

Native American-Serving Nontribal Institutions Program (NASNTI) Project Abstracts for FY 2021

Abstract 1: Seminole State College (OK) \$2,250,000

P382C210011 Seminole State College (SSC), located in Seminole, OK, is a two-year, public, state supported,

Native American-Serving Nontribal Institution serving a vast five-county service area (3,819 sq. miles, pop. 157,500) in the heart of central Oklahoma's Seminole Nation. More than one in six service area residents (17.6%) live in poverty, and only 15.9% of adults hold at least a bachelor's degree. In an area characterized by socioeconomic challenges, Native American residents are the most disadvantaged (23.6% poverty, 11.6% adult baccalaureate attainment). Our students are a reflection of the area: 46% are Pell eligible (55% Native American Pell eligibility). One in four students (25%) are Native American.

SSC is committed to empowering the Native American, high-need residents of our region through access to postsecondary options leading to baccalaureate transfer and socio-economic stability. Unfortunately, a postsecondary degree eludes far too many area residents. Overall, too few area residents are enrolling, and those that do, struggle to persist. Over the past five years, SSC has experienced declining enrollment, with Native American enrollment mirroring overall enrollment. SSC's fall-to-fall persistence for first-time students was 54% for all students and 41% for Native American students between Fall 2018 and Fall 2019, dropping below the national average for public two-year colleges. Three-year graduation rates (32% for all students, 30% Native American students) are also lower than the national average.

Critical gaps in student success and development skills and a dearth of postsecondary role models for students threaten the ability of SSC students to be successful in college. At the same time, SSC recognizes weaknesses in its academic programs and support services. SSC's Computer Science program, for example, is outdated and underdeveloped. It is not effective in preparing program graduates for employment and transfer opportunities. SSC has also identified a need to build institutional capacity to support online students with disabilities.

SSC proposes Innovative Improvements, a comprehensive activity including the following:

(1) SSC will revitalize and expand its Computer Science program to bring it up to date with industry standards while adding options in Security, Programming, and Esports. SSC will upgrade its IT infrastructure and establish necessary equipment in lab spaces to support

updated and specialized computer science instruction.

(2) SSC will develop seminars (face-to-face), videos/modules (online), and Talking Circles to address academic success skills, technology skills, civic/professional skills, cultural awareness, and wellbeing/resilience (addresses Invitational Priority)

(3) SSC will strengthen support for online students with disabilities by training faculty and staff in best practices of supporting online students with disabilities, implementing new assistive devices and technology, and redesigning foundational courses to ensure they best support online students with disabilities (addresses Competitive Preference Priority)

Five-year outcomes include increased headcount enrollment, increased fall-to-fall retention, increased three-year associate degree completion, and increased number of associate degrees awarded.

Our proposal responds to the Competitive Preference Priority and Invitational Priority for this competition.

Abstract 2: Northern Oklahoma College (OK) \$ 2,248,870

P382C210003 - Northern Oklahoma College (NOC) is a two-year, public Native American-Serving Nontribal Institution located in north central Oklahoma, with a main campus in Tonkawa (pop. 3,028) and other campus sites in Enid (pop. 49,585) and Stillwater (pop. 50,299). NOC also offers online courses and services to reach time- and place-bound students.

NOC serves a predominantly rural area (13,500 sq. miles), including the following 14 counties: Alfalfa, Grant, Kay, Osage, Major, Garfield, Noble, Pawnee, Payne, Blaine, Lincoln, Kingfisher, Logan, and Creek (total pop. 458,726; 14.2% Native American). NOC's service area is home to six tribal jurisdictions: Tonkawa Tribe, Osage Nation, Kaw Nation, Ponca Tribe, Otoe-Missouria Tribe, and Pawnee Nation. Most service area residents struggle with high levels of poverty and low educational attainment. One in six (17%) NOC service area residents live in poverty; poverty among Native American residents is more severe with rates soaring as high as 41% in some service area counties. Only 22% of area adults (14% for Native American adults) have earned a bachelor's degree or higher compared to 25% for the state and 32% for the U.S. NOC's mission to provide "high quality, accessible, and affordable educational opportunities and services..." are critical to the region's residents. The College serves as the educational access point for thousands of disadvantaged area residents. In Fall 2020, NOC served 3,386 students, 17% (562) of whom were Native American. Nearly two-thirds (61.3%) of NOC's students are enrolled part-time; 36.8% self-report as first generation in college (40.4% for Native American students); 25.3% are low income (29.4% for Native American students); 15.6% are age 25 or older.

NOC is particularly interested in better serving its growing Native American student population. Native American enrollment at NOC has grown by 72.3% since 2014-15. Now one in every six NOC students is Native American.

Comprehensive institutional analysis has revealed institutional gaps and weaknesses—underdeveloped academic programs, inadequate student services, and limited capacity to support remote learners with disabilities—that hinder NOC from best serving its target population.

To address the institution's identified gaps/weaknesses, NOC proposes a project entitled, Connecting Students to Promising Pathways. The proposed project includes three initiatives:

Initiative 1: Develop new STEM academic programs and supporting course options.

Through this initiative, NOC will develop a new Renewable Energy option under the Associate of Applied Science in Electronics Technology and Associate of Science in Precision Agriculture as well as courses in Data Analytics that support both new programs. A classroom/laboratory and greenhouse classroom will be created in the PTEC Building to support program instruction.

Initiative 2: Strengthen student services. Through this initiative, NOC will develop a new student needs assessment and update its student support system procedures to ensure early identification and response to student needs. NOC will also strengthen its career and transfer services by developing career/transfer webpages customized for NOC's programs/majors. NOC will also update its Student Success Center to create dedicated space for career/transfer coaching, virtual reality career exploration, and access to computers with career/transfer resources.

Initiative 3: Build capacity to support remote learners with disabilities. Through this initiative, NOC will train 90 faculty across eight academic departments on Universal Design for Learning. NOC will also update 20 key program courses to better support remote learners with disabilities using new assistive technology and contractual services.

NOC is addressing the Competitive Preference Priority and Invitational Priority for the NASNTI FY2021 competition.

Abstract 3: University of North Carolina at Pembroke (NC) \$ 2,249,246

P382C21010 - University of North Carolina at Pembroke (UNCP) NASNTI project goals are to provide innovative and high-quality student support services that enhance the campus experience and create an environment where specialized and underserved student populations can flourish and succeed.

UNCP is a fully-accredited, public, co-educational, master's level, historically Native American liberal arts four-year institution of higher education in the state-supported University of North Carolina System. UNCP is located in southeastern North Carolina in the town of Pembroke in Robeson County, and serves a surrounding nine county region. In Fall 2020, UNCP served 8,262 students in 58 degree programs. Student demographics include: 12.62% Native American, 30.55% African American, 38.76% Caucasian, 7.79% Hispanic/Latino, and 10.28% Other. Approximately one-third of the undergraduate student body is non-traditionally aged. UNCP has an 18:1 student-to-faculty ratio and average class sizes are 20 students.

Need for a NASNTI project at UNCP is as follows: 1) retention and graduation rates for first time full-time (FTFT) Native American, low-income, and all FTFT students are too low when compared to UNC system schools, 2) graduation rates for transfer students are considerably lower when compared to UNC system schools, 3) percentages of earned grades of D, F, or W are too high for introductory mathematics courses, 4) there is no formal plan for academic advising, 5) students are dissatisfied with advising and feel as if it is delaying their time to graduation, and 6) UNCP's ability to proactively identify and support at-risk students is too weak.

Striving Towards Academic Retention and Success (STARS) is the project that UNCP proposes for NASNTI funding to address the key problem areas above. The objectives for this project are:

1. Increase persistence to graduation of FTFT students by increasing first year retention by 9%, second year retention by 7%, and 6-year graduation rate by 5%.
2. Increase persistence to graduation of FTFT Native American Students by increasing 4-year graduation rate by 5% and by increasing 6-year graduation rate by 7%.
3. Increase persistence to graduation of FTFT low-income students by increasing first year retention by 9%, second year retention by 7%, and 6-year graduation rate by 5%.
4. Increase persistence to graduation of transfer students by increasing 2-year graduation by 5%, 4-year graduation by 7%, and 6-year graduation rate by 9%.
5. Increase the success rate of students taking first year math courses by decreasing the

DWF rate in Introduction to College Math by 10%, College Algebra by 12% and Pre-Calculus by 15%.

6. By February 2022, retrofit the on-campus resource lab with updated computers and technological devices required for student success.

The STARS project is applying to compete under the Competitive Preference Priority for homeless students. This project proposes a plan to increase access to technology for homeless students in the Resource Learning Lab, as 2.94% of UNCP undergraduate students are homeless.

Abstract 4: East Central University (OK) \$ 2,000,000

P382C210006 – East Central University is expanding on the success of the previous NASNTI grant programs, ECU proposes the ECU Resources to Enhance Achievement and Completion in Higher Education (REACHE) Program to improve its capacity to serve Native American and low-income students by developing, implementing, and sustaining a comprehensive, student-success program with increased access to high-quality remote learning resources, targeted, student academic and wrap-around support services, high-impact educational research opportunities, and increased access to enhanced learning environments that address their academic needs.

The ECU REACHE Program will address barriers, increase resources and services, and leverage, enhance, and expand upon existing university resources to ensure these and other disadvantaged students persist to graduation. To complete this the following goal and objectives were created: GOAL: To improve and expand ECU's capacity to serve NA and LI students through the development, implementation, and sustainment of a dynamic, data-driven program designed to minimize service gaps. OBJECTIVE 1: To improve NA and LI student persistence and graduation rates through increased access to academic programs and enhanced learning environments. OBJECTIVE 2: To improve NA and LI student outcomes through targeted student services. OBJECTIVE 3: To increase NA and LI students' opportunities for high-impact educational experiences. The long-term outcome of the success of the REACHE program is the increased retention and graduation rates of NA and LI students at ECU.

In addition, the REACHE program will address seven of the eight legislatively authorized allowable activities: The purchase, rental or lease of scientific or laboratory equipment for educational purposes, including instructional and research purposes; Renovation and improvement in classroom, library, laboratory, and other instructional facilities; Support of faculty exchanges, and faculty development and faculty fellowships to assist faculty in attaining advanced degrees in the faculty's field of instruction; Curriculum development and academic instruction; The purchase of library books, periodicals, microfilm, and other educational materials; The joint use of facilities such as laboratories and libraries; and Academic tutoring and counseling programs and student support services.

The REACHE program will also address the Competitive Preference Priority and the Invitational Priority.

Abstract 5: Northeastern State University (OK) \$ 2,207,967

P382C210008 - Northeastern State University (NSU) is requesting funding to expand its capacity to serve American Indian students in response to the call for applications for the Native American Serving Nontribal Institutions (NASNTI) Program. NSU's project seeks to enhance the services provided by the Center for Tribal Studies focusing on student support, professional development opportunities and community building activities. The requested funding will provide additional staff and resources to offer a more comprehensive set of services to improve student's academic performance to support academic, career and cultural development of the American Indian students at NSU. The project will also ensure high-quality and culturally relevant professional development opportunities for faculty and staff to further enhance the American Indian student experience. The three primary goals of the project are to: 1) increase the institution's capacity to serve American Indian students; 2) improve the retention and graduation rates of American Indian students by providing a comprehensive model for academic, personal, cultural, and professional development; and 3) improve the delivery of instruction and services to students through high quality professional development opportunities for faculty and staff. The proposed project seeks to address both the Competitive Preference and Invitational priorities, by focusing on improving accessibility for students with disabilities. In addition, the project meets the invitational priority by providing wrap-around services to American Indian students, which also address the impact of covid-19 on their mental health and academic outcomes.

The project will be placed under the authority of the Division of Academic Affairs while housed within the Center for Tribal Studies on the Tahlequah campus, with branches on the Broken Arrow campus and Muskogee campus. The Director of the Center for Tribal Studies will serve as the Principal Investigator and Project Director and will oversee three full-time staff (Student Engagement Coordinator, Faculty/Staff Engagement and Professional Development Coordinator, and Retention Specialist) who will focus on providing a holistic approach to varying services and make real time adjustments as needed. The coordinators will oversee part-time staff, student mentors, faculty mentors, and supplemental instructors.

The successful implementation of this project, which has been designed to intentionally work collaboratively with other departments on campus, will help create opportunities for developing the institution's workforce and infrastructure to better serve American Indian students.

Abstract 6: Redlands Community College (OK) \$ 2,061,010

P382C20002 - Redlands Community College (Redlands) is a public, open-access, two-year institution located in western Oklahoma. Redlands currently holds 10-year accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Redlands offers Associate in Arts, Associate in Science, and Associate in Applied Science degrees, as well as Certificates of Mastery in certain areas. Our fall 2020 FTE enrollment was 1917.

Activity: Building Capacity for Digital Learning and Mental Health Resilience

Purpose: This project will improve Redlands' capacity to increase the participation, academic success and graduation of Native American and low-income students by improving the equipment and facilities of the Learning Resources Center (LRC), increasing student and faculty training for digital fluency, and improving mental health, academic, and wrap-around supports for these students. We propose to renovate a section of the LRC to accommodate collaborative workspaces, digital production, accessible meeting and tutoring/assessment space, a lending library for devices, and additional classroom/presentation space for use in our online/hybrid distance learning courses. We will purchase devices to use in a lending program piloted for Native American and low-income students who do not have the means to acquire one on their own. We will implement a faculty mini-grant program to identify and fund impactful use of educational technology. We will hire a NASNTI Student Counselor to provide counseling, crisis intervention, referral, mental health workshops and other supportive service to struggling students at Redlands. Faculty will participate in professional development leading to greater understanding and improved instructional methods for Native American and low-income students, as well as improved usage of digital learning technologies. This project will improve the success, retention and graduation rates of Native American and low-income students as well as increasing Redlands' capacity to offer high-quality digital learning and enhance mental health supports for high-need students. This proposal addresses the Competitive Preference Priority and the Invitational Priority.

Competitive Preference Priority: This priority includes: technology equipment and renovations which will conform to the foundational principles of disability access. We will prioritize accessibility and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in professional development and the mini-grant program.

Invitational Preference Priority: This priority includes: hiring a NASNTI Student Counselor which will substantially increase our ability to improve mental health outcomes for students affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Abstract 7: Coconino Community College (AZ) \$ 2,100,245

P382C210007 - Coconino Community College (CCC), covering Coconino County in northern Arizona, serves nearly 6,000 individual students each year with an array of programs from adult basic education to workforce and transfer degrees and certificates. Approximately one-third of CCC's 18,000 square mile service area is tribal land; including portions of the homelands of the Diné (Navajo), Hopi, Havasupai, Hualapai, and San Juan Southern Paiute peoples; and Native American students comprise nearly 20% of CCC's student body. However, course success and program completion rates for CCC's Native American students lag significantly behind other demographic groups at the College. This project proposes three activities intended to help Native American students succeed in higher numbers: 1) launching a summer bridge program for new Native American students, 2) establishing and staffing Native American Success Centers at our locations in Flagstaff and Page, and 3) enhancing culturally responsive pedagogy at CCC. As a result of these activities, Native American students and their families and communities will develop a greater sense of belonging, experience higher levels of course success and program completion, and recognize the College as a culturally responsive organization where indigenous students thrive.

The Strengthening Indigenous Student Success (SISS) project at CCC will utilize NASNTI grant funds to hire two full-time retention advisors, three peer tutors, and five peer mentors. Grant funds will also be used to remodel space at our Flagstaff and Page locations to create the Success Centers; purchase textbooks, laptops, and remote internet connections to create lending libraries in the Success Centers; and conduct evaluation and continuous improvement activities.

Abstract 8: University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma (OK) \$2,249,584

P382C210004 - University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma (USAO) is the only Liberal Arts University in Oklahoma and offers 23 programs of study leading to a Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science or Bachelor of Fine Arts. Our fall 2019 FTE enrollment was 800.

Activity: Enhancing Distance Learning

Purpose: This project will improve USAO's capacity to increase participation, academic success and graduation of Native American and low-income students by developing remote delivery and associated services. While 17% of our students are Native American, 49% of our students are economically disadvantaged. The shock of the Covid-19 pandemic and the closing of colleges and universities in Oklahoma made it clear that USAO must update and enhance students' access to and success in our courses without being tied to the traditional classroom. Remote delivery of classes is new to USAO. The technology required is new to us. Faculty must learn the highest and best practices of instruction and use of technology to enhance student learning and success. We have designed a multi-faceted approach to remote teaching and learning. We will develop strategies for remote teaching in at least two courses each year of the project. We will develop supportive activities for students and faculty members as they transition to this new way of teaching and this new way of learning. Renovations and equipment upgrade to traditional classrooms will provide the opportunity to install hardware and software for course production and instruction to students. Collaborative learning sites will be designed to allow small groups of students to meet with faculty members virtually or to create study groups where technology provides for on-campus and off-campus attendees. The need to provide services for personal growth and personal concerns that may impede academic success is clear following the pandemic. This project will develop strategies to provide helping services (tutoring, counseling) remotely. These services will be designed in tandem with teaching strategies to prepare our students with the transition to new ways of learning and studying. This program, a combination of new educational techniques and newly delivered student services, will greatly enhance access and success to Native American, low-income and disabled students. This application also addresses the Competitive Preference Priority: We will implement regular accessibility audits for remoting learning materials, provide professional development for course design and other accessibility issues in remote learning, and purchase/install hardware, software, furnishings and equipment to meet the technology needs of our students with disabilities.