

CAMPUS COMPACT

INDICATORS OF ENGAGEMENT PROJECT

Tribal Colleges

Executive Summary

Campus Compact's Indicators of Engagement Project (IOEP) is exploring civic and community engagement at different types of institutions, including tribal colleges. This project has found that tribal colleges have distinctive approaches to engagement that differ from practices at other minority- and majority-serving institutions.

Initial Project Findings

- Preservation of a tribe's language and culture is a primary goal of tribal colleges. By helping tribal cultures survive, tribal colleges become "the hub of the community."
- Tribal colleges work to create an educational context in which Native American students feel understood and valued, helping students move beyond a history of negative schooling experiences.
- Tribal colleges exhibit a developed appreciation of the legally enshrined right of native peoples to self-determination. This sovereignty implies not only specific legal rights established by treaty or formal Executive Order but also an understanding of the tribal community as the ultimate source of legitimacy. In other words, tribal education in all its forms—including higher education—exists foremost to serve the interests of the communities from which students come.
- Tribal colleges work to help Native American students access and utilize the power of non-native ways of knowing while recognizing and celebrating their heritage.
- Native American schools prize personal relationships above formal authority, and experience above formal credentials. These values lead to an absence of hierarchy at tribal colleges and the willingness of all staff members, including the president, to pitch in anywhere and everywhere.
- Tribal colleges see no distinction between the college and the community. The health of the community and its people is seen as inextricably linked to the success of the college.

New Resources

The Campus Compact database of Model Programs at Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) is now live on our website at www.compact.org/indicators/MSI_models_index.php. Complete project findings will be included in a book on engagement at MSIs, to be published in 2005. Information about this publication is available on our website at www.compact.org/publications.

"We found our participation [in the Indicators of Engagement Project activities] to be an invaluable guide for the development of our own programs. Our faculty... are now excited to take steps toward including service-learning in their curricula. Thank you so much for affording us this wonderful learning opportunity."

Marietta Forrest
Instructor, Diné College (AZ)

Data on Civic and Community Engagement at Minority-Serving Institutions

According to Campus Compact's 2003 Annual Member Survey, completed by more than 400 colleges and universities, minority-serving institutions (MSIs) are more likely than other types of schools to:

Require service and service-learning for graduation

- 18% of MSIs require service for graduation, compared with 8% of all institutions
- 17% of MSIs require service-learning for graduation, compared with 9% of all institutions

Provide support structures for engagement activities

- 96% of MSIs have a community service or service-learning office, compared with 83% of all institutions
- 92% of MSIs have a community service or service-learning director, compared with 80% of all institutions

Establish partnerships with K-12 schools and faith-based organizations

- 100% of MSIs have an existing partnership with one or more K-12 schools, compared with 93% of all institutions
- 90% of MSIs have an existing partnership with one or more faith-based organizations, compared with 69% of all institutions

Project Goals

The IOEP is a three-year project of Campus Compact to document and disseminate best practices of civic and community engagement at different types of colleges and universities. In addition, this project seeks to help campuses deepen their engaged practice by institutionalizing their approach to civic and community engagement. This research is based on the 13 "Indicators of Engagement" developed by Campus Compact.

Campus Compact is a national coalition of more than 950 college and university presidents, representing some 5 million students, who are committed to fulfilling the civic purposes of higher education.

"For tribal colleges, it is vital to reach students who have never had access to college. To talk with Elders, leaders, and first-generation students involved in this process is vital to the growth and development not only of the tribal college but of the community and tribe as well. Many tribal governments are looking at ways to start tribal colleges, and having a model that exemplifies teaching and learning strategies of tribal colleges is simply invaluable to native peoples of all tribes."

-Dr. Jean Strait,
Asst. Professor,
Hamline University (MN) &
Campus Compact
Engaged Scholar

For more information, please contact Jenn Meeropol, Project Coordinator, at jmeeropol@compact.org or (401) 867-3950. Additional information is available at www.compact.org/indicators.



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