

## Characteristics of Tribal College and University Faculty

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### Introduction

This report summarizes the results of a survey of Tribal College and University (TCU) faculty conducted in the spring and summer of 2003. The goal of this survey was to inform a planning grant to enhance the recruitment and retention of American Indian faculty at TCUs. Funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and administered by the American Indian College Fund, in conjunction with the American Indian Higher Education Consortium, the planning grant sought to document the current status of TCU faculty including their demographic characteristics, their satisfaction with their work, their level of instructional activity, their mobility and plans for future employment, and the reasons that they choose to work at TCUs.

Little is now known about the characteristics of those who teach at TCUs. Three national surveys of faculty have been conducted by the federal government's National Center for Education Statistics known as the "National Survey of Postsecondary Faculty" or NSOPF.<sup>1</sup> Because of the relatively low number of TCU faculty sampled by NSOPF, however, it has not been possible to fully report their characteristics and to compare them to mainstream faculty in ways that might inform recruitment and retention needs. The other federal effort comes from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Surveys or IPEDS. IPEDS data about TCUs has fallen short of its intended mark, however. Past participation by TCUs in reporting IPEDS data has been, in general, spotty. Some institutions have excellent response rates while still others appear to until recently have ignored this obligation. Lack of data is a severe constraint to efforts to understand issues of recruitment and retention of American Indian faculty. Consequently the data reported here can fill in some large gaps and lead to a fuller picture. It may also help TCUs pursue other faculty initiatives as they work to enhance their instructional effectiveness.

The survey instrument (Appendix A) was distributed to TCUs in both paper and web-based versions. The latter distribution channel proved to be very effective in increasing response rates. At the conclusion of July 2003, 166 usable responses were obtained, a number that represents approximately 38 percent of the estimated total full-time faculty at TCUs.<sup>2</sup> The questionnaire was modeled closely after instrument used in the 1998 federal survey of instructional faculty, the National Study of Postsecondary Faculty, so that comparisons could be made between TCU faculty and faculty at mainstream institutions.<sup>3</sup> Only aggregate results are presented below; data for individual TCUs are unavailable.

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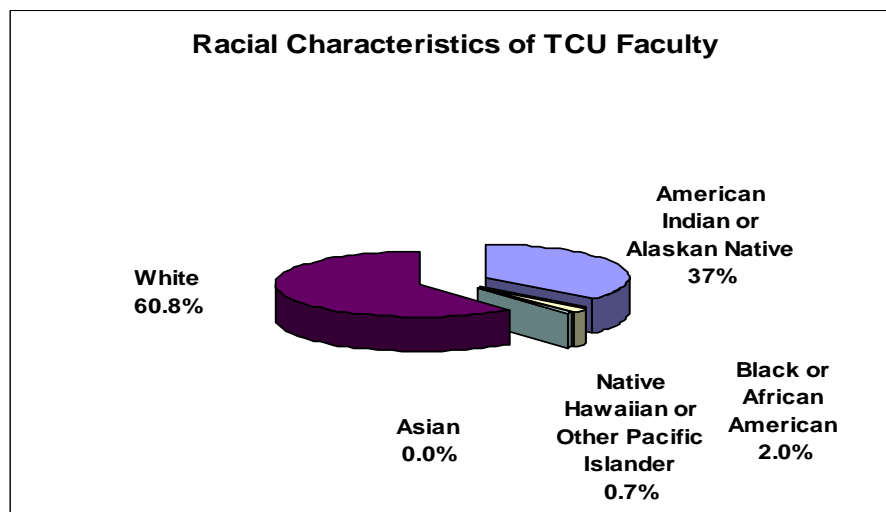
<sup>1</sup> These surveys were administered by the National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, in 1988, 1993, and most recently in 1998.

<sup>2</sup> This estimate is derived from NCES' Integrated Postsecondary Data System's Fall Staff Survey for Fall 1997 in which 437 full-time 9 and 10 month faculty were reported by responding TCUs. The Fall 1997 survey is the last known reference point for the total number of TCU faculty and staff although it is incomplete with respect to the number of respondent institutions.

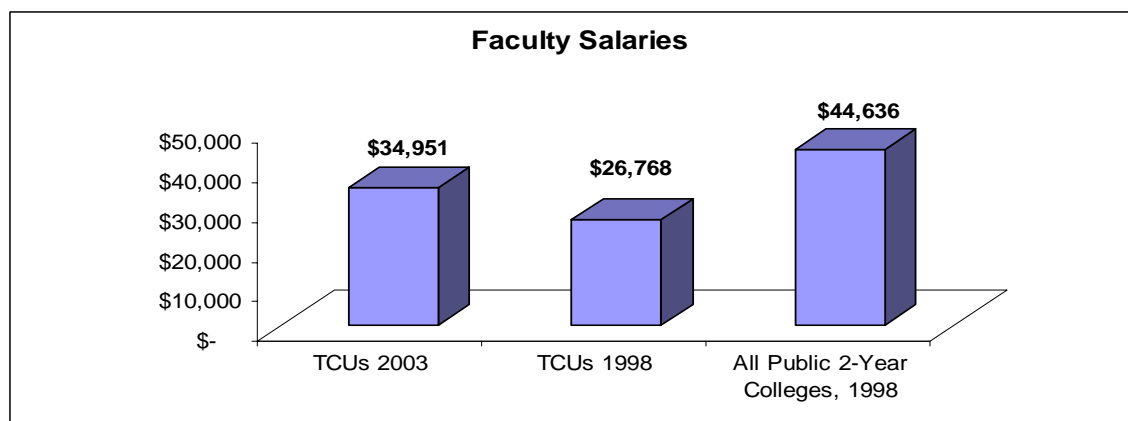
<sup>3</sup> The "mainstream" comparison group throughout this study are public 2-year colleges. Although several

### Demographic Characteristics of Tribal College and University Faculty

American Indian faculty constituted more than a third (37%) of the total responses (n=56) to the survey. Previous sampling of TCU faculty did not result in reliable race/ethnic breakdowns.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, there is no historical data from which to judge comparability. However, given that each TCU faculty member across the United States had an equal chance to respond to this survey, this statistic seems reasonable.



Although American Indians appear constitute a significant proportion of the faculty at TCUs, their overall proportion significantly lags the overall proportion of American Indian students enrolled in TCUs (88.9%).<sup>5</sup>



The average faculty salary reported by survey respondents for 2002-2003 was \$34,951. To make a reasonable comparison between two points in time, TCU salaries for 1997-1998 are depicted with mainstream institution salaries for the same year. This gap is nearly \$18,000.<sup>6</sup> Whereas the 2003 survey data indicate that some of this gap has been closed, it is also certain that even after allowing for only modest annual increases in inflation, current annual salaries at mainstream, public 2-

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tribal colleges and universities are now baccalaureate awarding institutions, the number of faculty engaged in delivering 4-year instruction is not large.

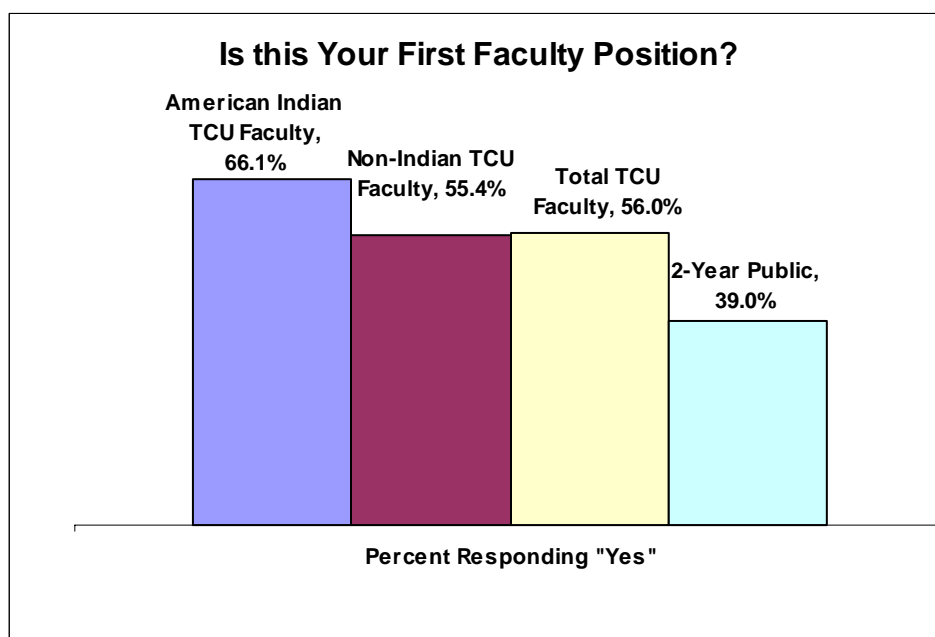
<sup>4</sup> The Fall 1998 IPEDS Faculty Salary Survey counted the number of 9 and 10 month faculty but did not ask institutions about faculty race or ethnicity.

<sup>5</sup> IPEDS Fall 2000 Enrollment Survey

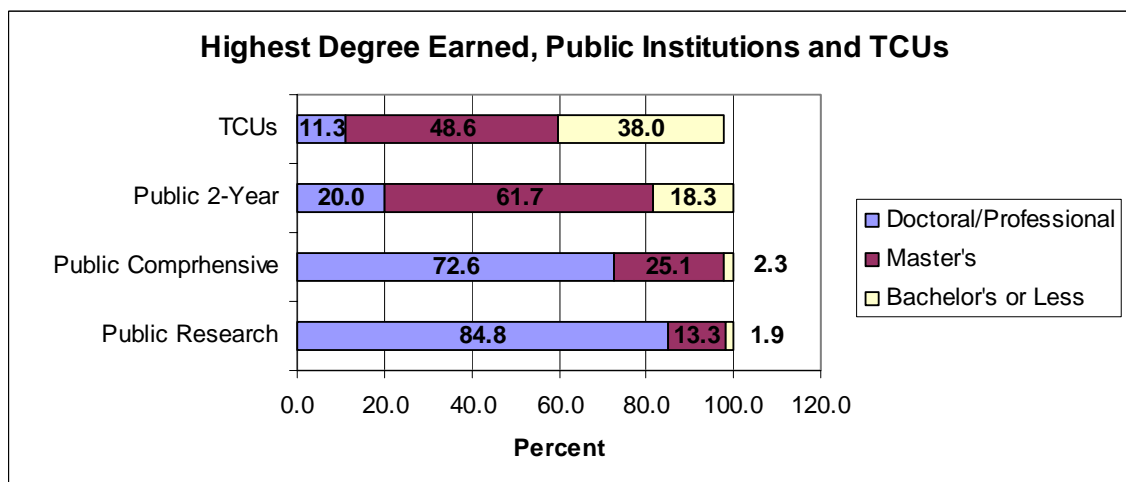
<sup>6</sup> Fall 1998 IPEDS Faculty Salary Survey

year colleges are likely to exceed TCU salaries by almost \$10,000. Later in this report we ask whether relatively low salaries at TCUs are a barrier to recruitment and retention.

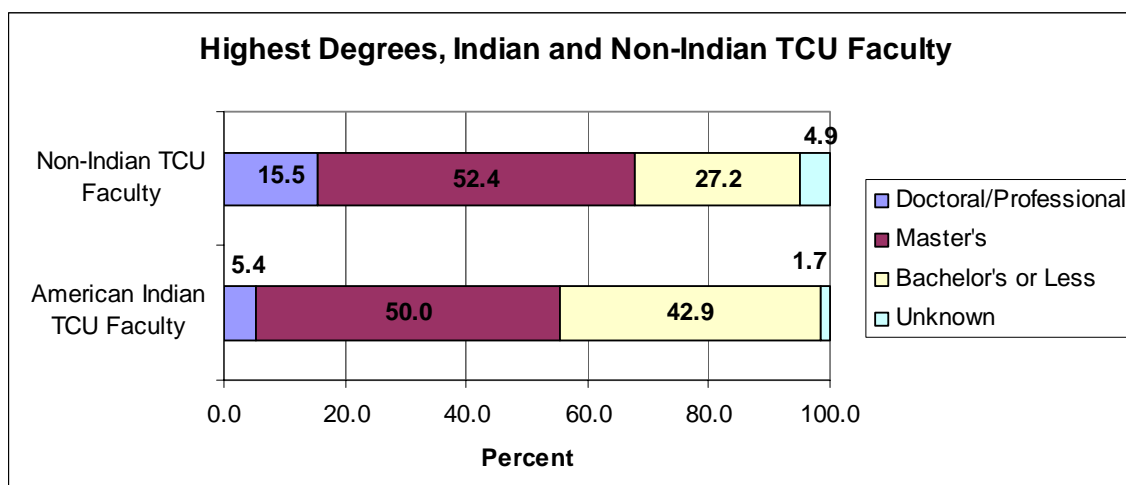
The average age of TCU faculty is younger (47.8 years v. 49.8 years) than their counterparts at mainstream, public 2-year colleges. TCUs in general attract more new faculty than mainstream institutions. All respondents are more likely to indicate that their present job is their first faculty position in higher education. This was especially true for American Indian TCU faculty (66.1%).



Fewer doctorates and master's degrees are found among TCU faculty than faculty teaching at public institutions, especially 4-year public institutions (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). However, the gap between public 2-year colleges and TCUs is not as large and may be due, in part, to the number of faculty teaching in vocational and cultural areas that do not require advanced degrees.



The survey also sought to determine the educational level of American Indian faculty at TCUs. The chart below indicates that American Indian faculty at TCU's are less likely to have doctoral degrees and more likely to have baccalaureate degrees than their non-Indian counterparts. The proportion of American Indian faculty with Master's degrees, however, corresponds closely to Non-Indian faculty. The differences might be owing to the numbers of non-Indian faculty that are recruited to teach in vocational areas that do not require graduate degrees. At the same time, a number of American Indian faculty are engaged in Native language and cultural transmission fields where qualifications to teach are based primarily on community and life experience and not on graduate credentials.



The most common faculty credential in the nation's community colleges is the Master's degree. In fact, possession of a doctoral degree is more prevalent in public 4-year and doctoral institutions than in 2-year colleges and TCUs. A master's degree, or significant graduate hours within a discipline area, is typically required by regional accrediting bodies for faculty teaching in the liberal arts areas. It would appear from these data that TCUs lag their public counterparts in advanced degrees. Encouragingly, American Indian faculty (44.6%) are more than twice as likely as their counterparts at public 2-year colleges (16.1%) to be working toward an advanced degree.<sup>7</sup>

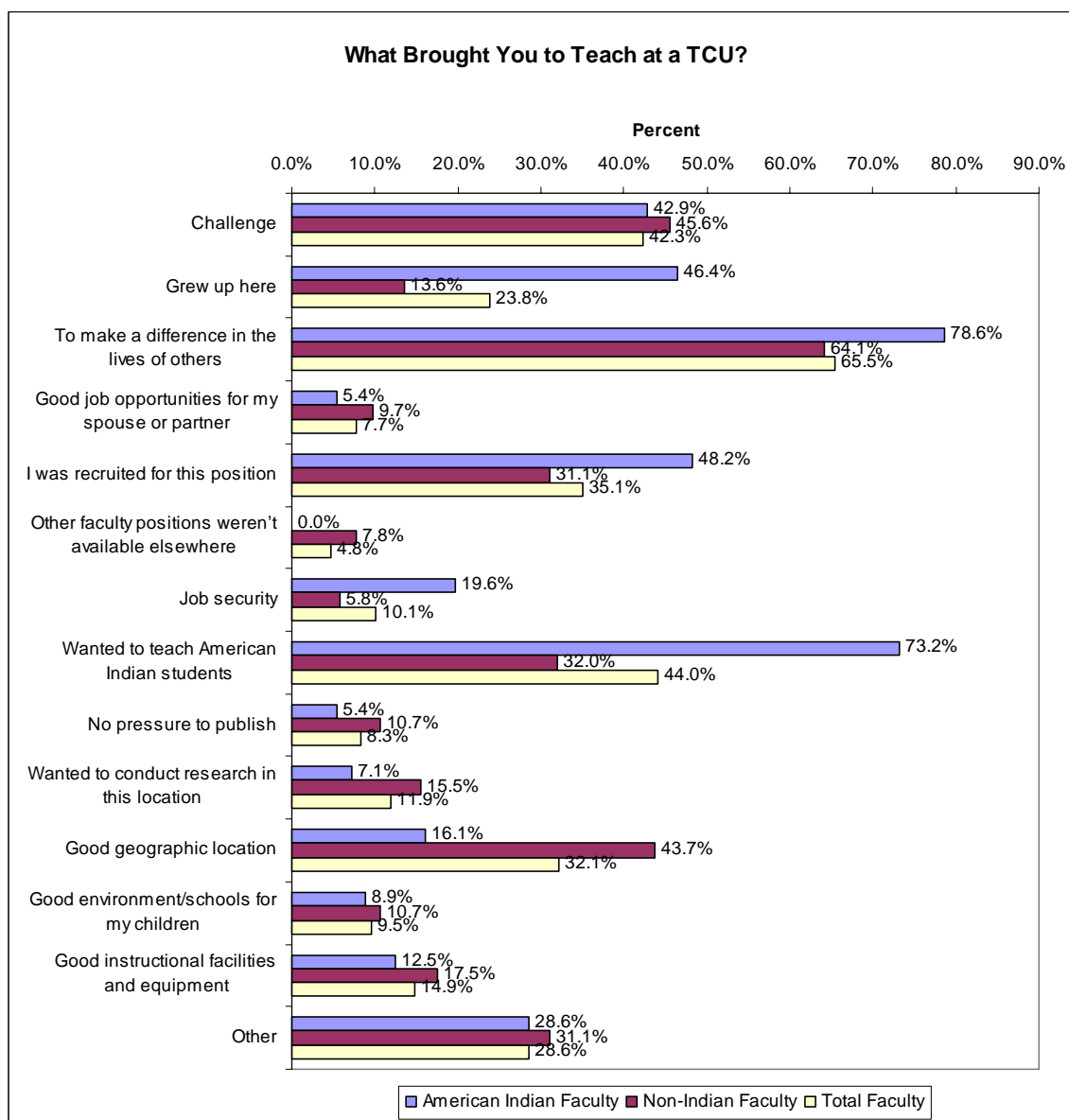
#### Why Do TCU Faculty Choose to Teach at TCUs?

Faculty come to TCUs for a variety of reasons as captured below. Significantly, American Indians appear to be drawn to TCUs to "make a difference in the lives of others" and to "teach American Indian students" than by other motivating factors. The latter reason, in particular, was expressed by American Indian faculty more than twice as often as by non-Indian faculty. A large sense of commitment to American Indian communities underlies these responses. Both Indian and non-Indian faculty indicate that "challenge" brought them to TCUs in almost identical percentages.

The obligation to serve Native communities was heard frequently from American Indian respondents. For example, several American Indian respondents said they were at TCUs "to fulfill my traditional obligations to my Native people," and "I am a first-generation college student like many of my students...I have a lot in common with my students," and, "This is my home reservation. I want a better education for our enrolled members. I also enjoy being a role model for students."

<sup>7</sup> National Study of Postsecondary Faculty, Data Analysis System, 2003

Other themes also emerge from these responses. American Indian faculty appear not to be attracted to TCUs to escape the rigors of research and publishing that are the hallmark of traditional academic institutions. It also appears that decisions to teach at TCUs are not made because other academic employment is unavailable elsewhere or because of the perception that TCUs represent a refuge from the mainstream academic expectations of “publish or perish.”



### What Do TCU Faculty Teach?

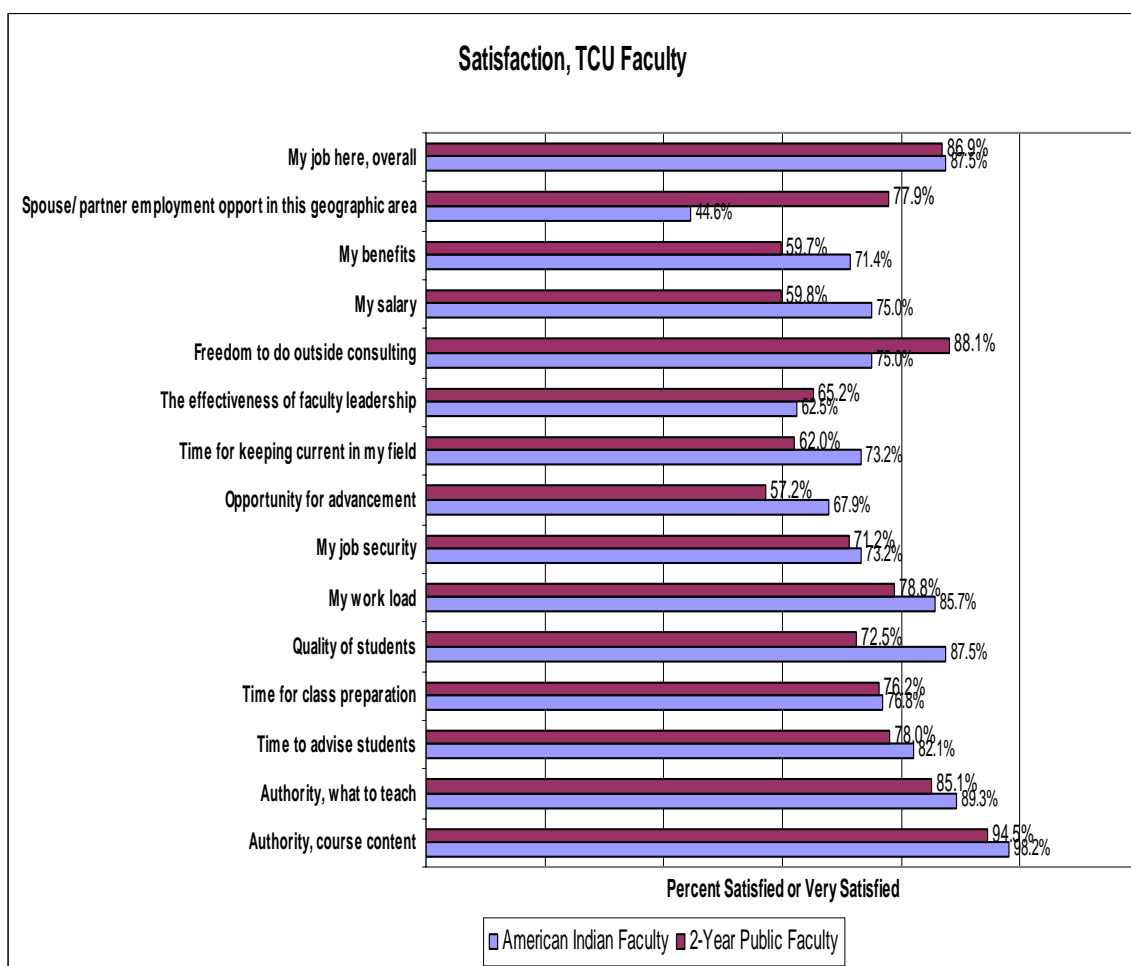
Appendix B displays the areas in which TCU faculty teach. These data can be used to begin to formulate recruitment targets. Caution should be applied to their interpretation; these data were not collected from all faculty and they have not been paired with instructional output. Nonetheless, these data indicate that American Indians are underrepresented in these teaching areas: agriculture, biology, computer science, life/physical science, mathematics, nursing, general science, and veterinary science. It should be noted that these teaching disciplines also pose significant recruitment challenges for mainstream colleges and universities. The competition for faculty in the hard sciences is especially strong among all institutions

and may require special incentives and capacity building to increase the number of available, qualified American Indians.

### How Satisfied Are American Indian TCU Faculty?

Comparison between public 2-year faculty satisfaction and American Indian TCU satisfaction reveals similarities and several remarkable differences. It appears that--overall--American Indian faculty at TCUs are as satisfied as their counterparts. At the same time, they appear significantly more content with their workload, opportunities for advancement, time to keep current in their field, benefits, salary, and perceived quality of the students they teach. They were less satisfied than their peers with the opportunities for their spouse or partners in their geographic locations and the freedom to engage in outside consulting. Both of these dissatisfactions might be a result of the rural location of most TCUs.

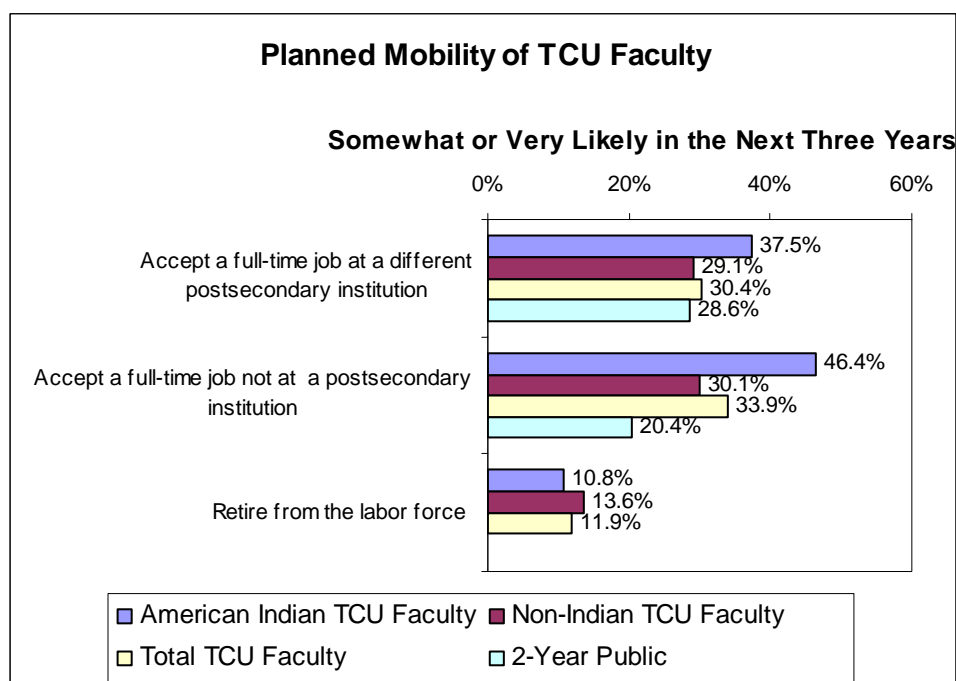
These differences, in combination with those reasons expressed for choosing to teach at a TCU captured above, strongly suggest American Indian faculty are motivated less by dollars than by altruism, more by obligation than by personal gain. Their satisfaction with the different aspects of their job could be used to market TCUs as pleasing places to work for potential American Indian faculty.



### Mobility

Despite their level of satisfaction and commitment to teaching at TCUs, American Indian faculty also perceive themselves as professionally mobile. The proportions

who indicate their retirement plans are somewhat or very likely in the next three years are roughly the same as their counterparts. However, American Indian faculty are twice as likely to indicate that it is somewhat or very likely they will accept full-time work outside of a postsecondary institution within three years and are also more likely to indicate that they will find full-time work in other postsecondary institutions. This finding has obvious implications for developing effective retention programs at TCUs. Individual turnover is difficult to forecast and intentions to leave do not automatically result in departure. However, the proportions who indicate their planned mobility out of TCUs should be of concern to administrators charged with recruitment and retention of American Indian faculty.



### Summary

The results of this survey pose several challenges to the recruitment and retention of American Indian faculty at TCUs. First, the magnitude of the problem could be overwhelming as witnessed by the overall proportion of American Indian faculty to the proportion of American Indian students enrolled at TCUs. It may be possible, someday, to narrow this gap significantly but to do so will require extensive commitment and coordinated action to identify and train new generations of American Indian faculty. This training should occur across all areas, but particularly should focus on those areas in which they are now underrepresented including mathematics, hard sciences, and other science-related fields including agriculture. American Indian faculty will also be needed in general education areas and within vocational areas if closing the overall gap remains a goal.

The solutions to closing this gap are complex. Even though current annual salaries at mainstream, public 2-year colleges are likely to exceed TCU salaries by almost \$10,000, money does not seem to be the largest motivator for American Indian faculty. Rather, they appear to be most moved by the chance to do well for Native communities. This level of altruism cannot be purchased; instead it must be nurtured in meaningful ways. A meaningful recruitment and retention campaign would appeal to these factors and to those factors found in this study that make TCUs good places to work.

American Indian faculty actively are making a difference in their own careers. Nearly half of American Indians (44.6%) who responded to this survey indicated they were working toward advanced degrees. In the absence of a formal program or pre-existing network to link them to graduate programs, this level of ambition is nothing short of astounding. The corresponding proportion of public 2-year college faculty degree aspirants is only 16.1 percent. Clearly, the appetite exists among American Indian TCU faculty for advanced degrees and were such efforts supported in formal ways, it is very possible that this proportion of upwardly mobile American Indian faculty would be much larger.

A subsequent set of interviews was conducted after this survey to determine what it might take to assist those American Indian TCU faculty to accelerate, or even finish, the advanced degree programs they began. These results confirm the general altruistic characteristics picked up in this survey and indicate that there is much that could be learned among TCUs about how to recruit American Indian faculty. The Southwest Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI), for example, operates an informal mentoring program in which an occasional student who shows promise is linked with subsequent, advanced education and, later, is given an opportunity to return to SIPI to perform research. This version of "grow your own," although presently only informal and small-scale, appears to hold great promise for increasing the number of American Indian faculty at TCUs.

American Indian faculty at TCUs apparently face twin, competing pressures. First, the commitment to teach at TCUs runs high. They appear to be drawn to TCUs to "make a difference in the lives of others" and to "teach American Indian students." At the same time, they also report that the likelihood that they would take other jobs within three years either in other postsecondary institutions or outside of education to be relatively high. Since the majority report that these are the first faculty jobs they have held, they may well wish to see what teaching or working in other environments might hold.

Part of the retention solution might be to provide professional development opportunities at TCUs so that faculty can find new challenges in the TCU environment that would convince them to stay longer. TCUs are often short-handed and need professional expertise in a variety of areas. Further, although most TCUs, because of their rural location, may never be able to adequately provide opportunities for spouses and significant others, some thought should be directed toward programs that could improve faculty satisfaction in this area.

#### References

U.S. Department of Education. National Center for Education Statistics. *Background Characteristics, Work Activities, and Compensation of Faculty and Instructional Staff in Postsecondary Institutions: Fall 1998*, NCES 2001-152, by Linda J. Zimbler. Washington, DC: 2001.



## Appendix A TCU Faculty Questionnaire

April 2003

Dear Faculty Member:

The American Indian College Fund and the American Indian Higher Education Consortium are engaged in a planning project to facilitate the recruitment and retention of faculty at tribal colleges and universities. To assist with planning for this project, we are asking your help in filling out this brief questionnaire.

All information that permits the identification of individuals will be kept strictly confidential.

Please return this questionnaire to the project coordinator on your campus. Or, if you prefer, you may mail it directly to the address found on the last page.

Results of this research will be made available to your college's project coordinator in the fall.

Thank you for your valuable help.

Sincerely,

Nicole Adams  
American Indian College Fund

### Section A: Nature of Employment

1. During the 2002 Fall Term, did you have any instructional duties at this tribal college or university (*e.g., teaching one or more courses, or advising or supervising students' academic activities*)?
  - Yes
  - No (SKIP Questionnaire)
  
2. During the 2002 Fall Term, did this tribal college or university consider you to be employed part-time or full-time?
  - Part-time
  - Full-time
  
3. In what year did you begin the job you held at this tribal college or university during the 2002 Fall Term?

**OR**

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4. Which of the following best describes your academic rank, title, or position at this tribal college or university during the 2002 Fall Term? (Mark [x] one box. If no ranks are designated at your tribal college or university, mark the "NA," Not Applicable box.)
- N/A. Not applicable: no ranks designated at this tribal college or university
  - Professor
  - Associate Professor
  - Assistant Professor
  - Instructor
  - Lecturer
  - Other title (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
5. What was your tenure status at this tribal college or university during the 2002 Fall Term? (Mark [x] one box.)
- Tenured → In what year did you achieve tenure at this tribal college or university? 19 \_\_ \_ OR 20 \_\_ \_
  - On tenure track, but not tenured
  - Not on tenure track/although tribal college or university has a tenure system
  - No tenure system at this tribal college or university
6. Were you the chairperson of a department or division at this tribal college or university during the 2002 Fall term
- Yes
  - No
7. What is your *principal* field or discipline of teaching
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Section B: Academic/Professional Background**

8. Please list below information about the degrees you have received. Do not list honorary degrees. If you have more than one degree at the same level, please list the most recent degree first.

**Codes for Type of Degree**

- 1) First professional degree (M.D., LL.B., J.D., D.V.M)
- 2) Doctoral degree (Ph.D., Ed.D., etc)
- 3) Masters of Fine Arts, Masters of Social Work (M.F.A., M.S.W.
- 4) Other Master's degree (M.A., M.S., M.B.A., M.Ed., etc.)
- 5) Bachelor's degree (B.A., A.B., B.S., etc.)
- 6) Associates' degree or equivalent (A.A., A.S., etc.)
- 7) Certificate or diploma for completion of undergraduate program (other than Associate's or Bachelor's)

- NA. Not Applicable; do not hold a degree or award listed above (SKIP TO QUESTION 9)

	Degree Code	Year Received	Name of Field	a. Name of college or university

	(from box above)			b. City and State/Country of Tribal college or university
Highest				a. b.
Next Highest				a. b.
Next Highest				a. b.
Next Highest				a. b.

9. Are you currently working toward a degree?

- Yes  
 No (*SKIP TO QUESTION 11*)

10. Please indicate below the type of degree you are currently working toward and other details.

	Degree Code (from box above)	Year Anticipate d	Name of Field	a. Name of institution b. City and State/Country of college or university
Degree Working Toward				a. b.

11. In total, how many professional positions in higher education institutions have you held?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ Number of Positions

12. Is this your first faculty position at any higher education institution?

- Yes  
 No

13. How many years have you been teaching in higher education institutions?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ Number of years

14. How many professional positions, outside of higher education institutions have you held?

- None

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ Number of professional positions outside of higher education

15. What brought you to teach at a tribal college or university? (Mark all that apply).

- Challenge
- Grew up here
- To make a difference in the lives of others
- Good job opportunities for my spouse or partner
- I was recruited for this position
- Other faculty positions weren't available elsewhere
- Job security
- Wanted to teach American Indian students
- No pressure to publish
- Wanted to conduct research in this location
- Good geographic location
- Good environment/schools for my children
- Good instructional facilities and equipment
- Other. Please specify \_\_\_\_\_

15. How many of each of the following have you presented/published/etc. during your entire career and during the last two years? For publications, please include only works that have been accepted for publication. Count multiple presentations/publications of the same work only once. Include electronic publications that are not published elsewhere in the appropriate categories

<b>Types of Presentation/Publication/etc.</b>	<b>Total during career</b>	<b>Total during past two years</b>
1. Articles published in refereed professional or trade journals; creative works published in juried media	___ ___	___ ___
2. Articles published in nonrefereed professional or trade journals; creative works published in nonjuried media or in-house newsletters	___ ___	___ ___
3. Published review of books, articles, or creative works; chapters in edited volumes	___ ___	___ ___
4. Textbooks, other books: monographs; research or technical reports disseminated internally or to clients	___ ___	___ ___
5. Presentations at conferences, workshops, etc., exhibitions or performances in the fine or applied arts	___ ___	___ ___
6. Other, such as patents or computer software products	___ ___	___ ___

16. On average, how many hours per week did you spend at each of the following kinds of activities during the 2002 Fall Term?

Activity	Average number of hours per week
a. All paid activities at this tribal college or university (e.g. teaching, clinical service, class preparation, research, administration)	___ ___
b. All unpaid activities at this tribal college or university	___ ___
c. Any other paid activities outside this tribal college or university (e.g., consulting, working on other jobs)	___ ___
d. Unpaid (pro bono) professional service activities outside this tribal college or university	___ ___

17. During the 2002 Fall Term, what was the total number of classes or sections you taught at this tribal college or university? (Mark "NA", if you did not teach any classes)

- Do not include individualized instruction, such as independent study, individual performance classes, or working with individual students in a clinical or research setting
- Count multiple sections of the same course as a separate class (e.g., If you taught Indian Culture 202 to two different groups of students during the term, count this as two separate classes)
- Count lab or discussion sections of a class as the same class (e.g., if you taught Biology 202 to a group of students during the term and the class consisted of a lecture two times a week, a lab one day a week, and a discussion section one day a week, count this work as one class)

NA. Not applicable; no classes taught (*SKIP TO QUESTION 20*)

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ Number of classes/sections (i.e., credit and non-credit)

18. How many different courses (preparations) do these classes/sections represent?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ Number of courses these classes/sections represent

19. How many of the classes/sections you taught during the 2002 Fall Term were remedial? (Write in number, if none, write in "0")

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ Number of classes/sections that were remedial

### Section C: Job Satisfaction Issues

20. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with each of the following aspects of your instructional duties at this tribal college or university (Mark [x] one box for each item).

	Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Not applicable
a. The authority I have to make decision about content and methods in the courses I teach					
b. The authority I have to make decisions about what courses I teach					
The authority I have to make decision about other (non-instructional) aspects of my job					
Time available for working with students as an advisor, mentor, etc.					
Time available for class preparation					
Quality of students whom I have taught here					

21. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following aspects of your job at this tribal college or university? (Mark [x] one box for each item)

	Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Not applicable
a. My work load					
b. My job security					
c. Opportunity for advancement					
d. Time available for keeping current in my field					
e. The effectiveness of faculty leadership at this tribal college or university					
f. Freedom to do outside consulting					
g. My salary					
h. My benefits					
i. Spouse or partner employment opportunities in this geographic area					
j. My job here, overall					

22. During the next three years, how likely is it that you will leave this job to:

	<b>Not at all likely</b>	<b>Somewhat Likely</b>	<b>Very Likely</b>
Accept a <i>part-time</i> job at a <i>different</i> postsecondary tribal college or university			
Accept a <i>full-time</i> job at a <i>different</i> postsecondary tribal college or university			
Accept a <i>part-time</i> job <i>not at</i> a postsecondary tribal college or university			
Accept a <i>full-time</i> job <i>not at</i> a postsecondary tribal college or university			
Retire from the labor force			

**Section D: Compensation**

Note: Your responses to these items as with all other items in this questionnaire are voluntary and strictly confidential. They will be used only in statistical summaries, and will not be disclosed to your tribal college or university or to any individual or group.

23. What is your basic salary from this tribal college or university for the 2002-2003 academic year? (Write in dollar amount. If not sure, give your best estimate)

a. Basic salary for academic year .....\$ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_

**Section E: Sociodemographic Characteristics**

24. Are you  
 Male  
 Female

25. In what month and year were you born?

\_\_\_\_ Month      **1 9** \_\_\_\_ Year

24. What is your ethnicity?  
 Hispanic or Latino  
 Not Hispanic or Latino

25. What is your race? (*Check all that apply*)  
 American Indian or Alaskan Native.  
 What is your tribal affiliation(s)? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Asian  
 Black or African American  
 Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander  
 White

Appendix B  
Respondent Teaching Areas  
**American Indian Faculty Assignments**

Adult Basic Education	English (2)
Alcohol and Drugs	English & Native American Studies
American Indian Studies	Finance, Marketing, & Small Business
American Literature	Management
Biology/Chemistry	General
Business	Health Physical Education/Athletics (3)
Business Education	Human Services/Social Services (3)
Business Management and Native Studies	Law
Chemical Dependency	Mathematics
Computer Science	Medical Coding/Billing/Transcription/Sciences
Construction Technology	Microsoft Office
Developmental English/Writing	Physics & Mathematics
Early Childhood Education	Psychology
Education/Teacher Preparation	Science (2)
Elementary Education	Social Behavioral Science
Educational leadership	Speech/Humanities
Electronics Technology	Teacher Preparation
	Tribal Legal Studies

**Non-Indian Faculty Assignments**

Accounting	Geospatial Technologies
Business Education	Graphic Arts
Ag business/Ag Science (3)	Health/Fitness
Anthropology	History (3)
Athletic Training	Human Behavior
Biology (2)	Information Technology
Biology/Ecology	Language Arts Teaching
Biology/Environmental Science	Law Enforcement
Building Trades	Life/Physical Sciences
Business Education (3)	Marketing Management
Business/Economics/Accounting	Mathematics (7)
Communications (3)	Music education
Communication/English	Natural Resources Department
Computer Science (2)	Nursing (5)
Computer Software	Nutrition
Computer Technology	Philosophy/Music
Computer/Math	Physical Education
Computers (3)	Physics (2)
Criminal Justice (2)	Plant Sciences/Agriculture
Criminology	Psychology & Human Services
Developmental Math, English & Computers	Psychology (2)
Digital Pre-press	Science (3)
Early Childhood (3)	Science (Chemistry Microbiology)
Education (3)	Science/Education
Electrical Technology	Sociology
English (3)	Special Education
English and American Indian Studies	Speech
Environmental Science (2)	Survival Skills - College and Career
Equine management	Veterinary Science
Corrections	Vocational Education (3)
Geography	



