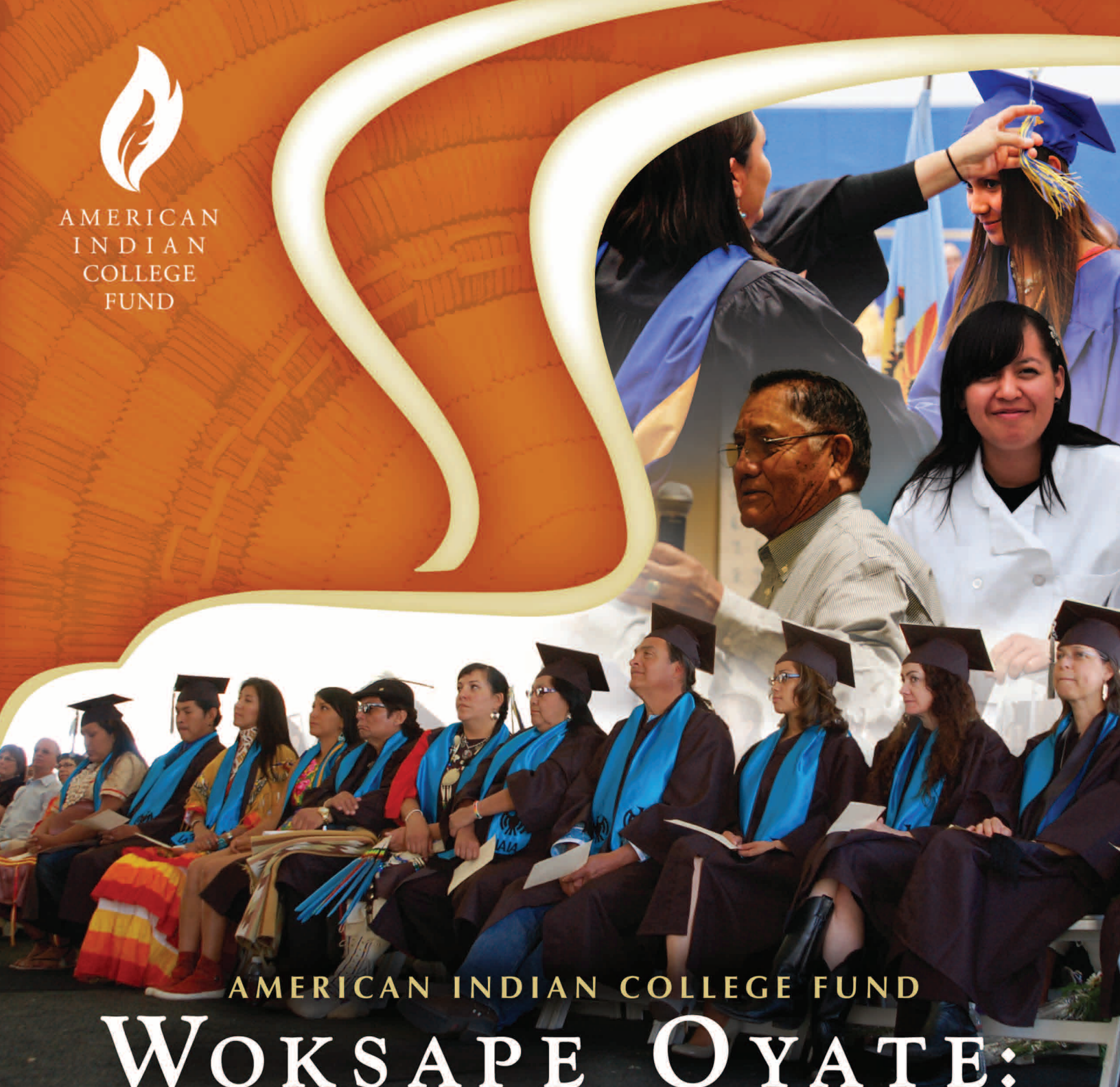




AMERICAN
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FUND



AMERICAN INDIAN COLLEGE FUND

WOKSAPE OYATE:

Wisdom of the People

GRANT FINAL REPORT



WOKSAPE OYATE:
Wisdom of the People

AMERICAN INDIAN COLLEGE FUND

WOKSAPE OYATE:

Wisdom of the People

STRENGTHENING INTELLECTUAL CAPITAL
AT TRIBAL COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Final Report to
The Lilly Endowment, Inc.
August 31, 2012



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WOKSAPE OYATE:
Wisdom of the People

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Transformative Partnership

Since 1999, the Lilly Endowment, Inc. (Lilly) and the American Indian College Fund (the Fund) have worked together to improve higher education for Native Americans. This historic partnership began with Lilly's generous investment of \$30 million in capital construction and renovation of tribal college and university (TCU) facilities. The gift helped the Fund raise an additional \$45 million and leveraged an additional \$232.8 million in state, local, tribal and federal funding for desperately needed projects. **Campaign Sii Ha Sin** fixed leaking roofs, upgraded plumbing and heating systems, and added science laboratories, residence halls, childcare centers, classrooms, and administrative buildings.



Institute of American Indian Arts: Before and After Campaign Sii Ha Sin

Lilly helped create welcoming and beautiful environments that attracted students and raised educational hopes within tribal Nations. Next, TCUs needed to build their institutional capacities for academic excellence, create more challenging and engaging learning environments, and develop strong and effective leaders among all participants.

Woksape Oyate: Transforming the Intellectual Landscape

While the construction campaign succeeded in its objectives, it revealed concerns about organizational efficiency and effectiveness at the TCUs. The Fund approached Lilly in 2005 for help with pressing needs for improved academics and qualified personnel at these small, underfunded institutions. Lilly responded by awarding \$17.5 million for the **Woksape Oyate: Wisdom of the People** project to raise intellectual capital at the TCUs and to invest in the people who could lead the institutions forward.

Woksape Oyate granted 32 sub-awards for projects as unique and diverse as the institutions themselves. The Fund asked TCUs to focus strategies and demonstrate measurable growth in one or more of three program areas: strengthening academic programs, professional development, and recruitment and retention. It was a rare opportunity for the institutions to reflect on their current capacity to fulfill their missions and respond to strategic educational priorities for their tribal constituencies.

Project Accomplishments

The *Woksape Oyate* projects produced outstanding results. TCUs seized the opportunity to raise their intellectual capital by developing rigorous and relevant new academic programs, increasing qualifications of faculty and staff, and developing highly competent leaders among all participants.

Strengthening Academic Programs

In 2006, there were 8 TCUs that offered bachelor's degree programs, and thanks to the Lilly investment, there are now 13. These **new offerings helped TCUs meet the educational and economic development needs** of their tribal Nations and regional populations, and increased access to higher education in isolated rural areas. Four schools reached an important institutional milestone by offering their *first* bachelor's degree. There are:

- 10 new bachelor's programs at 5 TCUs
- 13 new associate's degree programs at 8 TCUs
- 8 new certificate programs at 3 TCUs

The associate's degree programs became pipelines for enrollment in new bachelor's degree programs or **set the stage for future degree development**. TCUs with new programs reported that they gained the institutional confidence needed to plan and develop more upper-level degree offerings in the future. For example, Navajo Technical College became accredited for its first bachelor's degree, with three tracks in information technology, and a new associate's degree in registered nursing. They subsequently requested permission to begin developing their first master's program and have initiated work on a new math and engineering baccalaureate degree.

New degree programs allowed TCUs to revise and integrate other academic programs and upgrade curricular content as prerequisites for upper level courses. TCUs **streamlined their institutional processes** for program and course development and approval of new curricula:

- 155 new courses created at 15 TCUs
- 23 new curricula implemented at 7 TCUs



Six faculty and staff members at Aaniiih Nakoda College completed degrees with the help of *Woksape Oyate* funding

Professional Development

The investment in human resources had a powerful impact on both immediate and long-term institutional capacity building. TCUs focused on improving teaching and learning, upgrading critical skills of key positions, and supporting employee advanced degrees. Raising skills to industry standard helped **improve organizational efficiency**. Cross-departmental training **developed abilities in institutional assessment** which supported accreditation and increased data-driven decision making. TCUs changed their strategic thinking about professional development, and many **revised human resource policies**

and procedures to become more responsive to both institutional priorities and individual position requirements.

Woksape Oyate funds supported 98 faculty and staff to complete advanced degrees including:

- 7 doctorates
- 53 master's degrees
- 24 bachelor's degrees
- 14 associate's degrees

At the grant's close, 95 TCU employees remained in progress toward degrees including:

- 21 doctorates
- 27 master's degrees
- 29 bachelor's degrees
- 18 associate's degrees

This is a remarkable achievement in a relatively short time span. **Higher educational credentials and new knowledge resulted in stronger academic programs** as well, including updated course content, new instructional technologies, and improved student services.

- 80 percent of TCUs reported increased rigor and relevance of coursework

New degrees **built morale and raised expectations for higher education** among TCU staff and within the communities they serve. Personnel that engaged in higher education inspired others to pursue degrees. It is significant that many were tribal members that had originally graduated from tribal colleges and with advanced degrees had new opportunities to teach or **advance to higher levels of leadership and responsibility**.

- 61 employees at 15 TCUs received promotions

Recruitment and Retention

The *Woksape Oyate* proposal encouraged TCUs to focus on recruitment and retention of students or faculty, or both.

Faculty and staff recruitment by TCUs led to increases in the number of **qualified Native employees**. These employees **became role models for their students** and demonstrated the importance and benefits of education.

Program funds assisted 12 institutions to recruit 70 highly qualified Native faculty, staff, or administrators and to retain 14 Native core faculty and staff. For example, *Woksape Oyate* incentives helped Fort Peck Community College recruit tribal member Dr. Florence Garcia to fill its vice president of academics vacancy. She was subsequently hired to succeed Dr. James Shanley when he retired as president after 25 years at the College.



Florence Garcia, PhD, became the new president at Fort Peck Community College

Student recruitment and retention programs fell mainly into two categories: academic support and student engagement. Academic support programs initiated **new learning centers and innovative strategies** such as peer tutoring to improve math and literacy. Sitting Bull College engaged the entire K-16 system across their reservation for collaborative training to address college readiness, and the consortium adopted a common approach to writing instruction. Progress was noted in academic outcomes, retention, and graduation.

- 9 TCUs improved math and English skills
- 7 TCUs increased student success and retention
- 5 TCUs increased grade point averages
- 12 TCUs increased graduation rates

Student engagement programs sponsored honor societies and research programs, academic competitions, formal leadership training and mentoring, and infused service learning requirements in the curriculum. Little Big Horn College offered full-ride scholarships to top high school graduates along with leadership mentoring by the president and the executive team. These **high performing students set a new standard** and **elevated faculty expectations for the academic performance of all students**. Improved student outcomes and new marketing and outreach strategies contributed to the improved academic reputations of the colleges.

- 18 TCUs reported increased enrollment, particularly for new high school graduates



Leech Lake Tribal College students received top honors in the Critical Inquiry competition at the American Indian Higher Education Consortium conference

The Fund's Growth

The Fund itself expanded its scope of influence and capacity to raise more financial support for tribal colleges and universities. Lilly funding allowed our organization to add a significant number of positions for our development teams and to revise the entire organizational structure for broader outreach to our donors across the country. As a result, **we have met and exceeded our fundraising goals** during an economic downturn. The *Woksape Oyate* scholarship program provided its first 10 awards to deserving students, and the Lilly scholarship endowment will continue in perpetuity. The generosity of Lilly has helped to secure the future of the Fund, and thereby helped ensure funding for

years to come for thousands of American Indian students who seek higher education and better lives for their families and communities.

Building Institutional Capacity

It is clear that the Lilly investment in intellectual capital at tribal institutions of higher learning met and exceeded expectations in every area. The grant made an enormous impact on leadership capacity. Presidents improved executive management skills, boards learned their appropriate roles and relationships in a higher education setting, and faculty degrees led to higher expectations for teaching and improved assessment of learning. Students are more highly engaged and better prepared for advanced degree work in mainstream institutions and leadership roles in their fields and in their Native Nations.

The project truly captured the intellectual spirit that is inherent at each of these culturally distinctive institutions. Today, TCUs are much more efficient and effective in fulfilling their missions as institutions of higher learning. TCUs became centers of excellence that provided challenging and responsive learning environments to fire the imagination of the next generation. Because of *Woksape Oyate*, these colleges and universities provide appropriate, rigorous education that is on par with mainstream education and that meets standard accreditation requirements. Indeed, the *Woksape Oyate* project grew the wisdom of the people and instilled hope for realizing greater educational aspirations to build the social and economic well-being of Native America.



Project leads and presidents gather from 32 tribal colleges to learn best practices in project evaluation

INTRODUCTION

The *Woksape Oyate*: Wisdom of the People Grant

This report captures the returns on the \$17.5 million that Lilly Endowment, Inc. (Lilly) invested in America's tribal colleges and universities (TCUs) and in the organizational capacity of the American Indian College Fund (the Fund). The sections that follow document the outcomes of individual components of the grant, including the \$2.25 million for the Fund's organizational capacity building, the \$1 million for the Lilly scholarship endowment, and the overall impact of the \$14.25 million invested across the three program areas to build intellectual capital at TCUs.

The Fund's Proposal to the Lilly Endowment

The Fund proposed an initiative to increase intellectual capital or “the collective knowledge, experience, and capacity” located within America's tribal colleges and universities. The grant intended to improve the ability of each institution to “demand excellence, deliver a high quality education, and provide an environment where ideas are born and exchanged.” Primarily, the project sought to foster leadership by investing in “the people who work at and believe in these institutions, namely the presidents, faculty, staff, and students.”

The Proposal Process

Upon notification of the Lilly award, the Fund invited each eligible TCU to apply for grant funding, and offered \$10,000 planning grants upon receipt of letters of intent. TCUs could request up to \$700,000 over five years for programs in one or more of three strategic areas: strengthening academic programs, professional development, or recruitment and retention. The Fund expected TCUs to identify institutional development needs and supporting data, and detail program goals and objectives, a budget narrative, and an evaluation plan that would capture the impact of activities on institutional capacity.

The Award Process

A panel of five experts from diverse sectors reviewed and rated the strengths and weaknesses of each proposal. Readers recommended resubmission or additional information from all TCUs, and several schools received technical assistance to strengthen their proposals. The Fund awarded 28 TCUs in the first round: 7 received \$700,000, 14 received \$400,000, and 7 received \$250,000. Four more institutions received \$150,000 in year three: two newly eligible institutions and two more that were previously denied. In all, 32 TCUs received *Woksape Oyate* funding to build their intellectual capital. Only one eligible TCU, Ilisagvik College, decided not to reapply after an initial rejection.

Funding for Presidents' Professional Development

The Fund found that TCU presidents initially had only modestly invested in developing their own leadership capacity. Therefore, the Fund encouraged presidents to request an additional amount of up to \$10,000 for their own professional development or if near retirement, to plan for succession. The Fund also invited Ilisagvik College's new president to participate in this funding and awarded 25 presidents.

Supplemental Project Awards

The Lilly grant agreement stipulated that unbudgeted award monies would be redistributed to TCU projects. Lilly had approved a revised budget in year one to provide for TCUs that might become eligible for funding during the grant cycle. Fewer TCUs qualified than anticipated, and some award funds remained. Therefore, the Fund extended a second request for proposals to strengthen and sustain successful program activities. The Fund's external reviewers read 23 supplemental proposals and recommended 6 for awards ranging from \$56,994 to \$100,000. The Fund rescinded one supplemental award after one year because staff turnover impeded its implementation.

In the final year, the Fund allowed all TCUs to apply for up to \$10,000 to help close the grant and made 28 such awards. Appropriate activities included consultant fees for final evaluation and reporting, additional president leadership development, travel to the *Woksape Oyate* Summit, and video documentation of the project.

Gathering the Data

The Fund conducted site visits to each project, encouraged continuous evaluation, and tracked outcome data from semi-annual reports. We expected that institutions funded at the highest level would have the greatest gain, but this was not always the case. Some of the projects that realized the greatest impact were found at smaller institutions with more focused projects. For example, two colleges funded at the lowest level had tremendous returns on investment in professional development. At Bay Mills Community College, 14 employees received funding for advanced degrees, 9 completed degrees, and 6 were promoted to higher levels of leadership. At Navajo Technical College, 23 employees received scholarships for degree work, 8 completed degrees, and 7 advanced in responsibility. The advanced credentials of faculty in the information technology department supported accreditation for its first bachelor's degree program. With just \$250,000, Fort Peck Community College supported advanced degrees, provided incentives for recruiting and retaining qualified faculty, trained its entire faculty and staff in best practices for student engagement, and implemented service-learning requirements for all first year courses. One hundred percent of students who engaged in leadership programs involving service learning were retained.

Institutional attitude toward the importance of the award, persistence in evaluating outcomes and revising strategies, and the willingness to engage a broad effort across the campus made the difference in how a particular institution accomplished its goals. Those that leveraged the grant planning, implementation, and evaluation processes to improve institutional infrastructure enjoyed the greatest impact and more sustainable outcomes. TCUs that took time to analyze how grant funding supported institutional priorities and strategic needs found ways to integrate the funding to deepen the effect of other initiatives.

Despite differences in levels of development, maturity, and capacity, TCUs all share a common purpose: to build tribal Nations and strengthen tribal sovereignty through appropriate and rigorous education. The unfolding story of *Woksape Oyate* shows the true genius and character of these small, relatively young institutions of higher education and the people they employ and serve.

SUMMARY OF PROJECT OUTCOMES

This section establishes the summative gains in intellectual capital made across the 32 TCU projects during the five years of the *Woksape Oyate* program. The outcome data from individual TCU projects truly revealed full details by program area and for overall institutional capacity and credibility.

The year five interim and final TCU reports and presentations at the *Woksape Oyate* Summit on Intellectual Capital completed the Fund's ongoing data collection to capture the overall return on investment. At times during the analysis, it was difficult to separate results into succinct categories. Growth in one area logically affected other areas of institutional functioning. For instance, professional development strengthened academic programs, and stronger programs attracted and retained more students and highly qualified faculty.

The Fund is keenly aware that the numerical data alone does not tell the entire story of the “Wisdom of the People” or intellectual capital realized under *Woksape Oyate*. The individual TCU chapters will reveal full details of the *qualitative* impact of this historic project in the immediate term and help predict the long-term and sustainable effects of the Lilly investment at each TCU.

Strengthening Academic Programs

The *Woksape Oyate* grant produced its intended effects in the area of strengthening academic programs and went beyond expectations for elevating the quality of education at TCUs. The **main indicators of increased academic capacity are the number and the relevance of new degree or certificate programs** developed. Bachelor's degrees are of particular importance as these increase accessibility to higher levels of education within or near tribal communities.

The project provided direct support to launch **10 new bachelor's degree programs** at 5 institutions. For four TCUs, the new degrees represented institutional milestones as the very first accredited bachelor's degree programs. United Tribes Technical College obtained accreditation for its first three bachelor's degrees in education, criminal justice, and business. Fort Berthold Community College received approval for three first-time baccalaureate programs in education, environmental science, and Native Studies. Sisseton Wahpeton College's first time bachelor's degree in education is in the accreditation process. Early in the grant cycle, the College of Menominee Nation had received approval for its first bachelor's degree in education and received notification in May 2012 that the two new bachelor's programs developed with *Woksape Oyate* support also gained accreditation. The new programs included a bachelor's degree in public administration and one in business. Navajo Technical College received approval for three tracks of study in its first bachelor's degree in information technology.

The Lilly grant provided these small institutions with **the experience and confidence to tackle accreditation processes and to envision and develop new programs**. Several colleges reported that with new bachelor's degrees in place, they are beginning to dream of master's and doctoral degrees, or of university status. TCUs also found that each **new associate's degree created a framework and pathway for building future baccalaureate programs**. For example, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) recently reviewed Navajo Technical College's plan to move forward with a new associate's degree in mathematics that will provide the pipeline for a proposed new bachelor's degree in engineering. In addition, the **new degrees are relevant to building local**

economies and community well-being as they meet educational needs identified by the local constituents. New programs and courses completed:

- 10 new bachelor's degree programs at 5 TCUs
- 13 new associate's degree programs at 8 TCUs
- 8 new certificate programs at 3 TCUs

New degree offerings naturally **increased institutional capacity to develop, review, approve, and offer a large number of new courses**. There were:

- 155 new courses created by 15 TCUs
- 23 new curricula created or implemented by 7 TCUs

The TCUs reported that **new programs streamlined and improved their institutional processes**. There are more effective committee structures, new procedures, and more efficient ways of working. Upgrading academic offerings required TCUs to provide additional professional development for key staff members and many TCUs focused on raising the credentials of tribal members. Thus, several TCUs reported **increased institutional capacity to provide effective and rigorous culture-based education, which is the essential goal of tribal higher education**.

Professional Development

Researchers find that professional development outcomes are difficult to measure at the institutional level because of multiple intervening variables. The Fund challenged TCUs continuously to find ways to evaluate the institutional impact of professional development activities funded by the grant.

By far, **the most meaningful outcome of the Lilly investment in professional development is the number of TCU employee degrees completed and in progress**. The *Woksape Oyate* grants funded employee tuition, travel, and other type of instrumental support, and thereby helped to remove employees' perceived and real barriers to accomplishing educational goals.

TCUs that supported employee degrees found it necessary to **rethink human resource** practices, policies, and professional development plans, and to extend educational leave. Therefore, **TCUs became better employers as they changed the campus cultures to those that supported continuous learning**. They thus positioned themselves for employee satisfaction, and consequently, for increased institutional stability.

There were **98 employee degrees completed**, including:

- 7 doctorates
- 53 master's degrees
- 24 bachelor's degrees
- 14 associate's degrees

There are **95 employee degrees in progress**, including:

- 21 doctorates
- 27 master's degrees
- 29 bachelor's degrees
- 18 associate's degrees

In addition to advanced degrees, **8 employees completed professional certifications** required for teaching or working in their fields. Advanced credentials and professional development resulted in **improved job performance for 255 employees at 12 TCUs**. Concerning leadership development, increased competence and preparation resulted in **61 employees at 15 institutions advancing to new levels of responsibility**. The recipients of professional development inspired innovations in institutional infrastructure that helped the **TCUs do a better job of serving students**. For example, Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College's financial aid staff acquired training that qualified the College to offer federal grants for the first time.



Three Little Big Horn College administrators received MBAs in 2010: Beverly Snell, financial aid director; Teatta Old Bear, dean of students; Aldean Goodluck, chief financial officer

Professional development not only improved institutional efficiency, it also **raised the level of academic excellence**. TCUs reported that the return to higher education inspired faculty creativity and thereby improved the classroom experience. Faculty members who pursued advanced degrees returned the investment by initiating new degree programs, providing up-to-date content, engaging in new teaching methods, and contributing to increasingly competent assessment. At Sinte Gleska University, for example, one instructor completed her doctorate and began immediately to develop the institution's first master's degree in business. At Stone Child College, a project recipient completed a bachelor's degree and the College hired him to teach art. He helped develop a new associate's degree program in fine arts. In

combination, **12 TCUs implemented 36 new teaching methods**, and **80 percent indicated that professional development increased the rigor and quality of coursework**.

Several TCUs focused faculty professional development efforts on increasing cultural understanding. Because of culture-specific training, both non-Native and Native faculty members showed **improved ability and confidence to integrate Indigenous concepts in classrooms and in learner assessments**. This cultural competence contributed to **increased institutional pride and identification as true tribal institutions of higher learning**. The TCUs reported that enhanced ability to provide cultural and linguistic content in the curricula also **supported accreditation**, and contributed to the **increased enrollment** in Native language courses at 11 schools.

Many TCUs reported that professional development **increased employee morale** (77 percent) and **raised expectations about educational attainment**. The Fund was gratified to discover that many of the **new Woksape Oyate-funded degree recipients started their academic careers at tribal colleges**. It is clear that TCUs targeted employees for advanced degrees in order to promote advancement from within, and **many were tribal members** who previously had been unable to complete degree work. Thus, professional development outcomes have an immediate and positive effect on **future leadership capacity** within tribal colleges, communities, and tribal Nations.

When asked about sustainability, the TCUs identified a challenge in obtaining future funding that will support employee degree work already in progress. Structural and policy changes that support education leave opened the door for continued work. Even without specific funding resources, TCU employees expressed determination to persist and complete their degrees. The Fund hopes to capitalize on the tremendous growth in TCU staff with advanced credentials. We plan to seek additional fellowship opportunities that will complement the Fund's existing programs supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. The TCU scholars funded

by *Woksape Oyate* will contribute new research to expand Indigenous knowledge for the betterment of Native Nations. In this way, the Lilly project helped to generate powerful outcomes that will inspire generosity among future donors and stimulate new funding opportunities for American Indian higher education.

TCU President Professional Development

The *Woksape Oyate* grant **invested in leadership development for 25 presidents** and thereby increased their ability to **generate excellence** at their institutions. Professional development activities allowed three presidents to **prepare for succession** and to prioritize goals. For example, President Verna Fowler of College of Menominee Nation consulted with one college president and a retired TCU president. She reported that their advice led to the restructuring of the College's entire administration and leadership teams to make them more effective, sustainable, and ready the institution for presidential succession.



Dr. Luana Ross, president at Salish Kootenai College

Three presidents attended the **Harvard Seminar for New Presidents** and found it gave them the guidance and direction they needed to determine the next steps of their presidency. Newly appointed president, Dr. Luana Ross of Salish Kootenai College said of her experience at Harvard:

“The networking alone was worth attending the Harvard Institute. Many mainstream university president are extremely interested in working collaboratively with tribal colleges. However, at the Institute we were also instructed on hiring and firing, management issues, qualities of a good leader, qualities of a successful transition, qualities of a successful president, and so on. Additionally, we were instructed on the importance of fundraising and the critical need for a public relations person. These are areas that I will focus on for improvement. Paramount, however, was the confidence I gained to go forward and be the best president I can.”

Six presidents reported that their activities provided them valuable opportunities to **learn the latest “best practices” for building Indigenous academic programs**. Six presidents attended the World Indigenous People's Conference on Education in the summer of 2011. The conference offered them the opportunity to connect with their worldwide peers in Indigenous education, and to gain new perspectives on teaching Native languages and infusing culture into the curriculum.

Four presidents engaged in international academic exchanges in Europe and Turkey and with Indigenous college presidents in New Zealand, Mexico, and the United Arab Emirates. President Martin also established a memorandum of understanding for student scholarships, and cultural and educational exchanges with Istanbul Technical University in Turkey. Dr. David Gipp of United Tribes Technical College was an invited participant in the European Higher Education Study for United States and Canada. A cohort of 12 American college and university presidents met with European higher education leaders and learned about the Bologna Process for integrating and coordinating diverse systems across the European Union (EU). Dr. Gipp presented the model at the *Woksape Oyate* Summit president's convening and to the American Indian Higher Education

Consortium. He plans to publish a paper showing how TCUs might build a confederated system modeled after the EU.

Three presidents who pursued **advanced degree work** said their studies **brought credibility to their institutions and to themselves as leaders**. Two more presidents spent time doing independent research on developing innovative and culturally relevant models for tribal higher education. Ten presidents utilized leadership funding for specific training related to **executive management functions** in higher education including fundraising, technology, grant management, crisis leadership, and financial management. Overall, the presidents reported that the impact of their activities is far reaching within their institutions and communities. Their experiences helped to **prepare future TCU leaders through mentoring** and increased the value placed on providing appropriate training for these leaders.

Recruitment and Retention

Fifteen TCUs implemented **new strategies** for recruitment and retention of either students or faculty. Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College received funding for three years and focused exclusively on student retention. Many projects funded for multiple areas found that strengthened academic programs and well-prepared staff increased their ability to attract and retain students.

TCUs realized that to build intellectual capital, they needed to **hire faculty best qualified to address the academic and cultural needs of their students**. Most TCUs find that Native faculty members are a good “cultural fit” and are generally willing to make the kind of commitment required to sustain their work over time. TCUs wanted to increase these numbers in order to **ensure Native leadership for the future and to add positive educational role models** for students and communities. *Woksape Oyate* funds assisted 12 TCUs in **hiring 70 new Native employees and retaining 14 current Native employees**. Educated tribal members with strong cultural identities gave students hope and changed some of the historically negative perceptions about education within the communities TCUs serve.

Eleven TCUs reported that grant activities **improved public perception and awareness** about their offerings. The grant provided funding to create new public relations campaigns and recruitment materials, and 18 TCUs reported positive implications for enrollment.



In the past, high school counselors were more likely to refer Native graduates to mainstream colleges and universities, but this is changing. New outreach strategies helped **nine schools attract more high school graduates to the local TCU as first choice** for higher education. This is very significant because of the history of early failure for tribal students going directly from high school to mainstream colleges and universities. Upon graduation from TCUs, students are better equipped with the skills and confidence needed for advanced degree completion at mainstream institutions.

The *Woksape Oyate* programs helped several TCUs to create more **engaging learning environments and to improve academic success and retention**. The *Washington Monthly* ranked **Leech Lake Tribal College (LLTC)** as the seventh best among community colleges in America in 2010. According to LLTC’s president, the **peer-tutoring program** developed under the *Woksape Oyate* grant

improved student engagement and contributed in large measure to this status. The ranking also considered LLTC's graduation rates of 72 percent, which improved during their grant cycle as well.

Woksape Oyate recruitment and retention activities showed the following encouraging trends over the course of the project:

- 9 TCUs improved math and English skills
- 7 TCUs increased success and retention
- 5 TCUs increased grade point averages
- 2 TCUs increased attendance
- 12 TCUs increased graduation rates



Several other *Woksape Oyate* programs used recruitment and retention funding to enhance student engagement. For example, Fort Peck Community College integrated service learning in all courses, provided professional development in best practices for student engagement, and now requires all staff to mentor a cohort of students. Navajo Technical College started a chapter of a national honor society, and their grant provided additional opportunities for students to participate in leadership training, service learning, and academic competitions.

Increasing Institutional Capacity

The *Woksape Oyate* project generated an unanticipated excitement and new energy across the tribal college movement that TCUs frequently described as “transformational.”

Blackfeet Community College found that the grant's greatest return on investment was “a heightening of the spirit of creativity and motivation” among its partners to “resolve intellectual challenges.” The accomplishments in the three funding areas tell the story of improved institutional capacity of the TCUs to fulfill their unique missions.

The outcome data demonstrates the ways that **TCUs continue to improve overall institutional effectiveness for academic excellence.** Professional development and advanced degrees contributed to improved instructional practices, assessment, and increased cultural relevance in curricula and course materials. Faculty members have a better understanding of the Native experience, which promoted productive relationships with students, colleagues, and community stakeholders. Enhanced cultural content, along with new technology-based delivery methods increased access to higher education for remote tribal communities.

Many TCUs also reported **improved organizational functioning and efficiency** because of professional development activities. Among 16 TCUs, there were **50 new positions created** that addressed a variety of gaps in service and staff were prepared to fill these roles.

Because of professional development offered at TCUs:

- 82 % improved efficiency of operations
- 75 % increased employee participation in shared governance activities
- 85 % improved or new student support services
- 91 % improved capacity for assessment

Professional development for assessment is especially timely and critical given the increasing demand on institutions to provide evidence of success for accreditation. Exactly half of the *Woksape Oyate* projects reported that grant training activities positively supported accreditation processes. As well, TCUs reported that increased capacity for cultural inclusion improved their ability to help students succeed. Expanded organizational infrastructure and improved efficiency had a positive impact on accreditation.



Institutional Credibility

The *Woksape Oyate* projects helped improve institutional credibility at 94 percent of TCUs.

Professional development for employees contributed to **improved reputations for the colleges.** Sixteen institutions reported that advanced degrees for tribal members raised expectations for educational attainment at their schools and within the communities that they serve. **Tribal leaders and elders, who had previously been reticent to get involved at the TCUs, became**

essential partners in program development. The involvement of traditional knowledge-keepers contributed to increased community access to Indigenous histories, cultures, and languages at 20 TCUs. The evidence of improved credibility is the number of **new partnerships** formed because of the grant.

- 21 new business partnerships formed at 8 TCUs
- 51 total new community partnerships entered into by 13 TCUs
- 41 new academic partnerships formalized by 15 TCUs

At half of the TCUs, the projects promoted increased **dissemination of new knowledge, research, or models for best practices in teaching and learning.** This is a key factor for TCUs' academic credibility both in their communities and in the realm of higher education.

INTERNAL CAPACITY BUILDING AT THE AMERICAN INDIAN COLLEGE FUND

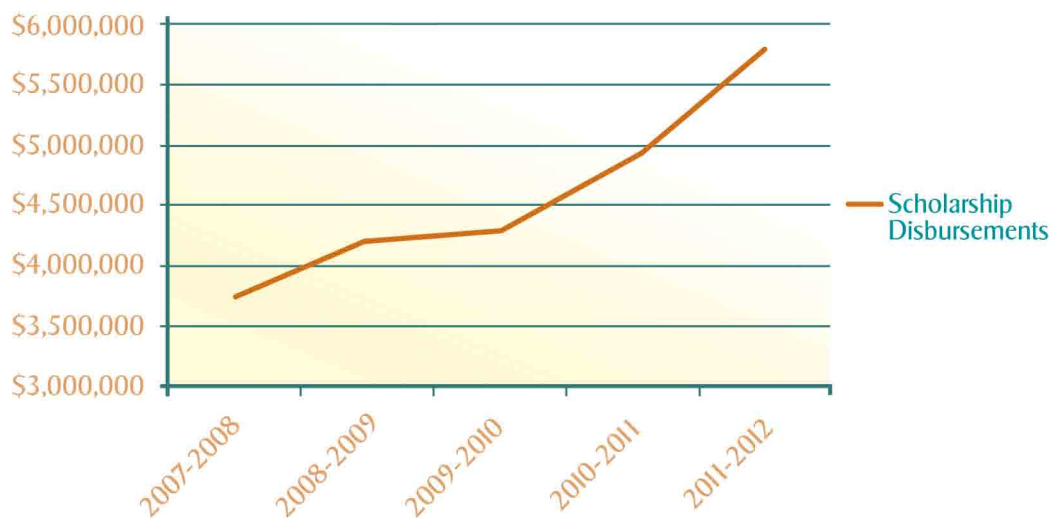
Lilly awarded a portion of the *Woksape Oyate: Wisdom of the People* grant to the Fund for its own capacity building. The Fund requested a budget of \$2.25 million to build its capacity through new positions, professional development, and \$1 million to establish a scholarship endowment. This section describes the positive outcomes of these three aspects of the *Woksape Oyate* project, as well as lessons the Fund learned for the future about effectively administering scholarship programs and complex, multi-year grants.

Organizational Capacity Building

Financial resources are increasingly limited for both the Fund and for TCUs. Fundraising and program administration have become more complex and challenging across the non-profit sector during the recent economic downturn. Private donors who were once willing to donate unrestricted funds to the overall mission of the Fund now place significant limits on their gifts. TCUs continue to receive limited support from federal and state funding sources, and recent federal budget cuts decreased per-student allowances. Moreover, proposals continue to surface that would eliminate all federal funds that benefit tribal colleges. At the same time, the TCUs report tremendous growth in enrollment, meaning that the scarce funds available must stretch even further.

In the context of these limited resources, the Fund needed to hire more development personnel to meet the ever-growing needs of tribal colleges and their students. Internal capacity building monies from Lilly allowed us to make critical hires and other improvements in staffing while keeping administrative costs low. In turn, more money could flow to student scholarships. Overall, the number of employees almost doubled between 2006 and 2012, with several positions funded by the Lilly grant. For example, during the grant period, the organization expanded to include a vice-president of resource development. This position allows for better coordination across fundraising teams to meet our strategic objectives. The Fund also hired new team members in each of our three resource development departments. As a result, we were able to increase our fundraising revenue and grow the amount awarded in scholarships from \$3.7 million in 2007-2008 to over \$5.5 million in 2011-2012. Revenue growth allowed the Fund to take over the funding of the staff positions initially added though the Lilly investment, and all positions will be sustained beyond the grant period.

Capacity building funds also supported new staff positions in our operations and scholarships departments. The Fund was able to increase contact with TCUs and students, which helped us to gather the types of data that demonstrate returns on donors' investments. We increased our investment in marketing efforts, bringing greater public awareness about TCUs and the scholarships the Fund provides. We also increased our outreach to American Indian students, and in 2012 we experienced a 600 percent increase in scholarship applications. This reenergized the Fund in our efforts to grow our fundraising capacity so that we may increase our ability to meet the significant financial needs of Native students.



Scholarship disbursements 2007-2012

The addition of new staff and the growth in organizational capacity positioned us to obtain significant new grants. In 2011, the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation awarded the Fund \$300,000 for six TCU faculty fellowships to complete masters’ or doctoral degrees in the science, engineering, and math areas. As the *Woksape Oyate* projects at TCUs end, the new grants will help continue the Lilly legacy of supporting masters’ degrees for TCU employees. In 2010, the Fund received a competitive \$5 million, five-year award from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to create innovative early childhood education programs at four tribal college centers.

Professional Development

In order for the Fund to accomplish its mission, it is equally important that we develop existing staff. Support from new administrative staff hired under the Lilly grant allowed the executive team to devote more time to examining its overall staffing patterns and approach to professional development.

The Fund experienced turnover in the past due in part to lack of opportunities for advancement. One challenge in filling positions was a lack of potential employees with fundraising experience in the field of Indian higher education and non-profit organizations that serve American Indian people. The executive team realized that the Fund needed a new approach to retain and develop talented staff.

The Fund’s leadership devised a new organizational structure that created more opportunities for promotion among current staff. Managers identify talented staff members to mentor for roles with greater responsibility, while encouraging considerable collaboration and training across departments. The Fund also provides opportunities for individuals to obtain outside training for job-specific roles and responsibilities as needed, and partially reimburses employees for tuition for advanced degrees. Team dynamics and management training are critical areas of organizational functioning, and the Fund applies resources to address these areas to ensure a positive and productive working environment.

The Woksape Oyate Scholarship Endowment

A premise of the Lilly grant is growing leadership for the enrichment of the colleges, among students, and within tribal Nations. The **Woksape Oyate** grant provided for an endowed scholarship to help TCUs recruit and retain the most talented students within their own communities. Tribal colleges often find that mainstream universities recruit the best and brightest in their Nations and award these students prestigious scholarships. Many times these same students return home without completing their courses because the universities fail to provide appropriate support.

To help top performing students decide to enroll in tribal colleges, the Fund offers two endowed Lilly scholarships: the generous *Distinguished Scholar* award to high school graduates in the top 10 percent of his or her graduating class, and the *Keepers of the Next Generation* award, for high performing single mothers already enrolled at a TCU. Each recipient receives \$8,000 annually and has the opportunity to renew the scholarship for up to four years. The **Woksape Oyate** scholarships are among the largest the Fund offers and are on par with mainstream scholarships. The Fund awarded scholarships to 10 students at 7 TCUs since 2008. Five received the *Distinguished Scholar* award and five received the *Keepers of the Next Generation* award.

The Fund found that the high-performing students selected for the Lilly scholarships fulfilled expectations for return on investment. All **Woksape Oyate** scholars persisted in their education and improved their confidence as capable students. They inspired their peers and raised educational expectations for their children, communities, and other students. The Fund is pleased that the endowment established through Lilly resources will continue to fund the scholarship program well beyond the life of this grant.

The Fund's Capacity for Project Administration

When the Fund approached Lilly in 2005 with the concept of funding intellectual capital at TCUs, it was operating with a relatively small staff. Despite this, the Fund had a number of strengths that positioned it well to administer the grant. The Fund's expertise, its visionary leadership, and its relationships with donors were key factors in its confidence to apply for such a large grant. Our President and CEO, Richard B. Williams, has a strong guiding vision based on his practical knowledge of the strengths and challenges at TCUs. In addition, his previous knowledge of Lilly's priorities helped the foundations and projects teams successfully apply for the **Woksape Oyate** funding, stay on target to fulfill the Fund's obligations, and meet Lilly's expectations for return on investment.



Richard B. Williams

Although the Fund's original project officer left in the middle of the first project year, the Fund hired a new project officer who remained consistent throughout the remainder of the project. Dr. Deborah Esquibel Hunt provided stability in spite of other changes in support staff and organizational structure. The stability in project leadership meant that TCUs could rely on their relationship with the Fund and feel confident about receiving the technical assistance needed to navigate program requirements. Dr. Hunt has a background in higher education and held high expectations for the TCUs. She encouraged the projects to do their best, meet

their goals, and look toward a long-term vision as they developed their unique wisdom and institutional capacities.

The grant provided for an external evaluator to evaluate the overall success of the project. The Fund hired Dr. Holly YoungBear-Tibbetts who had broad experience in program evaluation and tribal college administration. She provided continuous feedback that helped the Fund develop best practices for project management. Finally, we appreciated the combined watchfulness and flexibility of the Lilly project officer and her team. Lilly offered clear, proactive communication and constructive feedback that helped the Fund guide the TCU projects to accomplish their goals.



Deborah Esquibel Hunt

Project Administration Challenges for the Fund

A project of this scope and duration is likely to experience many changes. The Fund encountered numerous unanticipated challenges as it implemented its internal project plan. For example, we discovered a lack of formal management protocols that easily transferred to a project of this size. With multiple rounds of proposals, three program areas, four levels of funding, and three supplemental award processes, the *Woksape Oyate* grant may well be the most complex venture the Fund administered to date. The grant created a new learning curve for the Fund in its project management capability.

The Fund always has the challenge of meeting the diverse needs of a group of institutions of higher learning that differ broadly in purpose, site, and situation. The Fund wanted to acknowledge this diversity, and we encouraged flexibility in defining intellectual capital. The Fund offered \$10,000 planning grants to help TCUs design programs that honored and expanded their own strengths, and the Fund's president made personal visits to promote the grant. He encouraged TCUs to secure external consultants who might assist in developing their proposals. However, most TCUs chose to write proposals internally, and many of the proposals did not meet the expected quality in the first review.

The Fund's External Review Committee recommended that all TCUs amend at least some elements and resubmit their plans. This rewrite process delayed the initiation of several programs and caused several TCUs to under expend their first year budgets. With unanticipated carryover requests, the Fund implemented budget change procedures. The challenges ultimately led to the Fund's request for a project extension, which Lilly approved. This extension was very helpful in accomplishing the project's objectives and evaluation of outcomes.

The Fund found another challenge in designing appropriate reporting templates that would help capture the complexity of project outcomes. The concept of intellectual capital demanded very thoughtful responses from TCUs regarding the institutional level impact of programs. The external evaluator helped design the appropriate questions, and the responses met the expectations in most cases. The Fund required interim progress reports twice annually, which created very large and complex outcome data sets. The Fund found ways to summarize common themes found within large amounts of diverse data without sacrificing the intellectual essence of each unique institution.

The project changed the way the Fund interacts with TCUs because the *Woksape Oyate* grant required the TCUs to respond with a higher level of accountability than they had experienced in the past. Therefore, the Fund spent a good deal of time developing positive working relationships,

providing technical assistance, and coaching. The *Woksape Oyate* project raised the bar for future project reporting and accountability at TCUs.

The Fund's own donor reporting capacity needed refinement and improvement. There was an initial challenge in the Fund's ability to stay focused on donor-driven outcomes. TCUs and the Fund were excited initially about early growth in academic programs that emphasized language and culture because positive changes in this area support the missions of tribal colleges. As the project progressed, the increased focus on all three program area goals and proposed outcomes helped both the TCUs and the Fund maximize successful results.

Project Management Lessons Learned

The challenges and solutions generated throughout the *Woksape Oyate* project taught the Fund to expect complicated data analysis in projects with multiple funding areas. With future large projects, the Fund will require more staff development in the area of program design, evaluation of the sub-awards and tracking of the outcome data. This means the Fund should request larger budgets for project administrative costs, including frequent travel to project sites for face-to-face evaluation and assistance.

The Fund will consider structuring projects with a first year planning phase for eligible institutions. Prior to distributing the request for proposals, the Fund could offer informational meetings with potential recipients to ensure clear understanding about objectives, evaluation strategies, and the expected return on investment. The Fund found that *Woksape Oyate* project meetings provided common training and technical assistance for more consistent project performance and results.

Standardized templates for reporting and tracking outcomes evolved over the life of the grant. The Fund learned from this grant that upfront instructions with potential recipients, the promotion of common understanding of terms, and standardization of reporting protocols are essential to facilitate the management of such a large number of projects over multiple years. The project officer for the new Kellogg grant incorporated the practice of standardized protocols. In fact, she reported that one college requested guidelines and templates such as those they had come to expect from the Lilly grant.

Overall, the *Woksape Oyate* grant created a demand for enormous growth in the project management skills and procedures of the Fund and increased capacity for administrating large, multi-faceted programs. It is significant that the project raised the Fund's expectations of TCUs to demonstrate return on investment with grant-funded projects. *Woksape Oyate* elevated expectations for the quality and depth of project evaluation, including measurable outcomes, types of measures obtained, and anticipated impact of activity on strengthening institutional capacity. This project pushed the TCUs for higher-order thinking about project planning, management, and reporting, and the Fund's project staff came to expect increased excellence in project management by the TCUs.

CLOSING STATEMENT

The generous funding from the Lilly Endowment, Inc. has given TCUs the time and space to think critically and creatively about their unique legacies, capacities, and challenges. In the process they have honed their visions, engaged their intellectual spirit, and thereby enlarged their institutional self-concepts and credibility. This ability to reflect and develop according to strategic needs is an important benefit of funding from private donors, and the recipients are extremely grateful to Lilly for the opportunity to define and develop their own intellectual capital.

The creative programs developed under the *Woksape Oyate* grant helped TCUs become true centers of excellence that are attracting top performing students and highly qualified faculty. Leaders emerged at all levels of the institutions, including boards, executive teams, presidents, academic departments, student services, and students. The new academic programs provide increased access to higher education and address critical social and economic needs, and opened new funding opportunities. TCUs strengthened their processes for developing new courses and degree programs, and new dreams for advanced educational offerings emerged. The faculty improved their ability to engage and challenge students with up-to-date instructional methods and content in their fields. Coursework is more rigorous and more relevant to tribal experience, and Native languages are on the path to preservation. Professional development boosted employee morale and helped improve institutional effectiveness and efficiency across all departments. TCUs strengthened shared governance processes and investment in generating excellence across the institutions. Institutions are better prepared to assess outcomes, link these to strategic plans, and meet accreditation standards. Tribal governments, community members, and educational partners are more involved in the process of higher learning and tribal Nations have raised their expectations for educational attainment. Students are increasingly prepared to reach their intellectual, social, and cultural potential and advance to higher degree programs. More tribal members are qualified and confident to lead their institutions, community organizations, and agencies toward future growth and stability.

The Fund is grateful that Lilly had confidence in our organization to administer this project. The Fund grew in its ability to manage large and complex projects, and we will capture and share the lessons learned to benefit new ventures. The portion of the award dedicated to developing our own capacity allowed us to add new positions and positioned us for a new regional plan for expanding and focusing our fundraising efforts. The Lilly investment will continue to grow through the endowed scholarship program and outstanding students will be the ultimate legacy of the *Woksape Oyate: Wisdom of the People* project.



American Indian College Fund staff

ADDENDA

- ***Woksape Oyate Funding Chart***
- **Financial Report**

WOKSAPE OYATE FUNDING CHART

Tribal College	Total Disbursed	Supplemental	President Leadership Development	Grant Closeout Funding	Academic Programs	Professional Development	Recruitment & Retention
Seven \$700K Awards							
College of Menominee Nation	\$700,000	\$50,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	X	X	
Little Big Horn College	\$700,000	-	\$10,000	\$10,000		X	X
Oglala Lakota College	\$700,000	-	\$9,900	\$10,000	X	X	
Sitting Bull College	\$700,000	-	\$9,489	\$10,000	X	X	X
Stone Child College	\$700,000	\$56,994	\$7,033	\$10,000		X	X
Tohono O'odham Community College	\$693,963	-	*	*	X	X	X
United Tribes Technical College	\$700,000	-	\$10,000	\$10,000	X		X
Fourteen \$400K Awards							
Aaniiih Nakoda College	\$400,000	\$100,000	\$10,000	\$10,000		X	X
Blackfeet Community College	\$400,000	-	*	\$10,000	X	X	X
Cankdeska Cikana Community College	\$400,000	-	\$5,900	\$10,000	X		X
Chief Dull Knife College	\$400,000	\$100,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	X	X	
Fort Berthold Community College	\$400,000	-	\$6,874	\$10,000	X		X
Institute of American Indian Arts	\$400,000	-	\$10,000	\$10,000	X		X
Lac Courte de Oreilles Community College	\$396,868	-	\$5,185	\$10,000		X	
Leech Lake Tribal College	\$400,000	\$48,586	\$3,565	\$10,000	X	X	X
Little Priest Tribal College	\$381,773	-	\$10,000	\$10,000		X	
Nebraska Indian Community College	\$400,000	-	\$10,000	\$10,000	X		
Northwest Indian College	\$400,000	-	\$10,000	\$10,000		X	X
Salish Kootenai College	\$395,682	\$100,000	\$9,341	\$10,000		X	
Sinte Gleska University	\$396,100	-	\$10,000	\$10,000		X	
Sisseton Wahpeton College	\$400,000	-	*	\$9,975	X		X
Seven \$250K Awards							
Bay Mills Community College	\$250,000	-	*	\$10,000		X	
Diné College	\$260,000	-	*	\$10,000	X	X	
Fort Peck Community College	\$250,000	-	\$10,000	\$10,000		X	X
Haskell Indian Nations University	\$250,000	-	*	*	X	X	X
Navajo Technical College	\$219,241		\$10,000	\$9,830		X	X
Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College	\$250,000	-	*	*	X		
Turtle Mountain Community College	\$241,253	-	\$10,000	*		X	
Four \$150,000 Awards							
Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College	\$131,881	-	*	\$10,000			X
Keweenaw Bay Community College	\$150,000	-	\$10,000	\$10,000		X	
Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute	\$150,000	-	\$10,000	\$10,000		X	
White Earth Tribal and Community College	\$150,000	-	\$10,000	\$10,000		X	

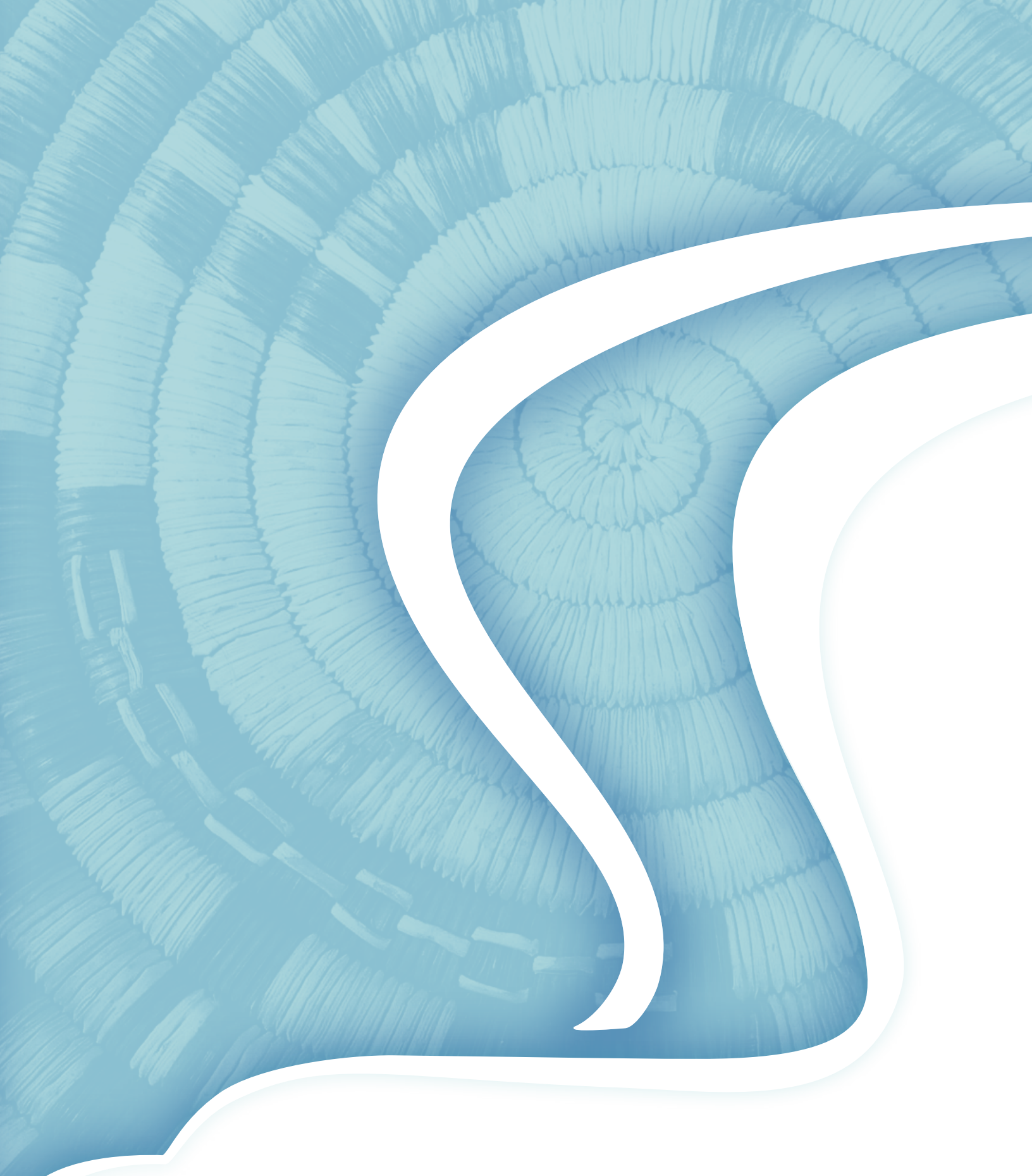
* None requested ■ 1 Program Area ■ 2 Program Areas ■ 3 Program Areas

FINANCIAL REPORT

The Lilly Endowment Financial

Woksape Oyate Program Expenses	Original Budget	Final Budget 10-11-11	Actual	Remaining**
November 16, 2006 through June 12, 2012				
Grant No. 2006 1616-000				
Planning Grants	\$330,000	\$320,000	\$320,000	\$0
Consultants Fees and Expenses	\$120,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$0
Awards	\$13,800,000	\$13,728,943	\$13,641,240	\$87,703
Scholarship Endowment*	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$0
A*CF Program Support	\$2,250,000	\$2,301,057	\$2,301,057	\$0
Total Grant Budget	\$17,500,000	\$17,500,000	\$17,412,297	\$87,703
Woksape Oyate Endowment Performance (as of June 30, 2012)	Initial Investment	Investment Earnings	Disbursements	Total Endowment
Scholarship Endowment	\$1,000,000	\$80,357	\$53,045	\$1,027,312
A*CF Capacity Building Endowment	\$500,000	\$37,192	\$23,536	\$513,656

**All Program Monies were awarded. As of June 30, 2012 \$87,703 has been returned as unspent by the schools. These funds and any other returned funds will be added to the Lilly Scholarship Endowment, per approval of the Lilly Project Officer.



WOKSAPE OYATE
Wisdom of the People

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