indians may also succeed educationally. Case studies, as described in chapter three, are effective “when a great deal can be learned from a few examples of the phenomenon in question” (Patton, 1990, p. 54). Following are the stories of the 12 participants’ undergraduate experiences from which a “great deal can be learned” about this “phenomenon” of the success of American Indians in higher education.

The stories will describe the undergraduate experiences for all 12 of the participants. The experiences will start with the type of elementary and secondary school the participants attended. The stories will include elementary and secondary school experiences when the information pertained to the participants’ higher education. The type of post-secondary institution they attended, what attracted them to that college, and the length of time it took for them to complete a bachelors program are also included.

Undergraduate Experience 1

This American Indian female was born on the reservation. She attended public elementary schools in two communities on the reservation. Her secondary education was experienced at a boarding school operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) located in another state. In her senior year, she had the opportunity to take college courses. These courses were brought into the high school through a nearby college. When she graduated from this boarding school, she already had college credits. She then entered a public four-year institution that was chosen by her parents.

I was expected to go to college and get a teaching degree. They said when I finish high school I was going to go to college. That I was going to go to (this college), because it was the closest to home, and it was small, and it would be more reasonable for me to go there than any place else.

The parents' expectation of a college education for their children had started with her older sister.

It was an expectation that my older sister had to get her degree because she was the oldest. She was going to set the example. I'm not just talking about my mom and dad now, I'm talking about the aunts and uncles. My older sister was expected to get her degree because she was the oldest, and she was going to set the example. She would be the role model for all the younger brothers, sisters, and cousins. No matter what it took, they were going to get her through college. That is why she finished. For the rest of us, it was just expected. We were not allowed to consider living on welfare; welfare was not a part of our reality. We would have to do something that we would earn a life with. That is where my dad came in so strong. He didn't have a college degree. I don't think he even had a high school diploma. He was a hard worker, and worked from morning to night.

The hard experiences with little education by her father and the experiences of an education by her mother and many of her aunts led to the expectation that their children also attain higher education.

Having had the opportunity of college courses in high school, this student felt academically prepared for college. The boarding school experience had already prepared her to live away from her family and live in the college dorm. "It gave me structure, time management, organizational skills, and discipline." Although an Indian club was established the first year she attended this public college, she was not involved in it. The college did not have any programs that were specific to the Indian student, "you were just another college student." Part of being "just another college student," she attended an orientation for all freshmen. The college also had an advising system for all its students.

That first quarter the advising was very structured. They advised you into freshmen English, and they showed you the catalogs and said this is what you should take, with the idea that you knew what you needed to get a degree. It worked well, but once you were a returning student it didn't matter. You could just fill out your own, walk in and they would sign off on it. For me, being so young, I think it was too much, because I made some bad choices.

Although she was not discriminated against in participating in the campus activities at this college, she transferred to a tribal college the next year. After a semester at this tribal college, she returned home. There she attended a newly established Tribally Controlled Community College and became employed. She found she was doing a job



that she could do well, but was not happy doing. She also now had children to provide for.

I decided I was going to go back to school. I had set my goal; I knew I was going to get my degree to be a teacher. I was married, with a lot of alcohol in our life style, which was an extreme for me, and I found my personality changed into something I didn't know, but it was not something I wanted to be. I had every excuse I had ever heard any student use while I was working in student services at the college. But my desire to have a better life style was more important to me, because I realized that this life style will continue unless I got my degree.

She then returned to the first college she had attended after graduating from high school.

She attended that public, four-year institution for a year when she learned of a special program being set up between the tribal college back home and a public university. This program brought courses from the university to the reservation, where she would be able to attend the tribal college as well. In her last year she could spend one week every month plus summer on the university's campus. This arrangement was effective for this student. She earned a bachelors degree in elementary education and an associate degree from the tribal college.

This student attended four higher education institutions. Two of the institutions were attended twice over the 12 year period. When a college degree became an expectation for herself, and not solely the expectation of others, that was when she made the earning of a degree a personal goal.

Undergraduate Experience 2

This female American Indian participant was raised by her grandparents. These grandparents were very supportive, "they have always supported me going to school, morally, emotionally, spiritually." She attended a public elementary and high school on the reservation where she was born and raised. In high school, this student did not have the expectation herself of going to college. However, college was an expectation for her, "If you did good in high school, you kind of got the impression that you should go on to college." Academics were not a problem for this student, but she did find she was not prepared for the life and system of post-secondary education. "I knew nothing of college; what was to go on there. I didn't know anything of dorm life. I had no orientation on what to expect." The summer after high school graduation, she got the opportunity to attend a precollege session at an all Indian institution.

That kind of gave me an idea of what would go on, but it was negative, too; it set you up to fail. It was an all Indian school and the mentality was that if you didn't succeed here you will never succeed anywhere else. They said that to us. Sure enough, that is what happened. I failed and I just figured that I would never succeed anywhere.

This student's high school counselor arranged for her to attend a public four-year college that following fall.

I was kind of pushed there from the guidance counselor at my high school. I really wanted to go somewhere else, but he steered me in that direction. He set it up for me--that this college would be the place where I would succeed and be able to complete.

She did not succeed or complete at this college. The following describes her experiences that led to her leaving this institution after five quarters.

It was the worst time in my whole life, that I have ever experienced. It was a very racist community and school. There was a lot of Indian students there; you know you always tend to find other Indian students and you hang around together. We had to go down to the men's dorm to eat every meal. A lot of times the other students would holler out and make all kinds of statements at us. Literally harassing us as we would come and go to eat. The school itself didn't really want anything to do with Indians. I don't think the school really discouraged, but they just didn't want to deal with it. They didn't want to develop any offices for Indian programs or counseling programs that would help us get through some of these things that we faced there. There was one Indian faculty member there. He was in the PE, or coaching department, but I never had any contact with him. Sometimes you can find key students that could set up things or make things better, but there really wasn't anyone there like that. We would struggle to set up programs that would keep us together and help us find things like financial aid, and counseling, and try to keep students in school; to try to deal with some of the things that we experienced. We had no support groups there. I just didn't like the feeling of more or less being alienated because of who I was as an Indian person. At that time I just couldn't handle the cultural conflict and racism, so I just quit.

Certainly many variables came into play to prompt this student to quit. The first variable was having the expectation of college imposed on her, because she "did good in high school." This indicates the lack of opportunity to do goal setting and career exploration during her secondary education. The second variable was being "set up to fail" at a precollege summer session that did little to boost her self-esteem, let alone prepare her for college. In fact, her failing at this summer program gave her the expectation that she would never succeed in higher education. Being pushed to attend an institution of

another's choosing only continued the track of being "set up to fail." The large Indian student population and the friendships that developed among the students did not provide enough support for this student to handle the racism and unsupportive institutional climate of the four-year institution.

Soon after quitting this college and going home, a job opened in another town. She applied and got the job and moved to the town. She worked at this position for almost two years when,

I realized while I worked there that a person needed to go to school because there was no opportunities. I was kinda in a rut. I was well trained under a lady who trained me on everything, but I was never recognized for a promotion or increase in pay for it. I could see it across the board there; there were other Indian women working there longer than I. I felt we were denied any type of promotion because we were Indian. The opportunities were just denied.

This realization lead this participant to talk to a co-worker about her circumstances and her desire to return to college.

I was working with this guy, and his best friend was a recruiter for Concordia College. He lined me up with his friend, and I did the necessary papers. By that summer, Concordia College was calling me. They offered me a pretty good funding package.

That fall the student went to Concordia, where she was the only American Indian on campus.

Again I faced alienation, but it was a different kind of alienation. I would have people, the financial aid officer, the admissions director, people in the top offices always getting in touch with me and checking on me to see if I was doing all right. I worked in the admissions office all while I was going to school there, so I had a lot of opportunities and a lot of help

and support. But the alienation was really hard. To me I always have to have the company of other Indian people, other wise I feel pretty much alone. A lot of those people there felt it too, and they asked me what it would take to keep me there. I told them I think we should have a full time Indian counselor, more Indian students. Within two or three years we had a full Indian studies program [with a] a full time counselor/recruiter. Her and I went out and recruited Indian students. They stood behind me with the recommendations I made. It made a difference; I wasn't just falling through the cracks. In fact, it was the opposite. They were personally contacting me to see if there were things I wanted done.

This time this student did not "just fall through the cracks." She was given a voice in the matter; a voice that was heard and acted on. More importantly, she was given the opportunity to be a player in the changes she recommended. This student not only became a player in her education that lead to her earning a bachelors degree, she over came the barriers of having no voice and no power over her own education. She no longer was "being set up to fail."

### Undergraduate Experience 3

This third study participant is a male American Indian, who attended public elementary and secondary schools. He was raised by his mother and father who were a big influence in his life, as was, and still is, his extended family of clan members. "I attributed it all to the prayers of my clan uncles. Nothing I'm doing is attributed to me; it's all to the supernatural, mystic role and I just happen to benefit by being in this body." He entered a public four-year institution the fall after high school graduation in

a pre-medicine program. This public college recruited him to be on their cross country team. The coach and team provided this student with a support system.

The cross country team was pretty supportive; I hung around them guys. They were whites, but jocks. When you are a jock you kind of get special privileges. It's a support system. The privileges of being in a support system. Having mentors who over see the system. Makes sure we are fed, in good shape, injury free. We were treated just like race horses.

The school did have a large Indian population, an organized Indian club in which he was elected secretary. "One time I just walked into a room where they were having a big discussion about preparing for a pow wow and parade. I spoke up, and just by speaking up they elected me as their secretary." He felt that his secondary education adequately prepared him for college.

Darn right it did. It was based on my resentment of the white system. I was put in remedial and forced to stay after school. To me I felt I looked bad. The school I went to was majority white. They had like an elitist group and they would put them in the more difficult classes, more conventional classes, like physics and algebra. I started resenting them and that system. I took those classes just to show them that I'm just as good as they are. It was just my spit I guess, that got me into that, because I didn't like being looked down upon. That and my natural competitiveness.

Although this college did have many of the attributes that would lead to the retention of this student, he was only there one semester.

A year later, this student attended another public four-year institution. This institution did not have an Indian club, in fact the Indian population was very small. "It was really lonely; there wasn't many Indians there. I was there solo; it was pretty tough. That was the worst part of it." The student transferred to a tribally controlled college,

which was not on his reservation, nor held courses in his tribal culture. Five years later he entered a public, four-year institution that was close to his reservation and from which he earned a bachelors degree.

This male study participant attended four institutions over a 12 year period. One of the institutions was a tribally controlled college, and the other three were four-year public institutions. His resentment of the white system and efforts to compete motivated him academically for college. His strong spirituality and the encouragement, support, and prayers of his family and clan gave this student the push to overcome his undergraduate barriers and obstacles.

#### Undergraduate Experience 4

The fourth undergraduate experience is the story of an American Indian female, who attended an elementary boarding school. The secondary schools she attended were also boarding schools that were operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Having finished all but a few credits by her senior year in high school, she was able to attend Haskell, a tribally controlled college. "My high school counselor and my mom worked it out, because I had finished all my requirements. They let me go to Haskell the second semester, and come back and graduate. If I didn't go I probably would have just sat out that semester." A semester after returning from Haskell and graduating from high school, she entered the local tribal college. "They offered classes that looked interesting. I took a class here and there. I didn't plan on going for a degree."

This student then returned to Haskell for a semester, where she did very well academically. Again, she attended classes that looked interesting. She then transferred to a public college in another state, where she was still in a general studies program. Once again this student took courses that looked interesting. The longest this student attended any of these institutions was two semesters, taking only courses that interested her. "I wasn't really there for the academics; it was more for the adventure."

Attending college for the adventure, with no degree program in mind, certainly tends to explain why this student was not retained to earn a degree from either of the two institutions. Her boarding school experiences in elementary and secondary education also play into the explanation of why this student viewed college as an "adventure."

I think a lot of it was because of the boarding schools. You were always told what to do. That is the way I grew up, never having my own opinion. Everything was told to me--what I had to do, when to do it. I think that is why I stayed in school and went to college--because I knew I had to. There was no question.

Returning home, she then became involved in the American Indian Movement (AIM). She even did a short stint in Lebanon, where she worked with the people who were a people just like American Indians.

I saw how they were a people just like us, but they didn't have a land base. They were able to support their people and were able to fight this big war. And here we are, we have our land base, but yet we can't become self sufficient like that. It was a neat experience for me.

Her involvement in the movement led her to return to college.

I think more of it came when I really wanted to be there, to be in college. It was in the early 80's, when the American Indian



Movement was still strong. All the things we were trying to do there. We talked about education a lot. I think that is what really prompted me to go back.

She entered a public university located in another state. She no longer looked at college as an adventure, but a tool which could benefit Indian people. This university had an Indian club and a Native American studies department, with counseling available for their American Indian population. Although she finished high school early, she was still academically unprepared for college. "I took remedial English and math courses every semester and summers, too." She was assigned an advisor in her degree program, but she still found that she needed to be more aware of the courses she took. "I took two or three courses twice, that I didn't realize I did. I wasn't keeping that close of tabs on it." She earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Home Economics from this university.

This female American Indian study participant attended four institutions before earning a degree. One of these colleges she attended twice, but at different times. The American Indian Movement gave this student direction in her life; i.e., view education as a tool to benefit Indian people, not just an "adventure."

#### Undergraduate Experience 5

This American Indian male grew up on an Indian reservation, where he attended a public one room elementary school. He attended two public secondary schools, one located on the reservation and the other in a town that bordered the reservation. After graduating from high school, he attended a business college. "I went to study business

because I was encouraged by my family and my physician, because I already had rodeo injuries." He earned a certificate in business, and then worked for the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Indian Health Services as an accountant. When he applied for promotions, he realized he needed more education. "I saw people who had more education, had more flexibility, and more job mobility. Going to work for awhile helped me to see that, and that helped motivated me." This prompted him to go back to school. He chose a four-year private institution.

Because my grades in high school were not that good, I had trouble getting accepted in a public institution. At this college they accepted me on a probationary basis and I received some help through what was called the Office of Economic Opportunity. They were dealing with a special population at that time. It was actually for minority people who had let go of their social problems; people who may have been in trouble with the law, or in jail. It targeted that group, but I was able to get in. I think I was the only Indian person in that program at that time.

The idea for advancement in employment, finding an institution to accept him and his high school grades, and securing the funding to assist with college expenses were all part of why this student returned to college. Desire was another reason that motivated this student.

I have never pushed myself intellectually, all through grade school and high school. When I went to this college, I said to myself that I was there to do this--push myself. It is interesting the messages I got in grade school and high school--especially in high school--that I wasn't very good at anything. When I went to (the high school that bordered the reservation) I was kind of pushed out of math and science classes with the idea that you guys (Indians) are not too good at these kinds of things. I internalized it. Plus I had some low self-esteem issues coming out of high school as far as the discrimination

that I encountered. There were a lot of racial issues at the time there. I wasn't really sure I could do it. When I first started going to the college, I took an IQ test and I was told I was above average, which kind of blew me away. I thought that I would always have to work extra hard as an Indian, and not be intellectually good enough until this IQ test told me that I had a high IQ.

The Indian population was small at this college, but he had the assistance of a counselor who worked with special groups. Although Indian population may have been small at this institution, the community was diverse. "In this community, there were three different cultures, Anglo, Chicano, and Indian. That really helped me. That is where I started looking at and appreciating my own Indianness."

He attended this public institution for two years and then transferred to a public four-year institution.

The program that was assisting me financially decreased as you went further in college. The idea was that you were to find other funding sources. The higher cost of tuition at the private college led me to transfer to a public institution, which cost less. And in the meantime I had proven myself to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) scholarship program, which had actually told me at one time that they didn't think I was college material, because of my low grades in high school. So after two years, I proved that I could do it. Actually I was on the dean's list. At that time, they would not fund you at a private institution. That was really the biggest reason why I transferred.

This college was just establishing a Native American studies program. This student was awarded work-study and was placed in this project. "That really helped me to deal with my own cultural issues, as far as dealing with cultural conflict." He was also elected

president of the Native American student organization and had the opportunity to deal with the cultural diversity issues on campus.

One of the things that we found out was that we were not receiving financial aid; that they were not fulfilling our needs. The financial aid office's assumption was that the Bureau of Indian Affairs took care of us. We couldn't get their attention so we went on the local radio station and talked about it. The financial aid officer changed and started working with the Indian students.

This student attended three post-secondary institutions, earning a certificate at the first. The high cost of a private institution along with the declining funding and the non-funding of private institutions by the BIA, led the student to transfer to a public college where he earned a bachelors degree. The student was involved in the Native American organization, which gave him an awareness and a voice in the issue of diversity on college campuses, as well as his personal issues of cultural diversity.

#### Undergraduate Experience 6

The next story is the undergraduate experiences of an American Indian female, who first attended a government boarding elementary school and then a public school. She received her secondary education at a boarding school on a reservation. She was raised by her parents, who encouraged her and her siblings.

My mother and father were both really advocates of education. My dad would always say, 'Don't ever expect anybody to take care of you, least of all a man. Don't ever expect a man to take care of you, nobody can take care of you better than you can take care of yourself.' A lot of families really pushed their daughters toward marriage. That was security. They really encouraged us. They wanted all of us to be teachers. They

always encouraged us to read a lot and we had seen them reading all the time. They had contacts off the reservation, and they would take us to visit and expose us to other lifestyles.

When her sister finished a year at college, her parents held the expectation of college for all their children.

It was expected. My oldest sister went to college; and once my dad had seen she could do it, he really encouraged all of us. My dad had this complex; because we were full bloods, I think he didn't expect us to. He did know we had to work, or be trained, or do something beyond high school. When my sister finished her first year of college and did well, he really pushed the rest of us to go in that direction.

When she graduated from high school, her father contacted a friend.

He told his friend that he wanted me to go to college, but he didn't know what we had to do. I didn't get that information in high school either. I think most of us were pushed toward a vocational school. I know a lot of my classmates went on relocation, but I just couldn't see myself doing that.

The friend of her fathers sent the forms for the student to fill out and return. With the assistance of this friend, she entered a public, four-year institution in another state.

There were no American Indian faculty or staff at this college, and the Indian student population was very small. "There were five Indians there, and we just automatically hung out together. We were all starting at the same time, and we all took the same classes that first semester. We didn't have any connection with any organized college group." Although this student didn't think that her secondary education prepared her for the academics of college, she was confident in her ability because she could read. "I have always been a reader, and we were encouraged to read. I always had that confidence in myself because I could read, and I enjoyed reading. I knew I could learn

whatever I needed to learn to get by. I think that is what saved me, that I could read.”

Science and math was another story:

I was always scared of science. I don't know why. The math was hard. We had help at this college--a program for Hispanics. There were so few of us (Indians) that I don't think they knew what to do with us, so they put us in with the Hispanics, and we did get by.

The large American Indian student population and her sister prompted her to transfer to a public university in the same state. “I transferred over there to be with her. And they had a very big Native American student population there. It was better.” At this institution they had a program for American Indians with a lot of activities. “Unfortunately they were drinking things. Everyone drank--the director and staff. When I think about it now, it was too wild.” She quit this university and worked. After four or five years, she returned to the public university. “For a year again I went to that school, but it was just taking nonsense classes. I didn't have a degree program, and I didn't have any kind of major picked out.” With no guidance, direction, or plan, this student left higher education again.

When she decided on a major, she enrolled in the local tribal college and took courses that she needed. The tribal college did not have a program for her major, and she transferred to a college that did. She entered a four-year, public institution that was close to the reservation. Although this college was located near the reservation, there were not very many American Indians there. “By then, after going to all the other colleges, I knew what to do and get what I needed.” She earned a bachelors degree from this college. “I started college in 1969 and I didn't get my degree until 1983. It was

just periods of stopping and going, stopping and going and working. I think a big part of it was that I had no academic counseling. When I went to college I had no idea what it was about." Her prior experiences in higher education are what eventually helped her earn her a degree.

### Undergraduate Experience 7

This American Indian male grew up on a reservation and attended a public elementary and high school on the reservation. He was raised by his grandparents, who were very supportive of his education.

My grandfather especially, to all his grandchildren. I think in some way he could see the future. He could see that the days of the Indian was over, and we would have to make that adjustment to the white man's society. He said you have to do this. You have to get education--the only means to get ahead. To make something of one's self is through education.

His grandparents supported his education even when they had very little experience with education themselves. "As far as I know, my grandfather and grandmother went through elementary and I don't know if they even attended seventh or eighth grade."

After graduating from high school, this student attended a two-year public community college which his brother was also attending.

I went because I got a basketball scholarship. The coach was really supportive of Native Americans; he seemed to know where we came from, the things we went through, through the educational processes. He knew that we had the tendency to drop out.

After two weeks of attendance at this institution, this student did drop out.

I went home for some reason and I never went back. I think maybe it was that transition thing we go through, but for being lonely it wasn't that. My brother was there and I was staying with him, so my home life was okay. It was when I went to classes. I think there was only two or three Indians in each of my classes. I was used to practically everyone being Native American.

The supportive coach had no idea that this student would not return, nor did the student himself. "I had no intention of staying home, of not going back. I even left my clothes with my brother there." Reflecting back on the coach's support, this participant stated, "I think if I did go back, it is really possible that I could have made it through. In fact my course work wasn't that complicated for me. I think it was the culture shock."

The course work was not a problem for this student, indicating that the student was academically prepared for college. Although the coach provided course selection and advising, this student was not prepared or even aware of how the college system worked at this institution. "It was the unexpected. In fact, I didn't even know that we could just go to class and leave. I thought we had to be in class all the time." Financial aid was also an "unexpected" area that this student was not prepared for. "I didn't know anything about financial aid. I didn't know what it's purpose was. In fact, I didn't even know it existed." This public community college did not employ any American Indian faculty or staff and it did not host an Indian club to provide a support system for its Indian students. "When you went there, you were on your own. I don't think there were any Indians in the community, just the few of us that were going to college." The unexpected college life coupled with the "culture shock" of being one of only a few



Indian students at this institution can very well explain why this student did not return to college at this time.

His grandparents, specifically his grandfather, talked to him about not returning to college, "He was mad, in fact he used some very strong words." These "strong words" from his grandfather prompted the student to enter Haskell Indian College the following fall. He stayed at Haskell Indian College for two years, earning a certificate in masonry. This institution did not provide this student with an advisor, or a special Indian student services program. What this institution did provide were some role models of Indian faculty and staff and even more importantly a large American Indian student population. These Indian peers assisted this student with the college system. "I learned the system from those who were already there. With them, I found out where to go and what to do."

The student returned to the reservation to work for several years and then returned to the same public community college that he attended right out of high school. Majoring in history, this student found the institution had made changes when it came to the needs of their Indian students. The institution did not have an Indian club organization; however, they designated a room, "a cultural room; we'd hang out there all the time." These changes also included an advisor, a Native American lady from his reservation. "She gave us Indians a tour, told us what to expect, and helped us fill out our schedules and forms." Even more importantly the changes caused an increase in the Indian student population. "I knew a lot of people there; my cousin and brother were there and a lot of people from the reservation. The Indian population really grew, and

that really helped me.” Although this public community college now addressed and made changes to meet the needs of this American Indian student, he did not complete a degree in history. “I was short just three credits. They wanted me to go to summer school, but I didn’t.”

The student then started to look at four-year institutions, and settled on a college in Colorado. He did not attend the Colorado college, but did attend another public, four-year institution in South Dakota. “My intentions were to just work there that summer. My wife’s sister was working there and somehow convinced my wife and I to stay and work.” Having prior experiences in higher education, this student now knew what to expect and was prepared to operate in the college’s system. This four-year college had an Indian organization and the institution’s Native American population was large. In addition, the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Indian Health Services regional offices were located in the community. The student now had job and family obligations that became a barrier to attaining a degree. “I worked full time and I took classes when I could. Mostly, they were night classes and they offered classes on Saturdays. I could pick up three hours here and there, which made it and the courses harder, academically and time wise.” Along with the lack of time and academic performance, this student also experienced the lack of financial resources to attend college and provide for his family. “Financially it was hard, even though my wife and I were working. I then had family obligations. I was unable to get any grants. In fact, I didn’t get a BIA scholarship. I had to pay everything myself, which took away from my classes and family.” Although this student now had the knowledge of the college system and there was a large

population of American Indians at the institution and in the community, obligations of employment and family and lack of financial resources presented a barrier too large for him to overcome.

Returning to the reservation, he then attended a newly established tribal college, where he earned an Associate of Arts degree in Business. At this time, a Chicago based educational service for Native Americans offered bachelors degrees at the tribal college. The student felt all his needs were met, and he could now concentrate on his course work. "The faculty went to the students. We didn't have to worry about transportation or anything to go to classes." This male participant attended the courses and earned a Bachelors of Arts degree in Community Services.

This male participant attended six institutions over a 24 year period. One of the colleges he attended twice. Another one of the institutions brought the courses to the reservation, where he finally earned a bachelors degree. He experienced many of the barriers and obstacles identified in the literature presented in chapter two. At the first institution he experienced an unsupportive institutional climate, that did not give him the opportunity to learn the college system. The student also experienced "culture shock" at this institution, where there was an extremely small population of Indian students. At another institution, this student experienced inadequate financial support. He had family obligations and needed to work full time, which put time constraints on attending college full time. These barriers and obstacles may have hindered and at times stopped this student, but he found ways to overcome them, even though it took 24 years to earn a bachelors degree.

Undergraduate Experience 8

The eighth undergraduate experience is the story of a female American Indian who attended a boarding elementary school. For her secondary education, she attended both a public and boarding school. After graduating from high school, she entered a public, four-year state college. "It was just the thing to do, to go to college after you graduated." Although there were only nine American Indians at this state institution, the college provided a counselor who assisted the students any way he could. "The counselor did all of the advising, testing, and got us tutoring. He would even bring us back home on weekends and holidays." This counselor could not prevent the racism that this student experienced from other students and some instructors. "That is why I didn't want to go back the next year. You could just feel the racism of the people there." She did not go back the next year. Instead she sought out a tribal college with the hope for a less racist environment.

The next year she transferred to Haskell, a tribal college in another state. The American Indian Movement (AIM) was gaining momentum, and this student quit Haskell and united with the momentum of that movement. "I joined AIM, Women of all Red Nations, and the Blackhills Alliance. I worked for Indian people through the movement for almost seven years." With the maturity that comes with life experiences, the American Indian Movement's advocacy of education, and a child to support; this student realized that she needed to go back to school. "At that point it was for survival more

than anything. I had my son, no job. I felt like I needed to get a college degree to provide for my son, because I didn't have any way of supporting him."

She returned to a public university that her sister was attending. Taking basic math, utilizing student support service programs, and having an American Indian advisor at this university retained this student. She earned a bachelors degree after eight years, attending three institutions, two public and one tribal college.

### Undergraduate Experience 9

This female American Indian attended a Catholic boarding school for her elementary and secondary education. She was unsure of her high school graduation status. "I don't think I graduated. I never did get a diploma. I know I was short credits for graduation." She was encouraged by her brothers to get a college degree.

I had intended to go to the army. My brothers discouraged me from going, and told me if I still wanted to go after I earned a college degree, that they would allow it then. They were afraid of the treatment that women were getting, at that time, in the army.

She entered a public community college. "They had just opened a program [of her interest] in a two-year degree there." This program was her second choice after her first choice of the army. This college was small enough so she did not feel a need for an orientation. "When I had questions, I just asked the teachers." The American Indian population was small. "There were just four of us there, at that time." The student experienced a great deal of racism at this institution. "Most of the students that went to that college were from farming communities. It was difficult to hear their regular

derogatory remarks about Indians, so that was difficult there. I didn't do anything, or say anything, because I was by myself." It was an American Indian instructor that helped this student cope with the racism.

There was one teacher who was Indian. She gave me a sense that everything was going to be okay. She was one of my first instructors. She made everything all better, even when I didn't talk to her, or I didn't have a problem. Just knowing that she was there gave me a sense that everything was okay.

The presence of this American Indian instructor gave this student the ability to cope in this environment.

The next year she was offered a scholarship to a public university in another state. Here she was inadvertently invited to join a club for Hawaiians. "They had seen me around campus, and assumed that I was Hawaiian. I was immediately inducted into a minority group of people. It wasn't Indian; it was Pacific Asians. So I had a social network there." With a social network in place this student found that she was unprepared for the academics of college. "I had to get tutored through a math course, and I had to do a lot of schedule changes because I was not prepared for the course work. It turned out okay, but I needed tutors through a lot of things." Although she overcame being academically unprepared and was included in a social network, she returned to the reservation.

She found a job, but it came with an excessive amount of stress.

I ended up back on the reservation, developed cancer and anorexia from over working in the law and order system on the reservation. I felt like I was killing myself, so I talked to my brothers, and they agreed with me that I better get a degree and

try to advance myself in a career where I wasn't so over worked, and I would be able to provide for my children.

With the advice of her brothers, she started looking at four-year colleges.

My first choice was (a four-year, public college) at that time, because it was closer to my mother, who had raised my children. It was important to me that my kids maintain some type of consistency, and we would be close enough to visit my mother, or she could visit us.

After visiting, she found this college to be uncaring. "I got the sense that they didn't care if I went there or not. After visiting a few offices I decided I would completely forget about going this college." She decided on her second choice, a public university. "It was the next college that was the closest to home. My brother was there, and already had a sense about this town--that it was small, and good for the kids." This university had an organized American Indian club. She attended the meetings and fund raising activities of this club regularly. "I had a sense of connectiveness to the Indian club." Although she had this "connectiveness" to a support system, she had to learn the university system by trial and error.

I had problems with my advisors, and they were changed frequently. I had problems with them not really looking into my file and seeing what classes I needed to take. I just assumed that they didn't look enough, or didn't care enough about my academic life because I was an Indian.

Like the first college she attended, this student again encountered racism. At this university she had a support system made up with the members of the Indian club and her brother. Unlike the first institution, where she did nothing when faced with racism, she fought back. "I went directly to the assistant dean of my college, and told him about

the incidents, and I worked with Affirmative Action on a couple of issues. I experienced worse discrimination at (this university) than at any of the other institutions.” With a support system she was able to confront the racism that she encountered and endure until she received a bachelors degree.

This American Indian female attended three institutions. She experienced racism at the first, but coped with the assistance of an American Indian instructor. The diverse population at the second institution could explain why she did not encounter racism there. At the third institution she faced the “worst” racism, but prevailed with a strong support system. With this system she was able to overcome the demons of racism and earn a degree.

#### Undergraduate Experience 10

This undergraduate experience is the story of a male American Indian who grew up off the reservation. He attended public elementary and secondary schools. He attended high school until the eleventh grade, when he dropped out. Not completing was a history and the norm in his family. “I was never encouraged to finish school by my family or by the school systems. The people in my family have never finished high school, just a history of incompletes there.” After receiving a General Equivalency Diploma (GED), he worked in minimum wage jobs.

The types of jobs that I’ve had up to that point were like labor jobs, low paying, which really didn’t get me anywhere. It was very difficult, and it was a struggle to survive on minimum wage. I realized through observing people that were going to college, my peers, and other people that I associated with and



been hanging around with at a university, my own potentials. These people don't have anything different than me; I'm no different from them. These people just have another opportunity that I've never experienced. I made it a goal to enter college, and it was quite a struggle. Putting together financial aid, getting the money and resources, and to just get my foot in the door was overcoming the first barrier and obstacle.

The realization that he was no different than others who were going to college plus working just to survive at survival wages prompted this student to make college his goal.

He located a scholarship for American Indians and entered into teacher education at a private, four-year institution. "I applied to the program, and it was very competitive. Actually, I was surprised to be accepted and participate in it. That is how I got started." The scholarship program provided support services of advising and orientating the Indian students to the college systems through regular meetings. Although the scholarship provided tutoring, the student still struggled with college academics, and it was his desire that pushed him to overcome his unpreparedness. "I think what helped me to succeed was a desire to succeed. Just wanting it very much." What the scholarship program could not provide was an environment void of prejudices.

I think there was an element of jealousy in the regular student body to the Native American students--that Native American students were getting their tuition and fees paid for by the scholarship service. The scholarship program brought in a huge influx of Native American students, and I think the college had a hard time adjusting to that. I also personally experienced discrimination in my classes, from the other students and some of the instructors. On a personal level I confronted it many times; other times it just wasn't worth confronting.

The student came in on the scholarship program in its last year, and without the scholarship he was unable to afford the high expenses of the private institution. He then transferred to a tribal college, where the tuition was a lot lower. He earned an associate degree at this tribal college and then transferred to a public university. This was the same university where he first had the opportunity to observe his peers attending college, the place where he had realized that he was no different and had made college a goal. Switching to another major, he earned a bachelors degree after four more years of courses.

This student attended three institutions of higher education over a seven year period. Dropping out of high school, and having a family history of "incompletes" did not stop this student from setting the goal of a college degree. Getting his foot in the door, searching for funding, struggling through classes, and facing prejudices did not stop this student from attaining a college degree.

#### Undergraduate Experience 11

This American Indian male was raised on the reservation. He attended a public elementary school located on the reservation. His secondary education took place in a public high school located in a town that bordered the reservation. He remembers in high school,

Some of the teachers would tell us (Indians) that we born to fail. One teacher flat out told me that I was a dumb Indian and didn't know anything. Other teachers said to me that I would become a nonproductive citizen--that I will be out on the

streets. Some of my white friends would even say these things, too. I was out to prove them wrong.

He was raised by his parents, who with little education struggled to provide for their family, but who encouraged their children to get an education.

My first choice was to go into the military, but my parents discouraged me from going. They said if I was going to get anywhere in this world, I needed to get an education. My father had an eighth grade education, my mother a ninth grade education. They both knew how they struggled and they didn't want their kids to go through the same thing.

His parents, school counselor, and peers all had the expectation that this student would go to college.

He entered a four-year public college from which he received a wrestling scholarship. "It wasn't very much, they jokingly called it laundry money." He was advised into courses that were similar to what he took in high school. The courses did not challenge his abilities and allowed him a lot of free time. This permitted him to concentrate on the racist environment in which he found himself. "That was one of the keys that helped me decide to go back home." After the first quarter he returned home.

The next year, he attended a public technical college. The courses he took at this school were very technical. His secondary education did not prepare him for the math and science courses he needed. An advisor was appointed to him, but only provided minimal information. "It was learn as I went, and mostly I was on my own." Like the first institution, he only stayed at this college for one quarter.

At home a tribal college was being established and offered courses as a satellite center of a public community college. The student witnessed the accreditation of the

tribal college while attending courses there. The student's ambitions out ran the degree offerings of the community college, and he transferred to a public, state university. At this institution, he found that he was not prepared for the writing required in his classes.

I got to the point where I tried to talk to the instructors about the problems I was having in their classes. In most cases they were very helpful, but in some cases very critical. I felt inferior some of those times. I usually ended up dropping the classes that the instructor was critical.

He overcame his writing problems and earned a bachelors degree at this university.

This student attended four institutions over a nineteen year period. He learned that it was not only his desire to "prove them wrong" that got him through, but his willingness to be and think positive. "I am an optimistic person, if there's an avenue or opening I try to take advantage of it. I do things that keep me going."

### Undergraduate Experience 12

The last undergraduate experience is the story of an American Indian male, who attended a public, one room school on the reservation for the first three years of his elementary education. The remainder of his elementary years was in a public school that was also located on the reservation. His secondary education was at a public school where the majority of the student population was non-native. "I think my brothers and I were the only Indians there." He was raised by his parents, who were very active and supportive of his education.

They were always strong supporters of us and school; they made us do our homework every night. I remember Mom making us always do our homework, Dad too, but mostly

Mom. She was the big pusher to go to school and get educated. They were always active in any kind of parent organization; they were always pushing us to do good.

His father did have a high school education, and his mother had continued on to a tribal college but did not receive a degree. "Not many in our family or in my extended family have gone on to college."

It was just "a given" that he would go to college. "All my friends that I was hanging out with were all going to school. It was just the thing to do, a group thing. My older brother was in school, so I didn't think of anything else." He chose an in-state, public university which his brother was attending. His secondary education, for the most part, had prepared him for college academics. "I don't think I had enough writing skills. I just wasn't a good enough writer." He utilized his friends at this university, to read over his papers. "Make sure my papers made sense." He joined a fraternity, was involved with the church, and sat on the church's parish council. "I did a lot with the church as an undergrad, and my brother was there. He introduced me to all of his friends, so I met a lot of people through him." His fraternity, church, brother, and friends provided a support system for him. This support assisted him in learning the college system. "They had a freshmen orientation, but I never did attend any functions like that. People just helped me out." The university had an American Indian Club and had employed American Indians on the staff.

I know there was one in the education school; I had a class with him. There were some other faculty there in the other departments, too. There were others, that worked in the financial aid office just with Native American students. I had

quite a bit of interaction with them. And they had some counselors there that were Native American.

With the encouragement of his parents, the support of the organizations he joined, the American Indian role models employed at the university, friends and brother, he earned a bachelors degree.

This American Indian male study participant attended one post-secondary institution and earned a degree within five years. This participant's undergraduate experience is what a majority in higher education would term "traditional." Entering college after graduating from high school and attending one institution for an average of five years is an example of a "traditional" student and is a profile of this participant.

### Summary

The purpose of this study was to show that there are American Indians who have been successful in higher education. The stories of the participants' experiences were presented to demonstrate how they were successful in their undergraduate education. The background data collected on the 12 doctoral candidates revealed that ten of them grew up on American Indian reservations where they experienced the low social and economic standards typical of most reservation communities. Eight of the candidates attended a public elementary school, three attended an elementary boarding school, and one attended both for their elementary schooling. In their secondary school years, seven attended a public high school, four a boarding school, and one attended both. Ten of the candidates graduated from high school. One participant dropped out before attaining a

high school diploma, but later received a General Equivalency Diploma (GED). No high school diploma was conferred on the twelfth candidate, and she was unsure of her status.

Their stories were revealed through interview data, which was based on the barriers and obstacles identified in the literature and discussed in chapter two. Barriers and obstacles of inadequate academic preparation, inadequate financial resources, unsupportive institutional climate, and lack of role models were all portrayed in the stories. A cross case analysis of the study participants' undergraduate stories revealed that only two of the participants felt their secondary education prepared them for college academics. One of these participants was Undergraduate Experience #1, who had the opportunity to attend college enhancement courses at her high school to prepare her for college classes. The other participant (Undergraduate Experience #4) who attended a public high school that bordered the reservation and stated that it was his "resentment of the white system" that prepared him for college. He felt that he "looked bad" because he was put into remedial courses and forced to stay after school.

They had like an elitist group and they would put them in the more difficult classes, more conventional classes, like physics and algebra. I started resenting them and that system. I took those classes just to show them that I am just as good as they are. It was just my spit, I guess, that got me into that--because I didn't like being looked down upon.

The remaining ten candidates did not feel that their secondary education adequately prepared them for college academics. These ten utilized developmental courses, special labs, and tutoring to assist them in passing college courses. One participant (Undergraduate Experience #6) stated that it was her love of reading that gave her the

confidence to continue. "I always had that confidence in myself, because I could read and I enjoyed reading. I knew I could learn whatever I needed to learn to get by. I think that is what saved me--that I could read." College enhancement courses in high schools, developmental courses, tutoring and special labs in college, and character resources such as a resentment of the white system are what assisted these candidates in their undergraduate education.

Inadequate financial resources to attend college are a major barrier or obstacle for many college students. The majority of the study participants received their bachelors degrees in the 1980s. The eighties decade was not kind to American Indians, in that the Reagan administration cut many social and education programs that greatly affected Indian communities and the Indian college student. Although the Indian student population continued to grow in the eighties, funding for Indian education declined. Inadequacy or lack of financial resources affected all of the participants. One of the students stated, "Putting together financial aid, getting the money and resources, was overcoming the first barrier and obstacle." Inadequate financial support is what also prompted four of the participants to transfer to another less expensive college to complete their bachelors degrees. The candidates also experienced lack of knowledge of the policy and procedures to apply for federal student aid. As one participant stated, "I didn't know anything about financial aid, I didn't know what it's purpose was, in fact I didn't even know it existed." The inadequacy/lack/ignorance of financial resources to attend college affects all college students and was a strong variable in hindering these participants in completing their undergraduate degrees.



Four areas of unsupportive institutional climate were identified in the literature as barriers or obstacles to the success of American Indians in undergraduate education. The four areas were social integration, academic integration, cultural conflicts, and racism/discrimination. Five of the study participants indicated that at least one of the institutions they attended provided some type of social opportunity, usually an Indian Club organization, to assist them in adjusting to the college environment. The remaining participants stated that the higher education institutions they attended did not provide any social opportunities for Indian students. These participants adjusted to the college environment by interacting with other Indian or minority students on campus. One of these students (Undergraduate Experience #9) joined a group of Pacific Asians for a social network.

Academic integration was also identified in the literature as a barrier to American Indians completing bachelors degrees. Academic integration involved an orientation and advising, which was provided by a college for five of the participants. A majority of the participants did not receive any academic integration by the higher education institutions. One participant (Undergraduate Experience #11) stated, "It was learn as I went, and mostly I was on my own." The lack of academic counseling is what one student (Undergraduate Experience #6) felt contributed to the length of time it took her to complete a bachelors degree. "I started college in 1969 and I didn't get my degree until 1983. It was just periods of stopping and going, stopping and going and working. I think a big part of it was that I had no academic counseling. When I went to college I had no idea what it was about."

The area of cultural conflicts was the one area in which the experiences of this study population did not coincide with the literature. Only two of the participants indicated that they had sometimes experienced conflicts between being a college student and their American Indian culture. Although the majority did experience culture shock at being the only or one of a few American Indians on campus, many did not feel that cultural conflicts were a barrier or an obstacle for them. While the undergraduate stories did not coincide with the literature on the issue of cultural conflicts, the stories did on the issue of racism and discrimination. The candidates undergraduate experience stories told of many instances of racism and discrimination directed at them by other students, instructors, communities, and institutions. The story of Undergraduate Experience #2, attributes the racism she experienced to her leaving the institution before completing a bachelors degree.

Half of the study participants indicated that there was at least one Indian faculty or staff person at a college they attended. Two of the participants did not have any contact with this Native American college employee. Only two of these students credit this Indian employee as being a great support to them. One participant (Undergraduate Experience #9) stated, "She gave me a sense that everything was okay."

Although the doctoral candidates did experience these barriers and obstacles in their undergraduate education, they did find a way to successfully complete a bachelors degree. Character resources, such as a resentment of the white system, financial resources of scholarships, support systems of family and institutional organizations, and the maturity and awareness that comes with such experiences, provided this population

with the strength and confidence to jump an obstacle or to knock down a barrier in order to complete their bachelor programs. The undergraduate programs on the average took these participants 12.5 years to complete, while attending an average of almost four institutions apiece. The higher education institutions they attended were an array of public, state colleges and universities, private institutions, community colleges, and tribally controlled colleges.

The stories of the study participants indicated that the majority had no specific goal in their undergraduate education other than to get a bachelors degree. Self improvement desires of having a better lifestyle, supporting their children, and increasing employment and salary opportunities drove their pursuit of a bachelors degree. Many took opportunities of scholarships and degree programs in fields that had nothing to do with their desire to eventually work in that field, but did meet their desires to obtain a degree. This may explain the attendance of many colleges, and why the majority of the participants earned bachelors degrees in education. The lack of role models in fields other then education in the participants' communities and the fact that the school districts are usually the largest and sometimes the only employers on reservations, can also add to the explanation why the participants had no final goal, except to get a degree.

## CHAPTER 5

### GRADUATE EDUCATION

A cross case analysis of the 12 interviews conducted with the doctoral candidates was utilized to describe the candidates experiences in graduate education. These experiences describe how they completed their masters programs, the barriers and obstacles in their doctoral programs, how they overcame them, and their post doctorate plans.

#### Masters Program

The data revealed that only three of the study participants entered a masters program right after earning a bachelors degree. Two of the candidates received their bachelors degree at Montana State University. One received a scholarship which prompted her to attend graduate school. The other had intended to work after earning a bachelors degree but found he did not care for the jobs that were available to him when he considered the amount of time he put into his education. "I wanted to make more money than what was being offered, so I made the decision to enter graduated school while I was still here [at MSU]." Being an MSU undergraduate degree recipient does not indicate immediate graduate school attendance, but it does indicate that these two

study participants were exposed to the possibilities and opportunities to attend graduate school at Montana State University. The third participant, who entered graduate school right after earning his bachelors degree, earned the degree at another institution. Although he was being encouraged by some faculty to enter graduate school, he entered a non-degree program part time. "I thought the area that they were in didn't interest me at that time. Also, at that time it was at a point of frustration and burn out with school. I wanted to stay in it, but I could not make a commitment to go full time." The remaining study participants did not enter graduate school after attaining their bachelors degrees. One participant did want to enter graduate school after earning a bachelors and even collected applications. "Basically, it was financial. I could not find the money to go." The candidates obtained employment and became involved in their jobs. One participant revealed, "I never did plan on attending graduate school. After I graduated from (name of college), I got a job with my tribe and became involved with the community. It never entered my mind." Another participant stated, "No, I wasn't thinking too strongly about it because I was working, managing programs for the tribe. Leaving a high level job and that level of pay I was receiving, a masters degree would not have made a difference."

The last two years of undergraduate grade point average (GPA), the Graduate Record Exam (GRE), and letters of recommendation are what the MSU Department of Education utilizes to determine admission to graduate programs. Although not all the participants attended MSU Department of Education for their masters program, these admission requirements were standard for admittance into many graduate programs. A

majority of the study participants were accepted into the graduate program on probational status due to their scores on the GRE. One of the participants who was admitted probationally did not put much emphasis on the GRE because she felt that she would not have a problem with the academics of graduate school. "A lot of people who have to take the GRE put so much weight on their score. I made it secondary. I did not care what I scored, I knew I could do the work." Another participant stated,

My academic background was good, and my recommendations were strong. My weakness in applying was the GRE; my scores are really low. I'm almost ashamed of them, on a personal level, because I don't think it reflected my ability at all. I justify it as the test not being culturally appropriate.

The culturally appropriateness of the GRE was what another participant questioned when she was denied admission because of her GRE scores.

I talked to the department head and told him I needed to challenge it because I felt a lot of my score had to do with that I got real nervous. I didn't realize the GRE test administration would be so intense, and when I get into anxiety I get very bilingual. I told him if he was bilingual and nervous maybe he wouldn't be thinking in English either. It takes me twice as long to accomplish something under those circumstances. I told him if he could find another way to test me accurately, to test any Native American who has English as a second language, then I would gladly go and take that test that was more culturally appropriate for me. He admitted me on six conditions to go to graduate school, and I passed those conditions.

While this participant was denied admittance because of her GRE score and had to appeal to be admitted, another participant was assured that her admittance would not be based exclusively on the score of the GRE. "Since I was over 40 years old and English was

a second language for me, I was told that my admission would not rest solely on the GRE scores.”

One of the participants entered the Business Education Graduate Program as a second choice.

My first option for my masters degree was Public Administration, but they would not accept me into the program because my GPA was 2.89. They would not accept anything less than a 3.0 GPA. I was encouraged to apply to the Business Education Program. They told me not to worry about the GRE score because it was culturally biased and they knew the kind of work I could do.

Although his GPA was too low to be admitted into his first choice for a masters program, he was encouraged to apply to another program where he was admitted based on his past performance and his potential. Even though many of the students did enter graduate school on probationary status, they did not allow their low GRE scores or undergraduate GPA to become a barrier.

How the participants completed their masters degree programs is directly linked to why the candidates went to graduate school. It was not surprising to find that a majority of the participants were prompted to attend a masters program because of the opportunity to take part in a scholarship or fellowship program. Lack of financial resources was one of the barriers and obstacles found in the literature and discussed in chapter two as contributing to the small number of American Indians who enter graduate education. For some of the participants it was just the opportunity they needed to enter a masters program. As one of these participants stated, “It was an opportunity to go to graduate

school on a three year scholarship. I had planned to either teach at a different school, or look at graduate school anyway. It fit right in with what I was planning to do.”

For others the question of attending graduate school depended not only on overcoming the financial barrier; other barriers and obstacles also needed to be considered. These barriers and obstacles included viewing graduate school as being out of reach, fear of failing, and uprooting a settled family.

I have never thought about going back to school until I heard about this fellowship. I have always thought of it as being so out of reach, so unavailable, so difficult, an elitist thing. My family and I were very settled, with a home, cattle, horses and my husband had a job he enjoyed. To take this fellowship meant giving that all up and what if I failed. I seen it as a big risk.

The participants who had these other barriers and obstacles to consider relied upon their spirituality and the encouragement from their families and graduate school faculty to make the decision to enter graduate school. “I prayed and prayed about the decision,” one participant stated. “I pray about every decision that my family and I face.” It was her spirituality that gave her direction and the ability to overcome the barriers and obstacles of doubt and moving her settled family.

Family encouragement was another resource utilized by the participants to overcome barriers and obstacles. One participant who used family encouragement stated,

I have always spent my life striving to following in the footsteps of my brothers, rather than my sister. Our real Indian names were given to us at birth and I know that my name is the only masculine name of the women in my family. This may be the reason why I follow male verses female role models. All three of my brothers went on to graduate school. It encouraged me to also go.



Still Smoking (1997) addressed Indian names in her unpublished dissertation, "Names give true meaning to the purpose in life for individuals" (p. 83). Although it was seeing her brothers attend graduate school that also encouraged her to attend graduate school, her masculine Indian name gave her "true meaning to the purpose in life" when she chose to follow male role models.

Encouragement from graduate school instructors who were recruiting American Indian students into masters programs also played a part in the decision for some participants to enter graduate school. "Academically, I didn't think I could do it. They (instructors) convinced me that I could. I also knew I could do it when I finished my first semester and did very well." Although it was the encouragement from the instructors that prompted the participant to enter graduate education, it was his grades in his first semester courses that finally convinced him that he could succeed in a masters program.

For one participant, it was not the opportunity to participant in a scholarship that prompted her to enter graduate school.

I was offered a position, but there were others who had masters degrees that I felt were more qualified than me. I felt that they needed to be offered the position first, and if they declined I would accept it. They declined, and as part of the offer I said I would get my masters degree. Getting the degree was never in writing, but I was raised with the value that if you gave your word, you kept it. I made it my personal goal.

The job offer is what motivated this participant to enter graduate school, but her values made obtaining the degree a goal.

In summary, three of the participants started a masters program right after earning a bachelors degree. Two of these entered a masters program at the same institution at which they earned a bachelors degree. The third attended a non-degree masters program part time, due to "burn out" of going to college. All the other participants obtained employment and became involved in their jobs before entering graduate school. Many of them entered their masters programs on a probational status due to low GRE scores. The opportunity to participant in a scholarship or fellowship prompted a majority of the participants to enter graduate school. This indicates that the lack of financial support to attend graduate school was the major barrier this group had to overcome. Eleven of the study participants earned a masters degree at Montana State University. Eight of the participants earned a degree in the Adult, Community and Higher Education Program, two in the School Administration Program, and one in Business Education. The twelfth participant earned an Education Administration masters degree at an out-of-state university.

### Doctoral Program

The study participants made up two unique groups, according to the location in which they took the majority of their classes. This unique grouping, which was described in chapter three on research design, required that the findings of the participants' doctoral program experiences be described according to this grouping. The two groups were unique in that one group had the opportunity of having a Montana State University, Department of Education doctoral program brought to their residing

reservation. The other group relocated to Montana State University campus in Bozeman, Montana, to attend graduate school. Who or what encouraged the participants to enter a doctorate program, motivators, barriers, obstacles and how they overcame them will be described for each group. Similarities of the two groups will also be described.

### Reservation Site Group

The group that had the opportunity to have Montana State University's Department of Education bring the Adult, Community and Higher Education graduate program to their residing reservation consisted of four doctoral candidates. The program also provided graduate courses to many other students who also resided on this reservation. These other students were not included in this study because they were not admitted to the doctoral program when this study took place. In fact, most of the students attending MSU graduate courses at this reservation site were enrolled in the masters program. Three of the reservation site participants were full time employees at the tribal college where the MSU graduate courses were conducted. The fourth study participant was employed full time, at another educational institution, which was also located on the same reservation town as the tribal college. Being employed full time meant that these reservation site participants could only attend the doctoral program part time.

One of the reservation site participants entered a doctorate program right after earning a masters degree. He was encouraged by faculty, family, peers, and students at the tribal college.

Some of the faculty at MSU encouraged me--Gary and Bob.  
There was a couple other students there that graduated with

their doctorates that encouraged me. Some of my peers here at (tribal college) encouraged me. My family encouraged me to do it myself, and some students (at tribal college) were encouraging me to go on--to keep rising academically. There was a lot of encouragement there to continue on and keep trying. Some financial assistance became available and I chose to continue into the doctorate program at MSU.

The other three participants did not enter a doctorate program immediately following their master degree graduation. One of these three obtained employment with a program that assisted American Indians in graduate education. "While I was sitting there in that job, I thought I should be in school doing my doctoral program. It encouraged me to see the students who went through that program--the ones that I'd seen complete and the ones that really had struggles, but they still made it." It was seeing other American Indian students complete graduate programs that encouraged her to enter a doctorate program. Another participant, who did not enter a doctoral program right away, always wanted to do a program in Adult, Community and Higher Education.

After I received a masters degree in Adult, Community and Higher Education, I really became interested in the subject matter. I always wanted to do a doctorate program in that area. After working in some other administrative jobs, I just decided that I wanted a change in my life. I wanted a change in the jobs I was doing. I came down to the college to work, with the idea that I could get my doctorate degree. Having the classes here provided me the opportunity to do what I really wanted to do at the time.

The third participant who also waited to enter a doctoral program did start taking the courses that were being brought to the reservation site and eventually entered a doctoral program. The reservation site participants were encouraged to apply for the doctoral

program by faculty, family, students at the tribal college, peers, financial assistance, seeing other American Indians complete, and interest in the program.

Having the opportunity to attend the graduate program courses on the reservation site certainly added to the encouragement for these participants.

Up to that point, I was commuting to a couple of different campuses. When the classes started to come up here, just the idea of not having to drive all those distances and spend all that money, depleting my resources not only financially, but physically, too. The classes fit in really well in terms of my learning and professional development.

Another of the reservation site participants stated, "It was the answer to my prayers. The availability was certainly important to be here and be able to work and not give up my home and family to leave." One participant felt he would still have done a doctoral program even if the program was not offered at the reservation site. "I would have, but not so soon. Again, it will be finding the resources to do it." Another participant was not so sure if he would have entered.

I may have, but leaving the community would really be difficult. I am also learning our traditional ways; that is really important to me. I would have to have a really attractive program to leave here and go back to the main stream's educational system. This program allows me to pursue those learning opportunities here.

A couple of the reservation site participants were also motivated to get a doctoral degree because they viewed themselves as role models.

Being a role model is a very big issue for me. Not only for my own family and children, but to the community. Student visibility, whether I want it or not. It adds social pressures to me, which I am not comfortable with at this point. On the other hand, it encourages me, too.

Another participant realized that while working with children, families, and co-workers that, "They need to have the support, and access to more. I have to keep going to set an example for them." But a role model was not the primary motivation for a different participant.

I think role models are important in the sense that it opens doors for others behind us. My motivation is more towards getting credentials to continue the kind of work here at home that needs to be done. I would continue researching our tribal history and culture. It not only increases my knowledge, but it also provides the opportunity for our people to get information. Finding out our own truths of what happened is the key to finding our own identity and help us get back our traditions, culture, and language.

Another reservation site participant was motivated by the impact that getting a doctoral degree could have on the people of her tribe.

Actually the bigger force is that after I understood the tribal college movement and what it could do for an Indian tribe, that probably has a larger impact on me than anything, at this point. I can see where each tribe continues to spin its wheels until someone with an education comes through. With education we will get recognized and included in the fields and resources where we would never have gotten included before. With a doctorate degree I could bring this back to our people.

Even with the availability of the courses offered at the reservation site and the aforementioned motivators, the participants still had thoughts about dropping out of the doctoral program. For one of these participants, the availability of the courses offered on the reservation site was a problem.

I just felt like that it would not matter if I finished, if I just let it go. I have these feelings all the time. It is because of the distance. I am not reminded of things, things that I would be aware of if I was on campus. It is harder for me to try and

finish being away from the campus. It is that department of Dr. Fellenz and Dr. Conti. They give you this motivation and support that you lose any time of the day, or any day of the year. You can practically give up and throw in the towel until you run into these people again. If it wasn't for those two, I doubt if I would have gone back to my doctorate program, or continue to go back.

One of the participants thought about quitting when representatives from the MSU Department of Education came for a visit to the reservation site.

I thought that it was very courageous of MSU to bring the extension program here, but they had some issues about this extended studies program here. My perceptions of that visit was they came here to tell us something, without even listening to us. At that time, I thought about quitting, because there are other places to be and other opportunities. Although I was really enthusiastic about the Adult, Community and Higher Education program, I started looking at other programs.

This student did not quit; "I think it is self motivation that keeps me in." Another participant also had doubts about the extension program.

Sometimes I think about quitting because I have to assess how much of the system am I buying into and if I am comfortable with that buy in. If I am buying in and doing it my way, or if I am buying in and doing it someone else's way. I think it is my desire to contribute something that keeps me in. It is also the other people who affect my life, who are younger. I think by getting a doctorate degree you create opportunity for other people, because your basic needs are met. By achieving, you can look beyond yourself. I think it is the younger people who give me the most drive, and the real old helpless people who are poor and just happy to have something to eat every day. I think that I will get my doctorate degree because as I move through the process, it will open the door for other people to have their basic needs met, too.

The last of the four participants did not ever consider dropping out, but often wonders why he is in the program, when he is working full time and has family obligations.

I have so many things going on. I often wonder what am I doing here. I am over here and over there. It is really intense at times. But I do like learning. I like being in education. I like self development. I like to succeed and I like to see other people succeed. I enjoy what I do so much at times, that it is not work and I am amazed that they pay me to do this.”

This participant was not alone when it came to the issues of time constraints. Although having the courses brought to the site may have been “the answer to prayers,” it did put time constraints on them. All of the reservation site participants held full time jobs, making attending a doctoral program, even if just part time, a constant struggle.

The four reservation site doctoral candidates all are employed full time. Only one of the participants entered into the doctoral program right after earning a masters degree. They were motivated by being role models for the community, researching and impacting the community. The participants at the reservation site experienced barriers and obstacles of being off campus, issues involving the site, doubts about the educational system, and dealing with the time constraints. Faculty did assist one of the participants to overcome her issues of being off campus. The other participants utilized their self motivation and desire to contribute to overcome their obstacles. The last participant’s love of learning and teaching assisted him in overcoming time constraints.

#### Campus Site Group

The campus group consisted of eight participants. Being on campus allowed these students to attend classes full time. Still many of them were employed part time, some as graduate assistants in programs that serve American Indian undergraduate students on the campus.



All of campus site participants entered a doctoral program after graduating from their master programs, which were all earned at Montana State University. Two of these campus site participants were encouraged to enter the doctorate program by faculty. "They made it a point to believe in me and believe in my career goals. They appreciated my work and ideas. That meant so much to me because I have never had that." A few of the other participants were encouraged by their peers to attend a graduate program.

It was the other Native American students here that were going to pursue their doctorate that encouraged me. I think it is easier, more comfortable for me to have these other Indian students here, rather just me going by myself. I thought, even if I don't get any scholarships and have to make some loans, I would continue. I felt that by making it through the masters program and having other Indians here, that I would not have this opportunity again.

The encouragement from peers and having made it through the masters program encouraged this student. It was also the realization of successfully completing graduate courses that encouraged another participant to attend a doctorate program.

After I finished that first semester, I just knew I was going to do it--complete the doctoral degree. I had a renewed sense of purpose, direction, and I had more confidence in myself. I thought I could do this; I have been through harder things in my life. I actually saw it as a vacation for me; because where I worked on the reservation, it was so hard politically and economically.

For another participant, it was the turn over of principals and superintendents at the school system where she taught that encouraged her to attend.

On our reservation we really go though the principals and superintendents. I think we really need to look at having our own Indian people who are committed to staying there. A lot of the principals just come and are there just two or three years

and then they leave. I wanted to be a principal in our system. I knew the people, the kids and I grew up in the same situation. Plus, I would be a good role model.

Being a role model was what another participant thought about as she was trying to convince her staff to attend graduate school. "I was trying to encourage all my staff to go. Then one day I was thinking, why don't I apply? I'm encouraging everyone else to go. I should be trying to go, too." For the last participant entering a doctoral program was never a question. "I came here with the specific intent of going for my doctorate. I knew coming out here that I was going into a three year program, with the end goal of being a doctor."

The campus site doctoral candidates also had other reasons that motivated them to earn a doctoral degree. For a couple of these participant being a role model was what motivated them.

I have children, grandchildren, friends, nephews, nieces, and a lot of people I've dealt with in youth activities and community events that really look up to me. I want to show them that there are good things out there, even though we run into a lot of problems. Kind of establish a road map for them that there are possibilities out there.

Being a role model for her children also motivated another participant.

My children motivate me. It has to do with role modeling. If I don't further my education, they might interpret that to mean that I don't feel I have the academic abilities. It is important that I demonstrate to them that although I do not go by a certain clock or a certain schedule like mainstream people my age, I can still do it and I have the abilities to do it. It is also a spiritual thing. There is a time for everything and this is the time for me to finish. I know I have a job to do somewhere and it requires that I have this degree.

Spirituality also played into another participants' reasons for her motivation.

While working for my tribe, the support was not there from the higher levels. I became very cynical about the systems on the reservation. I thought that I needed more. I wanted to be in my own business and be my own boss. I wanted to decide my own direction and not have it decided for me. After that, I started really seeking my spirituality and attending ceremonies. I decided at that time that is what comes first in my life. It is my strength and will give me direction.

It was also her experience working in the systems on the reservation that led her to seek her spirituality and direction. The desire to learn is what motivated many of the participants to attend graduate education. One of these participants stated, "The desire to learn is why I am here. I enjoy the college atmosphere and I like being in classes."

The campus site doctoral candidates were encouraged to attend a doctoral program by faculty and peers and by the realization that they could do the course work, seeing the turn over of people in the reservation school systems. They were also motivated by being a role model to their children and other American Indians, to "establish a road map" for others. Spirituality, work experiences, and the desire to learn also motivated the participants to earn a doctoral degree.

Although the participants did have the encouragement and motivation to enter and earn a doctoral degree, many still had thoughts of dropping out.

Plenty of times, with pressures and things not going my way, I questioned myself all the time. What am I doing here? Do I really need to be here? I look at the long term. Right at that point there is usually some kind of dissatisfaction or anger involved and I've got to give myself a little time to think things through and look at the big picture, instead of looking at the problem I'm facing at that time.

It was looking at the "big picture" that assisted these candidates through these times of questioning why they are pursuing a doctoral degree. "I think I would be doing myself a big disservice if I dropped out of the program now. I feel I would be letting a lot of people down. There are a lot of people who are watching me and expect me to come back and help them out." Seeing the "big picture" was hard for one participant to see when it was hidden behind other's expectations and the pressures.

It is everybody else's expectation to get this doctorate and not mine. I never thought I could do it. The importance is very surface and not in my heart. The pressures are too much. I just want to shut down. I think about it, really how am I doing this? I'm working, I'm going to school, trying do a dissertation, dealing with my children, with papers, tests, and presentations for my classes. Where do I find the time for that? I can not go on fooling myself that I can do this. I feel a lot of pressure from the expectation to get done before they retire (faculty that also sit on many of the candidates doctoral committees).

For this participant, it was only the lack of funds that is keeping her in the program. "Right now I can not move because I don't have the money to. Nothing and no one else is keeping me here, but the finances to move."

Other participants did not think about quitting, as this candidate replied, "I have never thought about quitting. I did get very tired when my mother died and I wanted to go home, but I did not want to quit. My mother was so excited when I told her I was coming here, that is why I didn't want to quit." For others, it was the support systems of family, friends, and their own determination and motivation that keep them in the program.

It is that family support. In my situation, anyone would want to be secure. I could never leave them at home and do it by myself. My husband puts my needs first and the kids really help me. It is because of this kind of support and willingness on their part that I am able to do it. I would never be able to be here by myself, although I do admire the women who do. It is also my spiritual family that supports me. Being able to have access to the sweat lodge, which the university has made that possible. We are able to function as a community here.

Their peers and self determination also provide a support system for the candidates. "It is my Native American friends here. We encourage each other." "I have an internal drive that keeps me going." "Myself basically, it is not one of those must things, nothing like that. It is just my internal drive that keeps me going and the fact that I am close to being done." For one candidate, it was the education of Indians that kept him in the program.

It is the discrepancy I see in Indian education verses non-Indian education. What Indian kids are being taught in school. I see a difference there--it is not academically adequate. I think we are doing a big disservice to Indian kids when we don't challenge them. It will only hurt Indian people in the future, if we do not change these things. Education is the key to survival for Indian people in the future. We need educated Indian people to become doctors, lawyers, or whatever, to empower themselves to start doing things for themselves and our people.

The campus site group consists of eight participants, who attend graduate school full time. All entered into a doctoral program right after earning a masters degree, which they all earned at Montana State University. Support systems of family and peers, their self determination and spirituality, and looking at the "big picture," were how the participants overcame barriers and obstacles. The barriers and obstacles identified were

the pressures of being in a doctorate program and questioning what they were really doing in the programs. Only one of the participants could not see the "big picture" that was hidden behind her pressures. The only reason this participant is still in the program is because of the lack of funds to move, which may just keep her around long enough to see through the pressures--to view the "big picture" once again.

The location of the two groups influenced the type of experiences that they encountered. The groups also had similar experiences in their doctoral programs. Similar, in that 11 of the 12 participants entered a doctoral program in Adult, Community and Higher Education. The faculty that encouraged, supported, and provided role models to the participants were also similar in both groups.

Only one of the study participants entered a doctoral program in school administration. All the other participants entered the Adult, Community and Higher Education program, with all having adult education as the emphases. Although this was the only program brought to the reservation site, it was just icing on the cake for the reservation site participants. "It was the program that attracted me," was the general feeling of these participants. The Adult, Community and Higher Education program provided the participants with another view of education, which did not include assimilation. These participants had experienced the assimilation approach of education, as had many American Indians. The program gave these participants control of their education. The idea of taking control of one's education, or self-directed learning, is one of the goals stated in the Adult, Community and Higher Education student advising booklet under the program emphasis in adult education.

The Adult, Community and Higher Education program instructors also attracted the participants. Program instructors, Fellenz and Conti, as well as the Director of the Native American Studies program, Stein, and instructors in the Education Department, Herbster and Clarke, were all mentioned by a majority of the participants for their encouragement and support. Fellenz and Conti chair many of the participants programs and sit on the committees of those they do not chair. The study participants not only credit Fellenz and Conti's background in adult education, but also their encouragement and support for their participation in the program. "Dr. Fellenz listens to me and he really values my opinions, judgement, and decisions. It is really good to get that kind of feed back. He is interested in me as a person, and I really think that encouragement and support is important."

Conti's humanistic and, at times, radical approach attracted me to the program. Humanistic in that he really believed in what he taught and believed in my abilities to learn. . . . Radical in that it did not always follow the standard, main stream approach. This allowed me to learn and value my own past experiences.

Ardy Clarke, Director of the Center for Bilingual/Multicultural Education at Montana State University, had also served on many of the candidates committees. The only American Indian in MSU's Department of Education, Dr. Clarke was mentioned by many of the study participants as being a very instrumental part of their graduate education.

She is a role model for me. Being an Indian woman and working in this system, and yet she has very strong ties to reservations, too. A lot of times you will see Indians leave their tribes or reservations, make a new home there, and have

no connection with Indian people again. Not Ardy. She is in touch with many tribes. She has helped many tribes and she helps Indians from many tribes here.

Clarke not only provided a female American Indian role model to the participants, but also sought out funding for the students. "I think I really have to give a lot of credit to Ardy for making this whole opportunity possible. Through her grant writing, she provided financial support and the opportunity to attend graduate school." It was because of the scholarships and fellowships provided by Dr. Clarke's grant writing skills that many of these study participants even considered graduate education. "If it wasn't for the scholarships that Ardy had, I would have never attended graduate school. In fact, I never did consider it, until she encouraged me to apply."

The study participants were separated by their unique grouping that resulted from their location, but they had similar experiences. The Adult, Community and Higher Education program, the encouragement and support of faculty, and the financial assistance of scholarships and fellowships were what attracted the students to graduate education and were similar experiences of the two groups. The 12 study participants made up two unique groups and these experiences of the participants' doctoral programs were described according to that grouping.

#### Post Doctorate Plans

Only one of the study participants was unsure if she would work with American Indians when she completed her doctorate degree. "It may or may not be with Native



Americans, but I do know it will be with some ethnic minority group." This campus site participant will not be returning to her reservation.

I don't feel like the political climate is such that it would be conducive for me to be of any benefit. The political climate on my reservation is too intense and very destructive. I know I can help my people and be a role model to certain people from my tribe although am not physically there.

The other campus site participants have no doubt they will work with American Indians, although many of them do have doubts about returning to the reservations. Following is the story of one of these participants, but whose plans may not include returning to the reservation.

I see myself as having to walk through two worlds. I have to do everything possible to help Indian people; not just my tribe but also other tribes. In the white world, a degree is very important. I learned that a long time ago. You could be the smartest person in the world, but without some type of degree or certificate you do not get far. I would like to use my doctorate degree to work independently and to be a bridge between the white and Indian worlds. I would like to be a consultant to tribal colleges; to all schools in terms of looking at parent leadership. I'm really interested in parent leadership. I think that is the missing element when looking at the educational systems of the reservations. There has never been anything in leadership or training. It is no wonder that our kids continue to be on the same path. My plans always change--I pray about every decision I make. I have asked the creator which direction I will go in after I graduate. I may stay here [Bozeman] but I think I will always have a foot in parent leadership building back at home. Having experienced higher education has created in me the need to improve Indian education. I want to work with Indian people. I think it is innate. It is just being Indian, that you never do anything just for yourself. Almost anyplace can be home, but the reservation will always be my home base.

Half of the campus site participants do have plans to return to the reservation. The following is one story of plans to return to the reservation.

I want to work back home on the reservation. I am not sure of what type of position, but I do know it will be in the education field. I feel that education is critical for our young people. The social-economic environment on the reservation is very low. In order to improve that, we need people that are educated. I would like an administrative position, but I also would do some consulting. In consulting, I will not limit myself to my tribe alone. I feel there is a great need throughout Indian country for consulting opportunities.

Although this participant does plan to return to the reservation, he also has many concerns. Concerns of moving his family back, the academics of the school system, and how others may view him with the doctorate degree.

I have concerns about moving my family back. The education system in Bozeman is very good. I don't want to criticize the reservation schools, but it would be a regression for the kids. The social environment is going to be another problem. Certain people do expect you to return, to help them. There are others who make little comments about how I will come back white, or return with ideas that might destroy some of the culture.

One of these participants who will return to the reservation and work was uncertain what reservation to return to.

After I graduate, I would like to get a job as a principal or assistant principal with an all Indian school. I would prefer to work in a high school setting but would not be totally against working in a middle school. Hopefully, I can take some of this knowledge and experience that I am receiving here and put it to use in helping to improve the education that Indian students receive. I plan on going back to the reservation when I'm done. I don't know where, I am not set on a certain area. I am willing to travel, to see the world while I can. I would not mind sticking around the Midwest.

This participant's plans, unlike the plans of the participant before, do not have family obligations for him to be concerned about. He is able to have plans to see the world while he can.

The reservation site participants all plan to stay on the reservation. The following is a story of the plans of one of these participants.

I don't have any major desires to ever leave the reservation. I have often asked myself for whatever reason in your future would you ever leave the reservation. I thought through a lot of things, but the only reason I would leave here is if I had a broken heart. If I ever lost a child, or lost my husband I would leave here because they are too ingrained here. That would be the only reason. What I want to do with my doctorate degree is to give my people a number that they can count. When they look at those who have credentials that they need for something to build our reservation with. Another thing is that when this tribal college does become a four-year college, it is absolutely necessary that several people from this community are the leaders, and I think they should have their doctorate degrees. I think in order for us to have an excellent educational program, we have to have those experiences in order to have people believe that we have people who know what they are talking about. I don't really plan on staying in my present position. In this position, I don't know if anyone is physically able to keep up with the high anxiety level of tribal colleges over a very long period. I'm looking at a few different things in the future. Sometime in the future, I see myself in a position in the college where I may be able to provide something to the college. Something that my experiences, like understanding the development of the tribal college, that can assist the administration of the college so that they don't have to reinvent the wheel, but they have someone to go to who can share that with them. Another thing, sometime in the future I may look at being on the faculty. I think about the kids in our school districts. I sort of have a dream of working with them--the middle school children. I think of trying to work in the public schools, or I think of trying to create an innovative school idea for kids. Another thing I would like to do, is that I would like to work for the tribal council some day. I would like to be a

doer for the tribal council. I would like to create things for the council, that are the dreams of the people.

One of the reservation site participants was concerned, wondering that if staying on this reservation was possible.

I would like to work for awhile as a dean of student services, or academic affairs, or some other type of academic administration. Eventually move into a tribal college presidency position. When my doctorate degree becomes reality, these positions will not be here because I don't see myself being chosen over a tribal member, since I am not a tribal member. What will probably happen, is that I will have to move into the main stream university system and then back to a tribal college. I might be able to go from here into another tribal college system. Either way, it is going to mean a physical move, and a commitment from me to do it.

Except for this participant, who was concerned about the possibility of not being able to stay on the reservation, the other participants planned to stay in the community. Two of the participants planned to stay in their present positions.

All but one of the 12 study participants have plans to work with Indian people. Four of the campus site participants plan to return to the reservation, three of whom plan to return to their own tribal reservations. Having the opportunity to attend a doctoral program on their residing reservation may be why three of the four reservation site participants' plans were more concrete about staying in their reservation community than the campus site participants. Another variable may be that the reservation site participants are presently involved in their jobs and the campus site participants have yet to find employment after obtaining a doctorate degree.

Summary

A cross case analysis of the interview data of the 12 doctoral candidates was used to describe the study participants' experiences in their masters programs, their doctoral programs, and their post doctorate plans. Low GRE scores and the lack of financial support were found to be barriers and obstacles for the participants to overcome in their masters degree programs. The experiences of the study participants' doctoral programs were described according to their unique grouping. The reservation site group experienced barriers and obstacles related to being off campus. They utilized the support and encouragement of faculty, their own self motivation, and desires to contribute to the reservation community and people to overcome the barriers and obstacles. The campus site group experienced barriers and obstacles of pressures and questioning what they are really doing in the a doctoral program. Support systems of family, peers, self determination, spirituality, and viewing the "big picture" are what these participants utilized to overcome their barriers and obstacles. The self benefitting desires that drove the study participants to earn a bachelors degrees in their undergraduate education have given away to new desires driving their doctorate programs. These desires are no longer totally dependant on improving themselves but are now also dependant on benefitting Indian people. The entrance to the Adult, Community and Higher Education doctoral program by a large majority of the participants indicated that the participants truly believed in the philosophies of adult education for themselves and the Indian people they planned to serve. The post doctoral plans of the participants related that all but one of

the doctoral candidates did plan to work with American Indian people. A majority of the participants also planned to return to, or stay on an American Indian reservation. This indicated that the candidates desires to have a doctorate degree will not only benefit themselves, but all Indian people.

## CHAPTER 6

## SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The American Indian is faced with a bleak situation. They rank at or near the bottom of every social index used as measurement of human suffering in the United States. These conditions are often described as "third world" and do not correlate with the American dream, although Indian people are within the physical boundaries of the country in which the dream is portrayed. Education is viewed as the only means of survival for the American Indian and their one hope to overcome this bleak situation. To realize the dream of education, American Indians must navigate through many barriers and obstacles in a system that ignores their language, culture, and traditions. The purpose of this dissertation study was to look at American Indian doctoral candidates who are navigating through this educational system, trying to maintain their Indian identity, with the hope of providing a path through the bleak conditions of their people.

Summary

The naturalistic inquiry method was utilized with data collection techniques of individual interviews and focus groups to provide qualitative case studies of the 12

doctoral candidates. The data collected were grouped according to the study participants' undergraduate experiences, masters programs, doctorate programs, and post doctorate plans.

### Undergraduate Experiences

The stories of the undergraduate experiences of the study participants described the barriers and obstacles that they encountered in post-secondary educational systems and in the earning of a bachelors degree. Questionnaire and interview data, which were based on the barriers and obstacles identified in the literature and discussed in chapter two, revealed their difficulties and successes. Barriers and obstacles of inadequate academic preparation, inadequate financial support, unsupportive institutional climate, and lack of role models were all portrayed in the stories. Character resources such as a resentment of the white system, financial resources such as scholarships, support systems such as family and institutional organizations, plus the maturity and awareness that comes with such experiences provided this population with the strength and confidence to jump an obstacle or to knock down a barrier in order to complete their bachelor programs. The interview questions based on the literature did not include barriers and obstacles directly related to spouses and children of the American Indian undergraduate. This explained why there was little or no mention of spouses and children in the participants' undergraduate experiences. Grabbing academic opportunities in fields that had nothing to do with any desire to work in that field, but that did offer an opportunity to obtain a degree that would meet their desires for self-improvement and



a better lifestyle, support for their children and increased employment and salary opportunities were characteristic. It took an average of 12.5 years, attendance at an average of at least four colleges and resulted, for the majority, in a bachelors degree in education. Having no final goal but to earn a degree explained why most participants attended more than one institution and persevered over a long period of time. The lack of role models in reservation communities in fields other than education and the fact that the school districts are usually the largest and at times the only employers on reservations explained why the majority of the participants earned a degree in education.

#### Masters Programs

Participants completion of a masters program was linked to their reasons for attending graduate school. The majority of the participants enrolled in a masters program because of the opportunity to participate in a scholarship or fellowship program. This indicated a lack of financial resources to enter graduate school for this study population. A majority of the participants were admitted to a masters program on a probational status due to their scores on the Graduate Record Exam (GRE). The GRE, was an exam used as one of the requirements for admission to graduate school in most locations. Participants utilized self confidence, strong recommendations, and special appeals to overcome admission barriers.

#### Doctoral Programs

The reservation site participants experienced barriers and obstacles that were related to the program being offered at the reservation location. Distance from the campus,

issues related to the program being offered at the reservation site, and time constraints were the barriers and obstacles frequently encountered by this group. Members utilized the support and encouragement of faculty, self motivation, the desire to contribute to community, and the enjoyment of their jobs to overcome these barriers and obstacles. The campus site group experienced barriers and obstacles related to questioning what they were really doing in a doctoral program. Seeing the "big picture" of letting down people who viewed the participants as role models encouraged the participants to overcome their doubts. However for one campus site participant, pressure to finish the doctoral programs blocked her from seeing the "big picture." All but one of the 12 doctoral participants entered the Adult, Community and Higher Education program. This program and faculty role models were what both groups held in common. The self improving desires that drove the participants in their undergraduate programs gave way to new desires of benefitting their tribes and all Indian people and this drove them forward in their doctoral programs.

#### Post Doctorate Plans

The post doctorate plans of the participants revealed that all but one had definite plans to work with American Indian people. These plans also indicated a change in goals from their undergraduate programs. The campus site participants' plans were not as concrete as the reservation site participants, in that half of the campus site participants were unsure about returning to their tribes and reservations. Having the opportunity to attend the doctoral program and still be involved in their jobs on their reservation could

explain why the reservation site participants' plans were more concrete about involvement with their tribe and reservation.

### Conclusions

The purpose of this dissertation study was to examine the successes of American Indians in Montana State University Department of Education doctoral programs in order to identify the barriers/obstacles and the strategies used by the candidates to succeed and to demonstrate how other American Indians might also succeed educationally. This research study uncovered three conclusions that were not found in other studies.

- (1) The first conclusion was the desire for self improvement that drove the participants in their undergraduate programs changed in their doctoral programs.
- (2) The second conclusion revealed by this study was that the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) was found not to be a barrier but an obstacle for the study participants.
- (3) The third conclusion of the study revealed that there were differences in the post doctoral plans of the reservation and campus site groups.

The first conclusion this dissertation study found was that the participants had self improvement goals that drove them to earn a bachelors degree; desires to improve their lifestyles, support their children, and to increase their employment and salary opportunities. This study identified these self improving goals of American Indians in higher education more clearly than indicated in other studies for two reasons: (1) these desires were also the desires that drive the dominate white society to obtain higher education, and (2) the majority of studies have not examined the post-secondary

education of American Indians beyond a bachelors program. It was, in fact, in the doctoral programs of the participants where a change in goals was noted that clarified the goals maintained in the undergraduate program.

The original purpose of the dominant society in educating the American Indian was to assimilate these "savages" into the "civilized" image of the dominant society. The developmental desires such as improving their life styles, supporting their children, and increasing their employment and salary opportunities, which drove the study participants to earn an undergraduate degree, mirrored the dominate white society's goals. Freire, in Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1993), described this mirroring of desires to the dominant society as cultural invasion.

In cultural invasion the invaders are the authors of, and actors in, the process; those they invade are the objects. The invaders mold; those they invade are molded. . . . Cultural conquest leads to the cultural inauthenticity of those who are invaded; they begin to respond to the values, the standards, and the goals of the invaders (p. 133-143).

The desires of the study participants were the desires of their invaders. Since education was viewed as survival for American Indians and to be successful in education entailed assimilation, these participants were assimilated and mimicked their invaders desires to obtain success in higher education. One could argue that this was the "normal" pursuit of the American dream, until this study found that the desires changed by the time the participants entered doctoral programs.

Very little is known about the American Indian in higher education. What little research there has been tended to focus on the history of educating the American Indian.

Much of this stopped abruptly at the award of a bachelors degree. The few researchers who have ventured past the bachelors program have only discussed why so few American Indians enter graduate education. These researchers failed to study the few that did enter graduate school; the few who succeeded in obtaining a masters degree and doctoral degree. They failed to look at the successes of American Indians in higher education, concentrating only on failed attempts and problems. The fact that failures outnumber success stories of American Indians in higher education was why this researcher chose to examine the success stories. These success stories revealed how American Indians prevailed in higher education against the high odds. Although the research that has been conducted did add to a better understanding and to the knowledge base of American Indians in higher education, the fact remains that American Indians are still disproportionately unrepresented in all levels of higher education.

No other study was found that concentrated on the experiences of American Indians in all levels of higher education. It was the examination of these on going experiences that uncovered a change of goals between the participants' undergraduate programs and their doctoral programs. The self improvement desires that drove the participants to earn a bachelors degree gave way to desires of being a role model and to contribute to Indian people and their communities that motivated them to earn a doctoral degree. They were now focused on benefitting other Indian people. These new goals also assisted the participants in overcoming obstacles in their doctoral programs. Viewing the "big picture" of how the degree would benefit others encouraged them to overcome obstacles. It was not clear exactly when this change occurred for the study participants. There was

some indication that it did not occur when the participants entered a masters program. For example, a participant who entered graduate school right after earning a bachelors degree stated: "I wanted to make more money than what was being offered, so I made the decision to enter graduate school." Another participant was prompted to enter a masters program by a job offer. What the findings did make clear was that it was the exposure to the graduate courses that changed self improvement desires to the new desires of benefitting other Indians and reservation communities in their graduate programs.

Actually, the bigger force is that after I understood the tribal college movement and what it could do for an Indian tribe, that probably had a larger impact on me than anything, at this point. I can see where each tribe continues to spin it's wheels until someone with an education comes through. With education we will get recognized and included in the fields and resources where we would never have been included before. With a doctoral degree we could bring those resources and recognition back to our tribes.

This change in aspirations was also indicated in the post doctoral plans of the study participants. All but one of the participants had definite plans to work with Indian people. The graduate courses gave the participants exposure to philosophies, theories, practices, methods, and provided them with the skills to research, which was not available to them in their undergraduate programs. More importantly, the graduate courses not only exposed the participants to these areas, but the students were encouraged to discuss their views and opinions in these courses and apply this knowledge to issues faced by American Indians. This exposure and opportunity gave the participants the

skills and knowledge that were needed to plan a path to alleviate the bleak conditions of their people.

The second conclusion revealed by this study was that the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) was not a barrier but an annoying obstacle for the study participants. Graduate schools generally require the GRE as one of the indicators of an applicants' potential to complete a graduate program. Studies of American Indians in higher education have identified the GRE as a barrier that has kept American Indians from participating in graduate education. This study found that the GRE was not a barrier but an annoying obstacle for these study participants, the majority of the participants were admitted into graduate school on a probational status due to their scores on the exam. The probational admittance meant that the participants were allowed to attend graduate courses and if they completed those courses with a grade of "B" or higher; they were off probation. This required the participants to provide proof that they could perform academically in graduate education. They all did.

The assumption that the GRE is a measurement of a student's potential to complete a graduate program failed to measure these participants' potential. The fact that these Indian students successfully completed a masters program and entered a doctoral program indicates that the GRE did not measure their potential to complete graduate studies, but only measured their test taking abilities.

The third conclusion of this study revealed that there were differences in the post doctoral plans of the reservation and campus site groups. Although all but one of the participants had definite plans to work with American Indians, the reservation site

participants were more detailed in their post doctoral plans than the campus site group. Also, all but one of the reservation site participants had definite plans to stay on their reservation. These participants had the opportunity to attend the doctoral program and be involved in their jobs. The reservation site participants also had the opportunity to put into practice the philosophies, theories, and approaches they were exposed to in the graduate courses. The tribal college, where three of the participants were employed, offers courses in critical thinking, research, and philosophy. These course offerings provide the undergraduate students of this tribal college an opportunity to be exposed to subjects that the participants themselves did not encounter until they were in graduate school.

Half of the campus site participants were unsure about returning to their tribes and reservations. These campus site participants had the opportunity to be exposed to other Indian tribes on Montana State University's campus and to also be exposed to the many opportunities available to them off the reservation. Even though half of the campus site participants were definite in their plans to return to their reservation communities, they were unsure of the type of employment they would acquire. For example, one of these campus site participants stated, "I want to work back home on the reservation. I am not sure of what type of position, but I do know it will be in the education field." Considering the high unemployment and underemployment rates on many American Indian reservations, employment opportunities will prove to be challenging for these students who want to return to their reservations.



### Recommendations

The goal of this study was to reveal that there are successful American Indians in post-secondary educational programs beyond a bachelors program and, by examining these candidates' experiences, to demonstrate how other American Indians may also succeed educationally. However, demonstrating how these candidates' experiences were successful and these candidates' plan to work with other American Indians alone will not alleviate the bleak conditions faced by the American Indian. Therefore, three recommendations were identified to assist in this endeavor.

1. Further Research. Although prior studies have led to a better understanding of the American Indian in higher education, the majority have not examined the successful experiences of American Indians beyond their bachelors programs. Further research studies are needed to address the post-secondary education of the American Indian beyond the bachelors program. Researchers should be encouraged to address problems faced by the American Indian through the successful experiences. Studies are also needed that address spouses and children of the Indian college student.

2. Requirements for Graduate School Admissions. Tests and exams do not measure an applicants' potential to complete a graduate program. Graduate Schools are urged to reassess their admission requirements to truly measure applicants potential to complete graduate programs. Graduate schools could incorporate applicant interviews, probationary periods, and recommendations from instructors into the admission process.

This will not lower standards, but will add to the process of identifying the potential of all applicants.

3. Higher Education Institutions. Higher education institutions are urged to follow Montana State University's Department of Education lead in developing a bridge of a graduate program with a tribal college. By developing these bridges, all Americans will benefit by having a larger educated population. Montana State University is also urged to continue this program at the reservation site and to also incorporate other graduate programs as well.

Montana State University as well as all post-secondary institutions are urged to provide their American Indian students with faculty and staff that are also American Indian. The term "growing our own" represents universities hiring their own doctoral graduates to provide American Indian faculty and staff role models for their Indian students. Another approach recommended is to hire American Indians and assist them with earning a doctorate degree while employed at the institution. Employing American Indian faculty and staff will increase post-secondary institutions' Indian student population, thus adding diversity to the campus.

The experiences of the 12 American Indian doctoral candidates revealed not only their presence in post-secondary education but that they can be successful in higher education. They provided a path with strategies to navigate through the barriers and obstacles for other American Indians to take.

## REFERENCES CITED

- Astin, A. (1982). Minorities in American Higher Education: Recent Trends, Current Prospects and Recommendation. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Benjamin, D., Chambers, S., & Reiterman, G. (1993). A focus on American Indian College Persistence. Journal of American Indian Education, 32(2), 24-40.
- Bennett, C. (1995). Research on Racial Issues in American Higher Education. Higher Education. New York: MacMillian Publishers.
- Beaulieu, D. (1991). The State of the Art: Indian Education in Minnesota. Change, the Magazine of Higher Learning, 23(2), 31-35.
- Campbell, P. (1995). State Population Projections. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Population Projections Branch.
- The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. (1989). Tribal Colleges: Shaping the Future of Native America; A Special Report. Lawrenceville, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Chan, K., & Ostheimer, B. (1983). Navajo Youth and Early School Withdrawal: A Case Study. Los Alamitos, CA: National Center for Bilingual Research.
- Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac. (1995).
- Clarke, A.S. (1997). The American Indian Child: Victims of the Culture of Poverty or Cultural Discontinuity? In R.D. Taylor & M.C. Wang (Eds.), Social and Emotional Adjustment and Family Relations in Ethnic Minority Families (pp. 63-81). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Cross, K.P. (1981). Adults As Learners: Increasing Participation and Facilitating Learning. San Francisco: Jossey Bass Publishers.
- Deyhle, D. (1989). Pushouts and Pullouts: Navajo and Ute School Leavers. Journal of Navajo Education, 6(2), 36-51.

- Falk, D., & Aitken, L. (1984). Promoting Retention Among American Indian College Students. Journal of American Indian Education, 23(2), 24-31.
- Freire, P. (1994). Pedagogy of the Oppressed. New York: Continuum Publishing Company.
- Guba, E. (1978). Toward a Methodology of Naturalistic Inquiry in Educational Evaluation. CSE Monograph Series in Evaluation, No. 8, Center for the Study of Evaluation: Los Angeles.
- Hill, N. (1991). AISES: A College Intervention Program That Works. Change: A Magazine of Higher Learning, 23(2), 24-26.
- Homett, D. (1989). The Role of Faculty in Cultural Awareness and Retention of American Indian College Students. Journal of American Indian Education, 29(1), 12-18.
- Hodgkinson, H. (1992a). A Demographic Look at Tomorrow. (Report No. ISBN-0-937846-57-0). Washington, DC: Institute for Educational Leadership. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 359 087).
- Hodgkinson, H. (1992b). The Current Condition of Native Americans. (Report No. EDO-RC-92-7). Charleston, WV: ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 348 202).
- Hodgkinson, H., Outtz, J., & Obarakpor, A. (1990). The Demographics of American Indians: One Percent of the People; Fifty Percent of the Diversity. (Report No. ISBN-0-937-846-0). Washington, DC: Institute for Educational Leadership. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 330 509).
- LaForge, W. (1996). A Study of Crow Reservation-Oriented College Students Who Attended Baccalaureate Degree Offering Colleges From 1965-1990. Unpublished Dissertation Draft, Center for Adult Learning, Montana State University, Bozeman, MT.
- Ledlow, S. (1992). Is Cultural Discontinuity an Adequate Explanation for Dropping Out? Journal of American Indian Education, 31(3), 21-35.
- Kidwell, C. (1991). Indian Professionals in Academe: Demands and Burnout. Working Paper presented at Opening the Montana Pipeline: American Indian Higher Education in the Nineties. Sacramento, CA: Tribal College Press. p. 85-110.

- Kidwell, C. (1989). American Indians in Graduate Education. Council of Graduate Schools Communicator, 22(2), 5,8. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 310 643).
- Kidwell, C. (1986). Motivating American Indians into Graduate Studies (Contract No. NIE-400-83-0023). Las Cruces, NM: ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 286 703).
- Kirkness, V., & Barnhardt, R. (1991). First Nations and Higher Education: The Four R's -- Respect, Relevance, Reciprocity, Responsibility. Journal of American Indian Education, 31(3), 1-15.
- McDonald, A. (1973, April). Value Conflicts as a Cause for Drop Outs. Paper presented at the Native American Teacher Corps Conference, Denver, CO. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 073 899).
- Mooney, C. (1990, April). Universities Awarded Record Number of Doctorates Last Year; Foreign Students Thought to Account for Much of the Increase. Chronicle of Higher Education, 36(32), A1, A11, A18.
- National Research Council (1995). Summary Report 1993: Doctorate Recipients for United States Universities. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- O'Brien, E. (1992). American Indian in Higher Education. Research Briefs, 3(3), 1-16. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 387 291).
- O'Brien, E. (1990). A Foot in Each World: American Indians Striving to Succeed in Higher Education. Black Issues in Higher Education, 7(1), 27-31.
- Olivas, M. (1992). Trout Fishing in Catfish Ponds. Minorities in Graduate Education: Pipeline, Policy and Practice. New Jersey: Educational Testing Service.
- Oppelt, N. (1989). Cultural Values and Behaviors Common Among Tribal American Indians: A Resource for Student Services Administrators. NASPA Journal, 26(3), 167-174.
- Ottinger, C., Sikula, R., & Washington, C. (1993). Production of Minority Doctorates. American Council on Education, Division of Policy Analysis and Research. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 382 086).
- Paisano, E. (1993). The American Indian, Eskimo, and Aleut Population. Racial Statistics Branch, U.S. Bureau of the Census.

- Patton, M.Q. (1990). Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods. (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA, London, New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Pelavin Associates (1994). Study of the Indian Education Fellowship Program. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Budget and Evaluation, Contract 300-87-0102. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 355 083).
- Reddy, M. (Ed.). (1993). Statistical Record of Native North Americans. Detroit, Washington, DC, London: Gale Research Inc.
- Roland, F. (1994). Tribal Education: A Case Study of Northern Cheyenne Elders. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis. Montana State University, Bozeman, MT.
- Russell, G. (1994). American Indian Digest: Facts About Today's American Indians, 1995 Edition.
- Stein, W. (1992). Tribally Controlled Colleges: Making Good Medicine. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.
- Still Smoking, D. (1997). Tribal Education: A Case Study of Blackfeet Elders. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis. Montana State University, Bozeman, MT.
- Tijerina, K., & Biemer, P. (1988). The Dance of Indian Higher Education: One Step Forward, Two Steps Back. Educational Record, 68(4), 87-91.
- Tierney, W. (1992). Official Encouragement, Institutional Discouragement: Minorities in Academe-The Native American Experience. Norwood, New Jersey: Ablex Publishing Corporation.
- U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census of Population.
- U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (1995). "Fall Enrollment in Colleges and Universities," and IPEDS, "Fall Enrollment: Survey; Table 201.
- U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (1993). IPEDS survey 1992-93 and consolidated survey.
- Wagner, U. (1992). Environments of Support. American Council on Education, Washington, DC. Office of Minorities in Higher Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 363 249).

- Williamson, M. (1994, April). Strengthening the Seamless Web: Fostering Minority Doctoral Success with Mexican Americans and American Indian Students in Their Doctoral Programs. Paper prepared for presentation at the "Advancing Diversity: Mentoring Minority Students at the Postsecondary level" Symposium during the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 374 948).
- Wright, B. (1991). American Indian and Alaska Native Higher Education: Towards A New Century of Academic Achievement and Cultural Integrity. (Commissioned Paper, See RC 018 612). Washington, DC: Department of Education, Indian Nations At Risk Task Force. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 343 771).
- Wright, B., & Tierney, W. (1991). American Indians In Higher Education: A History of Cultural Conflict. Change: A Magazine of Higher Learning, 23(2), 11-18.
- Zwick, R. (1991). Differences in graduate School Attainment Pattens across Academic Programs and Demographic Groups. A Research Report of the Minority Graduate Education Project. Educational Testing Service, Princeton, NJ. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 354 852).

APPENDICES



APPENDIX A  
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION FORM

Participant Information Form

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ AGE (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

TRIBAL AFFILIATION: \_\_\_\_\_

ARE YOU ENROLLED IN THIS TRIBE? \_\_\_\_\_

Highest school grade completed by your parents/guardians?

Father \_\_\_\_\_ Mother \_\_\_\_\_

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Have any of your siblings attended/earned a college degree? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Please use the back of this sheet if more room is needed)

PROGRAM: \_\_\_\_\_

MAJOR: \_\_\_\_\_

MINOR: \_\_\_\_\_

ARE YOU A FULL/PART TIME STUDENT? \_\_\_\_\_

YEAR YOU WERE ACCEPTED INTO YOUR DR. PROGRAM \_\_\_\_\_

YEAR YOU PLAN TO COMPLETE YOUR DR. PROGRAM \_\_\_\_\_

Where would you like the interviews to take place?

Your home \_\_\_\_\_ My home \_\_\_\_\_

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX B  
QUESTIONNAIRE

## QUESTIONNAIRE

Name \_\_\_\_\_

1. What type of elementary school did you attend (boarding/public)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Where? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What type of secondary school did you attend (boarding/public)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Where? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Did you graduate from High School? \_\_\_\_\_ Year? \_\_\_\_\_

No: Please explain \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Where did you attend college (undergraduate)?

<u>Place</u>	<u>Major</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Degree</u>
--------------	--------------	-------------	---------------

_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

If more room is needed, please use the back of this sheet, or add another sheet.

5. What financial resources did you utilize to attend college (PELL, loans, parent/family, own, scholarships)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How did you find out about these financial resources? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Where and when did you earn your bachelors degree? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Field? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Where did you attend graduate school?

<u>Place</u>	<u>Major</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Degree</u>
--------------	--------------	-------------	---------------


If more room is needed, please use the back of this sheet, or add another sheet.

8. What financial resources did you utilize to attend graduate school (loans, parent/family, own, scholarships)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How did you find out about these financial resources? \_\_\_\_\_

9. Where and when did you earn your masters degree? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Field? \_\_\_\_\_

10. What financial resources are you utilizing to do a Dr. program (loans, family, own, scholarships, etc.)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX C  
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

Undergraduate Work:

1. Did you enter college right after HS/GED graduation?
  - a. NO: How many years between HS/GED graduation till you entered college?
    1. Why did you wait to attend college?
2. Why did you go to college (employment opp, program, scholarship, expected of you, etc.)?
3. How did your secondary education prepare you for college?
  - a. What resources did you utilize to compensate for being ill prepared (tutoring, developmental courses, etc.)?
4. What social opportunities did the college provide to assist you in adjusting to the college environment (Indian club, etc.)?
  - a. NONE: How did you adjust socially to the environment?
5. What academic opportunities did the college provide to assist you in adjusting to the college system (orientation, advisor, etc.)?
  - a. NONE: How did you learn about the college system?
6. Did you encounter any cultural conflicts (returning home for ceremonies conflicting with attending classes, etc.)?
  - a. How did you handle these conflicts?
7. Did you encounter any racism/discrimination at college?
  - a. How did you handle these encounters?
8. Were there any Indian faculty/staff members at the college you attended?
  - a. Who/position?

Masters Program:

9. Did you enter graduate school right after earning a bachelors degree?
  - a. NO: How many years between earning a bachelors degree till you entered graduate school?
    1. Why did you wait to enter graduate school?
10. Why did you go to graduate school (employment opp, program, scholarship, expected of you, etc.)?

Doctorate Program:

11. Did you enter the Dr. program right after earning a masters degree?
  - a. NO: How many years between earning a masters degree till you entered the dr. program?
    1. Why did you wait to enter a Dr. program?
12. When applying for the Doctorate program did you encounter any problems GED/entrance exams, application, etc.)?
  - a. How did you handle these problems to be accepted into the Dr. program?
13. Who/what can you identify that encouraged you to apply for the dr. program?
  - a. What do they do?
  - b. How did they encourage you?
14. Who can you identify in your family, who encouraged you to get an education?
  - a. What did they do (professional, educated, etc.)?
  - b. How did they encourage you (expect good grades, meet with your teachers, make you study)?
15. Who can you identify outside of your family, who encouraged you to get an education?
  - a. What did they do for a living?
  - b. How did they encourage you?



16. Are there other things that motivated you to get an education (being a role model for your children, spirituality, etc)?
  - a. How did it motivate you?
  
17. How many brothers & sisters do you have?
  - a. How many went on to college to earn a degree?
  - b. How many went on to graduate school?
  - c. How did these influence you to get educated?
  
18. Do you consider yourself a survivor (strong, stick to your goals/principles; continued after facing barriers)?
  - a. In what way do you consider yourself a survivor?
  
19. Who/what keeps you in the program?
  - a. How?
  - b. Support systems? Who? How?
  
20. When faced with rejection/failure what did you do (give up/try again/wait and retry)?
  - a. How did you feel?
  
21. Did you ever feel like dropping out?
  - a. Why?
  - b. What/who kept you from dropping out?
  
22. Have you ever experienced racism/discrimination?
  - a. What effect did it have on you?
  - b. Did you use the experience as a motivator to keep going?
    1. How?
  
23. Why do you want a dr. degree?

Post Doctorate Plans:

24. What type of employment/position do you want to attain after you earn a dr. degree?
  - a. What are your concerns regarding attaining this employment/position (over qualified, etc)?
  - b. Why?
  
25. Do you plan on returning home/reservation after you earn your degree?
  - a. Why do you want/ not want to return?

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES



3 1762 10298917 3