

Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education: 2020 Supplement

CHAPTER 2

- **SPOTLIGHT**
- **Tribal Colleges and Universities:**
- **Serving Native Students in Higher Education**



Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education: 2020 Supplement

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This chapter is part of a larger report by the American Council on Education (ACE) titled *Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education: 2020 Supplement*, which follows ACE's 2019 release of *Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education: A Status Report*. These reports, along with their accompanying microsite, provide a data-informed foundation for those working to close persistent equity gaps by providing a comprehensive review of the educational pathways of today's college students and the educators who serve them.

Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education: 2020 Supplement and the microsite were made possible through the generous support of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Visit www.equityinhighered.org to learn more about the project and to download the full report, figures, detailed data tables, and other resources on race and ethnicity in higher education.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the ACE microsite. At the top left is the ACE logo (American Council on Education) and the title 'RACE AND ETHNICITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION'. A navigation menu includes 'HOME', 'ABOUT', 'INDICATORS', 'DATA SOURCES', 'DATA TABLES', and 'RESOURCES'. The main content area features a large image of a smiling Black woman with a backpack. Overlaid on the image is a 'Featured Findings' box with two statistics: '40.1% of Associate Degrees were Earned by Students of Color' and '31.5% of Bachelor's Degrees were Earned by Students of Color'. Below the image are two buttons: 'EXPLORE THE FINDINGS' and 'DOWNLOAD THE REPORT'. A section titled 'Explore the Findings' contains a paragraph about the project's purpose and a link to 'Download Reports'. A blue box on the right says 'NEW: IDEAS AND INSIGHTS' and 'View essays, videos, podcasts, and more >' with a play button icon.

About the American Council on Education

ACE is a membership organization that mobilizes the higher education community to shape effective public policy and foster innovative, high-quality practice. As the major coordinating body for the nation's colleges and universities, our strength lies in our diverse membership of more than 1,700 colleges and universities, related associations, and other organizations in America and abroad. ACE is the only major higher education association to represent all types of U.S. accredited, degree-granting institutions: two-year and four-year, public and private. For more information, please visit www.acenet.edu.

INTRODUCTION

Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), institutions created and chartered by Native American tribes or the federal government (AIHEC, n.d.a), play an important role in postsecondary access and success for Native students. In 2017–18, there were 37 TCUs spread across more than 75 main, branch, and satellite campuses located throughout the United States. TCUs can provide an example to all of higher education of how to serve Native students in culturally holistic ways. This chapter utilizes data from the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC), the “collective spirit and unifying voice of” the nation’s TCUs, to provide an overview of these institutions and how they serve Native students and communities in unique ways (AIHEC, n.d.b).

Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education: A Status Report (2019) sought to explore the educational journeys of today’s students by race and ethnicity. Many of the indicators in the report relied on surveys that lacked sufficient sample sizes to generate accurate results for American Indian or Alaska Native¹ and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander students. As a result, data were “unstable” or simply unavailable for these students, furthering the persistent gaps in data on the experiences of Native students in higher education. Our review of data provided by AIHEC is an attempt to fill a small portion of this gap, while at the same time shining a light on an important sector of higher education in the United States.

Like other under-resourced postsecondary institutions, TCUs have had challenges in building data capacities and collecting rigorous data on their campuses. In response to this need, 33 TCUs joined the Achieving the Dream Network in 2017, through which these institutions will work to build additional data capacity on their campuses and implement data-informed practices to serve their students (Achieving the Dream, n.d.). This partnership will help to further equip TCUs to tell their story and the story of their communities.

KEY FINDINGS

- Tribal Colleges and Universities were located in 16 states across the nation in 2017–18.
- Nearly 86 percent of all students enrolled at a TCU in 2017–18 were American Indian or Alaska Native.
- More than six in 10 students enrolled at TCUs identified as women.
- The most popular field of study among American Indian or Alaska Native students at TCUs was liberal arts, with roughly one in five students enrolling in this field.
- The majority of the 2,846 American Indians or Alaska Natives who earned a credential at a TCU in 2017–18 earned an associate degree, followed by certificates and bachelor’s degrees.
- Master’s degrees, diplomas,² and other credentials made up a small share of all credentials earned by Native students at TCUs.
- About 44 percent of faculty at TCUs were Native.
- More than 122,500 community members participated in community education programming offered through TCUs. Of those who participated in a community education program, nearly one-quarter participated in a health-related program.

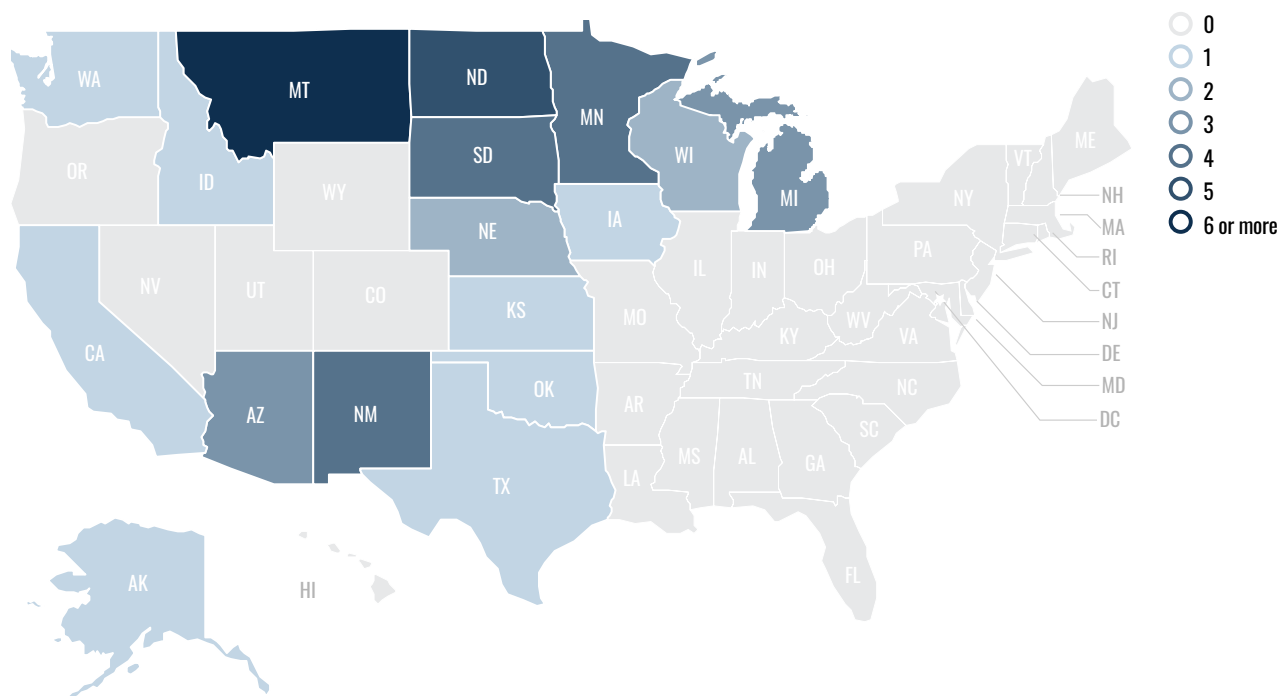
1 The terms American Indian or Alaska Native, Indigenous, and Native are used interchangeably.

2 Diplomas awarded by TCUs are professional credentials, which prepare students for specific jobs.

Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), like all minority serving institutions, play a critical role in the American higher education landscape. Chartered by their respective tribes, TCUs provide Native communities greater access to culturally relevant postsecondary education. These institutions were established out of the Tribal College movement of the 1960s, which sought to increase educational attainment within Native communities. The first TCU was established by the Navajo Nation in 1968 (AIHEC 2012). Currently, there are 37 TCUs throughout the United States, which provide an educational approach distinctively different from other postsecondary institutions. This approach incorporates Indigenous culture, language, and tradition into curricula, research, and educational offerings (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2018; AIHEC 2012). TCUs enroll a student body that is largely American Indian or Alaska Native, with White students being the second largest racial or ethnic group (Espinosa et al. 2019).

In addition, TCUs serve as an integral part of tribal communities and provide many services and community education programs, which connect and benefit many community members (Nelson and Frye 2016; AIHEC 2012). In 2017–18, more than 120,000 community members took part in the community-based services and education programs provided through TCUs.

Figure 2.1: Tribal Colleges and Universities, by Location: 2017–18



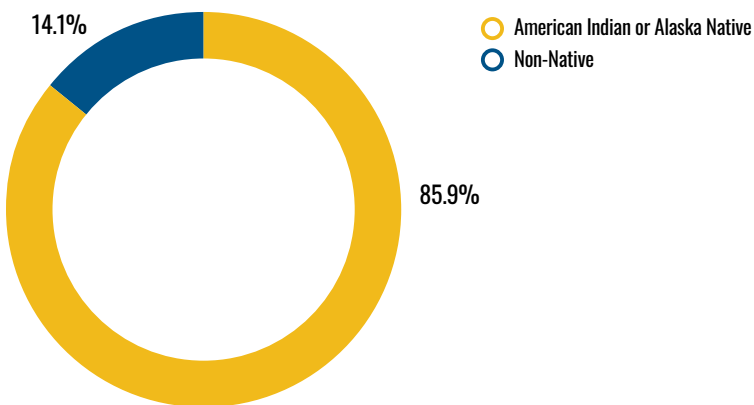
Source: American Indian Higher Education Consortium, American Indian Measures of Success, 2017–18
 Note: In 2017-18, there were 37 Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs). Figure includes 41 total TCUs, as four institutions have branch campuses in other states.

ENROLLMENT AT TCUs

The AIHEC American Indian Measures of Success (AIMS) data used in this chapter categorize students and faculty at Tribal Colleges and Universities into two groups: American Indian or Alaska Native and non-Native. In categorizing individuals by race and ethnicity, TCUs do not count individuals as American Indian or Alaska Native through self-identification. Rather, to be counted in this category, the individual must be an enrolled member of a federally recognized tribe³ or the biological child of an enrolled member of a federally recognized tribe. This definition, therefore, excludes all members of state-recognized tribes⁴ and those who do not meet the requirements to be an enrolled member of a tribe. For example, an individual whose biological makeup is 100 percent American Indian or Alaska Native, but who does not meet the minimum blood quantum for any of their family's tribes would not be counted as American Indian or Alaska Native at TCUs. AIHEC's AIMS data report these students as non-Native, even though they are indeed Native. At the vast majority of other institutions, any person may self-identify as Native.

In fall 2017, TCUs enrolled 15,512 undergraduate and graduate students. Of these students, while the majority were enrolled full time (60.9 percent), nearly four in 10 were enrolled part time (39.1 percent). The majority of students enrolled at Tribal Colleges and Universities in 2017–18 were American Indian or Alaska Native (85.9 percent). The remaining 14.1 percent of students enrolled at TCUs were from other racial or ethnic backgrounds.

Figure 2.2: Total Enrollment of Native and Non-Native Students at TCUs: 2017–18



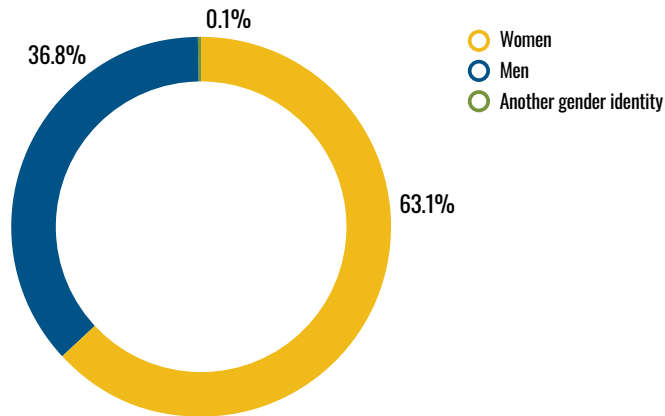
Source: American Indian Higher Education Consortium, American Indian Measures of Success, 2017–18
Note: Non-Native includes all students who are neither American Indian nor Alaska Native.

³ For more information on the tribal enrollment process, please see <https://www.doi.gov/tribes/enrollment>.

⁴ For more information on federal and state recognized tribes, please see <https://www.ncsl.org/research/state-tribal-institute/list-of-federal-and-state-recognized-tribes.aspx>.

More than six in 10 students at TCUs in 2017–18 identified as women (63.1 percent), followed by 36.8 percent who identified as men and 0.1 percent who had another gender identity.

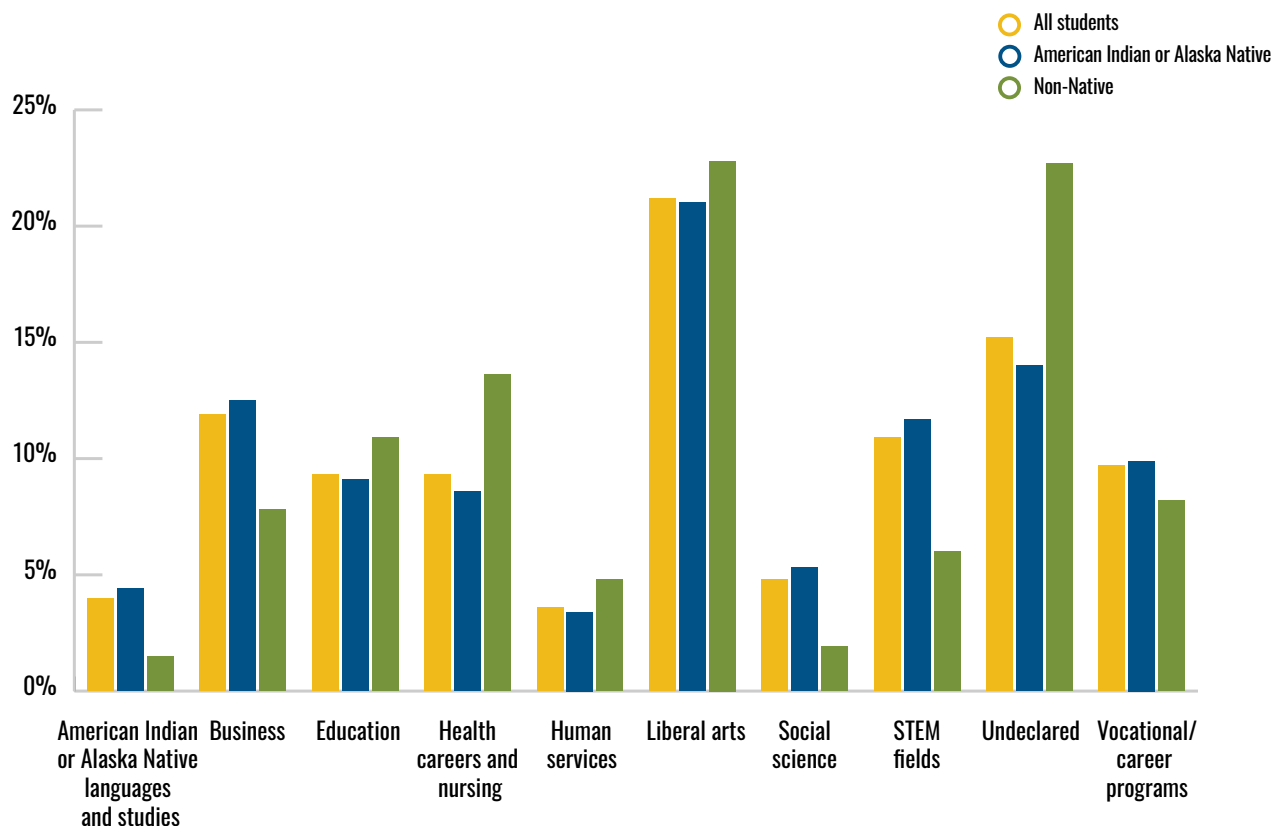
Figure 2.3: Total Enrollment at TCUs, by Gender: 2017–18



Source: American Indian Higher Education Consortium, American Indian Measures of Success, 2017–18

Liberal arts was the most popular field of study among students who were enrolled at TCUs in 2017–18, with roughly one in five students enrolling in this field (21.2 percent). The next most popular field of study was business (11.9 percent), followed by science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields (10.9 percent).

Figure 2.4: Total Enrollment at TCUs of Native and Non-Native Students Across Majors: 2017–18



Source: American Indian Higher Education Consortium, American Indian Measures of Success, 2017–18
 Note: Non-Native includes all students who are neither American Indian nor Alaska Native.

- Approximately one in five Native (21.0 percent) and non-Native (22.8 percent) students were enrolled in liberal arts majors.
- American Indian or Alaska Native students were nearly twice as likely as non-Native students at TCUs to be enrolled in STEM majors (11.7 percent and 6.0 percent, respectively).
- Non-Native students were much more likely than Native students to be enrolled in health careers and nursing majors (13.6 percent and 8.6 percent, respectively).

Women were much more likely to be enrolled in education (12.6 percent) and health careers and nursing (12.3 percent) majors than men, of whom only 3.7 percent were enrolled in education and 4.3 percent were enrolled in health careers and nursing majors. Men were much more likely to be enrolled in STEM fields (15.8 percent) and vocational/career programs (16.2 percent) than women.

Table 2.1: Total Enrollment at TCUs of Native and Non-Native Students Across Majors, by Gender: 2017–18

	American Indian or Alaska Native Languages and Studies	Business	Education	Health Careers and Nursing	Human Services	Liberal Arts	Social Science	STEM Fields	Undeclared	Vocational/Career Programs
Women	3.8%	12.4%	12.6%	12.3%	4.4%	19.8%	5.7%	8.0%	15.0%	5.9%
American Indian or Alaska Native	4.2%	13.4%	12.2%	11.4%	4.2%	19.6%	6.2%	8.6%	13.9%	6.2%
Non-Native	1.3%	6.7%	15.3%	17.4%	5.7%	21.2%	2.0%	4.4%	22.0%	4.1%
Men	4.4%	10.9%	3.7%	4.3%	2.2%	23.7%	3.4%	15.8%	15.5%	16.2%
American Indian or Alaska Native	4.8%	11.1%	3.7%	3.8%	2.0%	23.4%	3.7%	17.0%	14.0%	16.5%
Non-Native	1.9%	9.6%	3.6%	7.4%	3.1%	25.4%	1.7%	8.6%	23.9%	14.8%

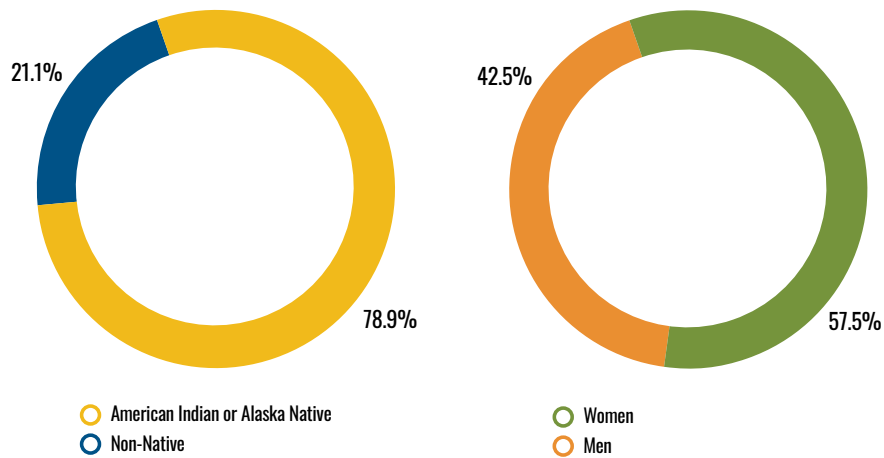
Source: American Indian Higher Education Consortium, American Indian Measures of Success, 2017–18
 Note: Non-Native includes all students who are neither American Indian nor Alaska Native.

- American Indian or Alaska Native women were twice as likely to be enrolled in business majors as non-Native women (13.4 percent and 6.7 percent, respectively) at TCUs. Native women were also nearly twice as likely as non-Native women to be enrolled in STEM fields (8.6 percent and 4.4 percent, respectively).
- Among women, non-Natives (17.4 percent) were more likely than American Indians or Alaska Natives (11.4 percent) to be enrolled in health careers and nursing majors.
- Among men, American Indians or Alaska Natives (17.0 percent) were nearly twice as likely as non-Natives (8.6 percent) to be enrolled in STEM majors.

FIRST-TIME STUDENTS AT TCUs

In fall 2017, 26 percent of all students enrolled at TCUs were first-time students, meaning they had no prior enrollment in postsecondary education after high school.

Figure 2.5: Total Enrollment of First-Time Students at TCUs, by Student Characteristics: 2017–18

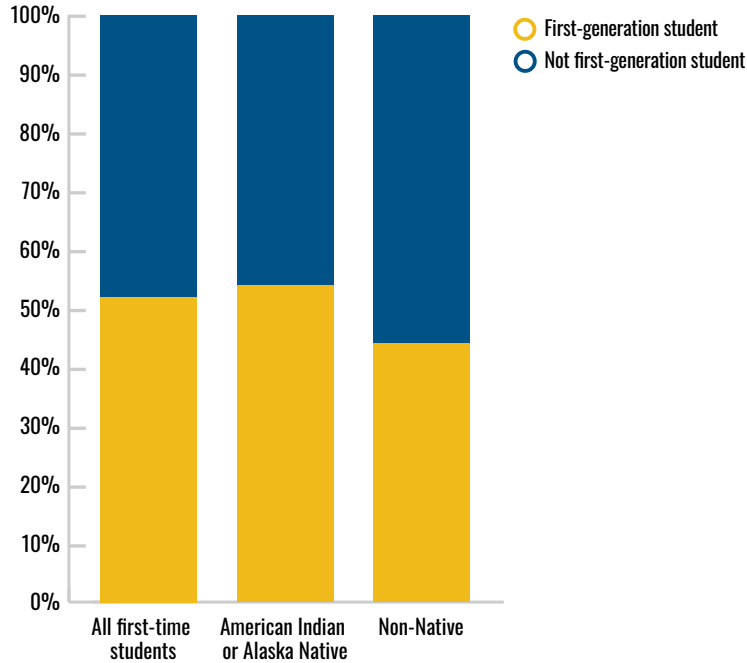


Source: American Indian Higher Education Consortium, American Indian Measures of Success, 2017–18
Note: Non-Native includes all students who are neither American Indian nor Alaska Native.

- Among first-time students at TCUs, 78.9 percent were American Indian or Alaska Native. The remaining 21.1 percent were from other racial and ethnic backgrounds.
- The majority of first-time students at TCUs in 2017–18 were women (57.5 percent), while 42.5 percent were men.

The slight majority of first-time TCU students were also first-generation students (52 percent), meaning that they were the first in their families to enroll in postsecondary education.

Figure 2.6: Total Enrollment of First-Time Native and Non-Native Students at TCUs, by First-Generation Status: 2017–18

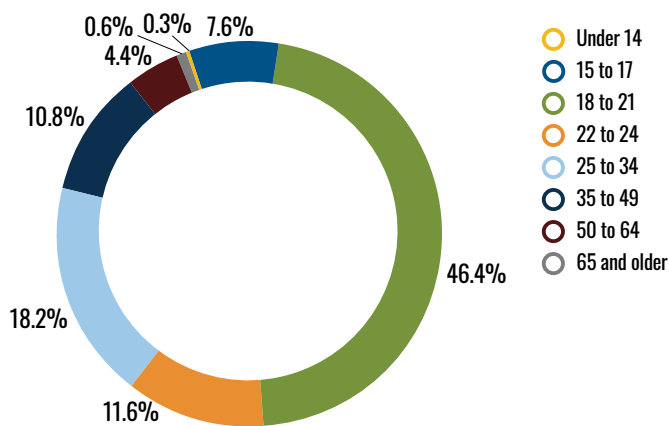


Source: American Indian Higher Education Consortium, American Indian Measures of Success, 2017–18
 Note: Non-Native includes all students who are neither American Indian nor Alaska Native.

- Over half of all first-time American Indian or Alaska Native students were first generation (54 percent), while 46 percent of Native students had parents with at least some postsecondary enrollment.
- First-time non-Native students at TCUs were much less likely than Native students to be first generation. In 2017–18, 44 percent of first-time non-Native students were first-generation students.

Nearly 60 percent of first-time students were between the ages of 18 and 24 (58.0 percent). About one-third of first-time students were over the age of 25 (34.0 percent), and 7.9 percent were 17 years old or younger.

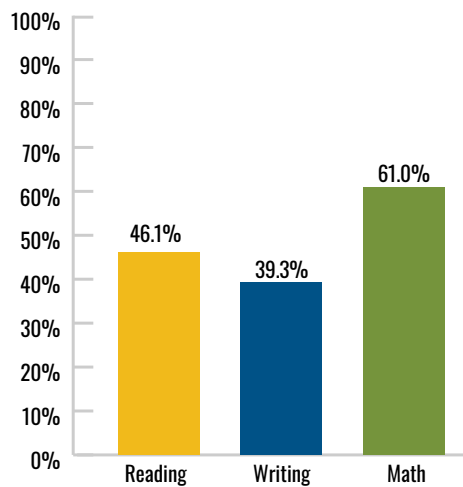
Figure 2.7: Total Enrollment of First-Time Students at TCUs, by Age of Entry: 2017–18



Source: American Indian Higher Education Consortium, American Indian Measures of Success, 2017–18

Enrollment in developmental education⁵ varied greatly by course type. Over half of all first-time students who took placement tests were placed in developmental education for math (61.0 percent), compared with reading (46.1 percent) and writing (39.3 percent).

Figure 2.8: Total Share of First-Time Students Placed in Developmental Education at TCUs, by Course Topic: 2017–18



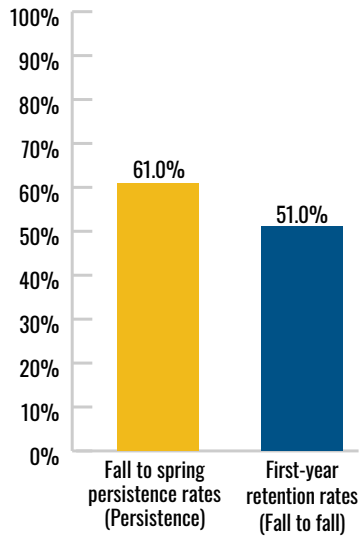
Source: American Indian Higher Education Consortium, American Indian Measures of Success, 2017–18
Note: Includes only those who took developmental education placement tests.

⁵ Developmental or remedial courses are designed to strengthen students' skills in key subjects such as reading, writing, and math so that they can be successful in college-level courses.

PERSISTENCE AND COMPLETION AT TCUs

Overall, 61 percent of students enrolled at TCUs persisted⁶ from the fall semester to the spring semester in 2017–18. The overall first-year retention rate of students at TCUs was 51 percent, meaning just over half of students returned in the fall of their second year.

Figure 2.9: Persistence and First-Year Retention Rates of Students Enrolled at TCUs: 2017–18

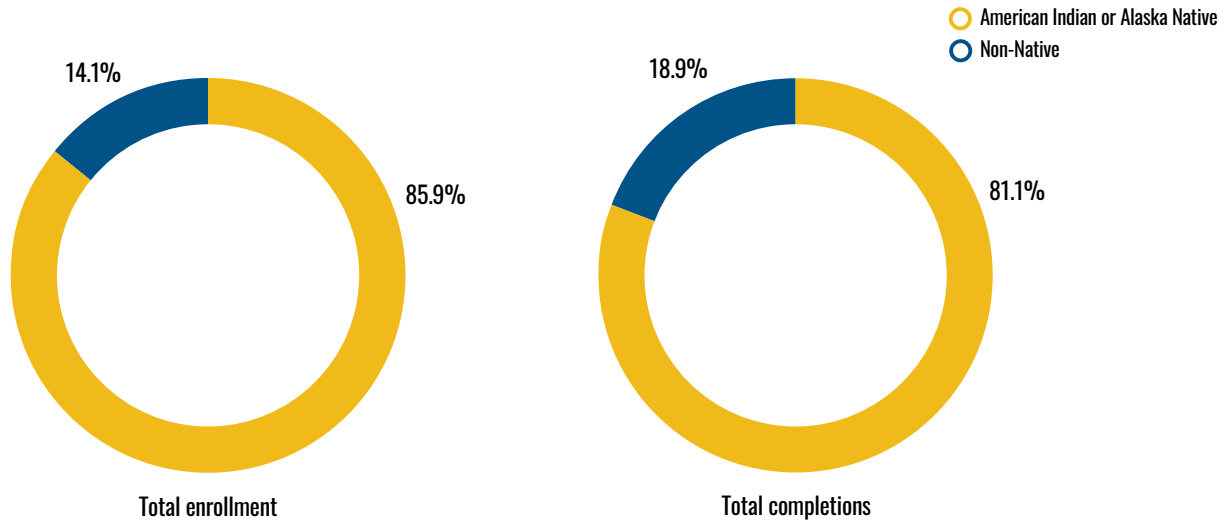


Source: American Indian Higher Education Consortium, American Indian Measures of Success, 2017–18
Note: Persistence and retention rates include full-time and part-time students.

⁶ Persistence and retention rates include full-time and part-time students.

The majority of all credentials earned by students at TCUs in 2017–18 were earned by American Indian or Alaska Native students (81.1 percent). The remaining 18.9 percent of credentials were earned by students of other racial or ethnic backgrounds.

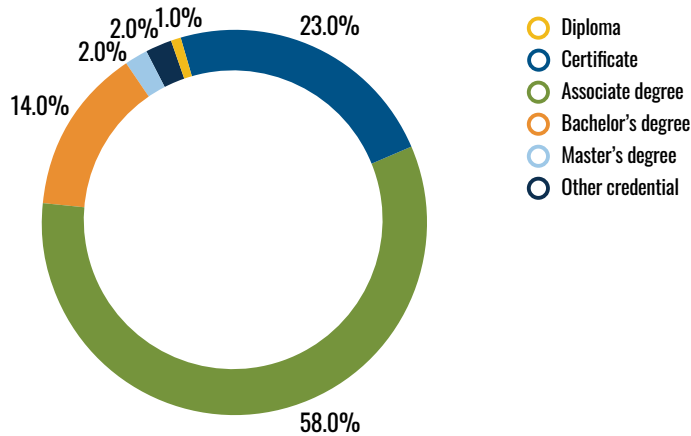
Figure 2.10: Total Enrollment and Completions of Native and Non-Native Students at TCUs: 2017–18



Source: American Indian Higher Education Consortium, American Indian Measures of Success, 2017–18
 Note: Non-Native includes all students who are neither American Indian nor Alaska Native.

The majority of American Indians or Alaska Natives who earned a credential at a TCU in 2017–18 earned an associate degree (58.0 percent), followed by certificates (23.0 percent) and bachelor’s degrees (14.0 percent). An additional 5 percent of Native students earned a master’s degree (2.0 percent), diploma (1.0 percent), or other credential (2.0 percent).

Figure 2.11: Total Credentials Earned by American Indian or Alaska Native Students at TCUs, by Award Level: 2017–18

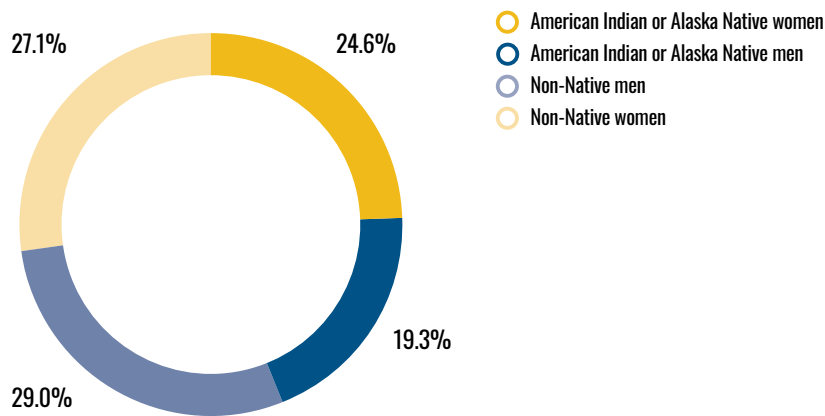


Source: American Indian Higher Education Consortium, American Indian Measures of Success, 2017–18
 Notes: Diplomas awarded by TCUs are professional credentials, which prepare students for specific jobs. | Other credentials include endorsements and other credentials that are not a degree.

FACULTY AT TCUs

Though the racial and ethnic makeup of the faculty at TCUs does not fully match that of the student body, the representation of Native faculty at TCUs greatly surpasses their representation in higher education nationally; just 0.4 percent of full-time and 0.5 percent of part-time faculty nationwide were American Indian or Alaska Native.

Figure 2.12: TCU Faculty, by Gender: 2017–18

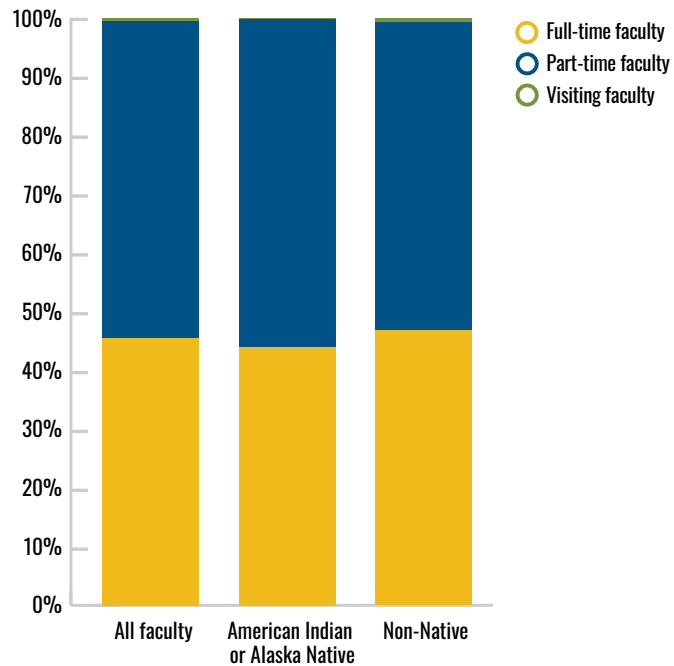


Source: American Indian Higher Education Consortium, American Indian Measures of Success, 2017–18
Note: Non-Native includes all faculty who are neither American Indian nor Alaska Native.

- Among the over 1,800 faculty at TCUs, 43.9 percent were Native, while 56.1 percent were non-Native.
- Slightly more than half of TCU faculty were women (51.7 percent).
- Over half of TCU faculty were non-Native men (29.0 percent) and non-Native women (27.1 percent), 24.6 percent were American Indian or Alaska Native women, and only 19.3 percent of TCU faculty were American Indian or Alaska Native men.

The majority of faculty at TCUs were part time (54.0 percent), followed by full-time faculty (45.6 percent) and visiting faculty (0.4 percent). This pattern was similar by racial and ethnic group.

Figure 2.13: Employment Status of Native and Non-Native TCU Faculty: 2017–18

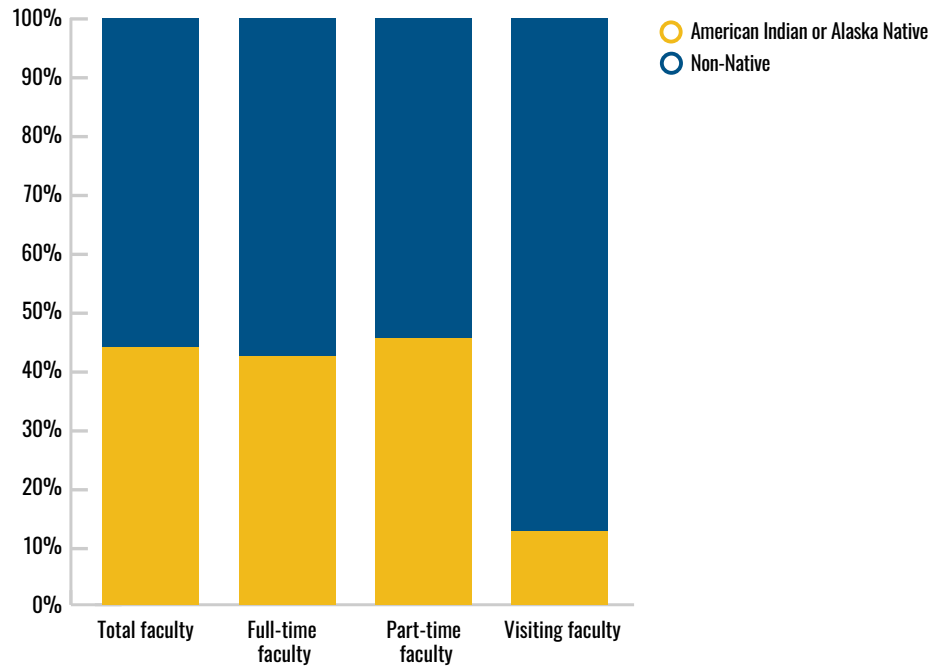


Source: American Indian Higher Education Consortium, American Indian Measures of Success, 2017–18
 Notes: Non-Native includes all faculty who are neither American Indian nor Alaska Native. | Total faculty includes visiting faculty.

- Over half of all American Indian or Alaska Native (55.9 percent) and non-Native (52.5 percent) faculty were part time.
- American Indian or Alaska Native faculty (44.0 percent) were slightly less likely than non-Native faculty (46.8 percent) to be full time.
- Non-Native faculty were more likely than American Indians or Alaska Natives to be visiting faculty (0.7 percent and 0.1 percent, respectively).

Looking within employment status, in 2017–18 the majority of faculty across all groups were non-Native. Visiting faculty were much more likely than full-time and part-time faculty to be non-Native.

Figure 2.14: Native and Non-Native TCU Faculty, by Employment Status: 2017–18



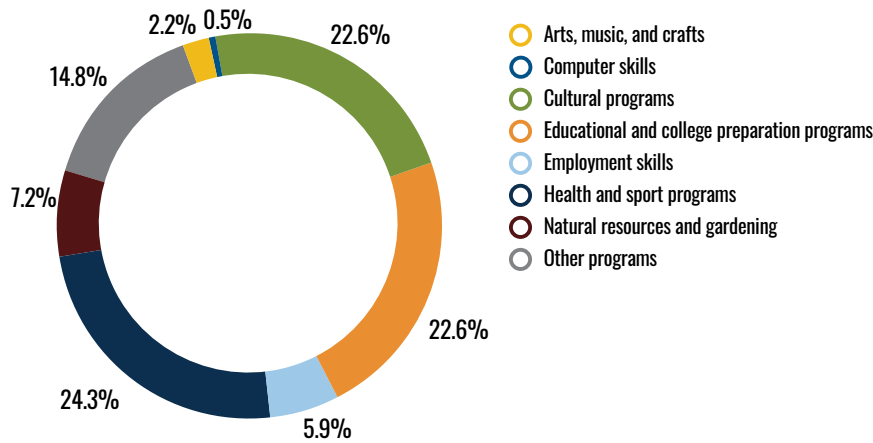
Source: American Indian Higher Education Consortium, American Indian Measures of Success, 2017–18
 Notes: Non-Native includes all students who are neither American Indian nor Alaska Native. | Total faculty includes visiting faculty.

- In 2017–18, the total share of part-time faculty who were American Indian or Alaska Native (45.5 percent) was higher than the share of full-time faculty who were Native (42.4 percent).
- Nearly 90 percent of visiting faculty were non-Native (87.5 percent).

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

In addition to providing American Indian or Alaska Native students access to postsecondary education, TCUs play a critical role within their larger Native communities. These institutions often serve as the cultural center for their community and provide additional services including health programs (e.g., health screenings, flu clinics, and first aid and CPR training), educational and college preparation programs (e.g., math workshops, adult basic education, and financial literacy workshops), and employment skills development workshops (e.g., grant writing workshops, workshops on financing business, and career fairs). In 2017–18, 122,596 community members were reached through the community education programming offered by TCUs.

Figure 2.15: Participation in Community Programs Offered Through TCUs, by Program Type: 2017–18



Source: American Indian Higher Education Consortium, American Indian Measures of Success, 2017–18

Notes: Cultural programs include those focused on traditional tribal culture, art, and history. | Other programs include those related to parenting, holidays, movie nights, carnivals, and other programs not directly related to any other program type listed.

- Nearly one-quarter of all individuals who participated in a community program at a TCU in 2017–18 participated in a health-related program (24.3 percent).
- Nearly 23 percent of individuals who participated in community programs participated in traditional cultural programs or educational and college preparation programs (22.6 percent each).
- Nearly 15 percent of all individuals who participated in a community program participated in a program related to parenting skills, holiday celebrations, family movie nights, and other activities (14.8 percent).

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