

Sinte Gleska University

**Draft Concept Paper:  
Institute for Lakota Teaching and Learning**

Fall 2016



From the beginning of treaty times, assimilative educational policies have displaced traditional tribal practices. These federal policies have resulted in deep misunderstanding and cultural conflict for several generations of Lakota students.

Misunderstanding and cultural conflict continues to be a central challenge for rebuilding tribal nations today. As a tribal university with a special role in nation-building, SGU is tasked with reviewing its educational policy and practices. The following draft is presented to the Board of Regents for review and recommendations prior to final approval.

**Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) Today**

1. Tribal Colleges and Universities grew out of the civil rights movement and the encouragement from communities and spiritual leaders to challenge the Eurocentric history and cultural curricula of mainstream colleges and universities.
  - a. TCUs have met the challenge of establishing their academic credentials while maintaining their mission to promote cultural and political equity.
  - b. There is now a concern that the drive for legitimacy as an 'academic department' has weakened Lakota Studies' proper position as the cultural directive force at SGU.
  - c. Establishing the proper place and identity for Lakota Studies is directly relevant to SGU's leadership position in the ongoing rebuilding of the Sicangu Nation and the Oceti Sakowin educational consortium.

## Lakota Studies & Education at SGU

1. Through the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) of 1978, the U.S. Congress recognized tribes' long-standing authority to regulate and care for member children. Because ICWA "assumes that a tribal code is the governance mechanism by which a tribe establishes and implements its jurisdiction over all aspects of child well-being," the Act supports tribes' reclamation of self-determination over child welfare.
2. Just as ICWA recognized tribes' authority to regulate and care for the welfare of tribal children, the Tribally Controlled Community College Assistance Act of 1978 recognized tribes' long-standing authority to regulate and care for tribal students higher education needs.
  - a. Accordingly, SGU is conducting a review and redesign of its educational services. This review and redesign will be led by a newly-constituted *Institute for Lakota Teaching & Learning*.
  - b. The Institute for Lakota Teaching & Learning will provide a set of directives based on the educational practices common to tribal homes and communities, historical and current. Using these research-based educational practices and directives, the Institute for Lakota Teaching and Learning will assist other SGU departments in redesigning their teaching and learning strategies.
  - c. The Institute for Lakota Teaching & Learning will also conduct a review of degrees and certificates currently offered by Lakota Studies and make recommendations for changes if needed.