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Indigenous Internationalization: Indigenous Worldviews, Higher Education, and Tribal Colleges and Universities

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Abstract: This article examines the role of Indigenous knowledges in higher education through an exploration of internationalization at U.S. Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs). We affirm that examining internationalization efforts with historically marginalized and underserved populations provides an opportunity for interrogating inequitable power dynamics in knowledge construction, production, and transference vis-à-vis education and within a Western hegemonic model of

modernity. Our discussion is anchored in decoloniality and Indigenous sustainable self-determination, which highlight educational initiatives that bolster Indigenous identities while addressing social, political, and environmental complications created by coloniality. Drawing from a five-year mixed-methods case study with TCUs, we offer Indigenous perspectives on place-based higher educational initiatives in relation to local and global concerns, specifically human and ecological sustainability. We propose a critical lens in *Indigenous internationalization* wherein Indigenous worldviews are vital responses to dominant notions of internationalization and historical limitations of education for Indigenous peoples.
Keywords: Tribal colleges; internationalization; Indigenous knowledges

Internacionalización Indígena: Cosmovisiónes Indígenas, la enseñanza superior, y las universidades tribales

Resumen: Este artículo examina el papel de los conocimientos Indígenas en la enseñanza superior por medio de internacionalización en universidades tribales en los Estados Unidos. Las investigaciones sobre internacionalización con gente Indígena nos dan la oportunidad de interrogar desigualdades y la inequidad de poder en la construcción, producción, y transferencia del saber, el cual está dominado por occidente y el discurso de la modernidad. Nuestra discusión está basada en la decolonialidad del poder y la autodeterminación Indígena cuyas teorías iluminan iniciativas que refuerzan las identidades Indígenas y, al mismo tiempo, combaten problemas sociales, políticos y ecológicos creados por el colonialismo. A partir de un estudio de caso de métodos mixtos llevado a cabo por cinco años con TCU, ofrecemos perspectivas indígenas sobre iniciativas de educación superior basadas en el territorio y que apuntan a preocupaciones locales y globales, específicamente de sostenibilidad humana y ecológica. Proponemos un lente crítico que denominados *internacionalización indígena* en educación superior que se centra en las cosmovisiones indígenas y que intentan corregir los límites de la propagación del movimiento global de internacionalización dominante.
Palabras-clave: universidades Indígenas; internacionalización; conocimientos Indígenas

Internacionalização Indígena: Visões de mundo indígenas, ensino superior e universidades tribais

Resumo: Este artigo examina o papel do conhecimento indígena no ensino superior através da internacionalização em universidades tribais nos Estados Unidos. A pesquisa sobre internacionalização com povos indígenas nos dá a oportunidade de interrogar as desigualdades e a desigualdade de poder na construção, produção e transferência de conhecimento, que é dominado pelo Ocidente e pelo discurso da modernidade. Nossa discussão baseia-se na descolonialidade do poder e na autodeterminação indígena, cujas teorias iluminam iniciativas que reforçam identidades indígenas e, ao mesmo tempo, combatem problemas sociais, políticos e ecológicos criados pelo colonialismo. Com base em um estudo de caso de métodos mistos realizado por cinco anos com o TCU, oferecemos perspectivas indígenas sobre iniciativas de ensino superior com base territorial que apontam para preocupações locais e globais, especificamente a sustentabilidade humana e ecológica. Propomos uma lente crítica que é denominada internacionalização indígena no ensino superior, que enfoca as visões de mundo indígenas e que tenta corrigir os limites da propagação do movimento global de internacionalização dominante.
Palavras-chave: Universidades indígenas; internacionalização; conhecimento indígena

Indigenous Peoples and the Colonial Construction of Knowledge

> Native people may need to understand Western society, but not at the expense of what they already know and the way they have come to know it. Non-Native people, too, need to recognize the coexistence of multiple worldviews and knowledge systems, and find ways to understand and relate to the world in its multiple dimensions and varied perspectives (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005, p. 9).

As researchers working with Indigenous peoples in higher education, we are confronted with pervasive impacts of coloniality across Indigenous communities. Globally, we see widespread ecological devastation due to industrialization and extractive industry, cultural and language loss due to unremitting colonial policies, and statistics that indicate declining health as Indigenous peoples continue to transition from ancestral lifestyles through development, modernization, and urbanization. At the same time, we are privileged to witness Indigenous students, educators, and community members rising against environmental devastation; revitalizing cultural practices and awakening Indigenous languages despite the power and status of dominant languages; and finding ways to protect, reclaim, and cultivate ancestral values of holistic being (physical, emotional, mental, spiritual) towards Indigenous wellness. Such tensions represent ideological clashes between the nation state and its actors and Indigenous communities asserting rights to self-determination. Today, at all levels of formal schooling, from early childhood through tertiary and adult education, Indigenous peoples are often portrayed as deficient subjects rather than peoples capable of self-representation and shaping education through their own knowledge systems. As such, we begin with Ray Barnhardt and the late Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley who called attention to educational disparities created by these misrepresentations and whose work in Indigenous science education demonstrated that balance can be achieved through mutual respect of local Indigenous and Western knowledges.

However, this balance is precarious, and generations of oppressive educational policies and practices have wrought damage in Indigenous communities, making schooling a contentious process as an instrument of coloniality. Over the past several hundred years in Indigenous communities in the Americas, education has served to perpetuate coloniality through its conceptualization as a controlled institution and process that can only be created and overseen by European colonizers (Avila, 2007), where Euro-centric learning content is normative, and where pedagogy is legitimate when formalized and confined to institutions (e.g. universities). Education also represents and perpetuates separation—where knowledge and ways of knowing are compartmentalized apart from the ecologies that define human existence in this world and the inherently interdisciplinary knowledge traditions from which students come. The work of Daniel Mato is critical in this regard. In his description of *Póliticas de identidades y diferencias sociales en tiempos de globalización* [Politics of identities and social differences in times of globalization], he aptly pointed out that though distinctions are useful between that which are deemed 'the economic,' 'the political,' 'the cultural,' and 'the social,' these remain partial categories limited by reductionist constructions. He argued that we must not lose perspective of cultural aspects of the processes we analyze, the relative contextual validity of theories we explore, the specific contextual conditions of our actions, or the present and potential importance of transnational relations at play in these contexts that ultimately challenge the confines of what is considered local (2010, p. 141). Thus, writing as representatives of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC), the umbrella organization of the 37 Tribal Colleges

and Universities[1] (TCUs) in the United States, we acknowledge limitations of constructs that would categorize education as distinct from political, social, cultural, and economic processes. We are proponents of education as also interwoven with environment, health, spirituality, language, and all other elements that create the possibility and conditions for peoples to realize self-determination.

We also aim to dismantle historical binaries between Western and Indigenous knowledges by asserting Indigenous knowledges as elemental in Indigenous worldviews, which are valid, organized, and purposeful ways of understanding the world around us, at once local and global, wherein the primary goal of learning is striving towards fluency in multiple epistemologies (Mato, 2011; Tom, Suminda Huaman, & McCarty, 2019). In this article, we discuss the establishment of U.S. Tribal Colleges and Universities as local and global manifestations of Indigenous self-representation that exemplify spaces of Indigenous knowledges and innovative responses to coloniality. We extrapolate the role of Indigenous knowledges in higher education through conceptualizations of internationalization at TCUs and contend that internationalization efforts with historically marginalized and underserved populations provides an opportunity for interrogating inequitable power dynamics in knowledge construction, production, and transference vis-à-vis education and within a Western hegemonic model of modernity. Our discussion is anchored in decoloniality and Indigenous sustainable self-determination, which highlight educational initiatives that bolster Indigenous identities while addressing complications created by coloniality and reflect renewed purposes and meaningful application of knowledge. Drawing from a five-year mixed-methods case study with TCUs, we offer Indigenous perspectives on place-based higher educational initiatives in relation to local and global concerns, specifically human and ecological sustainability. We propose a critical lens in *Indigenous internationalization* wherein Indigenous worldviews are vital responses to dominant notions of internationalization and historical limitations of education for Indigenous peoples.

Indigenous agencies and innovations in education through TCUs become especially significant when we recognize the inflexible nature of formal education institutions as staunch holders and producers of knowledge, as brokering agents of knowledge transmission, and serving Western hegemonic ideals of modernity. As Quijano contended (2000), the existing global model of power is rooted in race-based colonial constructions of identity that require controlling land and labor, which for Indigenous peoples is a particularly salient experience. Relatedly, Tslostanova and Mignolo (2012) elaborated the colonial matrix of power, wherein four interconnected spheres of social organization and conflict over control characterize nation-states, emphasizing the ongoing condition of colonial domination: economic control through appropriation of land, natural resources, and exploitation of labor; control of authority, including governance, political organizations, financial, legal, and military systems; control of normative ways of being, such as family, religion and morality, gender and sexuality; and control of knowledge and subjectivity through education and colonizing existing knowledges (p. 44-45). They also pointed out that among the most troubling legacies resulting from the colonial matrix of power are the lasting characterizations of peoples in the global North and global South—where Indigenous and minoritized populations are colorful and cultural yet devoid of intellectualism, and Europeans are rational, the only peoples truly capable of producing legitimate and scientific knowledge.

However, Mignolo also argued for the possibility of epistemic delinking from the colonial matrix of power (2017). He stated, "Decoloniality operates on pluri-versality and truth and not in uni-

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[1] Today, there is a distinction among the TCUs in that 34 have been chartered by tribal governments, thus making these institutions "tribally-controlled," and 3 are chartered by the U.S. federal government, making them federally-controlled TCUs. However, the term TCU is generally accepted by all AIHEC institutions.

versality and truth…it should strive for re-existence…If you resist, you are trapped in the rules of the game others created, specifically the narrative and promises of modernity and the necessary implementation of coloniality. There cannot be only one model of re-existence" (p. 41). Quijano, Tslostanova, and Mignolo's analyses are crucial to providing us with the language to understand how education has become emblematic of contemporary neoliberal challenges facing Indigenous peoples of the Americas and elsewhere in the global South, regions and peoples constructed as lesser-developed and sharing historical and contemporary experiences of inequality and dependency (Braveboy-Wagner, 2003). Despite being situated in the global North, Indigenous communities in North America—the geographic focus of this article—constitute colonized populations who understand, in a very painful sense, that education was not originally intended to serve their liberation. The 19th century U.S. boarding school and Canadian Indian Residential School[2] era demonstrates this point through government-supported systematic long-term abuses of Indigenous children who were slated for vocational work (Bombay, Matheson, & Anisman,2014; Lomawaima, 1995; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006). International and comparative education scholar, Martin Carnoy's early work (1974) in Peru further outlined the expansiveness of epistemological violence and education, arguing that Indigenous Andeans were historically given just enough education to pacify any potential resistance due to exclusion from Peruvian society, but not enough education to actually transform their position in dominant society from laborers to intellectuals or leaders. Hence, the idea of TCUs represents a radical shift—Indigenous-controlled educational institutions that place Indigenous knowledges at the center of their existence.

Evolutions in Indigenous Education

A Brief Historical Review of Indigenous Nations in the US

We cannot begin a discussion of TCUs without providing context regarding how Indigenous peoples are identified and the colonial foundations of their treatment, which reveal why Indigenous responses to dominant systems of schooling, including the emergence of TCUs, are significant. Inherent to this discussion is the question—When schooling worldwide amongst historically underserved and marginalized populations is viewed as opportunity for upward social and economic mobility, why does education remain such a contentious arena for American Indian communities in the US?

According to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), there are over 370 million Indigenous peoples worldwide across 70 different countries. There is no universal definition of Indigenous peoples, but the UNs 'modern understanding' includes the following characteristics: individual self-identification as Indigenous accepted by community; historical continuity with pre-colonial and/or pre-settler societies; strong link to territories and surrounding natural resources; distinct social, economic, or political systems; distinct language, culture, and beliefs; non-dominant groups in society (this alludes to lack of political, social, or

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[2] The 2008 Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (IRSSA) acknowledges the history of the tens of thousands of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children placed in residential schools. Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission releasing its report in 2015, and there are important links between the reconciliation strategies that have resulted and Indigenization of higher education initiatives at Canadian universities today: https://www.tru.ca/edsw/research/indigenizing-higher-education/Indigenization_Resources.html. For more information about the TRC in Canada, see: https://nctr.ca/map.php.

economic power); and the resolve to maintain and reproduce ancestral environments and systems as distinctive peoples and communities[3].

In what is now the United States, prior to its political formation in the 18th century, Indigenous tribes were the original inhabitants of lands spanning the expanse of the Americas. As of 2016, there remained 566 federally-recognized[4] "Indigenous entities" in the US—that is, Indigenous communities officially acknowledged by the U.S. national government as sovereign remnants of distinct cultural, social, and political forces that encountered European settlement and subsequent war and conflict. Central to federal recognition are treaties that resulted from Indigenous negotiations with European settlers. These treaties are nation-to-nation agreements, which outline colonial conditions (with present-day implications) of relations and provisions (e.g. early limited annuities and educational provisions) for invaded Indigenous nations forced to cede territories[5] to the US. For example, the 1854 "Treaty with the Chippewa" outlined agreement between the US and Ojibwe[6] tribal communities surrounding the northern Great Lakes region of the US. Under this treaty, Ojibwe lands were ceded to the US with the understanding that harvest rights (including hunting and fishing) would be retained by the Ojibwe and their descendants (Thompson, 2017). All remaining Ojibwe lands would remain under a trust relationship with the US—meaning, American Indians cannot own their own land, which is held in trust by the federal government, which in turn "leases" the land[7] from American Indians and controls its leasing/usage by other entities like extractive industry.

The 19th century constituted a formative era that characterized the treatment of Indigenous peoples as the US strategized how to deal with its 'Indian problem,' meaning what to do with its populations of 'primitive savages.' Several key elements defined this era and are key to our discussion of education. These elements together exemplify the interlocking features of the colonial matrix of power, where conflict over control of knowledge is inextricable from acquisition and control of Indigenous lands. First, the establishment of reservations from 1850-1887 effectively contained

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[3] For the full UNPFII document, see:
http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/5session_factsheet1.pdf
[4] This number is variable as tribes may petition for and gain recognition from the U.S. federal government. For information on federally-recognized tribes, including a comprehensive list, see:
https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/01/29/2016-01769/indian-entities-recognized-and-eligible-to-receive-services-from-the-united-states-bureau-of-indian or https://www.bia.gov/frequently-asked-questions. Approximately 230 of these entities are located in the state of Alaska where Indigenous peoples are collectively known as Alaska Native.
[5] Not all Indigenous tribal lands were ceded to the US, and there remain unceded territories today across the US and Canada.
[6] Ojibwe refers to one of the Algonkian language family groups spread throughout regions in Canada (e.g. the province of Ontario) and northern U.S. states (e.g. Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan). The Ojibwe were referred to by European colonizers as the "Chippewa." The Ojibwe also call themselves as Anishinaabe, which refers to Indigenous peoples in Ojibwemowin (Ojibwe language). In this article, we use historical and contemporary examples and illustrations (i.e. images) that relate to our focal research sites. We attempt to weave relevant contextual information linked with the TCUs we highlight in the US, but due to an attempt to protect confidentiality, we do not list TCU names nor do we identify participants or tribal affiliations.
[7] Note that the idea of leasing might imply fair exchange of funds for land occupation or use. However, this is not the case, and funds are managed by the U.S. federal government. To learn more about this and the largest class action lawsuit in the history of the US to date relating to violation of the trust, see Stivers (2017). Elouise Cobell and the Indian trust funds: Accountability and trust in public administration. *Administrative Theory & Praxis*, 39, 157-169 and https://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/18/us/elouise-cobell-65-dies-sued-us-over-indian-trust-funds.html

Indigenous tribes. Defined originally as 'civilizing spaces,' reservations were overseen by Indian agents (European settlers) responsible for policing the reservation and administering annuities (which were more often not distributed to Indigenous peoples now restricted from their ancestral lifestyles). During this era in 1871, the US also ceased all treaty-making, declaring that tribes were not independent nations and thus incapable of making treaties with the US (Canby, 2004; Wilkins, 2007). Second, in the late 1800s, a large portion of the lands remaining in Indigenous possession through the treaty process were stripped from Indigenous individuals and communities in order to accommodate the growing westward expansion of European settlers or Manifest Destiny (Miller, 2011). Under the guise of assimilating Indigenous peoples into becoming farmers, the Allotment Act saw the redistribution of Indigenous lands to settlers, reducing Indigenous lands from 138 million acres to 48 million acres, of which 20 million acres is desert. Third and also during the late 1800s, boarding schools for Indigenous children were established in order to 'civilize' Indigenous children through assimilation into the new European-dominant American society. This process was essential for the "creation of a new kind of individual," where Indigenous children were removed from their homes, viewed as "uncivilized" and taken to boarding schools run predominantly by Christian missionaries (Archuleta, Child & Lomawaima, 2000). In schools, children were stripped of their Indigenous clothing, their hair was cut, and they were punished (e.g. not being allowed to go to the bathroom or denied food) for speaking their heritage languages. Children were also severely punished for attempting to run away from the boarding schools in order to return to their families[8].

Attack on Indigenous peoples through the transformation of children's identities is an insidious strategy of coloniality, encompassing all facets of Indigeneity; that is, stripping Indigenous peoples of what makes them distinct—their governance, economy, spirituality, language, and education. However, in the 1960s through the Civil Rights movement, Indigenous self-determination emerged as federal policy to restore some tribal control over governance, law enforcement, education, and health care (Jorgensen, 2007). The 1975 Indian Self-Determination Act saw increases in tribal control of schools leading to culturally-relevant and bilingual education shifts in curricula, and this was the era that saw the birth of TCUs. However, while self-determination *as policy* has created opportunities for tribes to rethink schooling systems, there are limitations. Schools in Indigenous communities adhere to state and federal requirements and standards that impact teacher hiring and certifications, curriculum and student assessments, and conditions tied to state or federal funding.

Tribal Colleges and Universities, Indigenous Worldviews, and Epistemic Delinking

In 1975, the first iteration of the Tribally Controlled Community College Act was introduced as Senate Bill 1017, and in 1978, the Tribally Controlled Community College Assistance Act was signed into law by U.S. President Jimmy Carter. Justification for the law focused on actively supporting tribes in efforts to close the gap between secondary schooling and higher education by addressing the following—lack of tribal member access to mainstream higher education opportunities due to geographic isolation, cultural disparities between tribal communities and mainstream society, the idea that student success (i.e. persistence) was more likely when offered locally and in community settings, and building capacity for local control over higher education (Gipp 2009).

Prior to any federal legislative support for TCUs, the idea of American Indian higher education had been discussed by tribal and educational leaders post-World War II and through the

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[8] For more information, see: https://newsmaven.io/indiancountrytoday/archive/tiny-horrors-a-chilling-reminder-of-how-cruel-assimilation-was-and-is-VLKL7I26wUSj4LmZL_YDvw/.

1950s, well before the gains achieved through the Civil Rights movement in the US Brown (2003) and Stein (2009) remarked that American Indian higher education achievement was a concern for tribal communities. This is because despite the introduction of the 1944 GI Bill for returning war veterans and the Higher Education Act of 1965, American Indian students struggled to access higher education, and upon arrival on college campuses, they faced discrimination resulting in high dropout. Not to mention, college preparation through primary and secondary school was non-existent, with questionable quality of education at those levels in reservation communities. Additionally, President of the American Indian College Fund, Cheryl Crazy Bull (Sicangu Lakota), noted that 20th century federal Indian Termination and Relocation policies of the 1950s that aimed to effectively "terminate" the recognized status of American Indian tribes as sovereign and relocate American Indians to major U.S. cities for assimilation purposes caused increased concern among tribal leaders who were examining the impacts of assimilation and "whether there was any positive value in sending young people off to college" (2010, p. 1). This observation is linked with what Susan Faircloth and John Tippeconnic III argued that TCUs respond to—"centuries of educational disenfranchisement" as a result of dominant views that Indigenous cultures and languages are deficits to schooling (2010, p. 176).

The first tribal college, Navajo Nation Community College (today known as Diné College), was established in 1968 by the Navajo Nation, which spans Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah. The college was created "to encourage Navajo youth to become contributing members of the Navajo Nation and the world society" and was accredited by the North Central Association Commission on Institutions of Higher Education in 1976[9]. Crazy Bull (2010, p. 4) noted the significance of the college's founding principles, outlined by Diné College President Roessel:

> 1. For any community or society to grow and prosper, it must have its own means for educating its citizens. And it is essential that these educational systems be directed and controlled by the society it is intended to serve.
> 2. If a community or society is to continue to grow and prosper, each member of that society must be provided with an opportunity to acquire a positive self-image and a clear sense of identity. This can be achieved only when each individual's capacities are developed and used to the fullest possible extent. It is absolutely necessary for every individual to respect and understand his culture and his heritage; and he must have faith in the future of his society.
> 3. Members of different cultures must develop their abilities to operate effectively not only in their own immediate societies but also in the complexities of varied cultures that make up the larger society of man.

Other TCUs emerged during the 1970s, including Oglala Lakota Community College and Sinte Gleska College in South Dakota, Standing Rock Community College and Turtle Mountain Community College in North Dakota, Haskell Indian Nations University in Kansas, and the Institute of American Indian Arts and Southwest Indian Polytechnic Institute in New Mexico (Gipp, 2009; Stein, 1999). In 1972, the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) was conceived by the first six TCUs and officially established in 1973 to serve as the umbrella organization for TCUs. AIHECs work today focuses on Indigenous educational research, advocacy, and lobbying to support the history, foundation, and mission of each TCU under a national movement for tribal self-determination that represents a global educational movement.

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[9] For more information on Diné College, see: https://www.dinecollege.edu/about_dc/history/.

Today, there are 37 TCUs across the US—from Alaska and Washington, through the southwestern, plains, and midwestern states, and into Michigan (see Figure 1). TCUs represent geographic, cultural, and linguistic diversity. They are accredited and offer affordable admission to American Indian and Alaska Native students and any student wishing to attend. Currently, 86% of the total TCU student population is Indigenous, and there are over 100,000 American Indian and Alaska Native students in attendance, representing over 250 different nations. Across the TCUs, 37 Associates degrees are offered, ranging in fields from law enforcement to early childhood education, and 14 TCUs offer Bachelor's degrees, and 5 TCUs offer Master's degrees. Collectively, TCUs provide cultural and environmental sustainability teaching (e.g. language classes and/or traditional ecological knowledge); academic and intellectual training, including strong liberal arts education (e.g. Indigenous studies); economic/workforce preparation to benefit underserved populations (e.g. nursing, forestry, early childhood education); and broader Indigenous networking (e.g. formalized global connections typically addressing social problems).
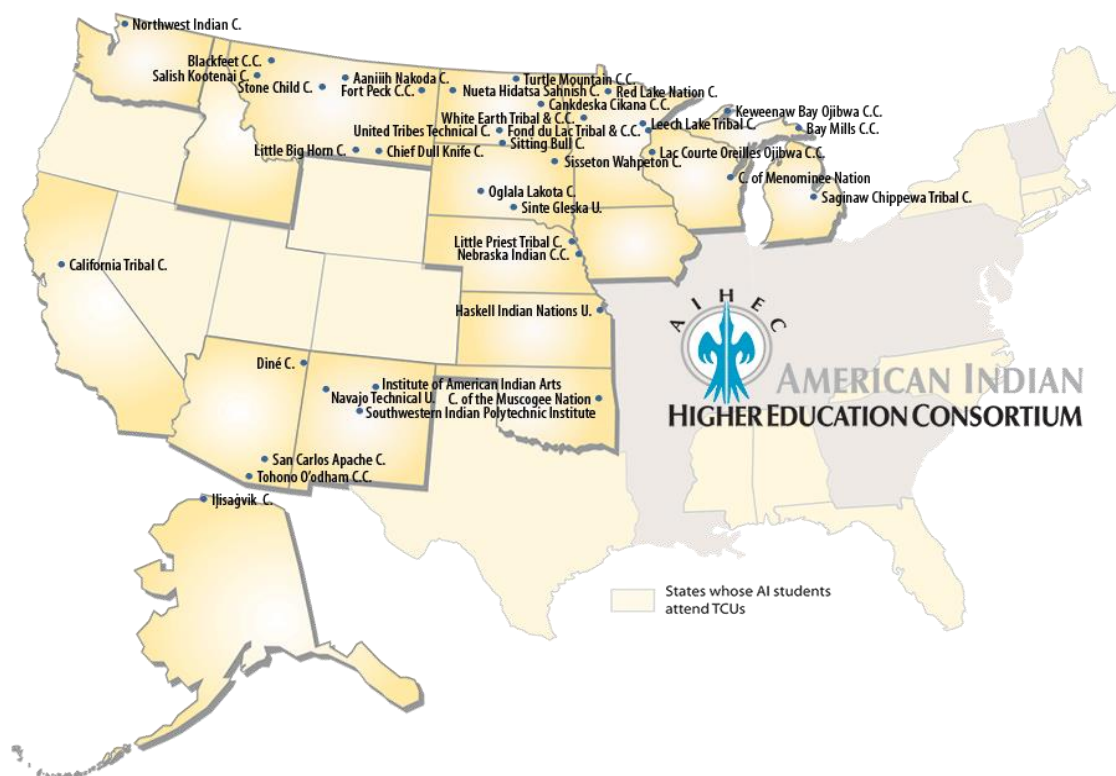
Figure 1. AIHEC Map of TCUs[10]

TCUs are clear in their mission to serve local peoples and cultural priorities. For example, an Ojibwe institution in northern Minnesota, the Leech Lake Tribal College mission states, "To be recognized as a center of academic excellence *that advances the Anishinaabe worldview* and empowers life-long learners who are fully engaged citizens, stewards, and leaders" (our emphasis)[11]. Simultaneously, TCUs connect their educational missions to global issues. According to Faircloth

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[10] Map source: http://www.aihec.org/who-we-serve/TCUmap.cfm.
[11] See LLTC for more information: https://www.lltc.edu/about-us/our-mission-and-vision.

and Tippeconnic, TCUs "are exemplars of how indigenous communities can and do respond to the demands and pressures of an increasingly globalized world while working to sustain and nurture the cultures and languages of the Native peoples by whom they were first established and to whom they are ultimately accountable" (2010, p. 176). Moreover, TCUs are distinct from mainstream institutions as they are the only institutions of higher education situated on Indigenous lands, within the tribal community, where severely threatened knowledges and languages are core learning material and given primary space. Sicangu Lakota scholar, Cheryl Crazy Bull, President of the American Indian College fund explained,

> tribal colleges are a place of restoration of hidden or lost knowledge…Our founders defined the vision of TCUs is the preservation of the traditional practices, belief systems, languages and values of indigenous people…No other educational institution regardless of its public or private mission has this vision of our survival as its deepest and most heartfelt intention. (2010, pp. 2-3)

Central to Crazy Bull's description is that at their core, TCUs perpetuate Indigenous knowledges gained through learning and discovery *and* through spiritual engagement and practice—that is, "our religious ceremonies and spiritual ways, our tribal languages, our tribal social systems, our traditional forms of governance, our economies, and our commitment to our homelands" (Crazy Bull, 1994, p. 22). Of these epistemological and ontological foundations, Ojibwe scholar Leanne Simpson wrote,

> An individual's intimate relationship with the spiritual and physical elements of creation is at the centre of a learning journey that is life-long. You can't graduate from Nishnaabewin; it is a gift to be practiced and reproduced. And while each individual must have the skills and knowledge to ensure their own safety, survival and prosperity in both the physical and spiritual realm, their existence is ultimately dependent upon intimate relationships of reciprocity, humility, honesty and respect with all elements of creation, including plants and animals. Nishnaabeg-Gikendaasowin, or Nishnaabeg knowledge, originates in the spiritual realm, coming to individuals through dreams, visions, ceremony and through the process of gaaizhi-zhaawendaagoziyaang – that which is given lovingly to us by the spirits. (2014, pp. 9-10)

These are articulate observations that speak to locations, origins, and purposes of Indigenous knowledges. Kawagley further clarified that knowledge is but one element within *Indigenous worldviews* that include philosophy, relationships, values, and practices (2006). We privilege this notion as a helpful way of understanding Indigenous knowledges in relation to other processes, which are collectively contentious in colonial societies rooted in a hegemony of modernity founded through racial and religious supremacy. In other words, Indigenous knowledges and values inextricable from environment are at odds with broader development initiatives that may compromise colonial use of land and natural resources.

Today, despite rhetoric regarding appreciation for diversity in education, we are often asked about the 'real world' value of Indigenous languages or cultural practices and beliefs, which do not appear to serve the goals of modernity and require competitiveness in the global economic marketplace. We respond that even as Indigenous peoples and TCUs are aware of tensions between increasingly globalized economic pressures and Indigenous identities, we do not place monetary value on cultural knowledges or the environments that cultivate Indigenous worldviews. There is no economic comparison to be made, but rather opportunities that challenge Indigenous students to acquire their own and other knowledges to address sustainability of their communities.

One of these is not like the other: Dominant Discourses of Internationalization and *Indigenous Internationalization*

Prior to describing our study, we discuss dominant conceptualizations of internationalization related to TCUs and acknowledge more recent debates regarding gaps in how internationalization is both conceived and practiced. We then delineate the ways in which TCUs on the one hand meet conventional definitions of internationalization using distinctively Indigenous approaches while also proposing and producing critical and innovative decolonial proposals to internationalization that center Indigenous knowledges.

Internationalization can be categorized as traditional, individual, and developing country internationalization. According to Altbach and Knight (2007), traditional internationalization includes study abroad, international area studies, foreign language instruction, and support for international students, and individual internationalization entails students funding themselves as investment in international experiences. Developing country internationalization involves universities in the global South hosting primarily students from the global North. While TCUs and the tribal communities they are based in are not categorized as "developing countries," they do share characteristics as 'culturally rich' locations with distinct languages, cultural practices, and ecosystems, and as a result, there are students from other nation states who seek opportunities to learn about Indigenous communities in the US, such as through Fulbright programs.

As a set of strategies, internationalization is aimed at increasing prestige, global market competitiveness, and strategic alliances of institutions and individuals. Knowledge is geared towards these purposes, and in any international exchange and study abroad experiences that entail encounters among people of different cultures, intercultural communication and intercultural competences have gained prominence. With regards to effective competences, knowledge is only one area of student development that is linked with *individualized* motivation, skills, attitudes, and behavior (Avila, 2007; Deardorff, 2015; Holmes & O'Neill, 2012), all of which are variable factors of individual student development and subsequent assessment in internationalization activities. Unfortunately, in internationalization efforts, less explored are the contexts from which individuals come, as well as any long-term dynamic between individuals, communities, and institutions as accountable to each other through values-based learning processes, such as respectful interaction. Moreover, in internationalization of education, there is a gap in the literature regarding issues of power, equity, and representation, which are related to knowledge development and towards what purposes and for whom (Gaztambide-Fernández & Thiessen, 2012; Mato, 2011). Discussions regarding social responsibility and reciprocity of individuals and institutions participating in internationalization are rare, which gives internationalization an extractive and/or elitist reputation. For example, institutions in the global North set up opportunities for their students and faculty to travel to 'exotic' locations to gain individual knowledge, skills, and resulting competences with too often little or no regard for how international global education more broadly can entail sociopolitical activity towards improving the global human (and environmental) condition (Ochoa, 2010).

Vavrus and Pekol (2015) explained that the height of neoliberalism in the 1980s and 1990s yielded significant advantages for universities in the global North to develop as leaders in internationalization, while universities in the global South, reliant upon diminishing state funds, could not follow suit. This is a contemporary rationale for uneven flows of students and capital as a result of the global political economy. We add that burdened by the oppressive conditions and restrictions created by conditions of coloniality, this uneven distribution remains inevitable for Indigenous communities. Vavrus and Pekol argued for a critical view of internationalization that

addresses representational, political-economic, and symbolic capital dimensions, and as a result, they advocated three action-related aspirations: 1) reimagine internationalization by shifting focus from the West as the center to other places, and focusing on critical global concerns rather than national ones; 2) reconceptualize study abroad as higher education partnership with reciprocal programs; and 3) engage reflexivity in the push for equal and ethical higher education partnerships, such as amongst researchers in the global North and global South. Our research addresses their call for critical internationalization; We support their recommendations and believe that TCUs have much to contribute towards ideological and practical considerations of internationalization, including dominant emphasis on individualism. We also add that the very idea of who and what is international must be revisited as Indigenous communities in the US are distinct nations within a nation.

Conventional and Innovative Internationalization at TCUs

In addition to the TCUs in the US, there are related tertiary institutions and initiatives in Canada (First Nations, Inuit, and Métis), Aotearoa/New Zealand (Māori), Norway (Sami), and in the South American Andes (Kichwa/Quechua and Aymara). We see these institutions as disrupting dominant Eurocentric assertions regarding how knowledge is defined, produced, and used, and how education is constructed, for whom and why. Through TCUs, Indigenous communities rebuild education for local purposes that resonate with other communities. For example, in the late 1960s, TCU founders, faculty, and students traveled to other parts of the world and welcomed visitors from abroad. As information was exchanged, educators recognized common themes of coloniality and resulting educational needs, including revitalization and maintenance of cultures and languages. Indigenous higher education institutions continued to evolve under these themes—Aotearoa opened its earliest tertiary institution in 1982 to protect the then-disappearing Māori language, among other goals. Western Canadian schools organized the First Nations Adult and Higher Education Consortium (FNAHEC) in 1999 and later created the nationwide National Association of Indigenous Institutes of Higher Learning (NAIIHL). In 2002, AIHEC was a founding member of the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC[12]). For 12 days, in Alberta, Canada, Indigenous education leaders convened to form the first worldwide organization for Indigenous higher education. One of WINHECs goals was to develop the authority to accredit institutions, and the standards WINHEC uses to evaluate are today based on Indigenous values and done so in a way that supplements, not replaces, other accreditation authorities. For example, one of the core values of accreditation is the value placed on Indigenous languages. According to Thomas Davis, a former executive board member, "culture and language arc at the absolute center of the process. A government is not dictating any of the rules. Indigenous communities are dictating them" (Ambler 2005). These are examples of conventional nation-to-nation exchange, yet for distinct purposes, particularly as Indigenous representatives identified first as tribal nation members.

The origins of WINHEC represent local epistemological commitments inextricable from global Indigenous connections. The W.K. Kellogg Foundation sponsored WINHECs early meeting in Hawaii between educators in the US and Aotearoa, where participants recognized similarities in terms of bringing back "lost" languages and re-engaging Indigenous youth challenged by problems ranging from health to employment. Soon after, Indigenous educators from Australian Aboriginal and Sami nations joined with founders from AIHEC and the First Nations Higher Education Consortium of Canada. Dr. Lionel Bordeaux, president of Sinte Gleska University in South Dakota,

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[12] For more information about WINHEC see: http://winhec.org.

and Rongo Wetere, one of the founders of the Māori Wānanga[13] were elected as chairpersons. Two years following its creation, the WINHEC Executive Board accredited three programs offered by the Māori Wānanga in Aotearoa with newly adopted accreditation standards.

Above all, WINHEC and AIHEC are instrumental in international Indigenous dialogue. Global Indigenous exchanges are not new as Indigenous peoples have connected with each other for generations (Sumida Huaman, 2019; Whitinui, McIvor, Robertson, Morcom, & Cashman,2015), yet Indigenous tertiary education leadership of dialogue and advocacy of shared efforts are critical for Indigenous peoples. For example, Crazy Bull argued the necessity of developing strong relationships among people from different nations as movements towards globalization and international trade treaties continue (1994). She emphasized the need for (improved) relations among disparate groups that have been separated and united by the Spanish conquest, such as in Guatemala where there are 24 Indigenous groups that have experienced two revolutions and a civil war. TCUs, she asserted, play a critical role in preparing Indigenous students to engage these conversations for the future of all Indigenous peoples and lands.

In recent years, the U.S. federal government has begun to recognize roles that Indigenous peoples and other minoritized groups might play in international and citizen diplomacy, which implicates higher education in internationalization efforts. There remains a call for diversity and inclusion of American citizens to do the work of U.S. diplomacy abroad, and there are varying initiatives across community colleges and minority-serving institutions (MSIs) like Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), and at TCUs. For example, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Department of State committed to creating opportunities for global exchanges of Indigenous researchers, faculty, students, and cultural ambassadors.

However, according to Raby and Valeau (2016), there are approximately 13 million community college students at 1200 institutions in the US who seek professional certification, degrees related to workforce training, and as a starting point towards a four-year degree. They argued that there is disparity of internationalization efforts and opportunity through community colleges that should be concerned about preparing students to be globally competitive and competent. As TCUs and MSIs are impacted by federal priorities, they are challenged to grapple with initiating, expanding, and maintaining internationalization programs while they serve historically marginalized students who confront daily and local needs and who may not necessarily prioritize dominant notions of internationalization as part of their immediate studies. This is a prime example of what Tatto et al. refer to as "external impulse for change," reflecting international discourse and agencies and often resulting in tensions on the ground (Tatto, Schmelkes, Del Refugio Guevara, & Tapia, 2006).

There is no question that the world market economy is interconnected. Indeed, the push for internationalization in higher education is geared towards competition and preparedness for participation in globalization. The fear that current and future generations of U.S. citizens will be left behind is evident from STEM to business sectors. We counter that dominant conventional notions of internationalization are insufficient for Indigenous peoples who experience coloniality daily and are concerned with community and cultural survival. While TCUs participate in the global expansion of Indigenous tertiary institutions, they do so rooted in their own local knowledges, cultural practices, and languages, and are first conscientious of place and what relationship with place entails. Meeting demands of U.S. diplomacy abroad or even employability somewhere else for the purposes of social mobility are not the reasons TCUs were created, nor are they the only reasons Indigenous students attend school. These considerations are heavily loaded, and they speak to larger debates in

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[13] For more information on Maori tertiary institutions see: https://www.twoa.ac.nz/?sc_lang=en.

internationalization—including, the processes and end goals in internationalization strategies as they exist today. As advocates of TCUs, we are concerned with how internationalization addresses local manifestations of coloniality and broad social injustices that Indigenous students face daily, as well as the widespread and global challenges that humanity faces. Thus, TCUs and MSIs with their complex histories present unique spaces to examine local and international tensions.

Research with TCUs

In 2011, we launched a mixed-methods study with the 37 TCUs under AIHEC in order to meet the need for diverse voices within higher education to address internationalization. Earlier survey studies had been done by the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education (NAFEO) with MSIs like HBCUs. As Indigenous peoples in the US constitute approximately 1% of the total population, American Indians and Alaska Natives are often considered statistically insignificant in larger studies. This gap presented us with an opportunity to propose a study that would include these historically underserved populations and to explore what TCUs could contribute to a conversation on internationalization, among other broad concepts (e.g. global citizenship). Linked with comparative case study methods (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017) that examine entities and issues vertically, horizontally, and transversally, and Indigenous research methodologies (Chilisa, 2012; Smith, 2012) that prioritize Indigenous control and ownership of research agendas, we were interested in the purposes and definitions of internationalization with TCUs. We sought to examine what TCUs were already doing, what they wanted to be doing, what obstacles stood in the way of their visions and expectations, and what strengths they embodied that could lend themselves to notions of internationalization as defined by them.

Funded by the U.S. Department of Education's International Studies and Research, this five-year study was the first of its kind[14]. Working with AIHEC and a research advisory board[15] that we established, we developed a research design, including quantitative and qualitative instruments to be used for data collection. Our first conversation with the board yielded an important issue— Rappahannock researcher Dr. Sharon Nelson-Barber pointed out the persistence of deficiency-based research impacting Indigenous communities and peoples. She asked if utilizing the term "internationalization" would limit the types of responses we might receive from TCUs that would be forced to consider dominant conventional definitions that included quantity of study abroad or foreign language learning opportunities for faculty and students internationally, meaning in other countries. This was problematic as Indigenous peoples in the US view themselves as nations, and there is geographic, linguistic, and cultural diversity amongst the currently 573 tribes. Indeed, when asked explicitly about the term international, Indigenous participants at TCUs declared that traveling from one Indigenous nation's territories to another constituted an international experience:

> Global education doesn't mean necessarily going to other countries. It could also
> mean different nations, tribal nations, and that's very international, you know. We
> are separate people. *We're all Indian people, but there's something unique about every tribe, and*

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[14] Following an Indigenous research methodology, year one involved research design and obtaining buy-in and permissions to do the study with prospective partners. In addition to our data collection and analysis, which required member checking and guidance from AIHEC and our research advisory board, this study remains under the AIHEC IRB, which is located at Northwest Indian College in the state of Washington. All dissemination, including publications and presentations must be approved by the AIHEC IRB.

[15] The research advisory board for this study included: Dr. Monisha Bajaj (University of San Francisco), Dr. Anya Dozier Enos (then affiliated with the New Mexico Higher Education Department), Dr. Carnell Chosa (Santa Fe Indian School), and Te Atawhai Mataira (Director Maori and Pasefika Development), and Dr. Sharon Nelson Barber (WestEd).

> *that's global. That's global to us.* [Directed at the interviewer] Because just sitting down
> with you in the few minutes that we have, I learned something about your nation and
> your people. You know, and I'm sure you learned a lot while being here. And if I sat
> down with somebody that was Lakota, I would learn so much from them. And, I
> think the greater American society is under the impression that Indian people are the
> same and we're not. (Indigenous Female Faculty)

Relatedly, the notion of a "foreign" language is an oxymoron at TCUs where, as first peoples, their local languages were the first languages uttered on the continent, not English, which TCUs viewed as a foreign language albeit essential to living in the US today. Consequently, we were concerned with who has the power to define what is international and global and how this might impact what we think of as education and pertinent training at the tertiary levels. The work of Mutua and Swadener (2004) regarding cross-cultural and decolonizing research reminded us to consider who has the power to name and how naming reifies existing power relations, and in what ways are reductive, binary categories dangerous dichotomies that polarize discourses. In our case this meant challenging dominant ideas of global, international, and modernizing, viewed as the height of humanity and the epitome of elite higher education institutions, while Indigenous communities and peoples are too often depicted as local, tribal, archaic and traditional, and resistant to modernizing (Sumida Huaman, 2018).

With approval from our advisory board and AIHEC, we made the decision to not enter TCUs with a pre-prescribed definition of internationalization but to be clear with TCU participants that while the study examined internationalization, we prioritized their definitions, current practices, and visions. While we did look at what is conventionally viewed as internationalization through course guides and conversations with TCU and AIHEC leadership, we wanted to explore what TCUs might be doing that speaks back to deficiency-based discourses (i.e. lacking foreign language study or international exchanges). We formulated three broad questions with regards to the notion of internationalization: How do Indigenous peoples define global? How is global education practiced at TCUs? What are TCU visions for global education?

In addition to creating quantitative instruments for TCU administrators, faculty, and students, we were approved for field visits at five TCUs[16] representing a cross-section of diverse geographies, cultural contexts, and sizes of TCUs: 1) large, midwestern, multi tribe serving, three to five Indigenous languages taught; 2) small, northern, local-serving, one to three Indigenous language taught; 3) mid-sized, southwestern, multi-tribe serving, no Indigenous languages taught; 4) mid-sized, plains region, multi-tribe serving, two Indigenous languages taught; and a small, northwoods, local-serving TCU where one Indigenous language was taught. From 2011-2015 we reviewed publicly and institutionally-accessible materials and literature regarding TCUs in the US, AIHEC and WINHEC, and Indigenous serving higher education institutions. In addition to our quantitative data, we collected qualitative data through 108 semi-formal interviews[17] and detailed observation

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[16] We were approved by 10 TCUs initially. During the fieldwork year, U.S. Congress cut our grant budget by 50%, which required us to reduce the scale and scope of fieldwork.

[17] We administered in-depth surveys aimed at students and key staff and received 222 responses where over 60% of respondents were students. Interviews were aimed at faculty and administrators in leadership positions, and where approximately 70% of participants were faculty. Due to the multiple responsibilities that TCU educators hold, roles are not strictly compartmentalized. Respondents were asked to outline their roles, and their primary identification was noted (e.g. Dean of Students might also be teaching faculty).

and participant observation. What we learned from our qualitative fieldwork provides the basis of our assertions in this section[18].

 With regards to how "global" is defined, major themes identified by participants included, a) awareness of the world, respect for all beings, understanding how decisions and actions impact others; b) taking care of the earth; and c) sharing culture through reciprocal exchanges with people and places. As one Mathematics faculty member stated[19],

> Global is really a recognition of life around the earth…In many ways I think problems in our world…are issues with destructive activities toward the environment, towards anything, as in a lot of ways a lack of recognition of life, of other kinds, of other cultures, of other beings generally and between people, of course, maybe a lack of respect of others' humanity. And, you know, it's unfortunate, but true that where we are here now is really a product in large part of the lack of that recognition of others' humanity by European settlers that came over, committed genocide and oppression on Indigenous people, and dragging others against their will to perform the hard work of their plantations and farms and etc. We're all here on the earth together for better or worse, and appreciation and respect for that comes as a result of that global awareness. (Indigenous Male Faculty)

A student focusing on Indigenous arts offered the following,

> I think that every community that has education or wants to encourage or offer it should definitely think about community… ultimately, what you learn as a Native person, at least how I was raised, is we go out, we leave our home, we go out in the world to see, to gain a perception, a new perspective, to get an education, to discover the world, what it is, and that also brings a bigger appreciation for home, and ultimately, that education and *whatever we learn out there in the world is what we're going to bring back to our community to better serve*. (Indigenous Female Student)

Across all Indigenous populations of students, faculty, and administrators at the participating TCUs, we consistently heard that learning out in the world, wherever the learning takes place, is important but lacks significance to the tribal community if what is learned is not brought back home. The idea of gaining knowledge for the sake of sharing with community and for the benefit of others is a striking departure from the goals of conventional practices of internationalization that uphold the role of the individual whose personal transformation benefits the individual and perhaps others through a somewhat abstract notion of becoming a better global citizen or competent for the sake of political, career, or business opportunities that require effectiveness in global relations that ultimately speak to state agendas (Hantzopolous & Shirazi, 2014).

 Building on the definitions of "global" emerging from interviews across the TCUs, we would restate participant responses and then ask what was occurring at their TCUs that might then be considered global education. Major themes included TCU classes, out-of-classroom activities, and programs that focused on environmental sustainability. TCUs that hosted speakers and international programs, as well as general campus programs that raise awareness of global issues and Indigenous Studies and interdisciplinary courses were also described. Participants were especially interested in

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[18] When we provide quotes from participants in this section, we add emphasis through italics.
[19] In order to protect participant confidentiality, we do not identify the names of the TCUs specifically in this article, nor do we match participant quotes with tribal affiliation or TCU. We found that these variables did not change the major findings of the study.

interdisciplinary courses that were being developed at TCUs and that combined a number of typically compartmentalized subject areas. For example, courses on Indigenous ethnobiology and in Indigenous Studies were seeing increased student interest based on STEM[20], humanities, and social sciences collaborations. As one STEM faculty member stated,

> I think the Western tradition was so powerful because it is the perfect embodiment of a rational system of categorizing reality. Higher education is a perfect embodiment of that. You take your biology over here. You take your political science over here. You take ethics over here…Indigenous thinkers, that is totally formed in terms of how they would think about knowledge. How they would prioritize valuing different kinds of insights, and it's just different. It produces a different result. So I would argue that global thinking is embodied in people who possess worldviews; wherein, they don't get fixated on the categorical kinds of spaces where we situate "knowledge," but instead are constantly looking at the relationships and processes that we are bound up in that make us who we are…*Indigenous thinkers are complicitly and inherently global thinkers because the way they think is big picture, holistic, integrated, process-oriented, relationship-driver thinking.* (Indigenous Male Faculty)

Indigenous faculty, students, and administrators recognized not only disciplinary linkages, but also Indigenous connections that could be made through their subject areas, which required comparative analysis. For example, one History faculty member stated,

> In my…classes, it's easy to integrate reading of history, American history, American Indian history, tribe-specific histories, as a part of the curriculum. And I think if you use that and think about Indian—*I guess you can say Native—colonization, that's just not in the United States that these things occur. It's happening worldwide, and it's really important to teach students that.* (Indigenous Female Faculty)

Building on TCU definitions of global and existing opportunities at TCUs, we asked participants to describe their visions for global education. Their responses overwhelmingly focused on reinforcing and supporting existing tribal cultural and linguistic work and goals, which they believed were inherently global. Participants asserted that their languages are global languages, and their cultural practices are distinct in international diversity—asking rhetorically, "What is U.S. culture?" They also envisioned well-funded environmental sustainability programs and curricula that enhances and builds reciprocal awareness with other Indigenous nations. Because TCUs are built on Indigenous lands, whether formally recognized reservations or historic Indigenous homelands, Indigenous students, faculty, and administrators were concerned with environmental shifts at home and their connections with other people similarly experiencing land dispossession and significant environmental impacts. Students in particular were concerned with how their education could expose them to opportunities to help at home and elsewhere. For example, in Alaska, Indigenous concerns reflected conventional notions of what is "international" and notions of connectedness based on vast environmental and human linkages throughout the Arctic, including the Inuit Circumpolar Council and peoples of Greenland, Russia, and Canada where prominent issues include subsistence rights, oil drilling, and climate change.

Participants envisioned coursework and associated interdisciplinary programs that emphasized reciprocal exchanges with other Indigenous peoples who had experienced colonization. Not one

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[20] STEM is science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, and is now also including the arts (STEAM). For more information on STEM see the National Science Foundation, which supports Indigenous science initiatives: https://www.nsf.gov/news/news_summ.jsp?cntn_id=296661&org=NSF&from=news.

Indigenous participant stated they wished to go somewhere to learn about "the other" without discussing reciprocity. Faculty, students, and administrators wanted to know how others were dealing with colonization, effective counter practices and counter narratives, what information or practices they could bring home, and how they could help.

> I was having a conversation just the other night with some students and we talked about some different things. They started talking to me about how interested they were. They wanted to know what's going on with Indigenous people in other parts of the world, you know—South America, or maybe way up north of here, or even New Zealand or places like that, Hawaii. We talked about a lot of these things. *What kind of challenges, what's the experience of the Indigenous people in these other parts of the world?* I think we have some students that do think like that and maybe even want to go there and check it out and find out what these people are like, what are they dealing with, *can we help.* (Indigenous Male Faculty)

Narratives like these are crucial in distancing Indigenous peoples from prevailing stereotypes as victims living in poverty who have everything to learn and gain and nothing or little to offer. Rather, Indigenous participants at TCUs proposed that they something to teach mainstream society, and they pointed specifically to pedagogy and values. Of pedagogy, an English faculty member stated,

> In my experience the teaching that's done here is done with a great respect for students and who they are, where they're from, you know, their belief systems and worldviews…some people don't realize the vast differences among Native peoples here. And how different their worldviews or their ceremonies or their belief systems are. Or their experiences. Where they're from. I mean, you know, not all reservations are just completely distraught and struggling, but many of them are. *And so wherever students are coming from, I think there's in the teaching aspect a respect for that experience* that may or may not happen at other universities. (Indigenous Male Faculty)

Rather than seeing students as empty vessels devoid of knowledge in what Freire referred to as the banking system of education (2005), Indigenous faculty highlighted their regard for student worldviews, spiritualities, and experiences as intentional.

Of these efforts, we consistently heard not only about the relationship between values and knowledge development as essential in Indigenous worldviews, but also how these values are ignored or underestimated in dominant society. A department administrator/faculty member stated,

> there are things about Native people, about how we interact with one another, how we're very community based, and our structures were set up where we worked as a community because we were subsistence-oriented, and if someone didn't pull their weight then the community suffered. *Those kinds of ideals and values, the world is hungry for*, and so in the educational arena if we can instill those kinds of values in our programs, those students when they graduate can go out and serve in different school systems, different tribal governments, different non-tribal governments and non-tribal businesses, wherever it is they want to go in there career…wherever they want to serve their value system…Their uniqueness is actually something that can impact because of how we are as Native people. (Indigenous Female Administrator)

Values were seen as serving not only Indigenous peoples and their communities, but also other contexts, including fields or professions that students would pursue. While these perspectives indicate Indigenous frames of reference on higher education development and internationalization, Indigenous

worldviews that call attention to critical global issues like climate change are not easy to reckon with in education, and in fact, quite challenging. In this sense, while TCUs are soulful places of Indigenous knowledges, cultural and linguistic revitalization, and decolonial envisionings, they also experience daily Western society demands, such as accreditation requirements, structuring courses and degrees according to those requirements, and ensuring that faculty are appropriately degreed (by Western institutions). TCUs also deal with recruiting the few Indigenous faculty there are with advanced degrees[21], faculty turnover, and cultural sensitivity work with non-Indigenous faculty and administrators. The issue as we see it is not the capability of TCUs to deal with these demands (as they have for decades), but how they will continue to balance Indigenous worldviews in local contexts where the resources that situate these worldviews are increasingly compromised by global hegemonic modernity, which has already resulted in language shift, urbanization, and extractive industry.

Based on our research, we offered four recommendations to the federal government and to AIHEC: 1) Enhance dialogue with and among TCUs to reflect on their current global education practices; 2) Acknowledge existing successful global education programs and best practices; 3) Create opportunities for new ideas and programs that focus on Indigenous-specific exchanges; and 4) Inform and shift dominant perspectives on internationalization at higher education institutions in the US and abroad. Underlying these recommendations is that Indigenous nations must be regarded as nations that are using education to uphold and reclaim worldviews that seek to heal the natural world for the benefit of all species. However, under current ideas and practices of internationalization, although TCUs view themselves as global and international, the US does not. There remains continued pressure for TCUs to adhere to conventional definitions "international" and thus related dominant agendas of internationalization. As TCU stakeholders, we must therefore consider opportunities for transforming dominant ideologies and that lead to understanding among agencies and institutions involved with Indigenous educational development.

Discussion: Indigenous Sustainable Self-determination

Indigenous scholars have written about self-determination[22] in education as universal desire to pursue a particular way of life and local—requiring understanding of Indigenous places, epistemologies, cultural practices, and languages, and challenges. At the heart of this argument is that Indigenous self-determination efforts through education must reflect broader Indigenous struggles for autonomy (O'Sullivan, 2001, p. 160). This is an important reminder for TCUs to acknowledge that while there may be gains made in self-determination through higher education, urgent attention is required towards addressing problematic relationships with the nation-state that are exemplified through consistent limitations regarding what Indigenous peoples can and cannot do on their own lands in terms of governance, economy, law and jurisprudence, and education.

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[21] For every 100 AI/AN students starting high school, 48 will graduate. Of those, 20 will enter higher education (including TCUs), where one will graduate within six years with a 4-year degree; only one out of every 2500 AI/AN peoples will complete a Master's degree, and only one in 7000 will complete a Ph.D. (Brayboy, personal communication, 2018; Lomawaima, 2017).

[22] The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples offers mention of self-determination and Indigenous rights in Articles 3 and 4: "Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development; and Indigenous peoples, in exercising their right to self-determination, have the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs, as well as ways and means for financing their autonomous functions."

Based on what we learned from participants, we see the work of TCUs as rooted in Indigenous *sustainable self-determination* (Corntassel, 2008). This theoretical frame underscores why the emergence and existence of TCUs is vital in Indigenous communities. Moreover, we distinguish self-determination *policy* from sustainable self-determination, which is an ideological shift with practical implications. The work of Julia Suárez-Krabbe is central to this distinction. Delving into colonial constructs of what is "human" in relation to human rights, she argued that "coloniality is intrinsic to all configurations of power today" (2013, p. 84)—an assertion that in our case, validates why educational policies, defined by European values of what constitutes "education," thrust upon Indigenous communities do not necessarily reflect Indigenous priorities. In response, Suárez-Krabbe urged scholars to envision "other possible worlds." We view Indigenous sustainable self-determination as such an envisioning, expanding on the freedom and ability of Indigenous peoples to decide their way of life and to enact that way of life.

> Sustainable self-determination as a process is premised on the notion that evolving indigenous livelihoods, food security, community governance, relationships to homelands and the natural world, and ceremonial life can be practiced today locally and regionally, thus enabling the transmission of these traditions and practices to future generations. Operating at multiple levels, sustainable self-determination seeks to regenerate the implementation of indigenous natural laws on indigenous homelands and expand the scope of an indigenous self-determination process. (Corntassel, 2008, p. 119)

We take up Tsalagi scholar Jeff Corntassel's sustainable self-determination as an Indigenous-centered approach towards mediating Indigenous community priorities against state limitations. In sustainable self-determination, the focus on political and legal recognition shifts to greater consideration of Indigenous environments, community health and well-being, natural resources, sustainability, and the perpetuation of cultural practices, and where at its core, Indigenous self-determination is about spiritual and relational responsibilities (2008, pp. 116-117). We maintain that TCUs are already doing the work of Indigenous sustainable self-determination and interminably so.

In her seminal *Decolonizing Methodologies*, Smith proposed an international social movement of Indigenous peoples, which is exemplified through global political mobilization. She also underscored that the strength of this movement is local peoples and their knowledges—where what she referred to as *cultures of resistance* have emerged and been nurtured over generations leading to successful initiatives developed by those communities using their own ideas and cultural practices (2012). TCUs are local spaces that center, maintain, protect, and revitalize Indigenous worldviews. They can and do meet conventional standards of internationalization, but they also produce decolonial practices that challenge us to rethink what is international and how internationalization is conceptualized and towards what end.

Based on our research with TCUs, we observe that internationalization for individual benefit, knowledge, and experiential gain is insufficient to define Indigenous educational visions and practices. As a result, we offer that critical approaches to *Indigenous internationalization* center Indigenous worldviews, prioritizing Indigenous knowledges, philosophies, relationships, values, and cultural practices. Indigenous internationalization requires new configurations of nationhood and reciprocal global connections that honor Indigenous sustainable self-determination through shared efforts across Indigenous communities and TCU students, faculty, and administrators. Accordingly, we see Indigenous internationalization as a broader education movement that has the potential to shape transformative agencies within higher education. We believe that dominant constructions of internationalization can be reconceptualized using Indigenous and other local approaches, which

requires understanding community contexts and Indigenous knowledge systems in relation to higher education opportunities and agendas.

Conclusion: To Listen and to Learn from One Another

In this article, we centered Indigenous worldviews in an analysis of the relationship between Indigenous knowledge, higher education, and internationalization—a process that requires recognition of coloniality and the evolution of Indigenous educational initiatives over time. We reviewed major themes that brought Indigenous worldviews to the forefront, particularly regarding respect for all beings and responsibility for the earth, which are both local and expansive values. We also highlighted TCU visions and desires for reciprocal knowledge and practice exchange with peoples and in places that have also experienced colonialism, which exemplify Indigenous abilities to conceptualize and practice conventional internationalization while also offering Indigenous internationalization as an alternative to dominant notions and practices of internationalization.

> A global education helps our students to understand and to be patient and to seek common ground during deep disagreements and divisions, to celebrate diversity, to build upon and support commonalities, to teach one another, *to listen and to learn from one another*. These are lofty goals, but unless we teach our students to keep seeing how large the web of life—the web of this universe really is—we do them a disservice by limiting them. We need to help them see where their cultures, values, teachings fit in and what they have to offer and how to communicate this to others but also to receive those global teachings in return. (Indigenous female faculty, our emphasis)

We discussed tensions related to research recommendations, especially how to shift dominant perspectives on internationalization by holding space for Indigenous worldviews in the ongoing condition of coloniality and the persistent commodification of knowledge that prioritizes universal participation in a consumption-driven global economic marketplace. We conclude with the words of an Indigenous faculty member who eloquently described conscientiousness regarding the "web of the universe" and outlined our collective responsibility to TCU students and Indigenous people, which is advice we might all consider—to see where our worldviews might be reciprocally exchanged, to learn what we have to give to others, and how to graciously receive the lessons the world has to offer.

Acknowledgements

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