

Reclaiming the Words of Our People Initiative: a Collaborative TCU Language Action Planning Project

Action Plan

Introduction

The American Indian Higher Education Consortium's (AIHEC) Board of Directors acknowledges and celebrates the uniqueness of the Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) and AIHEC, as compared to other institutions of higher education and national higher education organizations. AIHEC was established in 1973 by and for TCUs and the students, communities, lands, and cultures they serve. For these reasons, AIHEC's strategic initiatives focus on sustaining, serving, and strengthening TCUs and American Indian and Alaska Native students.¹

AIHEC's Vision

The American Indian Higher Education Consortium's vision is strong Sovereign Tribal Nations through excellence in Tribal higher education.

AIHEC's Mission

AIHEC is the collective spirit and unifying voice of our nation's Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs). AIHEC provides leadership and influences public policy on American Indian and Alaska Native higher education issues through advocacy, research, and programmatic initiatives; promotes and strengthens Indigenous languages, cultures, communities, lands, and tribal nations; and through its unique position, serves member institutions and emerging TCUs.

Language Teaching and Preservation Strategies

Our language teaching and preservation strategies and actions arise from TCU language program site visits conducted virtually. All 36 TCUs were reached, and in some cases more than one meeting was conducted. The individual visits were followed by five regional meetings where the previously identified needs were discussed and prioritized.

3-year Action Plan

Year	Strategic Directions and Activities
	Strategic Direction 1. <i>Development of Standard Set of Text Corpora</i>
1	1. Determine the text corpus status for each of the 29 Native languages taught at TCUs
1-3	2. Assist TCUs in developing a plan for addressing gaps in their text corpus
1-3	3. Assist TCUs in identifying resources and grant opportunities to fund plan implementation
	Strategic Direction 2. <i>Provide Curriculum Support for TCU Language Programs</i>
1-3	1. Alignment of curriculum, standards and assessment
1-3	2. Native language translation services – research and development
	Strategic Direction 3. <i>Addressing language revitalization as a larger ecosystem (socio-cultural issues)</i>
2-3	1. Organize TCU-based discussion forums and encourage research projects to address the issues of more visibility and exposure to Native languages in the communities
1-3	2. Assist with language planning at the local community level
	Strategic Direction 4. <i>Native language advocacy</i>
1-3	1. Building partnerships with national organizations, associations and federal agencies
1-2	2. Building partnerships with state education departments and other educational institutions (e. g. land-grant universities)
1-2	3. Membership in the America’s Languages Work Group; building partnerships with other ALWG’s members organizations
1-3	4. Coordination of media communications regarding Native language issues
2-3	5. Advocacy for consistent funding for TCU capacity building in Native language education and reclamation
	ADMINISTRATIVE/OTHER ACTIVITIES
1-3	1. National TCU Center of Excellence on Native Languages Advisory Board: activities oversight, bi-monthly meetings
1-3	2. TCU Native Languages Community of Practice: professional development, meetings, yearly conference
	3. National TCU Center of Excellence on Native Languages Website: research and design
	4. National TCU Center of Excellence on Native Languages structure and organization: building of CoP, network of experts, TCU-based work teams

