



AMERICAN  
INDIAN  
COLLEGE  
FUND

EDUCATION IS THE ANSWER

2015 – 2016 **Annual Report**



## OUR MISSION

The American Indian College Fund transforms Indian higher education by funding and creating awareness of the unique, community-based accredited Tribal Colleges and Universities, offering students access to knowledge, skills, and cultural values which enhance their communities and the country as a whole.



### OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU:

For more than 25 years, the American Indian College Fund has been committed to transparency and accountability. We consistently earn top ratings from independent charity evaluators.

- The College Fund meets the Standards for Charity Accountability of the Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance.
- The College Fund received a four-star rating from Charity Navigator in 2016.





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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



**T**he American Indian College Fund's slogan is "Education is the answer." Our experience over more than 25 years has proven to us that education can help Native students navigate any challenge they encounter along life's journey. We all know that education provides an individual with the ability to earn a living, sustain a family, and contribute to the vitality of one's community, while maintaining one's physical and mental health.

Yes, education is the answer. But what if a person does not know the right questions to ask or even whether he or she should be asking questions in order to get that education?

Here at the American Indian College Fund, we know that scholarships are just one part of the package that ensures a successful journey for Native students. This long journey begins with walking through the doors of a higher education institution, and culminates with graduation and career success. This is why the College Fund's student support includes not just scholarships, but programs that foster student success. Beginning in early childhood through high school and into college, we are engaging family, teachers, and entire communities in Native student education to give them the support and guidance they need to thrive in their educational pursuits. We support students being educated in safe and secure places, and giving them access to study materials and tools they can leverage to make their dreams a reality every step of the way. And we do all of this while supporting Native cultures and languages, the heart of our students' identity.

The students we serve are disproportionately struggling financially, so our support is especially vital. Simple resources that many families take for granted aren't always available for our students. You will read in these pages about a stellar student, Robin Maxkii, a student at Salish Kootenai College who has set her sights on a career in the technology industry. Robin is one of the best and brightest collegiate minds in technology today. She has interned at the National Science Foundation and has been busily piling up achievements, but her success wasn't always a foregone conclusion. When Robin was a child, sometimes when she took things apart to learn how they worked, she wasn't always able to put them back together again. As a result, her tinkering wasn't always encouraged because her family needed those items and couldn't easily replace them.

By making programs available that allow intellectual inquiry from a young age, we ensure that Native students can follow their interests and achieve their dreams. Once Native students develop those skills, we help place them in internships to put their skills to work so they can develop both their skills and workplace networks for career success.

And as we walk with our students every step of their journey, we are thankful that you are walking with us, too. We could not do the work we do without your support. We are excited to share the impact we all have made together this year as we walk this journey together.

Thank you.

*Cheryl Crazy Bull*



Back, left to right: Dr. James Davis, Dr Robert Martin, Jeff Fillerup, Bill Black, Michael Purvis, Cameron Geiger, and Gail Bruce. Front row, left to right: Dr. Elmer Guy, Lynn Dee Rapp, Dr. Carole Falcon Chandler, Dr. Laurel Vermillion, and Anne Sward Hansen. Missing from Photo: Dr. David Yarlott, Kimberly Blanchard, Dr. Justin Guillory, Tom Brooks, Dawson Her Many Horses, Dr. Billie Jo Kipp, Dr. Richard Littlebear, Dr. Verna Fowler, Dr. Michael Oltrogge, Carrie Billy, David Kennedy, Dr. David Gipp, Richard Black, Dr. Cynthia Lindquist, Liesl Wilke.

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Author



Only **13.6%** of American Indians and Alaska Natives age 25 or older have a **college degree**.

# Education

More than **\$8.1** million dollars in scholarship and internship support was distributed in 2015-16, and more than **\$93 million** awarded since our founding in 1998.

# is the Answer.

**4,135**

American Indians **received scholarships** in 2015-16.

Support for programs and **higher education institutions** serving Native communities, including cultural preservation, early childhood education, faculty development fellowships, and research and leadership grants totaled nearly **\$4.7** million in 2015-16.

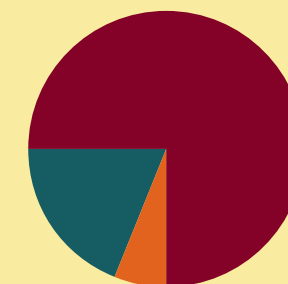
**\$4.7**

**37%** of students who received scholarships last year are the **first in their families** to go to college.

## TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS 2015-16

|  |    |                         |
|--|----|-------------------------|
| Individuals                            | \$ | <b>6.03 Million</b>     |
| Bequests                               |    | <b>5.74 million</b>     |
| Corporations and corporate foundations |    | <b>2.44 million</b>     |
| Charitable foundations                 |    | <b>9.45 million</b>     |
| <b>Total</b>                           |    | <b>\$ 23.66 million</b> |

## HOW YOUR DONATIONS ARE USED



### Five-Year Average Fulfilling Our Mission:

Scholarships, Programs, and Public Education **75%**  
 Management and General **6%**  
 Fundraising **19%**

### For 2015-16, we invested donations into the communities we served as follows:

#### Fulfilling Our Mission:

Scholarships, Programs, and Public Education 72.3%  
 Management and General 5.5%  
 Fundraising 22.2%





**1 Lay a foundation for success.** Early childhood education programs support tribal colleges and community partners to deepen Native family engagement in education starting from birth to age eight. The Ké' Early Childhood Initiative, funded by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, builds upon the success of its earlier sponsored Wakanyeja "Sacred Little Ones" Early Childhood Initiative by prioritizing and strengthening Native families' roles in both early childhood education and children's learning opportunities. Programs that are rooted in culture and place create a strong foundation for children's education while empowering Native families to advocate for positive change in their communities.

# Education is the Answer.



**2 Build a bridge.** Bridge programs to help junior and high school students get to college increase the number of college-going Native youth. The Native Pathways to College Project, funded by the Mellon Foundation, prepares students for admissions testing and the rigors of college and helps to create a financial plan. The program also supports students enrolled in tribal colleges and universities (TCUs), helping them successfully transition to four-year higher education institutions.

**3 Finish what you start.** We want every Native student who begins college to finish with a certificate or degree. American Indian College Fund scholarships ensure that students have the resources to pay for tuition, books, and living expenses so they can focus on studying for the end game.



**4 Test-drive a career.** Internship opportunities improve students' skills and knowledge, expose them to career paths, build professional networks, build self-esteem, pay the bills, and add experience to resumé, giving them a competitive edge when seeking a job or applying for graduate school. Our programs sponsored by the Henry Luce Foundation and AT&T expose students to opportunities that shape students' careers and lives.



## HOW WE BUILD AND SUSTAIN A PATH TO HIGHER EDUCATION



**5 Grow expertise.** Academic fellowships give tribal college and university professionals an opportunity to earn terminal degrees in exchange for a two-year teaching commitment. The end result: students are taught by and have the opportunity to do research alongside experts in their field, while bolstering the intellectual capital of the TCUs and the communities they serve through highly credentialed professors.

**6 Invest in people and communities.** The American Indian College Fund provides support to TCUs for student programs including tutoring, mentoring, and leadership. The College Fund also underwrites construction projects, equipment expenses for computer and science laboratories, environmental infrastructure, and more.

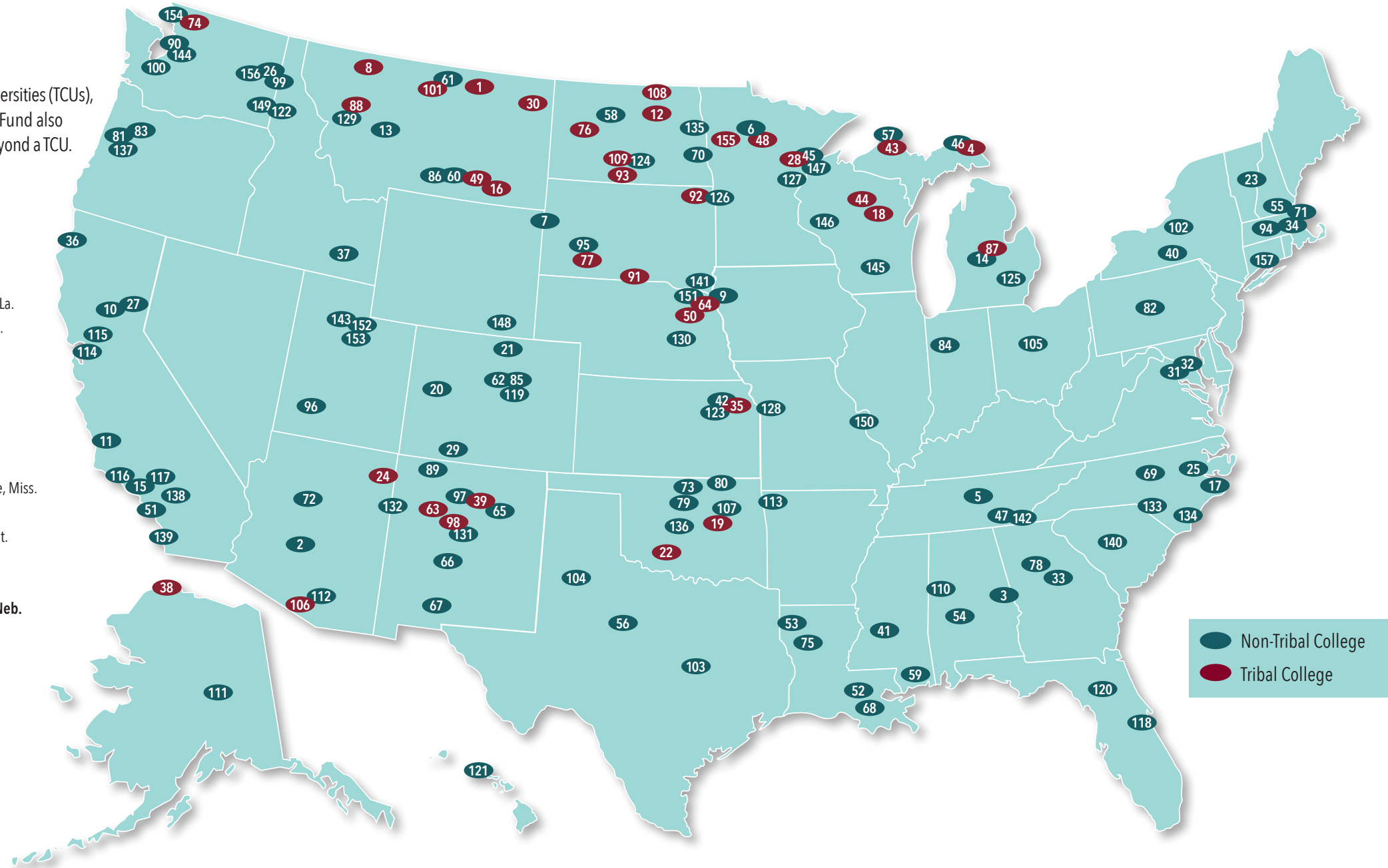




# MAP OF SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORT

In addition to providing financial and programmatic support for 35 tribal colleges and universities (TCUs), the American Indian College Fund provides TCU students with scholarships. The College Fund also awards scholarships to students who wish to continue or pursue their academic journey beyond a TCU.

- 1 Aaniiih Nakoda College, Mont.
- 2 Arizona State University, Ariz.
- 3 Auburn University, Ala.
- 4 Bay Mills Community College, Mich.
- 5 Belmont University, Tenn.
- 6 Bemidji State University, Minn.
- 7 Black Hills State University, S.D.
- 8 Blackfeet Community College, Mont.
- 9 Briar Cliff University, Iowa
- 10 Butte College, Calif.
- 11 California Polytechnic State University, Calif.
- 12 Cankdeska Cikana Community College, N.D.
- 13 Carroll College, Mont.
- 14 Central Michigan University, Mich.
- 15 Chapman University, Calif.
- 16 Chief Dull Knife College, Mont.
- 17 College of Charleston, N.C.
- 18 College of Menominee Nation, Wis.
- 19 College of the Muscogee Nation, Okla.
- 20 Colorado Mesa University, Colo.
- 21 Colorado State University, Colo.
- 22 Comanche Nation College, Okla.
- 23 Dartmouth College, N.H.
- 24 Diné College, Ariz.
- 25 East Carolina University, N.C.
- 26 Eastern Washington University, Wash.
- 27 Feather River Community College, Calif.
- 28 Fond du Lac Tribal & Community College, Minn.
- 29 Fort Lewis College, Colo.
- 30 Fort Peck Community College, Mont.
- 31 George Mason University, Va.
- 32 George Washington University, District of Columbia
- 33 Georgia Military College, Ga.
- 34 Harvard University, Mass.
- 35 Haskell Indian Nations University, Kan.
- 36 Humboldt State University, Calif.
- 37 Idaho State University, Idaho
- 38 Ilisagvik College, Alaska
- 39 Institute of American Indian Arts, N.M.
- 40 Ithaca College, N.Y.
- 41 Jackson State University, Miss.
- 42 Kansas State University, Kan.
- 43 Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College, Mich.
- 44 Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College, Wis.
- 45 Lake Superior College, Minn.
- 46 Lake Superior State University, Mich.
- 47 Lee University, Tenn.
- 48 Leech Lake Tribal College, Minn.
- 49 Little Big Horn College, Mont.
- 50 Little Priest Tribal College, Neb.
- 51 Los Angeles Harbor College, Calif.
- 52 Louisiana State University – Baton Rouge, La.
- 53 Louisiana State University – Shreveport, La.
- 54 Marion Military Institute, Ala.
- 55 Massachusetts College of Pharmacy & Health Sciences, Vt.
- 56 McMurry University, Texas
- 57 Michigan Technological University, Mich.
- 58 Minot State University, N.D.
- 59 Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, Miss.
- 60 Montana State University – Billings, Mont.
- 61 Montana State University – Northern, Mont.
- 62 Naropa University, Colo.
- 63 Navajo Technical University, N.M.
- 64 Nebraska Indian Community College, Neb.
- 65 New Mexico Highlands University, N.M.
- 66 New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, N.M.
- 67 New Mexico State University, N.M.
- 68 Nicholls State University, La.
- 69 North Carolina State University, N.C.
- 70 North Dakota State University, N.D.
- 71 Northeastern University, Mass.
- 72 Northern Arizona University, Ariz.
- 73 Northern Oklahoma College, Okla.
- 74 Northwest Indian College, Wash.
- 75 Northwestern State University of Louisiana, La.
- 76 Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish College, N.D.
- 77 Oglala Lakota College, S.D.
- 78 Oglethorpe University, Ga.
- 79 Oklahoma State University, Okla.
- 80 Oklahoma Wesleyan University, Okla.
- 81 Oregon State University, Ore.
- 82 Pennsylvania State University, Pa.
- 83 Portland Community College, Ore.
- 84 Purdue University, Ind.
- 85 Regis University, Colo.
- 86 Rocky Mountain College, Mont.
- 87 Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College, Mich.
- 88 Salish Kootenai College, Mont.
- 89 San Juan College, N.M.
- 90 Seattle Pacific University, Wash.
- 91 Sinte Gleska University, S.D.



- Non-Tribal College
- Tribal College

- 92 Sisseton Wahpeton College, S.D.
- 93 Sitting Bull College, N.D.
- 94 Smith College, Mass.
- 95 South Dakota School of Mines & Technology, S.D.
- 96 Southern Utah University, Utah
- 97 Southwestern College, N.M.
- 98 Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute, N.M.
- 99 Spokane Community College, Wash.
- 100 St. Martin's University, Wash.
- 101 Stone Child College, Mont.
- 102 Syracuse University, N.Y.
- 103 Texas State Technical College, Texas
- 104 Texas Tech University, Texas
- 105 The Ohio State University, Ohio
- 106 Tohono O'odham Community College, Ariz.
- 107 Tulsa Community College, Okla.
- 108 Turtle Mountain Community College, N.D.
- 109 United Tribes Technical College, N.D.
- 110 University of Alabama, Ala.
- 111 University of Alaska, Alaska
- 112 University of Arizona, Ariz.
- 113 University of Arkansas, Ark.
- 114 University of California – Berkeley, Calif.
- 115 University of California – Davis, Calif.
- 116 University of California – Los Angeles, Calif.
- 117 University of California – Riverside, Calif.
- 118 University of Central Florida, Fla.
- 119 University of Colorado – Denver|Anschutz Medical Campus, Colo.
- 120 University of Florida, Fla.
- 121 University of Hawaii, Hawaii
- 122 University of Idaho, Idaho
- 123 University of Kansas, Kan.
- 124 University of Mary, N.D.
- 125 University of Michigan, Mich.
- 126 University of Minnesota – Morris, Minn.
- 127 University of Minnesota – Twin Cities, Minn.
- 128 University of Missouri, Mo.
- 129 University of Montana, Mont.
- 130 University of Nebraska, Neb.
- 131 University of New Mexico – Albuquerque, N.M.
- 132 University of New Mexico – Gallup, N.M.
- 133 University of North Carolina at Pembroke, N.C.
- 134 University of North Carolina at Wilmington, N.C.
- 135 University of North Dakota, N.D.
- 136 University of Oklahoma, Okla.
- 137 University of Oregon, Ore.
- 138 University of Redlands, Calif.
- 139 University of San Diego, Calif.
- 140 University of South Carolina, S.C.
- 141 University of South Dakota, S.D.
- 142 University of Tennessee, Tenn.
- 143 University of Utah, Utah
- 144 University of Washington, Wash.
- 145 University of Wisconsin – Madison, Wis.
- 146 University of Wisconsin – Stout, Wis.
- 147 University of Wisconsin – Superior, Wis.
- 148 University of Wyoming, Wyo.
- 149 Washington State University, Wash.
- 150 Washington University in St. Louis, Mo.
- 151 Wayne State College, Neb.
- 152 Weber State University, Utah
- 153 Western Governors University, Utah
- 154 Western Washington University, Wash.
- 155 White Earth Tribal and Community College, Minn.
- 156 Whitworth University, Wash.
- 157 Yale University, Conn.



## MEET ROBIN: CURIOSITY, COMPUTERS, COLLEGE, AND COMMUNITY



*"TCUs offer you room to explore what you are good at. People take you places where you couldn't go on your own."*

**W**hen Robin M̀axkii was a young girl, she says "I always had curiosity and the desire to explore." But "When you're poor, you can't always experiment because your family is depending on something to work."

Budding techies take things apart. Sometimes Robin's scientific inquiry led to breaking things her family needed, so she wasn't always encouraged to tinker in the same way as children from families with more resources would have been.

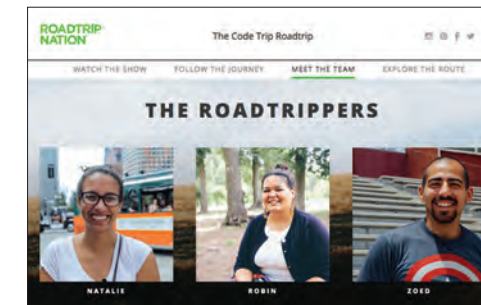
But that didn't discourage Robin from continuing to learn and explore. When she was at the library as a nine-year-old, she figured out how to hack the computers to get around the fifteen-minute time limit for patron usage. Unable to afford a new computer, she even built her own computer when she was a teen. Robin says that gave her a great sense of empowerment, but, "What I didn't understand or know is how tech could be a career... more pointedly, how it could be a career that could effect change within my community."

She also didn't understand how to get to college.

"There's sort of this ladder of success when it comes to college. You go to elementary school. You go up the rungs. For some of us, we're missing a couple of those rungs... We want to be a doctor, but how do we get there? It's not that we're lacking the drive, the motivation, or the inspiration for it, but we don't have that route or that map that some people get," Robin says.

A first-generation college student raised in a single-parent home, Robin had a strong desire to learn and succeed, so she began searching for information about college on the Internet. That search took her to Diné College, a two-year tribal college located in Arizona, where she started her education. She sold her car to pay for her first semester's tuition.

"I remember after I sold my car, it took me a few weeks to hit where I realized, 'I don't have a fleet of cars to pay for the next semester... I really don't know what I am going to do.'" A counselor asked her if she had applied for financial aid using the FAFSA, or Free Application for Federal Student Aid. "I said, 'I don't know what a FAFSA is.'" The counselor then asked if she had applied for scholarships with the American Indian College Fund. I replied, "A person like me doesn't get scholarships."



Watch Robin on the Code Trip Roadtrip at Road Trip Nation. [www.roadtripnation.com](http://www.roadtripnation.com).

For many Native American or first-generation college students like Robin, the path to college isn't intuitive. Without someone showing them the ropes, they don't always find their way to higher education.

Fortunately, Robin took her counselor's advice and applied for a scholarship. Her scholarships gave her the ability to choose classes and activities that contributed to her education.

Robin credits the College Fund and tribal colleges with making her dream of a career in technology a possibility. "I would not be who I am without the support and acknowledgment of the College Fund. It made me feel supported and part of a bigger community. No one had called me a scholar before... I feel part of a community. Through their Native scholars program I felt like I had a whole team alongside me, and I wasn't just going to school alone. I was truly part of something."

In addition, Robin says tribal colleges have proven to be excellent incubators for learning and career exploration. "TCUs offer you room to explore what you are good at. People take you places where you couldn't go on your own," Robin says.

And what places she has gone! Robin founded the national grassroots Blood Quantum Reform blog and social media campaign that was shortlisted to join the United Nations Partnership for Youth. She has visited the White House five times, and starred in a national PBS series about computer coding. Robin also completed her first internship at the prestigious National Science Foundation (NSF) in Washington, D.C., where she learned ways to apply her tech skills for greater public good. It was at the NSF that Robin began to seriously consider a tech career. She looked for more opportunities to intern in science and technology and next traveled to New Zealand, where she researched biodiversity.

After returning to the U.S., Robin appeared on The Code Trip, a national four-part television series sponsored by Microsoft as part of Roadtrip Nation. Robin was selected with two other students to pilot a large RV across the continental U.S. for five weeks. She met with technology experts to learn more about opportunities in the tech field.

"We got to spend time with people like ourselves who are not always well represented in tech (Robin says Native women in the field are few). We had great talks about what it is like to feel underrepresented in the field. I was glad to hear how they got through it. It also made me more focused than I was before."

Robin's career plans are now in focus. She plans to pursue a career in tech policy, conducting research in the development of ethical tools for fostering participation in science and technology, particularly in Native communities. Her next steps will be to earn a master's and doctorate degree. After that, Robin plans to work at a reservation school before returning to Washington, D.C. to immerse herself in a policy career. "It doesn't make sense to get removed from the community if I am going to make policy for it," she says.

Today Robin is completing her bachelor's degree at Salish Kootenai College, a four-year tribal college, readying herself for a journey that she knows has just begun.



## MEET WAYLON: NEW GRADUATE



*"I shall not forget the ocean of opportunities given to me for an education by supportive people."*

**W**aylon (Lummi and Northern Cheyenne) is a rarity: one of a small number of American Indian college graduates. Too often talented Native students like Waylon must forego a college education due to finances. Waylon, who hails from a traditional Lummi fishing family in the Pacific Northwest, was no different. He knew that college was something his family could not afford. But despite the financial hurdles to getting into college (and staying there), Waylon was determined to succeed.

Because his family was unable to assist him financially, Waylon says, "When I began my college journey, I came with the idea I was alone. I was determined to keep myself afloat. I obtained a full time job, working graveyard shifts, which only allowed me three to four hours of sleep a day. Homework was a priority and I made sure I was on time for class every time. Once, I woke crying because I was so tired and had homework to do."

It was the American Indian College Fund that made the difference in Waylon's life. When he learned he received a scholarship, he was able to resign from his full-time job so that he could focus on his studies. He no longer was plagued by worries about how he would pay for his books, tuition, or living expenses.

As it turned out, Waylon was not alone after all. He likens the scholarships and encouragement he received from the College Fund to the support crews who sustain rowers on traditional Lummi canoe journeys. "The support crew always remains within sight of the canoe, waiting for a sign that would indicate the rowers' need for assistance. Scholarships provided me with that safety boat, that sense of well-being," he says.

Thanks to his support crew—the College Fund and its supporters—and Waylon's hard work and determination along his education journey, he excelled. Waylon attended Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute, a two-year tribal college where he earned an associate's degree because he believes tradition,

history, and culture are important components of leadership. After graduating there, he transferred to the University of New Mexico to pursue a bachelor's degree, and graduated this spring with honors. Next up for Waylon on his journey is law school.

"I shall not forget the ocean of opportunities given to me for an education by supportive people," Waylon says.



## IVA BULLDOZES PATH TO SUCCESS



**A**fter Iva lost her lifelong best friend to cancer, she was feeling sad and anxious. Next her husband was injured, and shortly after, Iva struggled with illness herself, causing her to lose her long-time job. Any one thing alone was a hard enough burden, but the combination of events threatened the hard-working middle-class family with poverty. Iva, a self-described strong and independent woman by nature, found herself feeling shaken and uncertain about her future.

After taking a hard look at her life, Iva decided the only way forward was to do something she had always wanted to do: go back to school. Iva enrolled in classes at Blackfeet Community

College (BCC) on her reservation in northern Montana and in one year, she earned a certificate in the heavy equipment operations program.

That new certificate gave Iva an opportunity to earn money to keep her family afloat and keep her in college. It also gave her the encouragement she needed that she could succeed at whatever she set her mind to. Maneuvering massive equipment isn't easy work, and petite Iva felt her confidence grow as she worked on road crews, navigating like an old pro. And while in school, she got a real boost: she was awarded the Most Inspirational Award from the program's instructor. Iva was hungry to learn, bright, and hard-working. The certificate helped her get on her feet, but what she really needed was encouragement that she could regain her momentum, and her tribal college delivered.

Iva decided to continue her studies and pursued an associate degree. The awards and honors kept rolling in. She was consistently on the dean's list, was nominated twice for the American Indian Higher Education Student of the Year, and was elected to serve as President of the Student Senate. In addition, she was a vital member of the campus community, serving on the BCC's College Improvement Team.

She might have made it look easy, but it wasn't. Iva still had family responsibilities along with the intellectual and financial demands of college. "We really tightened our purse and managed to keep our heads above water without public assistance," she said. And scholarships from the American Indian College Fund, along with part-time work at BCC funded by the College Fund, were a big help. Her job allowed her to assist with cultural seminars and archival research with a mentor. And her scholarships gave her "the extra boost needed to pay for propane to heat the home, fix the heater in my truck when it was blowing cold air in the wintertime, and buy college textbooks online at half the cost of the college bookstore. [A scholarship] allowed me to use my work-study wages to buy groceries and not go on food stamps. A scholarship meant there was no problem buying gas to commute 50 miles a day to school, when getting to school was the most important thing of all."

Going to school was so important to Iva because she wanted a better life for herself and her family. But it was also important because she received confirmation at BCC that she had gifts that were needed in her community. At BCC she discovered she

*"I firmly believe that helping people to realize their potential through education will better serve the community."*

loved helping students and cheering them with her second job, as a part-time peer mentor.

With teaching in mind, Iva transferred to the University of Montana in 2012 to pursue a bachelor's degree. It wasn't easy, Iva admits, leaving her reservation and the tightknit community for the city. She struggled with missing family, children, and her adopted nephew, who was a resident in a long-term care facility at home and with whom she had helped with laundry, reading, and personal care. And Iva ached to participate in her community's traditional ceremonies, such as the pipe-bundle opening, held when the first thunder of the year rumbles across the big skies of Montana, marking the rain's return and celebrating the renewal of life.



Iva Croff, front right, wearing traditional Blackfeet ceremonial headdress as created by her son, Rodney FirstStrike.

"I didn't get to go home too often because I live 250 miles away and gas is too expensive," she said. "Sacrifices like this and being far from my family and other grandchildren have been difficult, but knowing that one day I would return to my community to teach has made it all worth it."

Iva's dream came true at last in the spring of 2016. She completed her master's degree in interdisciplinary studies (history, environmental studies, and curriculum development), graduating with honors. Her son surprised her by presenting her with a traditional Blackfeet headdress to wear to her ceremonies, and she was flanked by proud family and friends as she celebrated her achievement.

Many of her professors and classmates encouraged her to continue her education to earn a law degree, but Iva

said teaching is her dream. "I firmly believe that helping people to realize their potential through education will better serve the community." In addition to teaching, Iva dreams of starting an adult literacy program at home at her alma mater-Blackfeet Community College. "Reading has really opened my world... I want to share that with others," she said.

Just as Iva wants to invest her education back into her community, she is grateful to the American Indian College Fund and its supporters, saying, "I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for helping to brighten the future of American Indian college students, their families, and their communities. Thank you for investing in all of us!"



## INTERNSHIPS: VITAL TO CAREER SUCCESS

Internships are an important component to student success, providing students with opportunities to improve their skills, build confidence, and forge career networks. Yet many Native students cannot take advantage of internship opportunities because financial need makes working at an internship, whether paid or unpaid, impossible. Moving away from home to take an internship requires money

for transportation, room and board, and students must often choose between taking an internship or remaining enrolled in college.

Students shouldn't have to forego the important learning and career opportunities that internships provide. The American Indian College Fund offers internship programs designed to give them the knowledge and connections they need to succeed.



You can see Razelle's video, titled "Deconstructing the Internship," at <https://youtu.be/D1aUJt8TS1Q>.



### Filmmaking with Razelle Benally (Oglala Lakota/Diné)

Razelle dreamed of becoming a filmmaker since she was in high school, where she documented people working to protect sacred sites in South Dakota. From that moment on she was hooked. She went to work developing a long list of film credits as a director, actor, and editor, both in the U.S., Canada, and Sweden.

But it was as a student at the Institute of American Indian Arts, where Razelle is working towards a degree in Cinematic Arts and Technology, that she applied for and was awarded an internship through the American Indian College Fund. As a Henry Luce Foundation intern, Razelle was tasked with creating a video with the goal of learning and using new skills to set her apart in the competitive film industry.

First she crafted an idea. Razelle decided to create an instructional video about how to get an internship, working from her own misconceptions to inform others about the importance of proactively seeking out early internship opportunities. She wanted to imbue the project with a light comedic tone and a stylized, vintage aesthetic. She implemented a research plan and drew inspiration from rare and retro 1960s educational films and mainstream director Wes Anderson.

Razelle managed every step of the project from pre- to post-production, while overseeing a cast and crew of students. Her mentors were on hand to help her solve issues with craft service and editing. The result was a professional, high-quality video that the American Indian College Fund is using to promote internships.

In addition to learning new skillsets including production, leadership skills, and animation building, Razelle says, "The financial award that came with this internship project inspired me to push myself towards undertaking a larger, more professional production than any I have ever done before. Having the financial security helped me focus on the project goals and took away the stress that would have inhibited me from pursuing the unique vision I wanted to attain."

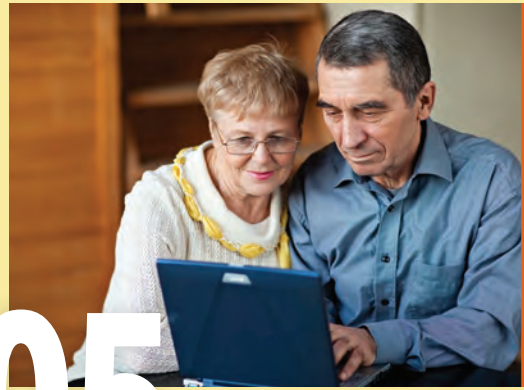


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We look forward to continuing our work together in the year ahead as we create opportunity and prosperity for generations to come.

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