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College Experiences of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians

A dissertation

presented to

the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

by

Rebecca Williams Lasher

May 2016

Dr. Donald Good, Chair

Dr. Louise Dickson

Dr. James Lampley

Dr. Jasmine Renner

Keywords: Native American higher education, experiences of Cherokee students, persistence

ABSTRACT

College Experiences of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians

by

Rebecca Williams Lasher

Many Native American students face challenges when entering and attending institutions of higher learning. For Native Americans, seeking postsecondary education frequently means overcoming hurdles, such as inadequate college preparatory courses work, economic hardships, leaving Native American communities behind and acclimating to the expectancies and values of a dominant culture. These barriers often result in Native American college students leaving college early or failing to graduate.

One solution to this problem has been the creation of Tribal colleges where Native American students are able to practice their cultural traditions and preserve tribal values, while at the same time developing skills to become successful college students. The Tribal colleges' curricula and delivery methods foster more cooperative learning activities rather than academic competition, present the study of natural phenomena through direct observations, and permit cultural research regarding Native American history and language.

A survey was distributed to all enrolled members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indian (EBCI) college students to compare the experiences of those attending Tribal and non-tribal colleges. The results of the survey provided data for a nonexperimental quantitative study that

addressed 18 research questions in an effort to determine whether there is a significant difference between the educational experiences of EBCI college students who attend non-tribal institutions and those who attend Tribal colleges. In particular, there was a focus on three domains: student viewpoints on separation and alienation from their tribal community; tribal community connections; and individual perceptions of success. A comparison of the experiences by gender between students attending Tribal versus non-tribal colleges was made. The researcher used the Native American Collective Orientation and Pursuits in Education Scale (NACOPE) survey results as determinants of the college students' experiences.

The findings of this study indicated there were no significant differences between the experiences of EBCI students who attended either Tribal or nontribal colleges. In addition, there were no significant differences when gender and type of college were considered. However, there were significant differences in those attending Tribal and nontribal colleges regarding some dimensions. Students in both groups had significantly higher survey scores than the median test value on the NACOPE in three areas. These higher scores were observed in their overall experiences being reported as positive; feelings of community connectedness to their home tribe; and less feelings of separation and alienation on their college campuses.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. Your people have long been out of sight and out of mind to many Americans. I can never understand or experience the obstacles you have confronted in this world; however, I am humbled by your ability to overcome these challenges and your continued effort to succeed.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

According to the United States Census Bureau in 2013, 22% of Native Americans ages 25 and older dropped out of high school, and only 13% have completed a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 29% of the United States population. Upon examining further data, it is evident that Native Americans continue to have lower educational outcomes than the general population by nearly every measurement. When considering all minority groups in this country, Native Americans tend to have the smallest percentage of young adults attending institutions of higher learning (Guillory & Wolverton, 2008) and they also have the lowest retention rates (Shotton, Lowe, & Waterman, 2013).

In 2011, President Barack Obama issued Executive Order 13175 - *Improving American Indian and Alaska Native Educational Opportunities and Strengthening Tribal Colleges and Universities*, which authorized a renewed effort to strengthen educational outcomes for Native American students. The Obama administration has been committed to supporting activities within higher education to increase college access and completion for this group of students. The effort will require that colleges and universities implement services to provide an environment for Native American students to experience affirmation on the college campus, achieve academic success, and graduate. Because of this initiative, there is a renewed dedication to increasing the success of the Native American student.

The underrepresentation of Native American students in higher education is a multifaceted issue involving several elements, such as lack of financial support, available resources on campus, cultural beliefs, stereotypes, and social stigmas. Native American students'

transition to higher education differs from that of students belonging to other minority groups and the predominately White mainstream culture (Swail, 2003).

Native American students, tribal leaders, and families often distrust the extent to which nontribal colleges can provide a successful environment with positive outcomes. Models for understanding student success in college point to the importance of comprehensive institutional support of the student and a working knowledge of the unique cultural needs of the populations they serve (Winters, 2012). These variables are particularly vital to ensuring success for Native American students. Because the educational experience of Native Americans has been complex from the early forced enrollment of the children to the Federal government's Indian Boarding Schools, there is a profound suspicion of the Eurocentric academic model. Guillory and Wolverton (2008) reported that the highest impediment for Native American students in college was the fear from their family members that this education would strip them of their Native American culture, identity, and skills. One alternative that could potentially make this transition smoother is that of the tribal college model. Tribal colleges and universities (TCUs) are regionally accredited higher education institutions situated on or near Native American reservations. These institutions were established and are directed by tribes to educate and preserve Native American ways, giving students the opportunity to earn college degrees or certificates while embracing who they are as Native people. There are currently 38 accredited TCUs in the United States (American Indian Higher Education Consortium, 2015). To improve retention and graduation rates of Native American students, it is critical to identify the institutional model and strategies on a system level that will best address the specific needs of this population.

Statement of the Problem

The Native American population is a comparatively small ethnic minority population with a unique history of institutionalized mistreatment and discrimination, including formal governmental programs targeted at genocide and cultural eradication according to Reyhner and Edner (2006). This cultural group has been described as the most disadvantaged and marginalized population in the history of the United States (Smith, 2012). Many Native American students face extensive challenges when entering and attending institutions of higher learning. Students who seek a higher level of education must overcome hurdles, such as inadequate college preparatory courses work and economic hardships. Pursuing a postsecondary education also means leaving Native American communities behind and acclimating to the expectancies and values of a dominant culture.

In the area of higher education, abundant research has focused on the specific needs for minority students who attend predominantly white institutions to experience a sense of inclusiveness and support. However, less research exists that deals with the experiences of the Native American students who attend predominantly white institutions. Thus, it is essential to investigate the <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/1540bec433bb4ed5?projector=1> e protocol of provisions necessary for these students to enroll in college, persist in degree completion, and matriculate.

This quantitative study was conducted with members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) who were enrolled in either Tribal colleges or nontribal colleges and it investigated their college experiences. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine whether there was a significant difference between the educational experiences of EBCI college students who attend nontribal institutions and those who attend Tribal colleges. In particular, I

focused on three domains: student viewpoints on separation and alienation from their tribal community; tribal community connections; and individual perceptions of success.

Research Questions

The researcher sought to identify factors that influence the low persistence and retention rate of EBCI is primary within this research; the following research questions outline the basis of this study.

Research Question #1: Do members of the EBCI attending Tribal colleges report their experiences as positive to a significant degree?

Research Question #2: Is there a significant difference in the degree to which EBCI males and females report positives experiences that attend Tribal colleges?

Research Question #3: Do members of the EBCI who attend Tribal colleges report their experiences as positive in the domain of separation and alienation to a significant degree?

Research Question #4: Do members of the EBCI who attend Tribal colleges report their experiences as positive in the domain of community connections to a significant degree?

Research Question #5: Do members of the EBCI who attend Tribal colleges report their experiences in the domain of individual success as positive to a significant degree?

Research Question #6: Do members of the EBCI who attend nontribal colleges report their experiences as positive to a significant degree?

Research Question #7: Is there a significant difference in the degree to which EBCI males and females report positives experiences that attend nontribal colleges?

Research Question #8: Do members of the EBCI who attend nontribal colleges report their experiences as positive in the domain of separation and alienation to a significant degree?

Research Question #9: Do members of the EBCI who attend nontribal colleges report their experiences as positive in the domain of community connections to a significant degree?

Research Question #10: Do members of the EBCI who attend nontribal colleges report their experiences as positive in the domain of individual success to a significant degree?

Research Question #11: Is there a significant difference in the degree to which EBCI students report positive experiences of those who attend tribal colleges and those who attend nontribal colleges?

Research Question #12: Is there a significant difference in the extent to which EBCI students who attend tribal colleges and those who attend nontribal colleges report their educational experiences as positive in the domain of separation and alienation?

Research Question # 13: Is there a significant difference in the extent to which EBCI students who attend tribal colleges and those who attend nontribal colleges report their educational experiences as positive in the domain of community connections?

Research Question #14: Is there a significant difference in the extent to which EBCI students who attend tribal colleges and those who attend nontribal colleges report their educational experiences as positive in the domain of individual success?

Significance of the Study

There is evidence of the continued discrepancy between the higher educational outcomes of Native Americans and the general population by nearly all measures. National studies have indicated that Native American students who do graduate from high school and go on to college are often ill equipped to be successful (e.g. Knapp, Kelly-Reid, & Ginder; National Center for Educational Statistics, 2014). They attend high schools that may not have the coursework,

mentorship opportunities, or comprehensive college-and-career content guidance for college admission techniques that lead to a productive university experience. These gaps in secondary education contribute to the fact that only 39% of Native American students who enrolled in a 4-year institution in the fall of 2004 completed a bachelor's degree by 2010, compared to 62% of white students (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2012). In 2016, there is insufficient empirical research that seeks to understand the experiences of Native Americans within institutes of higher learning.

Moreover, due to the unique history, political status, Native nationhood, and the sovereignty of the country's earliest inhabitants, distinctive issues are associated with Native American students' viewpoints, perceptions, and attitudes about the college experience. Therefore, a more focused inquiry is desirable. Understanding the perspective of Native Americans is necessary to strengthen their college experience and may help to provide more effective, impactful encounters within the institutions.

This study is also significant because it offers a distinctive perspective given its focus on one particular tribal community, students from the EBCI. Generally, research focuses on the broad term, Native American, in which all tribes are consolidated under this one term. However, there are particular experiences common to each individual tribe with unique cultures, languages, traditions, and beliefs. In addition, tribes have various statuses in terms of being recognized by the federal government. The United States recognizes the rights of about 560 tribes to self-govern and sustain their tribal sovereignty. The EBCI is one such tribe and it possesses the right to: form a government; enforce laws; tax; and establish membership.

Finally, the history of the EBCI tribe provides an exceptional status. The Cherokee Nation was removed from the territory in the southeastern area of the United States by the

federal government in 1839 to Oklahoma. During this time, known as “The Trail of Tears,” 20,000 Cherokees were removed but only 16,000 members of the group survived the trip west. Following this relocation, the Cherokee Nation restructured under their original constitution and to this day, the tribe continues to live in Oklahoma. The tribal members in North Carolina became estranged from the Oklahoma group after escaping removal by hiding from the United States Army. During that time, Native American people were not considered to be citizens of the United States, nor were they citizens of the state where they resided. Only after the Civil War was this ambiguous condition questioned. After several years of legal battles with the United States government, the Cherokee people in North Carolina established their own corporation. As a business, the Cherokee tribe could once again own the land. Known as the Qualla Boundary, this land was finally in the Cherokee people’s control. To individuate themselves from those in Oklahoma, the tribe became known as the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. The EBCI, as a federally recognized tribe, are also owners of a casino on the boundary and benefit from the profits of this business (Dugan & Harlan, 2002). Therefore, all of these distinguishing tribal characteristics make the investigation rare in its focus.

The research results may make significant contributions to the research on the needs of Native American students, particularly those of the EBCI tribe. The research will likely be instrumental for aiding high school counselors in guiding EBCI students to colleges where they will be successful. Finally, it will provide data to the tribe regarding the possible development of an EBCI tribal college or the benefits of sending students to other Tribal colleges.

The completion of a postsecondary degree is the most effective way to alleviate poverty, provide resources back to tribal communities through the return of the graduated Native student, and allow for Native American self-determination (Woodcock & Alawiye, 2001). Institutions of

higher education have an opportunity to create equal access and support for Native American students. Education is one of the most significant means to increase empowerment within individuals and communities. In particular, access to education for Native Americans is a decisive component in their overall wellbeing and development. The statistics for enrollment, retention, and graduation among the Native American population are lower compared to other minority groups and indicate the necessity for intensified investment in higher educational institutions distinctively focused on the educational needs of these students.

Given the noticeable attrition rates among Native American students, there is a need for research that explores the personal evaluations of these students' higher educational experiences. Ultimately, this study of EBCI college students may provide more understanding of how their personal college is experienced and has identified factors to help interpret the patterns of attrition, persistence, and graduation among their population.

Definitions of Terms

Throughout this study I used the term Native American to describe the population as a whole. Native American is used because of the United States' white majority culture understanding of the term. There are instances where the word American Indian is used in this study, but only when referring to reviews of literature or governmental reports that used the term. Most Native American people prefer to be called and are defined by their tribal citizenship and affiliations. Therefore, when referring to the participants in my study, I used the preferred term of EBCI for the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. For the purposes of this study and due to the differences among the tribes in Oklahoma and North Carolina, I refrained from using the term Cherokee.

The term tribal college refers only to those institutions of higher education that were chartered by their respective Native American tribes through the sovereign authority of the tribes or by the federal government, and defined in section 316 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1059c). Nontribal colleges refer to any other institute of higher learning, including community colleges.

In the survey research and attitudinal scales administered as part of this study, Native American was used because the researchers who designed the NACOPE dictate the use of this term. My preference was to use the term EBCI, however, the validity and reliability of the scale was from the researchers' use of the term Native American.

Limitations and Delimitations

This study is limited to the number who chose to respond to the online survey. Although it was electronically delivered to all enrolled EBCI college students, their participation was voluntary.

The delimitations include the subjects of the study. This research is confined to enrolled members of the EBCI. To meet the requirements for enrollment, there are specific restrictions according to the EBCI Charter. The restrictions required that there must be an unequivocal lineal ancestor who appears on the 1924 Baker Roll of the Eastern Band of Cherokees and the individual must possess at least 1/16 degree of Eastern Cherokee blood. The blood quantum is calculated from the ancestor listed on the 1924 Baker Roll and any DNA blood testing is prohibited in determining this calculation (McLoughin, 1994). In addition, the participants surveyed were restricted to students who received funding from the EBCI educational fund. As enrolled members of this tribe, students are entitled to full financial support from the EBCI

(EBCI Higher Education and Training, 2015).

Overview of Study

This study included five chapters. Chapter 1 contains an introduction to the study with a statement of the problem and significance of the research. Chapter 2 consists of a literature review with an evaluation of the foundational concepts related to Native American higher education. The first area of focus is a review of the history of Native American education, including the establishment of Tribal colleges, the second is experiences of Native American students in higher education, the third is characteristics needed by Native American students for success in higher education, and finally, institutional characteristics necessary for Native American retention rates, persistence, and graduation. Chapter 3 contains the methodology with a discussion of the NACOPE survey, the participants, data collection, and analysis of the data. The results of the study as per each research question stated with findings from the analysis are included in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 includes the conclusion and discussion of results and limitations of the study and implications for future practice, policy, and research. Accordingly, university retention and persistence strategies for the EBCI were also discussed.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The primary purpose of this chapter was to address the issues as they relate to both the institutions of higher learning and the Native American student. The review of the literature was an explanation of multiple levels of the historical educational background of Native American students, with particular emphasis on higher education; the Tribal College model; the experiences reported by Native American students regarding higher education; the characteristics Native American students report as necessary to their success in college persistence and graduation; and finally, the institutional characteristics effective in creating an environment for Native American student success.

History of Native American Students and Higher Education

A perspective that focuses on the historical experiences of Native American students entails the recognition of the use of assimilation policies by the United States to achieve this country's goals of conformity. A succinct historical summation of the educational eras of Native American higher education include 1) the colonial period, when the objective was converting Native Americans to Christianity through missions in early colleges; (2) the federal period during which the United States federal government essentially overlooked Native American higher education, nevertheless enacted a sequence of policies that were harmful to the Native American community; and (3) the self-determination period, distinguished by noteworthy modifications in United States federal policy toward self-determination, as well as the formation of colleges controlled by tribes (Carney, 1999). Each of these periods pointedly shaped the development and course of Native American higher education in the United States.

By tradition, the education of all Native Americans in the formative years involved members of both the immediate and extended family, as well as the elders training them for the tasks they would handle throughout life. The method was used to disseminate the norms and expectations of the religious, cultural, and historical life of the tribe of membership (Oppelt, 1990). The Native American education experience included the transmittal of skills, knowledge, and tradition from the older generation to the younger generation. Within this routine, young Native American students were not allowed to fail. The clan, tribe, family, and mentors worked with their youth until the task was expertly learned. These lessons were a daily part of tribal life and ceremonies, not a separate activity. The distinctive intention of early European North Americans' idea of education was related to religion. This was referred to as "civilizing" Native Americans through conversion to Christianity and the eradication of the tribal traditions (Oppelt, 1990). This transition to Christian religion, as believed by early European North Americans could create a compelling reason for Native Americans to become literate. Subsequently, higher education for Native Americans centered on reading ability and vocational preparation during the early 1600s. It also merged with the principal goal of converting tribal members to adopt the Christian religion (Carney, 1999). The Christian churches, for purposes of conversion, provided the complete early education to Native Americans.

The first historically documented attempt dedicated to Native Americans in the realm of higher education, occurred in Virginia from 1616 to 1622 within the settlement of Jamestown (Carney, 1999). This undertaking failed; but had it been effective, this would have been the first Native American institute within the United States. Funding was initially sought by transporting Pocahontas to Great Britain in 1616 to meet with King James. Her influence on the king was so profound that he ordered the Church of England to send funding for a Native American college

in Jamestown. King James decided to name the school Henrico College in admiration of his own son. Although these large amounts of funding were dedicated to the establishment of the college, corruption occurred and the money was diverted to the Virginia Company. Because of a revolt by the Native Americans against the settlement in Virginia that killed many colonists in 1622 (Carney, 1999), the funding of a college for Native Americans halted.

Documentation from Harvard University (as cited in Calloway, 2010), established in 1636, indicated that a Native American college was built on the campus in 1654. The Harvard University officials specifically designed the program to admit 30 students. However, records indicate that only a limited number of Native American students actually stayed at the college and of those who did stay, many suffered from diseases (Oppelt, 1990) transmitted from white students. Shortly thereafter, in 1693, William and Mary College developed a charter endorsing a desire to educate the members of tribal nations.

In the same fashion as Pocahontas had attempted earlier in 1616, another Native American, Samson Occum, traveled to Great Britain in exploration of funding for Native higher education in the late 1700s. A member of the Mohegan tribe, Occum had been converted to Christianity as a young man and became an ordained minister in 1759 at the age of 36. His educator, Eleazar Wheelock, was a fervent missionary and due to his accomplishment of converting Occum to Christianity, Wheelock became enthusiastic about the initiative of establishing money to educate Native Americans. From the encouragement of Wheelock, Occum traveled to England and Scotland to preach, as well as solicit funds for Native American higher education. The British had a high respect for Occum and the fund-raising trip was an immediate victory. The money was used by Wheelock to establish Dartmouth College in 1769. However, Occum soon felt deceived when he realized more non-Native American students were

accepted than Native American students. Dartmouth failed to graduate many students from the tribes due to a poor living environment that did not allow the Native Americans to feel comfortable. In addition, the curriculum was not adapted to meet the special needs of the students. The approach of Dartmouth to see traditional tribal practices as generally evil resulted in the low numbers of graduating Native American students (Reyhner & Eder, 2004).

During the American Revolution, the colonies pursued help from the Native American tribes to fight on their side against the British. However, many of the tribes fought for the British. Following the war, the United States began to create treaties with the tribes to prevent new wars, and the time frame from 1778 to 1871 became known as the treaty period in regard to Native American education (Carney, 1999).

Agreement continued within the colonies that Native Americans must be civilized and educated throughout the treaty period. The intent and true motivation behind this thought was to create farmers out of the tribal members and free up the vast hunting grounds for settlers to take over (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). During the treaty period, the United States federal government negotiated 645 treaties with tribes (97 of which included minimal educational provisions), thus recognizing the sovereignty of those communities. Throughout all of these years, higher education for Native Americans was largely ignored (Carney, 1999).

The United States federal government became responsible for the education of the Native American population during the treaty period. There were opposing points of view regarding the approach toward Native American education. One approach was that of an assimilationist position that favored Native Americans receiving vocational training to prepare for labor-intensive work in the colonies. The alternate view was that of the removal of all Native Americans from the colonial society by displacing the tribes to separate and isolated land.

Ultimately, it was the position of the assimilationist that prevailed (Carney, 1999). According to historical accounts from Carnegie (1997), tribes knew they had no control over the lack of educational policies and with this in mind, Native Americans had an immense fear their culture would be lost if they attended institutions predominantly created for the colonists.

In 1819, Thomas J. McKenney, superintendent of Native American trade in the United States, won his fight in getting Congress to pass the Indian Civilization Act. The purpose of the act was to provide funding to religious groups to educate and live among the Native American population (Carney, 1999; Oppelt, 1990). Authorization of \$10,000.00 per year was designated to provide money for educating the tribes and to introduce them to the “habits and arts of civilization” (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). As before, missionaries were in charge of educating tribal youth and these Christian agencies were even offered funding from the United States federal government to receive two-thirds of construction costs for new educational building and operating expenses (McClellan, Tippeconnic Fox & Lowe, 2005). During this time, there were a 21 schools established with 800 Native American students enrolled (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). Of course, the prime objective continued to be collective conversion by Native Americans to Christianity. The Indian Civilization Act was repealed in 1870 when debate arose over the issue of the separation of church and state (Carney, 1999).

During a special message to the United States Congress in 1825, President James Monroe offered his support to remove the tribal members of the Cherokees to land that was west of the Mississippi. His belief was that this was the only way to protect the Cherokee from the whites. Despite an attempt to fight the removal through the Supreme Court by the Cherokee, in 1830, Congress passed the Indian Removal Act. (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). This policy empowered President Andrew Jackson to exchange tribal lands of the Cherokee Nation in the eastern states

for land in the west. One of the impacts of the removal was the ending of the United States federal government's financial support of schools for Native Americans run by missionaries east of the Mississippi. Accordingly, substantial funding was offered to schools that would be established in the west. In 1883, Congress approved the forced removal of the Cherokee west. Of the tribal members who were removed, an estimated 4,000 of them died on the journey to Oklahoma, an event known as the Trail of Tears (Woodward, 1963).

Consequently, in 1841, the Cherokee began the process of setting up a national school system with a superintendent. The model established 11 schools within 8 districts and provided instruction in a variety of skills including reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, history, and English grammar. The tribe financed the schools with money received from the United States federal government for the land they had surrendered (Layman, 1942). By 1851, the Cherokee opened schools to provide high school instruction. Known as "seminaries," and segregated by gender, the schools only served tribal members (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). Following removal, the Choctaw tribe, also set up a system of tribal schools in 1842. By 1870, 84 schools were established serving 1,764 students. Most of the teachers in these schools were also Choctaw (Layman, 1942).

By the 1870s, assimilation had superseded the idea of removal as the central policy within Native American education. This idea was manifested in the Dawes General Allotment Act of 1887 and the Curtis Act of 1898 (Szasz, 1999). The Dawes Act impacted one of the most fundamental beliefs of Native American culture, that of living within a communal system. The law was an attempt to impose the value of individualism on tribes, a principle embraced by the European settlers. This act formally removed land from tribal control, granted 160 acres to a family head, or 80 acres to single persons (DeJong, 1993). The United States federal

government would hold the title to the land for 25 years and the tribes were allowed 4 years to decide what land they wanted. If the Native American family heads or individuals could not decide, the United States Secretary of the Interior would decide for them. After 25 years, those families who were allotted land were given citizenship. The goals of the Dawes Act were to break up traditional tribal life and enable Native Americans to achieve the benefits of civilization (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). The allotment contract required students from tribes to be educated alongside white students. Many of the Native American youth were too poor to buy clothing for school and were unable to do the classwork due to limited English speaking skills.

The major impact of the Curtis Act was the elimination of self-government by the tribes (DeJong, 1993). This loss of tribal sovereignty forced all Native American schools to be taken over by the United States Department of Interior (Carney, 1999). The schools were then transformed into public schools operated by the state (Debo, 1970).

By the late 1870s, a concept originated by Richard Pratt, known as the “government boarding schools for Indians” (Rehyner & Eder, 2004, p. 143) was established in the United States. Pratt opened the Carlisle Indian School in 1879. Located in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, the school began with 136 students in an abandoned army barrack. Pratt’s ideas were centered on the idea of taking the “Indian” out of students and civilize them to act like Christian Anglo-Saxons (Lindsey, 1995). To achieve this goal, the students were not permitted to speak their Native languages or practice their culture in any way. Pratt desired to disintegrate the tribes and break up Native American homes in order to advance the Native American individual. Students became profoundly homesick and faced rigid discipline in this setting. Before the concept ended in 1917, over 25 boarding schools had been established in 15 states in which 20,000 Native American children were forced to attend. The need for military facilities during World War I

served as an excuse to finally close Carlisle, and Native American students returned to their communities and their traditional ways of life (Carnegie, 1997). As the schools failed, so did the assimilation strategy. Despite the failure and closing of the Carlisle schools, Pratt was able to persuade the public that Native Americans could be educated. As a result, these schools were the forerunners of what finally progressed into more enlightened educational programs. Some of these schools expanded into vocational boarding schools, a number of which have endured and operate today (Szasz, 1999). For example, Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kansas, was launched in 1884, and the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico, was founded in 1890 (Szasz, 1999). Both of these institutions of higher learning are now federally chartered and provide exclusively Native American education. In particular, Haskell has been influential in that it has provided, and it continues to provide, Native Americans from diverse backgrounds with culturally pertinent educational programs.

Two private Native American colleges were established in the 19th century. The first began in Muskogee, Oklahoma in 1880 and was known as the “Indian University.” Initially, the college was founded on the principles of Christianity. This school, now known, as Bacone College, was founded by Almon Bacone, a missionary, who felt strongly that the curriculum should be built upon the local culture (Carney, 1999). The college was open to non-Natives and it was the only tribally controlled college for many years in the United States. Bacone was also concerned about the decreasing numbers of the Native American population and hoped the school would attract students from all over Native Territory. Indian University began with Rev. Bacone as the sole professor with only three students. Within the first year, the college's enrollment had increased to 56. The college was granted 160 acres to establish a large campus in 1910 by the Creek Council. This made Bacone College the first land grant college to be founded

by Native Americans (Tierney & Wright, 1991).

The second private Native American college, initially known as the Croatan Normal School, was founded in 1887. The initial intention for the school was to serve the Croatan or Lumbee tribe to educate Native Americans to become teachers. There were several name changes through the years, including the Indian Normal School of County in 1911, to the Cherokee Indian Normal School of Robeson County in 1913. Finally, in 1949, it became known as Pembroke State College. It eventually became a part of the University of North Carolina system in 1971 (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). This made the institution the only state-supported bachelor's level college founded specifically for the Native American population. Due to many financial struggles, the college evolved into a predominantly White institution and has ended its focus on serving the Native American student population exclusively.

As the century ended, Oppelt (1990) noted that managing public education was never extended to the "education of Indians because they were deemed to be unqualified to manage their own schools," (p. 14). However, two significant shifts in federal policy helped change policy toward educational self-determination for Native Americans in the 1920s and forced the United States government to relate differently to Native Americans. The Snyder Act of 1921 allowed the Bureau of Indian Affairs direct responsibility for Native American higher education. Unfortunately, it was still limited to the support of the students rather than the colleges. (Carney, 1999). In 1924, the Indian Citizenship Act was passed and this granted United States citizenship to all Native Americans.

The 1928 Brookings Institute Meriam Report was one of the earliest statements to positively influence change in education for Native American students (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). The report provided derogatory information regarding the policies of the United States'

government towards the Native American population. Meriam acknowledged the Native American as an individual and recommended that the methods used for education be adapted to address the specific interests, needs, and abilities of the individual. The conclusion from this report detailed the lack of support from the federal government for Native American education and self-governance. The self-determination era began shortly after the report was released. The Reorganization Act and Johnson-O'Malley Act of 1934 also contributed to this movement. The act was designed to deal with the direct needs of the Native American tribes including education, medical attention, social welfare, and agricultural assistance (Woodcock & Alawiey, 2001). These policies gave tribal nations the tools to build education and practical needs for their members.

As a result of the findings from the 1928 Meriam Report, President Franklin Roosevelt and the Commissioner of Affairs, John Collier, initiated significant changes affecting Native American communities in 1934 (Carnegie, 1997). Because Collier had considerable knowledge about the cultures and innovative community-based education models of the Native American tribe, he began to make decisions that advocated self-government and sovereignty for Native American communities (Oppelt, 1990). The objective became empowering Native American communities to allow them to restore their culture and work in a more positive manner with the United States government. For example, because teachers were predominantly White, there was a crusade to train Native Americans teachers. However, conditions did not improve because Native Americans were not permitted to make policy and had little influence in the creation of their own education.

Due to the country's effort to decrease government in the 1950s, there was a movement to "set the American Indian free" (Reyhner & Eder, 2004, p. 232). The solution for setting the

population free was the United States Congress's decision to terminate the reservations. The intention of Congress was for this termination to end the federal trust status of the reservation. Therefore, the tribal land and other assets would be distributed to the members of the tribe. Due to these changes, individual states became responsible for assuming responsibility for the education of all Native American children in public schools (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). This removal of Native American tribes from their own culturally based land to populated cities and the loss of their communal ways changed the tribal members' lives. Urban life was a difficult adjustment for Native American families and Philleo Nash; Commissioner of Indian Affairs in the 1950s described this relocation as "essentially a one-way bus ticket from rural to urban poverty" (Philp, 1986, p. 165). The United States Congress judged the policy a failure by the 1970s and put land that had been owned by tribes back into federal trust status in 1973 (Reyhner & Eder, 2004).

It was not again until the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, that new educational opportunities were developed to address the specific needs of the Native American student. The overarching attitude of this decade is summarized well by Oppelt (1990), when he stated, "the basic premise of white education—all persons were to be assimilated into white middle class values and behaviors—was antithetical to tribal desires to preserve some of their culture" (p. 38). The involvement with mainstream America had a surprisingly positive impact on the leadership skills of Native American tribes. The core leaders of tribal groups began to tell the United States government what they wanted and this was a push forward to develop self-determination. The conflict of objectives for higher education began to change for Native students when tribal leaders insisted that federal money be established for the development of tribal colleges. The first tribally controlled college was established in Arizona in 1968. Originally known as the

Navajo Community College, the institution was renamed Dine College in 1979, and began by offering associate degrees. In 1998, the college partnered with Arizona State University to offer a bachelor's degree in education. In 1978, funding was provided through the Tribally Controlled Community Act to increase the number of tribally controlled colleges. In 2016, there were 38 fully accredited Tribal Colleges and Universities in the United States (American Indian Higher Education Consortium, 2015).

Senators Edward and Robert Kennedy released a 1969 report titled *Indian Education: A National Tragedy, a National Challenge* (as cited in Echohawk, 2009). The investigation revealed that minimal progress was made in Native education since the Meriam report of 1928, 40 years prior. The primary conclusion noted was the need for an “increased Indian participation in and control over their own education programs and schools” (Echohawk, 2009, p. 17). As a result, in 1972, Congress responded by enacting the Indian Education Act (Reyhner & Eder, 2004).

No key changes affecting Higher Education for Native students were addressed again until 1996 when President Bill Clinton issued Executive Order 13021 acknowledging that Tribal Colleges and Universities were extensions of the tribes that are federally recognized. The order also confirmed the mandate of educating Native Americans as one of the responsibilities of the federal government. Through this order, Clinton ensured that these colleges would have access to programs, departments, and agencies within the federal government for assistance. This support allowed the Tribal Colleges to serve the communities more efficiently and effectively. Native American tribal leaders had been urging every administration for such an order since President Carter was in office during in the late 1970s. The order, similar to the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890, that designated land-grant colleges and universities to receive benefits through

state legislatures or Congress, came after a long campaign by the Tribal colleges for such recognition. The board of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (now the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities), which had strongly endorsed the campaign for Tribal colleges, voted to admit the American Indian Higher Education Consortium as a system member of the association with one representative as a member of the organization's Council of Presidents in 1995. Land-grant status was conferred on 29 Native American colleges in 1994 as a provision of the Elementary and Secondary Education Reauthorization Act. The bill also authorized a \$23 million endowment for the Tribal colleges, to be built up over 5 years. The colleges were to receive interest payments from the endowment each year. In addition, the legislation authorized a \$1.7 million challenge grant program for higher education programs in agriculture and natural resources, much like the successful program created at colleges during the 1890 Morrill Act, and \$50,000 per school for higher education in agriculture and natural resources (similar to the original Morrill-Nelson funds). The legislation also provided \$5 million to go to the Cooperative Extension Service of the 1862 land-grant institutions in states that also have tribal colleges. The 1862 institutions were to cooperate with the tribal colleges in setting up joint agricultural extension programs focused on the needs of the Native American institutions, as identified by the tribal colleges (Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities, 2015). In addition, the creation of an advisory panel was established and given the task of annually assessing the agencies' progress and advocating for the colleges' accreditation, promotion, and preservation of native languages and cultures, as well as, strengthen the schools' links to other education programs (Warner & Gipp, 2009).

President Obama authorized all levels of the American Indian Education Act into a singular executive order in 2011. Within this order, President Obama established a White House

Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native Education to be cochaired by the Secretary of Education and the Secretary of the Interior. The National Advisory Council on Indian Education (NACIE) served as the advisory body to the White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native Education. The Executive Director selected for the Initiative is a tribal member with extensive experience in higher education for Native students. William (Bill) Mendoza, was appointed as Executive Director of the White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native Education. Mendoza is a member of the Oglala-Sicangu Lakota, and grew up on the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Sioux reservations in South Dakota (U.S. Department of Education, 2011).

The order reads, in part:

My Administration is also committed to improving educational opportunities for students attending TCUs. TCUs maintain, preserve, and restore Native languages and cultural traditions; offer a high-quality college education; provide career and technical education, job training, and other career-building programs; and often serve as anchors in some of the country's poorest and most remote areas. (as cited in Capriccioso, 2011, para. 6)

The Obama administration continued its commitment to the education of Native Americans by hosting the first-ever Tribal Youth Gathering in July of 2015 at the White House. This event was held in conjunction with the United National Indian Tribal Youth Conference and brought 900 Native American youth who represented 230 tribal nations together with Cabinet officials, the White House Council on Native American Affairs and nonfederal partners about a range of issues including education, health, justice, economic opportunity, climate change, cultural protection, and language revitalization. The gathering drew further attention to the tremendous challenges faced by those Native American youth regarding opportunities for higher education. The Department of Interior also announced plans to issue \$995,000 to the American

Indian Higher Education Consortium that will be distributed to 20 tribal colleges and universities to work with 45 feeder schools (Noisecat, 2015).

To further engage with Native American youth, President Obama has created an initiative to fund and expand education, health social services, and employment. Known as Generation Indigenous or “Gen I,” it focuses on enriching the lives of the tribal youth through new investments and increased engagement. The initiative plans to adopt a comprehensive and culturally appropriate approach. The primary goal is to promote a national dialogue to create programs and policies to mobilized the future generation of Native American leaders (Lee, 2015).

The *America’s College Promise Act of 2015*, which offered free tuition to all community college students who maintain a 2.5 grade point average, was extended to students attending Tribal Colleges. The act made 2 years of community college free to all eligible students and created affordable pathways to 4-year college degrees for low-income students (Saunders, 2015).

The historical preservation of Native American education has been one in which the United States society, federal government, and religious institutions have participated since the arrival of the European settlers to the continent. However, the Native American people have also specifically worked to maintain rights for tribal culture and language (Brayboy, Fann, Castango, & Solyon, 2012). The recognition by the Native American tribes to adjust to the fluctuating world through education, and yet maintain their traditions and language, has created circumstances where Native American students are faced with the ramifications of two conflicting cultures.

Tribal Colleges

In response to the demands for higher education opportunities in Native American communities, Tribal colleges were established. Starting in 1968 with the creation of the Navajo Community College on the Navajo Nation in Arizona, tribes began bringing the opportunity for college courses to their members. While increasing tribal members' access to higher education, the colleges have also helped to maintain and preserve tribal cultures and languages. Tribal colleges have increased to a total of 37 institutions in the United States and one institution in Canada on more than 75 sites in 15 states, serving more than 19,070 students, from 250 federally recognized tribes in 2015. These schools provide higher education offerings to 80% of the Native American tribes, serving about 88,000 in academic and community-based programs annually. Initially Tribal Colleges were only 2-year institutions; but now 13 of the colleges offer bachelor's degrees and five offer master's degrees. The locations for the schools are all west of the Mississippi river, many are located on tribal lands and several are in remote areas. In 1994, the United States Congress designated Tribal colleges as land grant institutions due to the fundamental ties between the colleges, tribal lands, and local economic development. Typically, the students who attend Tribal colleges are nontraditional students, with at least half being over age 25 and 33% being single parents (American Institute Higher Education Consortium, 2015).

Many graduates go back to work for their respective tribes upon graduation. One benefit of the establishment of the Tribal College has been the preservation of tribal culture and language. In addition, tribal history and language courses are part of the core graduation requirements. The creation of tribal archives to store and protect vital photos and documents has been another benefit of the establishment of these colleges. Further, Tribal colleges are well known for their holistic approach towards students through a curriculum that is culturally relevant (Bordeaux, 1991).

The American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) was established in 1973 by the first six Native American tribally controlled colleges. The first priority of the organization was to initiate an independent accreditation agency to gain credibility for the colleges and allow administrators to distance themselves from the tribal politics. In addition, the group provided a support network to influence federal policies on Native American higher education and find stable funding sources (American Indian Higher Education Consortium, 2015).

Through AIHEC, policy can be influenced and programs built in all facets of higher education, not just the Tribal colleges. The organization has provided leadership on issues related to Native American higher education through its advocacy, research, and program ideas; has advocated and strengthened the tribal cultures, languages, and communities; and promoted emerging Tribally controlled colleges (Rehyner & Eder, 2004).

There is a growing existence of faculty in Tribal colleges who are Native American. Overall, Native Americans comprise 43% of full-time faculty and 46% of all faculty at Tribal Colleges. Seventy-one percent of Tribal College administrators are Native American (American Institute Higher Education Consortium, 2015). Tribal colleges have a number of partnerships with local universities that allow sharing of facilities and articulation agreements (Cunningham & Parker, 1998).

Guardia and Evans (2008) discovered, in their research on the role of Tribal colleges in the personal and academic development of Native American students, that the values of these students varied significantly from the majority culture and the opportunities within the Tribal colleges provide a solid foundation for American Indian student development (p. 239). Furthermore, their research indicated that students were able to practice their cultural traditions and preserve tribal values, while at the same time developing skills to become successful college

students. The Tribal colleges' curricula and delivery methods encouraged more cooperative learning activities rather than academic competition, offered the study of natural phenomena through direct observations, and allowed for cultural research regarding Native American history and language. Unique services were offered to students including help with transportation, mentoring programs for incoming freshmen to be paired with seniors, and financial counseling. The Tribal colleges helped Native Americans transition easier to the college experience and are "powerful forces in the personal and academic development of American Indian students" (p. 258).

Tribal colleges have made efforts to instill Native American cultural distinctiveness within programming of the college curriculum, revitalize their tribal languages, and incorporate the entire needs of the tribal community. These schools are perceptive in their programmatic planning around ceremonial events. Tribal mentors have acknowledged that college degrees will help future tribal leaders to better serve their own nation and communities. Woodcock and Alawiye (2001) have referred to this as an act of self-determination that will allow maintenance of their culture, yet resist assimilation.

Experiences of Native Students in Higher Education

In reviewing the history of Native American students in higher education, there has been an intense distrust of the American educational system. The unsatisfactory experiences of these college students have been related primarily to experiences of racism and cultural misunderstandings. Native American students have encountered surveillance, acts of micro-aggression, and being asked to speak for their entire culture (Brayboy et al., 2012). In a study on marginalized populations from 2012, Smith identified a concept of Native Americans being

referred to as the “Other” by Whites. She clarified this concept as the struggle between the interests and ways of knowing the West versus those of the “Other.” Smith delineates the theory of the “Other” in her conclusion, “It has been used alongside other similar concepts such as borders, boundaries, bridges, center-periphery, and insider-outsider to demarcate people in spatial terms: as well as in socio-economic, political and cultural terms” (p. 204). In Flynn, Duncan and Jorgensen’s 2012 research, students described the experiences of discrimination that included being verbally hurt by others. One student described an act of overt racism in the classroom: “Even within nursing there are people writing on Facebook during class saying, ‘Gosh it’s great sitting here in class learning how the Indians get everything for free’” (p. 444).

According to researchers, Native American students have frequently experienced a sense of cultural disconnect. Life on a predominantly White campus differs significantly from living with fellow Native Americans, either on a tribal reservation, or within a community of tribe members. In 2012, a theory constructed by Winters examined how Native American students must move from being a member of the majority population to the minority population upon arriving to college. As Pavel and Ingelbret wrote (2007) “the distance you travel may be great – not so much in physical miles but in the distance from Native cultural values” (p. 156). These experiences often create a dilemma for Native American students because they feel as if they are “walking between two worlds,” (Pipes, Westby, & Inglebret, 1993, p. 140) due to the transition from home to the college campus. This phenomenon involves the one world being the tribal community and the other being the mainstream world. When Native American students go away from their tribal communities and embark upon college, they take their tribal identification and cultural values with them, but are also expected to join into an institution with its own unwritten and often unspoken rules that represent the dominant culture. The expectation of assimilation

can be complicated because most of the personal and cultural identity, as well as spirituality are intertwined with the Native American students' connections to the family, community, and homeland. Throughout their early development, Native students are raised to think of themselves as parts of the interconnected whole of their tribe (Garrion & Larrimore, 1997). For the first time in their lives, students realize that their tribal affiliation or particular region of the country means little or nothing to those in the college environment. In addition, the fragmentation of life into separate components of academic, personal, social, and professional is in total opposition to the upbringing the Native student has experienced during their lives within the tribal community. The traditional view of health and personal development for the Native peoples is that all are inseparable parts of a complex whole. In other words, the individual's intellectual, physical, spiritual, and emotional aspects are intertwined, to maintain health and well-being; the Native American believes there must be balance among all (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991).

Native American students find themselves in uncertain situations because many feel uneasy in the mainstream culture and cut off from their Native culture. Consequently, the result is "cultural marginalization" (Pipes et al., 1993). Making the situation more complicated, Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991) insist that, when Native students enter college and then withdraw before completion, they are "branded by the university as a drop-out—a failure" (p. 5).

In 1988, Lin, LaCounte, and Eder examined the school environment on academic performance and graduation expectation of Native American students. The conclusion was that campus hostility and feelings of isolation had a substantial bearing on the academic performance of the Native American students. Turner (1994) described the experience of minority students on predominately White campuses as "guests in someone else's house." Moreover, she

described the total university climate as “unwelcoming” and the complicated college infrastructure as “problematic.” For Native American students, feeling like a “guest” on a predominately White campus is even more frustrating given that they are most likely the smallest student minority group at most conventional colleges.

College retention models infer that, in order to be academically successful, students must assimilate into the social and academic culture of the college (Rendón et al., 2000; Tierney, 1992). Brayboy et al. (2005) has suggested that at most mainstream universities, “there is an implicit assumption that underrepresented students will (and should) change or accommodate at any cost in order to succeed” (p. 16). Therefore, for minority students, to acclimate means to act “white” and, consequently, if a student refuses to assimilate into the dominant campus culture, the cost is social isolation, alienation, and eventually withdrawal (Wright, 1996).

Wright’s 1996 research implied that the obstacle is not necessarily the academic difficulties that the college places on any student but rather the pressure placed on students to assimilate into the new college environment. Saggio (2003) argued that it is “difficult for students of color to become involved when the social context of the academy is so strikingly different from the primary cultures of these students of color” (p. 7). This brings attention to the cultural conflict that many minority students, including Native American students, encounter when they enter college.

The solid family and cultural associations can establish a complication of anxieties for college students. As revealed in a study by Colbert et al. (2004), the capacity to sufficiently negotiate between the old life students left behind (family, friends and home) and the new life ahead of them was essential in their ability to persist in college. This process is often most problematic for Native American college students, considering the heightened pressure related to

cultural distinctiveness, that often includes distrusting the degree to which one maintains close family and cultural ties (Jackson, Smith, & Hill, 2003). This research found that Native American students reported feeling stress in numerous ways, including academic accomplishment and the willingness to stay near to home or both. They also reported suffering anxiety to be able to return home to help with family struggles or trauma. This complexity is seen through the feelings of rejection by other Native Americans because of their decision to pursue college.

Furthermore, studies indicate that Native American college students are often fearful that they must relinquish their Native orientation to be successful. Yet, Huffman and Ferguson's 2007 research revealed that Native American students can follow the model of Peace Corps workers who "simply increase their cultural repertoire by adding needed skills while retaining intact their Native culture" (p. 189). Although this may be true, once Native American students are on a college campus there can be a gap between what is learned in the classroom and what they know from their own tribal community, creating further feelings of displacement.

As a result of poor postsecondary educational preparation, the academic culture for the Native student in higher education presents another challenging experience. Students interviewed in Guillory and Wolverton's 2008 research cited the lack of academic preparation as a major barrier to their success, starting in the first year and often lasting as long as their third year in college. One student remarked that Native American students are socially promoted to the next grade level and went so far to say that preparation for college is simply not a priority for K-12 reservation schools. The need for tutorial and remedial educational services in the college setting is often necessary for Native American students due to the lack of adequate academic preparation (Pewewardy & Frey, 2004). Consequently, locating and navigating these services

can be difficult because many are first-generation college students (Schmidt & Akande, 2011).

Characteristics Needed by Native Students for Success in Higher Education

Overwhelmingly, the research on Native student success points to the vital role that family support provides. Family offers a foundation of encouragement for students and can take on various roles. These might include parents, siblings, children belonging to the student, or all of the student's extended family. For example, Guillory and Wolverson (2007) found that connection to family is so important to Native American students that they were willing to overcome many hardships to persist in their pursuit of a degree if family support was present. This literature also pointed to the cultural philosophy of the Native American that puts the community and family ahead of individualism.

Resistance theory and transculturation is a foundational concept regarding the persistence of Native American college students. Huffman (2001) worked with culturally traditional Native American students to determine if his hypothesis that students who had adopted characteristics of other cultural groups underwent a more effective higher educational experience than those students who were estranged and struggling academically. Through this research, Huffman was able to identify four distinct cultural masks employed by the students: assimilated students, marginal students, estranged students, and transculturation students. The noted differentiation between the estranged students and of those who had adopted the characteristics of other cultures was their reaction to assimilation. The estranged students assumed an aggressive rejection of assimilation. These students viewed "mainstream as a risk to their ethnic individuality and generally revealed a distrust of the college setting" (p. 9). The students who had adopted an attitude of transculturation, analogous to the estranged students, maintained a sound relationship

with their Native American culture and chose not to assimilate. “However, unlike estranged students, these students used their ethnic identity as a firm social-psychological anchor and derived strength and confidence from that cultural mask. These students found security and strength in their ethnicity” (p. 9). In addition, there was a strong indication that culturally traditional Native American students can simultaneously succeed in higher education and maintain their unique cultural identity. Huffman recommended that colleges intentionally celebrate and acknowledge the ethnicity of the Native American students on campus within the cultural environment. Finally, he appealed for “culturally appropriate higher education student counseling” (p. 34) to assist students in honoring their culture, perseverance, and ultimately their retention in higher education.

At a predominantly White university, Schmidtke (2009) discovered the importance of an instructor’s willingness to help the Native American student as a critical factor in achievement. The study points to the personal relationships students seek from the professors at their institutions. Native students looked for a faculty member who attempted to develop a relationship with them. Even something as straightforward as a professor who kept office hours, contributed to students feeling supported. On the whole, the Native American students responded positively to the encouraging attitudes and general enthusiasm of faculty members. One student in Schmidtke’s study stated, “It helped me that instructors were also having a good time doing it, actually wanted to be there instead of just kind of teaching on the board and leaving” (p. 255).

The pedagogical model within higher education also presents burdens on the Native American students’ ways of interacting with professors. Within some college classrooms, there may be a cultural norm for the professor to become a participant in the class discussion rather

than the leader. College students are expected to demonstrate their knowledge of the subject area by engaging with one another, including the professor as a participant, in academic dialogue and often times, even debate. This can present a cultural clash for minority students. In particular, Native American students have social taboos against competing as individuals and summoning undue attention to themselves within the group (Garrod & Larimore, 1997). This behavior is the way most Native American tribes work to orient the children toward their traditional values such as humbleness, collaboration, and harmony. Thus, the competitive behavior encouraged and often required within the college classroom is intimidating to many Native American students. Students perceive that the atmosphere is inappropriately aggressive and even selfish, because it works against the group's effort to become proficient at new skills. These feelings tend to influence Native American students' inclinations to be silent in the classroom setting due to the anxiety related to the focus on the individual's success rather than the group's (Garrod & Larimore, 1997).

Adequate financial support is a crucial feature for Native American student success in college. For example, as Guillory and Wolverton (2007) discovered, students often receive inadequate financial aid packages. Nontraditional students who may be single parents with children and need additional funds for childcare or living expenses are found to be those with the most need. Even college administrators point to insufficient funding as a core barrier for Native students to persist towards graduation.

Institutional Characteristics Necessary for Native Student Success

Correspondingly, for Native students to persist and graduate from institutions of higher learning, there must be a robust institutional commitment to academic and student support that is

responsive to the needs of the students. The roles and obligations of universities and tribal colleges to Native American students are well documented in the research. Flynn et al. (2014) indicated that many Native American students describe multiple barriers within the university community that interfere with their academic success. The university must also be accountable for the climate and culture of their respective institutions. Many Native American students report feeling they receive “mixed messages” during their college experiences. There is incongruence between the students’ expectations and the reality of misleading advertisements and hollow promises (Flynn et al., 2014). One of the participants described her experience: “I was kind of duped into it because I saw all the rhetoric on the university website and it says we have the leading liberal arts American Indian Studies degree in the area, come to this campus and you’d get the experience (empty promises), but that’s not what it is” (p. 239).

Saggio and Rendon’s 2004 research appealed to college educators and pointed to the importance of acquainting themselves with Native American cultures, establishing secure relationships with both the students and their families, while at the same time offering assistance in areas the students have identified as valuable. Lundberg’s 2007 research with 643 Native American students clearly signified the extensive importance of an institution’s value for diversity on the quality of experiences for the students.

Martin (2005) indicated the success of tribal colleges is due to the value placed on creating programs that are culturally sensitive, offer family support services, and provide individualized attention to students. According to Martin, the incorporation of elements from Native American culture has proven beneficial for the Native students to experience a sense of inclusion. With this intention, colleges that have built a fire circle, a simple circle of stones with a wood fire in the middle, create a sense of place for Native students. Native American culture

believes that the circle of fire can carry prayers to heaven; this relatively uncomplicated structure could provide a space for Native American students to pray based on their individual tribal beliefs.

Martin (2005) provided further documentation on distinctive teaching methods the Native American student responded to positively. Native Americans place a high value on both community and family, and with this in mind, students were more likely to respond to group activities that do not focus so heavily on individual competition. Faculty use of cooperative learning and group activities would add to the success of Native American students academically (Martin, 2005). Numerous academics recommended mentoring, peer mentoring, and staff relationships as imperative to Native American students' persistence and success. Shotton, Ossahwe, and Cintron (2007) noted "Pairing American Indian students with American Indian peer mentors can be a positive step toward facilitating their academic success and easing their transition into the university" (p. 98). Virtually without exception, the most effective academic students, regardless of race, have a least one strong relationship with another when dealing with academic work (Light, 2003). Because Native Americans are relational people; and whether they establish a relationship with an academic advisor, a faculty member, or other students outside the classroom, the value of a mentor goes beyond the social aspect. Many obstacles faced by Native Americans extend beyond academic challenges, so strong relationships do help them reach their goals of persistence and eventual graduation. Furthermore, other research studies surmised relational components as vital to the culture of the campus. These mentoring occurrences ranged from organized peer and staff mentoring to casual staff and student interactions outside the classroom (e.g. Chanet-Garcia, 2005; Guillory, 2013; Jackson et al., 2003; Okagaki, Helling & Bingham 2009; Waterman, 2007).

Chapter Summary

In 1655, colleges controlled by White Americans were established for the education of the Native America and in 1969 the first tribal colleges were established. However, Native American students still make up only 1% of the total enrollment in institutions of higher learning.

President Obama's Executive Order of 2011, establishment of the America's College Promise and the initiation of the Generation Indigenous program, illustrated a renewed and concentrated effort to address the needs of Native American higher education. These policies are designed to offer students of all tribes the opportunity to participate in the quest for bachelor's degrees and even graduate educations. This level of educational attainment can be an effective way to alleviate poverty, provide resources back to tribal communities through the return of the graduated Native American student, and allow for self-determination.

An evaluation of the literature offers recommendations for educational practices within higher education that are affirming and inclusive of the Native American student. The literature outlined proposals for institutions to pursue that will contribute to comprehensive access, environmental support of persistence, and the successful accomplishment of matriculation for Native American students. Accordingly, institutions of higher education can contribute meaningful knowledge concerning the factors that affect the persistence and graduation rates of Native American college students at tribal colleges and mainstream institutions of higher education through research within their own campus community.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to determine if there are significant differences between the educational experiences of college students from the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indian (EBCI) who attend nontribal institutions and those who attend Tribal colleges. This study was also designed to understand the EBCI college students' experiences across three domains: student viewpoints on separation and alienation from their tribal community, tribal community connections, and individual perceptions of success. Finally, there was a comparison of the experiences by gender between students attending Tribal versus nontribal colleges. This chapter is a description of the research questions and methodology with specific information on the survey instruments, data collection procedure, population, sample size, data analyses methods and survey procedures. Descriptions of the instruments used, and a list of variables are further discussed.

To better understand the unique experiences of the EBCI college students, a non-experimental quantitative design was used. In addition, the use of a non-experimental research design examined the phenomena studied without any direct manipulation of the conditions that are experienced.

Research Questions and Null Hypotheses

To determine the differences in the educational experiences of college students from the EBCI who attend nontribal and Tribal colleges, the following research questions were developed as a focus for this study:

Research Question 1: Do members of the EBCI who attend Tribal colleges report their educational experiences as overall positive to a significant extent?

H₀1: Members of the EBCI who attend Tribal colleges do not report their educational experiences as overall positive to a significant extent.

Research Question 2: Is there a significant difference in the extent to which EBCI male and female students who attend Tribal colleges report overall positive experiences?

H₀2: There is not a significant difference in the extent to which of EBCI male and female students who attend Tribal colleges report overall positives educational experiences.

Research Question 3: Do members of the EBCI who attend Tribal colleges report their educational experiences as positive in the domain of separation and alienation to a significant extent?

H₀3: Members of the EBCI who attend Tribal colleges do not report their educational experiences as positive to a significant extent in the domain of separation and alienation.

Research Question 4: Do members of the EBCI who attend Tribal colleges report their educational experiences as positive in the domain of community connections to a significant extent?

H₀4: Members of the EBCI who attend Tribal colleges do not report their educational experiences as positive to a significant extent in the domain of community connections.

Research Question 5: Do members of the EBCI who attend Tribal colleges report their educational experiences in the domain of individual success as positive to a significant extent?

H₀5: Members of the EBCI who attend Tribal colleges do not report their educational experiences as positive to a significant extent in the domain of individual success.

Research Question 6: Do members of the EBCI who attend nontribal colleges report their educational experiences as overall positive to a significant extent?

H₀6: Members of the EBCI who attend nontribal colleges do not report their educational experiences as overall positive to a significant extent.

Research Question 7: Is there a significant difference in the extent to which EBCI males and females who attend nontribal colleges report overall positive educational experiences?

H₀7: There is not a significant difference in the extent to which EBCI males and females who attend non-tribal colleges report overall positive educational experiences.

Research Question 8: Do members of the EBCI who attend nontribal colleges report their educational experiences as positive in the domain of separation and alienation to a significant extent?

H₀8: Members of the EBCI attending non-tribal colleges do not report their educational experiences as positive to a significant extent in the domain of separation and alienation.

Research Question 9: Do members of the EBCI who attend nontribal colleges report their educational experiences as overall positive in the domain of community connections to a significant extent?

H₀9: Members of the EBCI who attend nontribal colleges do not report their educational experiences as overall positive to a significant extent in the domain of community connections.

Research Question 10: Do members of the EBCI who attend nontribal colleges report their educational experiences as positive in the domain of individual success to a significant extent?

H₀10: Members of the EBCI who attend nontribal colleges do not report their educational experiences as positive to a significant extent in the domain of individual success.

Research Question 11: Is there a significant difference in the extent to which EBCI students who attend tribal colleges and those who attend nontribal colleges report overall positive educational experiences?

H₀11: There is not a significant difference in the extent to which EBCI students who attend tribal colleges and those who attend nontribal colleges report overall positive educational experiences.

Research Question 12: Is there a significant difference in the extent to which EBCI students who attend tribal colleges and those who attend nontribal colleges report their educational experiences as positive in the domain of separation and alienation?

H₀12: There is not a significant difference in the extent to which EBIC students who attend tribal colleges and those who attend nontribal colleges report their educational experiences as positive in the domain of separation and alienation.

Research Question 13: Is there a significant difference in the extent to which EBCI students who attend tribal colleges and those who attend nontribal colleges report their educational experiences as positive in the domain of community connections?

H₀13: There is not a significant difference in the extent to which EBIC students who attend tribal colleges and those who attend nontribal colleges report their educational experiences as positive in the domain of community connections.

Research Question 14: Is there a significant difference in the extent to which EBCI students who attend tribal colleges and those who attend nontribal colleges report their educational experiences as positive in the domain of individual success?

H₀14: There is not a significant difference in the extent to which EBIC students who attend tribal colleges and those who attend nontribal colleges report their educational experiences as positive in the domain of individual success.

Population and Sample

Approximately 300 members of the EBCI currently enrolled in college comprised the population. The sample included students who responded to the survey. For this nonrandom sample, any type of college enrollment was included and students were required to be at least 18 years of age for participation. The sample included a wide variety in terms of gender, type of higher education institutions, age, and year in school. Only one formal criterion was used in selecting participants, the study was confined to enrolled members of the EBCI. To meet the requirements for enrollment, there are specific restrictions according the EBCI Charter. There must be an unequivocal lineal ancestor who appears on the 1924 Baker Roll of the Eastern Band

of Cherokee Indians and the individual must possess at least 1/16 degree of Eastern Cherokee blood. The blood quantum is calculated from the ancestor listed on the 1924 Baker Roll and DNA blood testing is prohibited in determining this calculation. In addition, participants surveyed were restricted to students who receive funding from the EBCI educational fund. As enrolled members of this tribe, students are entitled to full financial support from the EBCI. This includes all living expenses, textbooks, and a laptop computer. The educational division provides each student with an advisor who works for the tribe. This staff person is available to college students for support and guidance on any issue that may occur within their college experience. If students do not maintain at least a 2.5 GPA each semester, the EBCI requires that the student pay all financial support back to the tribe.

Instrumentation

This research study was conducted using the Native American Collective Orientation and Pursuits in Education Scale (NACOPE) developed by Thompson, Johnson-Jennings, and Nitzarim (2013). Permission was granted for the use of the survey by the authors (see Appendix A). This instrument was developed specifically to access the knowledge of Native American students' experiences in higher education. The authors created the survey to assess domains that had been previously identified in former research with this population and included 48 statements. The survey was a 5-point Likert-type scale with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree. Using an exploratory factor analysis (EFA), three factors emerged to create the domains that uncovered the unique experiences of Native American students. The factors are: a) separation or alienation from both the campus community as well as one's family, tribe, and community; b) motivation stemming from a desire to give back or contribute to one's

family, tribe, and community; and c) a desire to be successful and advance oneself at an individual level both socially and economically. The coefficient alpha for the three subscales was .88 for the separation and alienation domain, .74 for the individual success domain, and .93 for the community connection domain (Thompson et al., 2013). This demonstrates acceptable internal consistency reliability.

Each domain within the survey has specific statements related to the dimension identified. The separation and alienation domain includes 22 items, the community connections dimension has 16 items, and the individual success domain has five items. An introductory paragraph about the research was included in the survey and four demographic questions were asked of participants. The survey was estimated to take approximately 20 minutes to complete. The introduction to the survey and a copy of the survey can be found in Appendix E and Appendix F.

Data Collection

Prior to conducting the research, permission was obtained from appropriate officials within the EBCI tribe and East Tennessee State University. Permission to conduct research was sought from the Cultural Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the EBCI and was then approved by the EBCI Tribal Council (see Appendixes B and C). All processes for conducting ethical research as required by the East Tennessee State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) were followed and approved by the IRB (see Appendix D). In keeping with the requirements of the Institutional Review Board, respondents were informed that their participation in this study was voluntary, and responding would serve as permission to participate.

An email invitation requesting the participation of current college students from the EBCI

was sent to the Program Manager of the EBCI Higher Education and Training Department for distribution to all tribal members currently enrolled in institutions of higher education. The researcher informed participants that the data in the research records would be anonymous and confidential. It was made clear that the data would be stored securely and made available only to persons directly involved in the study. No reference would be made in any oral or written report that could be used to identify any participants.

The survey was distributed through Qualtrics, an online survey service. Qualtrics is a generalized survey service permitting the creation of survey instruments, distribution of the surveys, data storage, and analysis. This service was the preferred tool for the survey because it met stringent information security requirements not found in free online survey tools. Qualtrics also has important quality control features such as preventing multiple submissions from a single survey participant. The survey was distributed by email to students by the Program Manager of the EBCI Higher Education and Training Department and originated from their office. The Program Manager prepared an email for students expressing the need for research regarding their experiences in college to better help the Higher Education and Training Department meet its needs more effectively. The message also urged students to participate in the project to aid in designing and implementing future precollege programs. A link to the survey was provided in the email to the students. The Program Manager advised students that the EBCI tribe would use final results collected from the survey for possible program development, but there would be no release of individual responses or identifying information. Finally, students were notified that by starting the survey, they agreed they had read the explanation of the study and agreed to participate. The survey did not have a time limit for completion; however, students were advised that it would take approximately 20 minutes. To increase participation in the study, three

additional follow-up email contacts were distributed at 2-week intervals. Students were asked to complete the survey before the end of the 2015 fall semester.

Data Analysis

The data for the research study were analyzed using parametric statistical methodology. The data were organized and entered into an IBM-SPSS version 21.0 data file.

Measures of variability were calculated to show how dispersed the scores of college students were based on their institution (Tribal or non-tribal) and included range, variance and standard deviation. Research question 1 and 6 were used to examine the level of positive educational experiences among students attending either Tribal or nontribal colleges. These two questions were analyzed using a single sample *t*-test to compare each mean with the test value of 3 that represents neutrality. Research questions 2 and 7 compared differences of the means for EBCI students based on gender. Independent samples *t*-test were used for analyzing data questions 2 and 7. Research questions 3 and 8 examined whether students attending Tribal or nontribal colleges described their educational experiences as positive in the domain of separation and alienation. These questions were analyzed using single sample *t*-tests to compare the mean with a test value of 3. The domain of community connections for students attending Tribal and nontribal colleges was examined in Research questions 4 and 9. Single sample *t*-tests were used to compare means with a test value of 3. Research questions 5 and 10 considered the domain of individual success for students attending Tribal and nontribal colleges. Single sample *t*-tests were used to compare the means with a test value of 3. Research question 11 compared the overall positive experiences of students attending Tribal colleges and those attending nontribal colleges by using an independent samples *t*-test. An independent samples *t*-test was

used to compare the domains of separation and alienation, community connections, and individual success of students attending Tribal and nontribal colleges. All the data were analyzed at the .05 level of significance.

Chapter Summary

Chapter 3 reported the study's methods and procedures including the research design, selection of the sample, survey instrument, research questions and null hypotheses, collection of data, and the types of tests performed for the analysis of research questions. Data collected from the study are analyzed in Chapter 4. A summary of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations obtained from this study are presented in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This quantitative study was designed to determine if there is a significant difference in the college experiences of members of the EBCI who attend either Tribal or nontribal institutions of higher education. This study was also designed to investigate the EBCI college students' experiences across three domains: student viewpoints on separation and alienation from their tribal community, tribal community connections, and individual perceptions of success. Finally, there was a comparison of the experiences by gender between students attending Tribal versus nontribal colleges.

Analysis of Research Questions

Data were collected from members of the EBCI who were currently enrolled in either Tribal or nontribal colleges. Once the surveys were received electronically, the data were entered into an Excel worksheet and organized with the three domains being examined: student viewpoints on separation and alienation from their tribal community, tribal community connections, and individual perceptions of success. The overall positive experience score was an average of each domain. This file was imported into SPSS for use in addressing all research questions. The following research questions were designed to evaluate significant differences between students attending Tribal or nontribal colleges, and between males and females.

Research Question 1

Do members of the EBCI who attend Tribal colleges report their educational experiences as overall positive to a significant extent?

H₀1: Members of the EBCI who attend Tribal colleges do not report their educational experiences as overall positive to a significant extent.

A single sample *t*-test was conducted to compare the overall positive experiences of EBCI students attending Tribal colleges to the test value of 3, which represents neutrality. The result was significant, $t(25) = 4.69, p < .001$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. EBCI students attending Tribal colleges reported significantly higher mean scores on the NACOPE ($M = 3.18, SD = .197$) than the test value. Figure 1 shows the distributions.

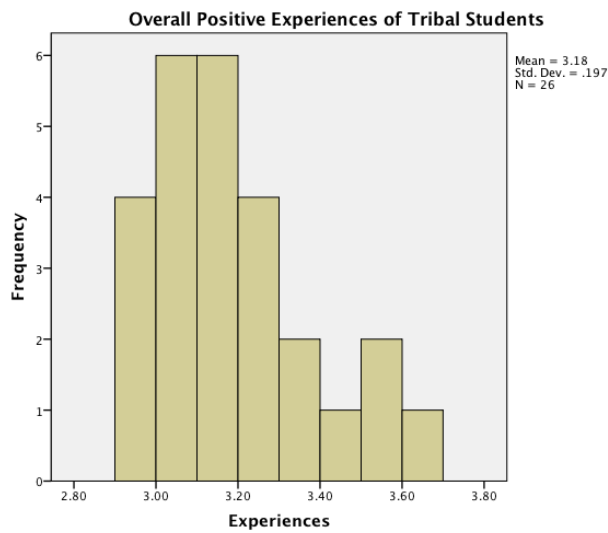


Figure 1. Distributions of Overall Positive Experiences of Tribal Students

Research Question 2

Is there a significant difference in the extent to which EBCI male and female students who attend Tribal colleges report overall positive experiences as measured by the average of each domain of the survey?

H₀2: There is not a significant difference in the extent to which of EBCI male and female students who attend Tribal colleges report overall positives educational experiences.

An independent-samples t test was conducted to evaluate whether the overall positive experiences of EBCI students attending Tribal colleges differ between male and females. The overall positive experiences was the test variable and the grouping variable was male or female. The result was not significant, $t(25) = .510$, $p = .302$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. The η^2 index was .01, which indicated a small effect size. EBCI students who were male ($M = 3.20$, $SD = .26$) tended to have approximately the same overall positive experiences as females ($M = 3.16$, $SD = .14$). The 95% confidence interval for the difference in the means was .123 to .205. Figure 2 shows the distribution for the two groups.

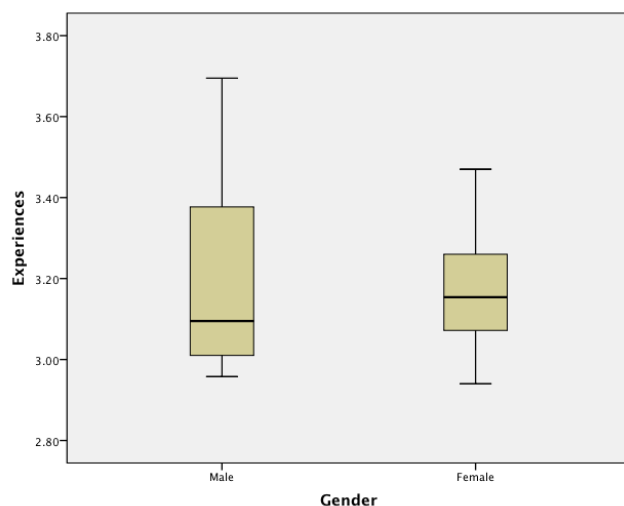


Figure 2. Distribution of Scores for Tribal College Males and Females Positive Experiences

Research Question 3

Do members of the EBCI who attend Tribal colleges report their educational experiences as positive in the domain of separation and alienation to a significant extent?

H₀₃: Members of the EBCI who attend Tribal colleges do not report their educational experiences as positive to a significant extent in the domain of separation and alienation.

A single sample *t*-test was conducted to compare the domain of separation and alienation felt by EBCI students attending Tribal colleges to the test value of 3, which represents neutrality. The result was significant, $t(25) = 82.95$, $p < .001$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. EBCI students attending Tribal colleges reported significantly higher mean scores on the NACOPE ($M = 3.17$, $SD = .195$) than the test value. Figure 3 shows the distributions.

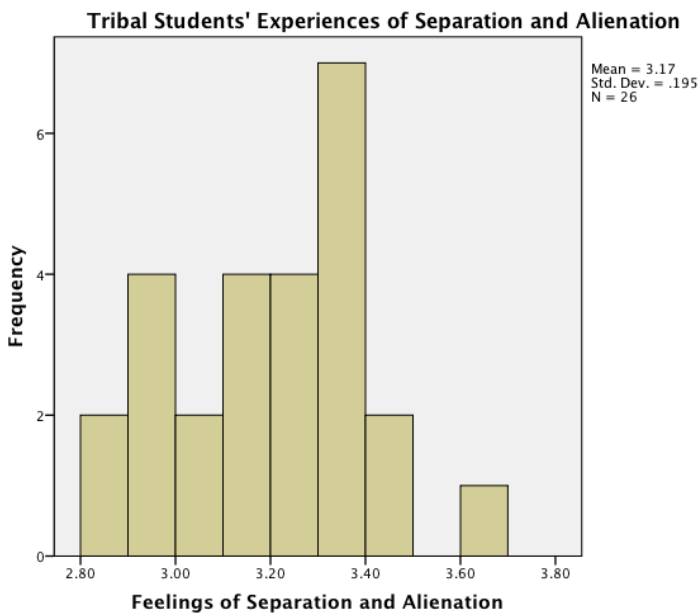


Figure 3. Distributions of Tribal Students' Experiences of Separation and Alienation

Research Question 4

Do members of the EBCI who attend Tribal colleges report their educational experiences as positive in the domain of community connections to a significant extent?

H₀4: Members of the EBCI who attend Tribal colleges do not report their educational experiences as positive to a significant extent in the domain of community connections.

A single sample *t*-test was conducted to compare the domain of community connection felt by EBCI students attending Tribal colleges to the test value of 3, which represents neutrality. The result was significant, $t(25) = 7.49, p < .001$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. EBCI students attending Tribal colleges reported significantly higher mean scores on the NACOPE ($M = 3.36, SD = .244$) than the test value. Figure 4 shows the distributions.

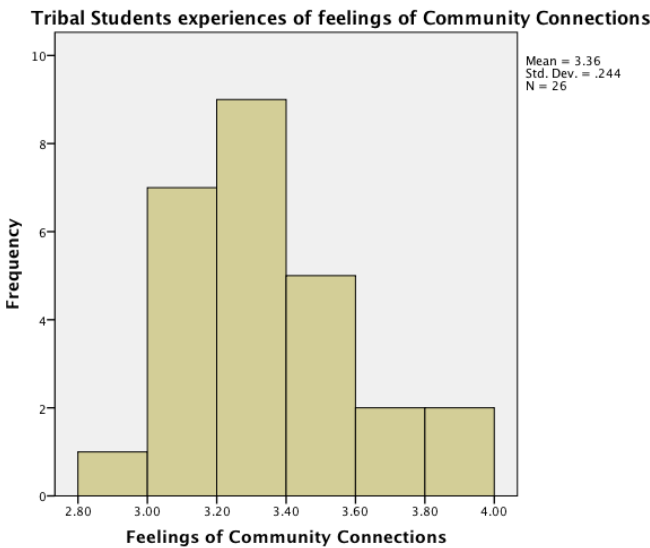


Figure 4. Distributions of Tribal Students Experiences of Feelings of Community Connections

Research Question 5

Do members of the EBCI who attend Tribal colleges report their educational experiences in the domain of individual success as positive to a significant extent?

H₀5: Members of the EBCI who attend Tribal colleges do not report their educational experiences as positive to a significant extent in the domain of individual success.

A single sample *t*-test was conducted to examine the domain of individual success felt by EBCI students attending Tribal colleges to the test value of 3, which represents neutrality. The result was not significant, $t(25) = .467, p = .644$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. EBCI students attending Tribal colleges did not report significantly higher mean scores on the NACOPE ($M = 3.04, SD = .082$) than the test value. Figure 5 shows the distributions.

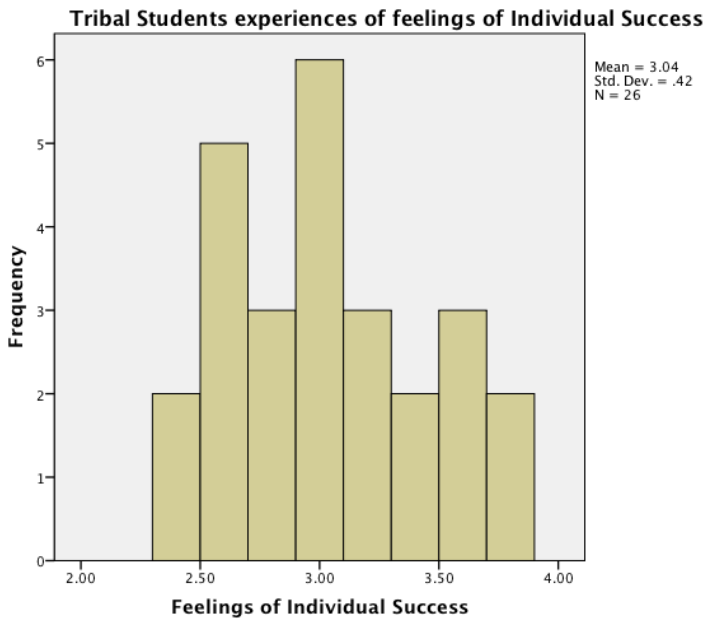


Figure 5. Distributions of Tribal Students Experiences of Feelings of Individual Success

Research Question 6

Do members of the EBCI who attend nontribal colleges report their educational experiences as overall positive to a significant extent?

H₀6: Members of the EBCI who attend nontribal colleges do not report their educational experiences as overall positive to a significant extent.

A single sample *t*-test was conducted to compare the overall positive experiences of EBCI students attending nontribal colleges to the test value of 3, which represents neutrality. The result was significant, $t(54) = 6.23, p < .001$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. EBCI students attending nontribal colleges reported significantly higher mean scores on the NACOPE ($M = 3.13, SD = .159$) than the test value. Figure 6 shows the distributions.

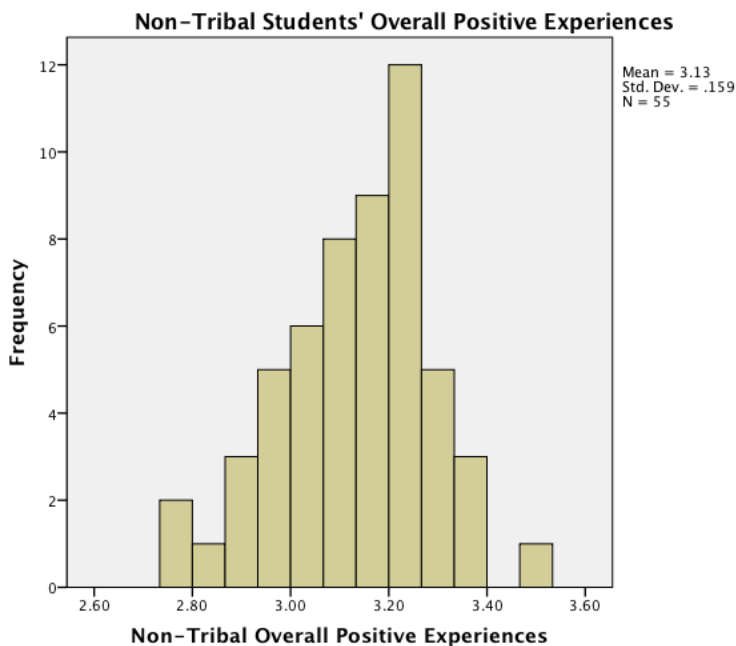


Figure 6. Distributions of Non-Tribal Students' Overall Positive Experiences

Research Question 7

Is there a significant difference in the extent to which EBCI males and females who attend nontribal colleges report overall positive educational experiences as measured by the average score of each domain of the survey?

H₀7: There is not a significant difference in the extent to which EBCI males and females who attend nontribal colleges report overall positive educational experiences.

An independent-samples t test was conducted to evaluate whether the overall positive experiences of EBCI students attending non-tribal colleges differ between male and females. The overall positive experiences was the test variable and the grouping variable was male or female. The result was not significant, $t(54) = 1.10$, $p = .317$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. The η index was .01, which indicated a small effect size. EBCI students who were male ($M = 3.10$, $SD = .16$) tended to have approximately the same overall positive experiences as females ($M = 3.14$, $SD = .16$). The 95% confidence interval for the difference in the means was .140 to .046. Figure 7 shows the distribution for the two groups.

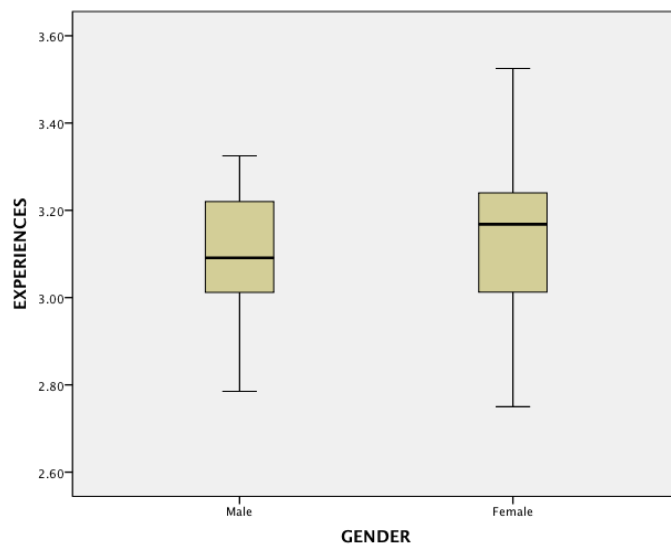


Figure 7. Distribution of Scores for Nontribal Males and Females Overall Positive Experiences

Research Question 8

Do members of the EBCI who attend nontribal colleges report their educational experiences as positive in the domain of separation and alienation to a significant extent?

H₀8: Members of the EBCI attending nontribal colleges do not report their educational experiences as positive to a significant extent in the domain of separation and alienation.

A single sample *t*-test was conducted to compare the domain of separation and alienation reported by EBCI students attending Tribal colleges to the test value of 3, which represents neutrality. The result was significant, $t(54) = 4.61$, $p < .001$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. EBCI students attending non-tribal colleges reported significantly higher mean scores on the NACOPE ($M = 3.13$, $SD = .21$) than the test value. Figure 8 shows the distributions.

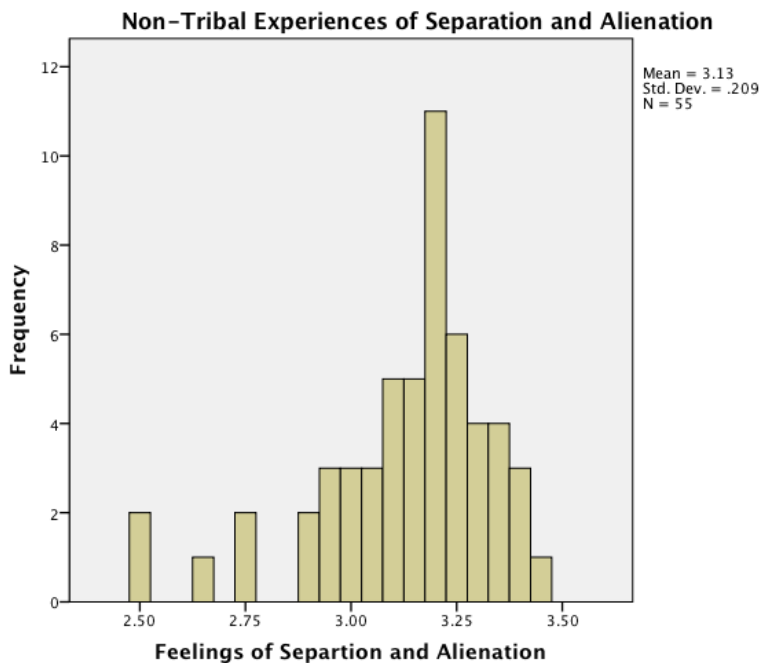


Figure 8. Distributions of Non-Tribal Experiences of Separation and Alienation

Research Question 9

Do members of the EBCI who attend nontribal colleges report their educational experiences as positive in the domain of community connections to a significant extent?

H₀9: Members of the EBCI who attend nontribal colleges do not report their educational experiences as overall positive to a significant extent in the domain of community connections.

A single sample *t*-test was conducted to compare the domain of community connection felt by EBCI students attending nontribal colleges to the test value of 3, which represents neutrality. The result was significant, $t(54) = 7.10, p < .001$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. EBCI students attending nontribal colleges reported significantly higher mean scores on the NACOPE ($M = 3.22, SD = .23$) than the test value. Figure 9 shows the distributions.

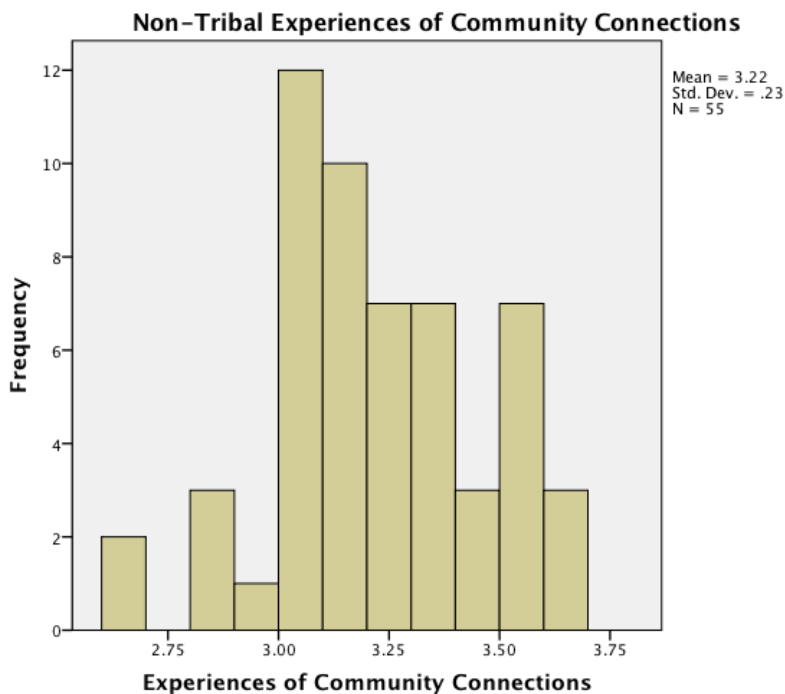


Figure 9. Distributions of Non-Tribal Experiences of Community Connections

Research Question 10

Do members of the EBCI who attend nontribal colleges report their educational experiences in the domain of individual success as positive to a significant extent?

H₀10: Members of the EBCI who attend nontribal colleges do not report their educational experiences as positive to a significant extent in the domain of individual success.

A single sample *t*-test was conducted to examine the domain of individual success felt by EBCI students attending nontribal colleges to the to the test value of 3, which represents neutrality. The result was not significant, $t(54) = 1.07, p = .289$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. EBCI students attending nontribal colleges did not report significantly higher mean scores on the NACOPE ($M = 3.05, SD = .378$) than the test value. Figure 10 shows the distributions.

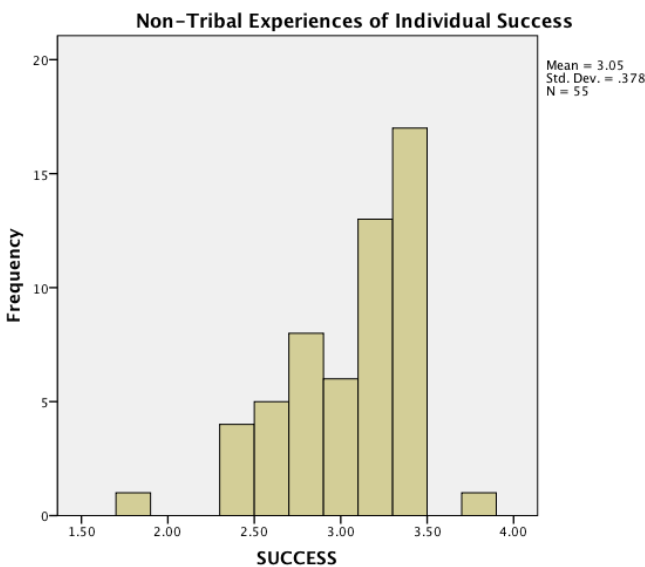


Figure 10. Distributions of Non-Tribal Experiences of Individual Success

Research Question 11

Is there a significant difference in the extent to which EBCI students who attend Tribal colleges and those who attend nontribal colleges report overall positive educational experiences?

H₀11: There is not a significant difference in the extent to which EBCI students who attend tribal colleges and those who attend nontribal colleges report overall positive educational experiences.

An independent-samples t test was conducted to evaluate whether the overall positive experiences differ between EBCI students attending Tribal colleges and those attending nontribal colleges. The overall positive experiences were the test variable and the type of college was the grouping variable. The result was not significant, $t(79) = 1.06, p = .306$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. The η^2 index was .03, which indicated a small effect size. Students attending Tribal colleges ($M = 3.18, SD = .159$) tended to have approximately the same overall positive experiences as students attending nontribal colleges ($M = 3.13, SD = .021$). The 95% confidence interval for the difference in means was .129 to .034. Figure 11 shows the distributions for the two groups.

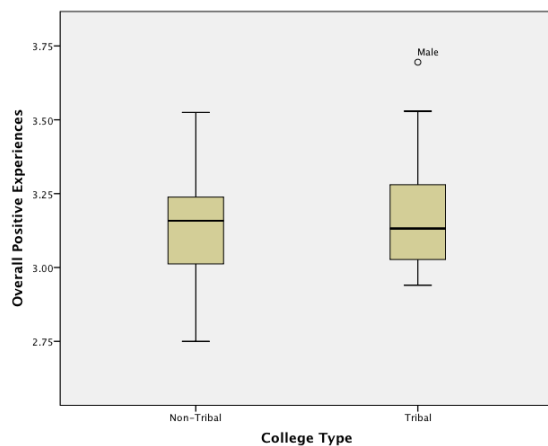


Figure 11: Distribution of Scores for Tribal and Nontribal Positive Experiences

Research Question 12

Is there a significant difference in the extent to which EBCI students who attend tribal colleges and those who attend nontribal colleges report their educational experiences as positive in the domain of separation and alienation?

H₀12: There is not a significant difference in the extent to which EBIC students who attend tribal colleges and those who attend nontribal colleges report their educational experiences as positive in the domain of separation and alienation.

An independent-samples t test was conducted to evaluate whether the educational experiences in the domain of separation and alienation differ between EBCI students attending Tribal colleges and those attending nontribal colleges. The experiences of separation and alienation were the test variable and the type of college was the grouping variable. The result was not significant, $t(79) = .781, p = .380$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. The η^2 index was .02, which indicated a small effect size. Students attending Tribal colleges ($M = 3.17, SD = .195$) tended to have approximately the same overall experiences of separation and alienation as students attending non-tribal colleges ($M = 3.13, SD = .209$). The 95% confidence interval for the difference in means was 3.08 to 3.19. Figure 12 shows the distributions for the two groups.

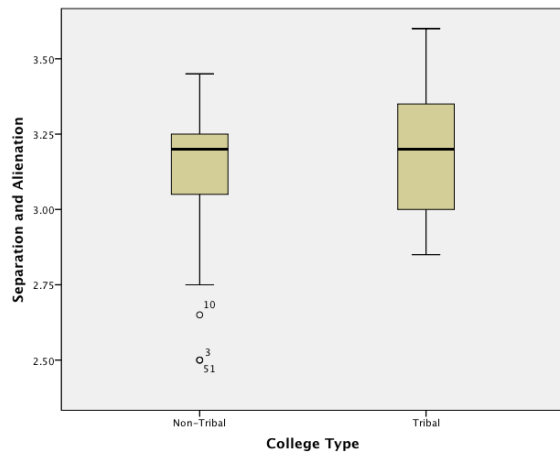


Figure 12: Distribution of Scores for Tribal and Non-tribal on the Domain of Separation and Alienation

Research Question 13

Is there a significant difference in the extent to which EBCI students who attend Tribal colleges and those who attend nontribal colleges report their educational experiences as positive in the domain of community connections?

H₀13: There is not a significant difference in the extent to which EBIC students who attend tribal colleges and those who attend nontribal colleges report their educational experiences as positive in the domain of community connections.

An independent-samples t test was conducted to evaluate whether the educational experiences were positive in the domain of community connections differ between EBCI students attending Tribal colleges and those attending nontribal colleges. The experiences of community connections was the test variable and the type of college was the grouping variable. The result was significant, $t(79) = 6.07, p = .016$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The η^2 index was .01, which indicated a small effect size. Students attending Tribal colleges (M

= 3.34, $SD = .244$) tended to have significantly more positive overall experiences of community connections as students attending non-tribal colleges ($M = 3.22$, $SD = .229$). The 95% confidence interval for the difference in means was 3.16 to 3.45. Figure 13 shows the distributions for the two groups.

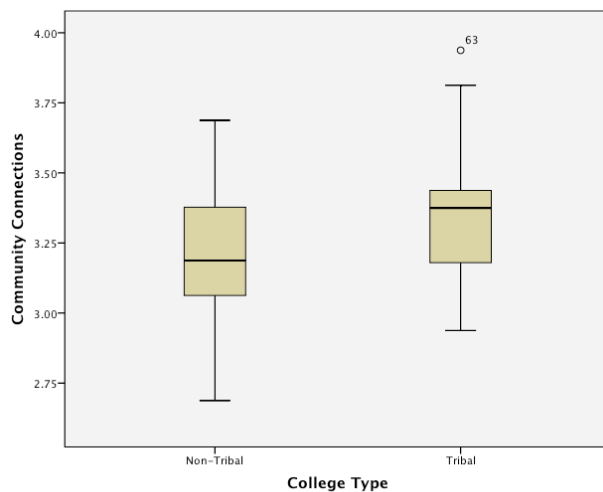


Figure 13: Distribution of Scores for Tribal and Non-tribal Community Connections

Research Question 14

Is there a significant difference in the extent to which EBCI students who attend tribal colleges and those who attend nontribal colleges report their educational experiences as positive in the domain of individual success?

H₀14: There is not a significant difference in the extent to which EBIC students who attend tribal colleges and those who attend nontribal colleges report their educational experiences as positive in the domain of individual success.

An independent-samples t test was conducted to evaluate whether the educational experiences were positive in the domain of community connections differ between EBCI students attending Tribal colleges and those attending nontribal colleges. The experiences of

individual success was the test variable and the type of college was the grouping variable. The result was not significant, $t(79) = .331, p = .567$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. The η^2 index was .02, which indicated a small effect size. Students attending Tribal colleges ($M = 3.04, SD = .419$) tended to have approximately the same overall experiences of individual success as students attending nontribal colleges ($M = 3.05, SD = .378$). The 95% confidence interval for the difference in means was .169 to .211. Figure 14 shows the distributions for the two groups.

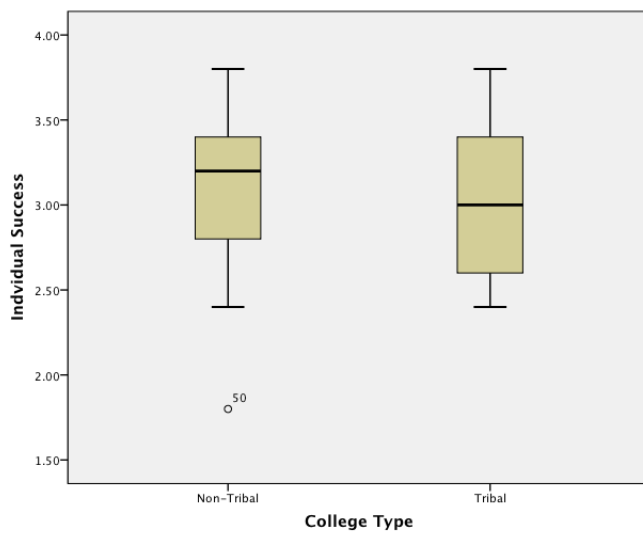


Figure 14: Distribution of Scores for Tribal and Non-tribal Experiences of Individual Success

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to determine if there are significant differences between the educational experiences of college students from the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indian (EBCI) who attend nontribal institutions and those who attend Tribal colleges. This study was also designed to understand the EBCI college students' experiences across three domains: including student viewpoints on separation and alienation from their tribal community; tribal community connections; and individual perceptions of success. Finally, there was a comparison of the experiences by gender between students attending Tribal versus nontribal colleges. The researcher used the Native American Collective Orientation and Pursuits in Education Scale (NACOPE) survey results as determinants of the college students' experiences. Summary, conclusions, and recommendations are outlined in the following sections.

Summary

Studies have indicated that Native American students' transition to higher education differs from that of students belonging to other minority groups and the predominately white mainstream culture (Swail, 2003). Once enrolled in college, Native American students face extensive challenges and the hurdles of leaving the tribal community behind and acclimating to the expectancies of a dominant culture. In addition, gaps in secondary education have contributed to the fact that only 39% of Native American students who enrolled in a 4-year institution in the fall of 2004 completed a bachelor's degree by 2010 (Shotton, 2012). Studies show that Native American students who attend Tribal colleges have an easier transition to college, are more successful academically, and are more likely to graduate (Guardia & Evans,

2008). Therefore, further study that focused on comparisons of college experiences of EBCI students enrolled in Tribal versus nontribal institutions of higher learning was important for understanding the impact of the choice of college for success, persistence, and retention. The findings of this study indicated there were no significant differences between the experiences of EBCI students who attended either Tribal or nontribal colleges. In addition, there were no significant differences when gender and type of college were considered. However, there were significant differences in both Tribal and nontribal college students regarding their overall experiences as positive, their feelings of community connectedness, and separation and alienation. The following sections outline the overall characteristics of the data sets and the results of each of the study's research questions.

Conclusions

For this study, all current EBCI college students were surveyed electronically. The NACOPE survey was answered and submitted by 81 students. The records were then sorted by type of college attended and divided into four datasets. The resulting datasets included females attending Tribal colleges with 15 survey results, males attending Tribal colleges with 11 survey results, females attending nontribal colleges with 38 survey results, and males attending nontribal colleges with 17 survey results.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 was focused on the overall experiences of students attending Tribal colleges. EBCI students attending Tribal colleges reported significantly higher mean scores on the NACOPE than the test value, which represented neutrality. These results are consistent with the literature regarding the success of Native American students who attend Tribal colleges. The Tribal college model emphasizes the significance of incorporating the families of the students within the functions of the institution; the incorporation of Native American cultural beliefs

within the curriculum; and the offering of flexible educational options, such as distance learning (IHEP, 2006). The uniqueness of the Tribal college experience is the strength it provides for ensuring success for Native American college students.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 was focused on any differences in positive experiences between males and females attending Tribal colleges. The overall positive experiences was the test variable and the grouping variable was male or female. There was no difference in the positive experiences of males and females attending Tribal colleges.

Research Questions 3, 4, and 5

Research Questions 3, 4, and 5 were designed to test the relationship between students attending Tribal colleges experiences across three domains: student viewpoints on separation and alienation from the tribal community, tribal community connections, and individual perceptions of success.

In regard to the domain of separation and alienation, EBCI students attending Tribal colleges reported significantly higher mean scores on the NACOPE than the test value, which represented neutrality in regard to feelings of separation and alienation. This finding is supported within the research regarding Native American students' experiences attending a Tribal college who report feeling less marginalized within these institutions where there are no cultural barriers or feelings of "walking between two worlds." In maintaining a leadership role for Native American students, Tribal colleges are places where conservation of the native language and training in the language, culture, and history are carried out with the active contribution of community-based scholars (Crazybull, 2009). In addition, the Tribal college

model provides a distinctive focus by serving a majority of Native American students, and offering locations on reservation land.

Research Question 4 was focused on the domain of community connections felt by students attending Tribal colleges. EBCI students attending Tribal colleges reported significantly higher mean scores on the NACOPE than the test value, which represented neutrality in the area of feelings of community connections. Native American students' attendance and success in Tribal colleges is frequently related to a sense of obligation to their own community; therefore, this result is supported within the literature. The magnitude of contributing to the welfare of others and giving back to one's community is well documented in the literature (Brown & Lavish, 2006; Okagki et al., 2009) among Native American students.

The domain of individual success experienced by students attending Tribal colleges was the focus of Research Question 5. EBCI students attending Tribal colleges did not report significantly higher mean scores on the NACOPE in the domain of individual success than the test value, which represented neutrality.

Research Question 6

Research Question 6 was focused on the overall experiences of students attending non-tribal colleges. EBCI students attending nontribal colleges reported significantly higher mean scores on the NACOPE than the test value, which represented neutrality. This result was unexpected and has not been reported in the literature. The suspicion of nontribal colleges, in particular, those, which are predominantly White institutions remains prevalent in most Native American communities today. Guillory and Wolverson (2008) report that the major barrier to their persistence in college was apprehension from tribal members that their education in these institutions would strip them of their Native American culture, skills, and identity.

Research Question 7

Research Question 7 was focused on any differences in positive experiences between males and females attending nontribal colleges. The overall positive experiences was the test variable and the grouping variable was male or female. There was no difference in the positive experiences of males and females who were EBCI students attending nontribal colleges.

Research Question 8, 9, and 10

Research Questions 8, 9, and 10 were designed to test the relationship between students attending nontribal colleges experiences across three domains: student viewpoints on separation and alienation from the tribal community, tribal community connections, and individual perceptions of success.

Research Question 8 was focused on the domain of separation and alienation, EBCI students attending nontribal colleges reported significantly higher mean scores on the NACOPE than the test value, which represented neutrality in regard to feelings of separation and alienation. This was an unexpected result based on past research. The nontribal college climate for Native American students has previously been described as one of marginalization and rejection within the social campus community (Garrod & Larrimore, 1997). However, in contrast, a compelling identification with their tribal communities along with openness to majority culture has been found to contribute to Native American retention (Huffman, 2001). These results indicate that EBCI students may possess a powerful cultural identity, which allows them to succeed in a non-tribal setting.

Research Question 9 was focused on the domain of community connections felt by students attending nontribal colleges. In regard to this domain, EBCI students attending nontribal colleges reported significantly higher mean scores in the area of community connections on the

NACOPE than the test value, which represented neutrality. This finding may indicate that EBCI students believe their college education, even though a nontribal college, is a way to advance their families and communities through their completion of a degree (Hernandez, 2000), which is found in the literature regarding underrepresented minority groups. In addition, Native American students who return often to their homes and families are found to feel less isolated on the college campus (Waterman, 2012). Students who persevered to graduation have reported their ability to navigate both cultures as fundamental to their success (Brown & Robinson Kurpius, 1997).

The domain of individual success experienced by students attending nontribal colleges was the focus of Research Question 10. EBCI students attending nontribal colleges did not report significantly higher mean scores on the NACOPE in the domain of individual success than the test value, which represented neutrality.

Research Questions 11, 12, 13, and 14

Research Questions 11, 12, 13, and 14 centered on any differences between students attending Tribal colleges versus nontribal colleges. The questions examined overall positive experiences and the experiences across three domains: student viewpoints on separation and alienation from the tribal community, tribal community connections, and individual perceptions of success.

Research Question 11 compared the overall positive experiences of students attending Tribal colleges with those attending nontribal colleges. The overall positive experiences were the test variable and the type of college was the grouping variable. There were no significant differences in the level of positive experiences between EBCI students who attended Tribal colleges with those who attended nontribal colleges.

The differences in the experiences of separation and alienation between students attending Tribal colleges versus nontribal colleges was the focus for Research Question 12. There were no significant differences in experiences of separation and alienation between EBCI students who attended Tribal colleges and those who attended nontribal colleges.

Research Question 13 was focused on the differences between students attending Tribal colleges versus nontribal colleges in the domain of community connections. There were significant differences in the experience of community connections between EBCI students who attended Tribal colleges and those who attended nontribal colleges. Those attending Tribal colleges had higher scores in community connections than those attending nontribal colleges. This result is supported within the literature on Native American experiences in a Tribal college. Due to the increased number of Native American faculty instructing students in the Tribal college environment there is a sense of greater community connection experienced by those attending these schools. These faculty members understand tribal traditions and present a genuine authenticity to Native American students. Their sincerity provides an increased emphasis on the traditional tribal focus for community success, as well as an example of their own commitment to give back to their tribal community. These faculty members represent a legitimate role model for Native American students.

The differences between students attending Tribal colleges versus nontribal colleges on the domain of individual success were the focus of Research Question 14. There were no significant differences in the feelings of individual success between EBCI students who attended Tribal colleges with those who attended nontribal colleges.

Recommendations for Practice

The findings and conclusions of this research have led to the following recommendations for practice. It appears that for EBCI students, the choice of type of college, Tribal or nontribal does not make a significant difference in the overall positive experience. Therefore, high school guidance counselors of EBCI students may not need to concentrate on the type of college, but focus on the best fit for the individual. One strategy to help high school students in their college selection would be to create collaborative summer programs with institutions prior to graduation. These programs for EBCI students would offer brief exposure, including overnight stays on college campuses during the sophomore year of high school. For example, an EBCI student who openly expresses a desire to stay closely connected to tribal traditions during the postsecondary experience could be offered the opportunity to spend time at a Tribal college campus. However, an EBCI student who had formidable family connections and a need to remain close to the actual tribal land would be encouraged to visit colleges close in proximity to the reservation. The educational division of the EBCI would develop relationships with specific universities, particularly places where EBCI students have flourished in the past, and then create a direct pipeline program. This programming would be reciprocally valuable to both entities. Students would experience a preview of the campus experience and the universities could actively recruit the EBCI students. In addition, these colleges would create an atmosphere where the EBCI families and the tribe as a whole would feel at ease sending their students.

Another strategy would be a peer-mentoring program for EBCI students to be developed between those in high school and those already in the colleges where the pipeline programs exist. EBCI high school juniors would also be invited to attend events on the college campuses with their mentors to experience the social culture of the community. In addition, the community colleges near the reservation would offer dual enrollment for those college bound students to

earn credits before leaving high school, with an option of reaching out to their peer mentors for tutoring. These EBCI mentors offer a positive educational role model and would stimulate younger generations of EBCI students to attend college. A crucial component of this program is to provide nurturance and encouragement to EBCI high school students by creating a safe environment to “practice” college with a fellow tribal member before making a decision to attend a particular institution.

These university partnerships could also be a mechanism to create internships and practicums that would provide services directly to the EBCI tribe and community. Implementing these types of opportunities would foster engagement with the tribe and allow students to have an explicit method of giving back to the community. In addition, it would provide a pool of qualified EBCI students upon graduation to gain employment with the tribe. Profits from the EBCI casino in Cherokee have allowed the tribe to build many new facilities offering services to tribal members. These include a new hospital, division of social services, and justice center. However, there is a lack of qualified applicants from the EBCI tribe to work within these facilities. This internship program would allow for trained EBCI students to become employees and serve their fellow tribe members. To enable EBCI students who want to maintain a community connection to the tribe, distance-learning partnerships should be established with specific universities to better meet their needs. Rather than forcing the EBCI students to leave the tribal community, this approach would bring the university to the tribe. By establishing these programs, a larger number of EBCI students could earn a college degree without leaving the community where they feel such a deep connection and devotion. The EBCI belief that everything within their environment has an intelligent spirit and continues to play a central role in their daily practices may make leaving the native land difficult. The deliberate establishment

of a distance-learning program would enable students to stay within the physical environment where they feel most comfortable.

Finally, the EBCI educational office can be more proactive with students at a younger age. Establishing programs with middle school students to create positive relationships with the educational division staff would allow for further mentoring and guidance before high school. The staff could also bring in current EBCI college students to speak to middle school groups about their experiences.

Recommendations for Further Study

This research study represents the first formal assessment of the experiences of EBCI students since the establishment of the educational division within the tribe. There is a need for regular and concentrated evaluation of the experiences of EBCI college students to provide accountability to the tribe for the financial resources provided. There is not a formal assessment tool used within the educational division and college students are only deemed eligible for funding if a certain grade point average is achieved. There is no way to determine if further services could be offered to prevent an EBCI student from dropping out or academically flunking out of school. Therefore, a research protocol should be designed and implemented on a regular basis. This study indicated that the educational division could reach out more frequently and in a more concentrated way to understand the needs of the EBCI students. Within the last section of this survey, students were allowed to submit open comments regarding their experiences. Several students reported numerous problems in dealing with the EBCI Educational Office. Comments noted are:

“EBCI education policies need to do more to support college bound students, undergrads, and post grad students.”

“I’ve had more problems with the educational EBCI office than with my school or my peers.”

“Because of the educational office, sometimes it seems like the tribe wants us to quit and come back home and be nothing instead of encouraging us to strive for greatness!”

These comments indicate a need for a qualitative research project with EBCI students to help the educational offices improve services, provide support, and understand the needs of students.

Interviewing students would allow relevant themes to emerge and help change or modify current procedures within the educational office that are ineffective.

A longitudinal design should be implemented to track EBCI students from their freshmen year until college graduation to examine academic performance, persistence, and experiences.

These results would indicate potential programming needs for students to be successful.

A more in-depth demographic study should be implemented to determine if there are differences among EBCI students who were raised on the Cherokee boundary with those not raised within tribal lands. This may indicate the impact of traditional versus nontraditional Native American culture has on EBCI college students.

The EBCI should research the possibility for creation of a Tribal college. This would be the only campus established East of the Mississippi river for Native Americans and could serve not only EBCI college students, but those from other tribes across the eastern half of the United States. The distinctiveness of this college model creates an opportunity to shape a curricula that is focused on the specific needs of the population and could include programs for continuing adult education as well.

In conclusion, extensive research should be conducted to determine if the casino cash benefits to EBCI students at age 18 impedes their desire to attend college. This research could provide guidance to the tribe regarding the timing of distribution of benefits to members.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Permission to Use NACOPE Survey

Email permission to use NACOPE Survey



Dear Rebecca,

Thank you for your email. I am happy to provide you with permission to use the measure for your research!

Best wishes as you move your project forward, and please let me know if you have any questions.

Warmly,

Mindi

Mindi N. Thompson, Ph.D., HSP
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Appendix B

EBCI Cultural Institutional Board Approval

Cherokee Council House
Cherokee, NC

Resolution No. 545 (2015)

WHEREAS, the Tribe's Cultural Institutional Review Board (CIRB) has been assigned the task of reviewing research requests made to the Eastern Band, and;

WHEREAS, the CIRB has reviewed and approved a research request made by Rebecca Lasher, in fulfillment of an Ed.D at East Tennessee State University, to conduct a study entitled "College Experiences of Students from the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians", and;

WHEREAS, the purpose of this study is to determine what factors may hinder collegial persistence of undergraduate students while pursuing university work. This will be done by utilizing the Native American Collective Orientation and Pursuits in Education (NACOPE) scale in coordination with the Western Carolina University (WCU) Cherokee Center and the Tribe's Education Program, and;

WHEREAS, the researcher acknowledges that all information obtained from the research is the property of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and will be forwarded to the EBCI Cultural Resources Supervisor for review. Mrs. Lasher and East Tennessee State University will not use this information in any manner not authorized.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by Tribal Council of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians in Council assembled at which a quorum is present that Rebecca Lasher is hereby granted permission to carry-out the above named research project as described in her CIRB proposal, carrying out all follow-up and reporting as required by Tribal CIRB

BE IT FINALLY RESOVLED that the EBCI Cultural Resources/Kituwah Preservation and Education Program shall carry out the intent of this resolution and that this resolution become effective upon ratification by the Principal Chief.

Submitted by: Thomas J. Holland, Cultural Resources Supervisor
Kituwah Preservation and Education Program

Appendix C

EBCI Tribal Council Approval Letter



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EASTERN BAND OF CHEROKEE INDIANS

Junaluska Memorial Site and Museum

August 13, 2015

Rebecca Lasher

Dept. of Social Work, 314 HHS Building, Western Carolina University
Cullowhee, NC 28723

Rebecca:

This letter is to notify you that the EBCI Tribal Council has approved your dissertation research proposal entitled "College Experiences of EBCI Undergraduates". I will be in touch with you periodically about the status of your project, and will be glad to provide any assistance that you might need.

If you or your advisors have any questions, please contact me via phone or email. I look forward to continuing work with you on this important project.

Sincerely

Thomas J. Holland EBCI Cultural Resources Supervisor Chairman,
EBCI Cultural Institutional Review Board

828-479-4727

junaluskal@frontier.com

Appendix D

IRB Approval Letter from ETSU



EAST TENNESSEE STATE
UNIVERSITY

Office for the Protection of Human Research Subjects · Box 70565 · Johnson City, Tennessee

37614-1707 Phone: (423) 439-6053 Fax: (423) 439-6060

IRB APPROVAL – Initial Exempt

November 24, 2015

Rebecca Lasher

RE: College Experiences of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indian Students IRB#: c1115.12 ORSPA#: ,

On **November 24, 2015**, an exempt approval was granted in accordance with 45 CFR

101(b)(2). It is understood this project will be conducted in full accordance with all applicable sections of the IRB Policies. No continuing review is required. The exempt approval will be reported to the convened board on the next agenda.

- new protocol submission xForm, PI CV, literature references, Consent form, College Experiences of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Questionnaire

Unanticipated Problems Involving Risks to Subjects or Others must be reported to the IRB (and VA R&D if applicable) within 10 working days.

Proposed changes in approved research cannot be initiated without IRB review and approval. The only exception to this rule is that a change can be made prior to IRB approval when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the research subjects [21 CFR 56.108 (a)(4)]. In such a case, the IRB must be promptly informed of the change following its implementation (within 10 working days) on Form 109 (www.etsu.edu/irb). The IRB will review the change to determine that it is consistent with ensuring the subject's continued welfare.

Sincerely,

Stacey Williams, Chair ETSU Campus IRB

Appendix E

Consent Letter

Dear Participant:

My name is Rebecca Lasher, and I am a doctoral student at East Tennessee State University. I am working on my doctorate degree in higher education. In order to finish my studies, I must complete a research project; the name of my study is College Experiences of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

The purpose of this study is to better understand the college experiences of EBCI students. I would like to give a brief survey to all current college students of the tribe using an online survey tool called, Qualtrics. It should only take about 20 minutes to complete. You will be asked questions about your experiences at your current college. Since this project deals with possible negative experiences it might cause some minor stress. However, you may also feel better after you have had the opportunity to express yourselves about what experiences you have at your college. This study may provide benefit by providing more information about what colleges are best for members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians to attend and how future college students in the tribe can be better prepared for the college experience.

Your confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology used. Specifically, no guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet by any third parties, as is the case with emails. In other words, we will make every effort to ensure that your name is not connected with your responses. Specifically, Qualtrics has security features that will be enabled and will not allow me to contact you, know your email address or name. Although your rights and privacy will be maintained, the East Tennessee State University IRB, personnel particular to this research, and Rebecca Lasher have access to the study records.

You must be 18 or older to participate in this survey. If you do not want to fill out the survey, it will not affect you in any way. You may skip any questions you do not wish to answer or simply exit the online survey form if you wish to remove yourself entirely.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate. You can quit at any time. If you quit or refuse to participate, the benefits or treatment to which you are otherwise entitled will not be affected. Please complete this survey by December 15, 2015.

If you have any research-related questions or problems, you may contact me, Rebecca Lasher at 828-227-2774. I am working on this project under the supervision of my doctoral chair, Dr. Donald Good. You may reach him at (423) 439-7621. Also, the chairperson of the Institutional Review Board at East Tennessee State University is available at (423) 439-6054 if you have questions about your rights as a research subject. If you have any questions or concerns about the research and want to talk to someone independent of the research team or you can't reach the study staff, you may call an IRB Coordinator at 423/439-6055 or 423/439/6002.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Lasher

APPROVED

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NOV 24 2015

By 
Chair IRB Coordinator

Appendix F

Survey Items

- Survey items are organized by domain focus.
- Respondents select the following choices for each item: Strongly agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

Domain of Separation and Alienation

1. I avoid talking about my degree with my family and larger community.
2. I am worried that my family and larger community do not understand why it is important to me to pursue a college degree.
3. I feel out of place in my tribal community because I have chosen to pursue a college degree.
4. I am confident that my tribe/community will support my return with a college degree.
5. To be successful in college, you have to learn to step out of your tribal world and walk in the “white” world.
6. I feel different at college than at home on my reservation/ in my tribal community.
7. I get emotional support from family and community to obtain my degree.
8. I believe that my community values my pursuit of a college degree.
9. I feel accepted and understood by friends from home.
10. I cannot talk about my college life with friends from home. If I had stayed home rather than coming to college, I would be more accepted by my community.
11. If I complete my degree and make a lot of money, I worry that my community will not accept me.
12. If I complete my college degree and make a lot of money, I worry that my family will not accept me.
13. If I had stayed home rather than coming to college, I would be more accepted by my community.
14. I feel safe on my college campus.
15. When I decided to come to college, I knew that there was a chance that my family and community would disagree with my decision.
16. My campus accepts me as I am.
17. Either I or others like me have experienced discrimination in class or on campus.
18. I often feel that my community and spiritual values are in conflict with academic values.
19. I don't have any problems fitting in on campus.
20. I love college and feel that I am a perfect fit.
21. I often feel that I have to act like a different person on campus versus in my home community.
22. I have to alter my behaviors when at college and home.

Domain of Community Connections

1. I went to college to contribute to my community.
2. Earning a college degree will allow me to contribute to my community more than if I did not earn a college degree.
3. Success means being useful to others.
4. I am motivated to complete my degree because others depend on me.
5. I am going to school to give back to my community and family.
6. Obtaining a college degree, will allow me to be a role model for others.
7. It is important for me to be successful in college so that I can support other members of my community who want to attend college.
8. I get support from family and community members to deal with discrimination on campus and elsewhere.
9. I sometimes speak up when I hear people saying incorrect things about my community.
10. Obtaining my college degree will help me protect my community's culture.
11. I seek support from others in my community on campus.
12. My college degree will accomplish a goal for my community.
13. I can earn a college degree even though my spiritual values and beliefs may differ from the majority.
14. Because of my community's spiritual beliefs, values, and support, I feel more confident coping with the campus environment.
15. I get support for spiritual practices from my community.
16. Becoming a role model to others is one reason I wish to obtain my degree.

Domain of Individual versus Collective Success

1. Success means making a lot of money.
2. Success means making enough money to increase my social class.
3. I am going to school to increase my personal social status.
4. In order to be healthy and happy, you need a have a lot of money to take care of yourself.
5. I can be happy without money

VITA

REBECCA WILLIAMS LASHER

- Education: B. A. Psychology, University of North Carolina, Asheville, North Carolina, 1983
- M.S.W. Social Work, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee, 1985
- Ed.D. Educational Leadership, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee, 2016
- Professional Experience: Assistant Professor, Western Carolina University; Cullowhee, North Carolina, 2008
- Family/School Specialist, Buncombe County Schools; Asheville, North Carolina, 2001-2008
- School Social Work, Madison County Schools; Marshall, North Carolina, 1994-2001.
- Clinical Social Worker, Highland Hospital; Asheville, North Carolina, 1989-1994.
- Therapist, Blue Ridge Mental Health Center; Marshall, North Carolina, 1985-1989.
- Publications: Clark, C., Faircloth, V., Lasher, R. & McDonald, M. (2013). Alternative Spring Break Jamaica! Service Learning and Civic Engagement in a Developing Country. *Global Partners in Education Journal*, 13, (1), 49-56.
- Robertson, P., Curtis, R., Lasher, R., Jacques, S., & Tom, S. J. (2013). Experiences of Postpartum Mood Disorders of Women With More Than One Child. *Family Journal*, 21(4), 435-442. doi:10.1177/1066480713491068