



Office of the President

Dr. Wanda Parisien, PhD - Educational Leadership, Interim President
10145 BIA Rd 7 Belcourt, ND 58316 | (701) 394-3159 | tm.edu

January 20, 2025
Senate Appropriations
Education and Environment Division
600 East Boulevard
Bismarck, ND 58505

RE: Support for an increase in non-beneficiary funding in SB 2003

Good Afternoon, Chair Sorvaag and members of the Appropriations Education and Environment Committee:

My name is Dr. Wanda Parisien, and I serve as the Interim President of Turtle Mountain College. Thank you for this opportunity to speak with you today about the vital role our institution plays in supporting Native American students and communities across North Dakota. I also want to express my strong support for increasing non-beneficiary funding for Tribal Colleges. This funding is crucial to ensuring that we can continue to provide high-quality education to all students, including those who are not members of federally recognized tribes but still seek educational opportunities at our institutions.

At Turtle Mountain College, we are deeply committed to providing quality education, preserving Native culture and traditions, and fostering economic development in the communities we serve. Our institution offers a variety of programs tailored to meet the unique needs of our students, ranging from vocational training and certificate programs to associate degrees in key fields such as education, healthcare, and environmental sciences. For the current semester (spring 2024-25), we have 567 students enrolled. We offer 27 certificate programs, 7- Associate of Applied Science (AAS), Associate of Arts (AA), Associate of Science degree programs, 2 - Bachelor programs, and 1 Master's program. One of the standout programs we offer is our Cybersecurity program. At Turtle Mountain College, collaboration is central to our educational philosophy, particularly in cybersecurity. TMC has established Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with several Tribal Colleges, including Sitting Bull College, United Tribes Technical College, Stone Child College, and Little Priest Tribal College. These partnerships emphasize resource sharing, such as faculty, courses, and cybersecurity lab facilities. Through this collaborative approach, we aim to enhance access to quality education, harness specialized expertise from multiple institutions, and strengthen the network for advancing cybersecurity education within tribal communities.

The financial support provided by the state is essential for our continued success. Increased funding will allow us to expand academic programs, improve infrastructure, and provide critical student services, including mental health support, housing assistance, and career development resources. Specifically, we are requesting a \$200,000 increase to current non-beneficiary funding (\$1.6 million) to help provide an excellent educational experience to every student of our institution. Like many tribal colleges, we face challenges such as aging facilities, limited access to technology, and the need for culturally relevant curriculum. However, with increased state support, we can implement solutions that will not only address these challenges but also ensure that our students are well-prepared for the workforce and for leadership roles within their communities.

In closing, I would like to reiterate the importance of investing in tribal colleges. Our institutions are not just places of learning; they are pillars of our communities, preserving culture, driving economic growth, and creating opportunities for future generations. We greatly appreciate your consideration of our funding request and your ongoing support.

Thank you for your time and attention. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.



Dr. Wanda Parisien
Interim President
Turtle Mountain College