

**A Call for Action:  
Nation-building for the Sicangu Lakota Oyate**

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The central problem emerging as a common theme throughout past community forums is the tremendous difficulty for Tribal people in coping with transition and change during the past 500+ years. These changes have irrevocably altered the cultural, economic, social, and governmental systems of Indian Tribes and Tribal communities. The technology trends and influences of social and economic diversity in today's world continues to place great stress and tension on native People and their efforts to shape their own future.

During past community forums, Rosebud Sioux Tribal members reflected on the many problems the *Sicangu Lakota* now face because of forced change and transition. These problems are inter-related and complex. To address the problem of coping with change, Tribal elders and spiritual leaders encouraged the development of a vision for the *Sicangu Oyate*. This must become a priority in the immediate future encompassing the following nation-building elements:

- A. Lakota Culture & Language Preservation: Wolakota
- B. Pre-school, K-12, Adult and Higher Education
- C. Land, Natural Resources and Environmental Impact
- D. Human Resources and Workforce Development
- E. Health, Housing and Transportation
- F. Economic Development
- G. Law Enforcement, Judicial and Incarceration
- H. Community-based Technology Needs
- I. Energy Resources (renewability and efficiency)

**TRIBAL NATION VISION**

*“The Tribal Nation vision is that the well-being of the Sicangu Lakota Oyate and their lands will be strengthened through culturally-based lifelong learning. The education of the Sicangu People must bring about the necessary change in all aspects of life if the Nation is to serve the needs of the People in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The most important outcome for bringing about change is that there will be a future for the Sicangu Oyate - the children, the grandchildren, and those yet to come.”*

## **A CALL FOR ACTION**

The following recommendations are offered to assist with prioritizing initial activities in partnership with Sinte Gleska University and other entities under four major goal areas:

### **Goal: Reaffirmation of Sovereignty**

1. Examine interpretations of federal Indian treaties and correlations with key federal, Tribal and state government policies.
2. Activate an interagency initiative to undergo a comprehensive inventory of Tribal human and land resources.
3. Increase personnel resources to update Tribal enrollment and to research blood quantum trends.
4. Establish and actively pursue an agenda of legislative priorities for Tribal, state and federal governments.
5. Realign internal mechanisms and data systems supporting documentation about how Tribal fiscal resources are procured, distributed and accounted for.
6. Bring together resources to fully activate goal-setting and interagency strategic planning of Tribal economic development through the Rosebud Economic Development Corporation (REDCO).
7. Examine the impact of changes in restructuring Tribal government including the integration of traditional community and family leadership; elders, spiritual leaders, tiospaye leadership, and youth representation.

### **Goal Area: Evolution and Continuity of Lakota Culture & Language**

1. Conduct community-based research to establish interpretations about original meanings and potential applications for Lakota philosophies, concepts and language use.

2. Integrate interpretations about the “laws of nature” and Lakota culture in social, economic and governance planning for the Tribe.
3. Conduct forums to nurture unity among entities for re-establishing and strengthening spirituality among Lakota People.
4. Bring together Tribal elders and youth to clarify kinship systems, responsibilities and potential applications for future Tribal family structures and Tribal community governance.

### **Goal Area: Conservation of Tribal Homelands – Land & Natural Resources**

1. Conduct a review of the relationships between Tribal enrollment and Tribal land interests, and initiate the development of an action plan directed at the preservation of the Tribal land base, the diminishment of land fractionation and the strategic planning for land and natural resources.
2. Create a Tribal position paper on water resources issues (e.g., Missouri River water rights; Oglala Aquifer, Little White River, water quality, etc.).
3. Conduct forums to determine how goals and effective planning will be carried out for land and natural resources use by individual Tribal members and tiospaye cooperatives through interagency partnerships with Tribal Land Enterprises (TLE).
4. Examine viable economic initiatives for the Tribal ranch, timber reserve, bison reserve, land acquisitions (e.g., Mustang Meadows, Bristow Ranch, Hard Grass, etc.) and renewable energy (green energy applications).

### **Goal Area: Self-sufficiency of the People**

1. Assess all current Tribal programs to identify and eliminate inequities (real and potential) in the delivery of services and benefits to Tribal members.
2. Establish goals and management priorities for the Rosebud law enforcement and judicial systems with a focus how to deal with epidemic substance abuse, domestic violence, juvenile issues and other community problems.

3. Examine resources and issues to create stronger linkages between Tribal Court system and Tribal programs.
4. Establish a Tribal plan to diminish the impact of the loss of federally-based program benefits.
5. Explore the establishment of a Tribal housing manufacturing business along with the integration of renewable energy technologies and energy efficiencies.
6. Align career-technical education and workforce training opportunities with Tribal land and human resource development needs.
7. Research the resources and alternatives to supplement current Indian health programs and services, including integration of traditional Lakota mid-wife practices, medicinal use of natural herbs and roots, and increased participation of Lakota spiritual leaders and medicine men in community activities focused on the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being of the Sicangu Oyate.