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Warner, Linda Sue & Gipp, Gerald E. (Eds.). (2009). *Tradition and Culture in the Millennium: Tribal Colleges and Universities*. Charlotte, North Carolina: Information Age Publishing.

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Warner and Gerald's volume on Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) is presented as part of the series edited by Bruce A. Jones on educational policy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: opportunities, challenges, and solutions. In the series forward, Jones calls *Tradition and Culture in the New Millennium* "one of the most important contributions to the series" and comments on the "stellar line-up of scholars" (p. xiii). Indeed, an impressive list of contributors has been drawn from American Indian higher education—including tribal institutions, American Indian studies programs, the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC), and the *Tribal College Journal*. Editor Linda Sue Warner is President of Haskell Indian Nations University, while Editor Gerald Gipp is former executive director of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC), making both

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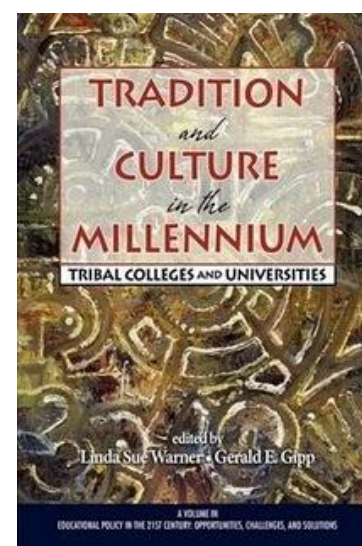
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extremely qualified to organize a dialogue on the development of indigenous higher education in the United States.

Jones also notes that this volume fills a gap in the existing literature on American educational policy in that American Indian history is integral to American history and, furthermore, understanding the history of tribally controlled higher education is vital to understanding not only American Indian history but also the academic, social, and political context for the lives of American Indian people today. Since the establishment of Navajo Community College in 1968, these institutions have been at the forefront of providing a community-based approach to lifelong learning. Jones furthermore sees TCUs as potentially remedying many of the problems and issues that plague mainstream institutions of higher education, such as the alienation that often exists among members of the university community, the need for higher education to be relevant to the community, and the low retention and graduation rates for historically disenfranchised groups. With the rapid growth of and large number of graduates from TCUs, these institutions provide a significant area deserving of scholarly focus and academic discussion.

The volume *Tradition and Culture in the New Millennium* is divided into four main sections addressing the history of TCUs, issues of culture and tradition, leadership of TCUs, and the future directions of tribally controlled higher education. Each section of the volume begins with a quote from a famous American Indian leader or intellectual that sets the tone of the section and provides a context for the pieces to follow. The tone of the various chapters highlights the many compelling institutional stories within tribally controlled higher education. In stating their emphasis, the editors note that policy in TCUs relies on native culture and traditions, while at the same time being called upon to provide a framework for academic rigor, collaboration, and relevance. Thus, the diverse perspectives and insights offered in the volume serve to illuminate these many facets of tribally controlled higher education historically and today. As the series editor notes, this volume is meant to give a comprehensive explication of the “phenomenal history” (p. xiv) of TCUs and to highlight the ongoing policy issues and concerns that they face.

Gerald Gipp is former executive director of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium.



In Part I of *Tradition and Culture in the New Millennium*, several authors contribute to a discussion of “Our History,” beginning with David M. Gipp’s overview of the history of AIHEC and its integral role within the history of TCUs as the catalyst for a dynamic process of tribal college development. Gipp describes the common traits that were recognized among the original member schools of AIHEC: location on/near geographically isolated reservations; Indian boards of regents or directors, faculty, and administrators; small Indian student bodies; chronic underfunding and unpredictable finances; and student bodies and surrounding communities that were the lowest income populations in the United States. Within this daunting context, Gipp cites the critical role of early leadership in AIHEC as well as the support drawn from outside of tribal governments to enhance sovereignty. Wayne J. Stein follows Gipp’s chapter with a discussion of the role of TCUs in revitalizing tribes and reservations, highlighting the centrality of education within issues of tribal sovereignty as well as historical Americanization movements imposed on tribes. Stein contextualizes TCU history within WWII, Civil Rights, extremely high attrition rates of American Indian students, and the community college movement of the 1960s. In the next chapter, James Shanley gives an overview of Montana Tribal Colleges, highlighted because an estimated 60% or more of American Indians in the state of Montana attend a tribal college. Shanley gives a brief history of TCUs and cites issues of concern including low pay for faculty, the importance of tribal colleges to reservation structures, and the ability of graduates to empower their communities and improve the condition of the state, and gives a short overview of individual TCUs in Montana. Douglas Clement follows Shanley with a chapter on the growth of TCUs, also noting the economic importance of education and TCUs in particular. Clement notes that TCUs are often the largest employer on their reservation in addition to being close to home and culturally sensitive environments for American Indian students to learn. In noting common attrition and “stop out” factors for American Indian students—family obligations, financial need, or employment obligations—Clement highlights the effectiveness of TCUs replicating extended family structures in an effort to increase student persistence. Ray Barnhardt

finishes the section with a chapter on the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC) and the process of defining international indigenous accreditation standards. Barnhardt explains how the standards are based on the unique features that distinguish indigenous institutions from their mainstream counterparts, include participation by the indigenous populations served, and reflect a new form of self-determination. Barnhardt also includes a set of sample cultural standards for reference at the end of his chapter.

Part II, “Culture and Tradition,” begins with a contribution by Richard Littlebear on understanding American Indian culture, in which Littlebear explains the differences between how white Americans define or fail to define their own culture and how American Indians have set out to define culture. A main thrust of Littlebear’s contribution is the emphasis on culture as dynamic and living, rather than static. Rosemary Ackley Christensen provides the other contribution to this section with her chapter on American Indian worldview and cultural behaviors. In her chapter, Christensen describes culture as twofold, consisting of both what goes without saying within a society and what must be communicated to other outside a society. Christensen uses her description of culture to offer insights into teaching methods and techniques that are culturally relevant and enable tribal teachings to be passed down. Christensen notes as well how American Indians in the academy inhabit two worlds—one of the mainstream culture and one of their tribal culture—and how American Indian pedagogy espouses principles of belief and acquiescence as well as questioning and empowerment. Christensen additionally relates tribally controlled education to the values of oral learning, which include spiral communication and reciprocity, relationship, and respect.

In Part III, “Leadership,” Linda Sue Warner and Kathryn Harris Tijerina begin with a chapter on indigenous governance, in which they describe the concepts of communal public education and consensus inherent in TCUs. Warner and Tijerina describe the complex and contradictory concepts of federal trust responsibility and tribal self-determination in the United States, while also asserting that tribes have always governed themselves. Warner and Tijerina note how the visions

for student success and holistic lifelong learning have been central to TCU policies, and that unlike mainstream institutions, TCUs share the burden of success that is often placed solely on students. John W. Tippeconnic III follows with a chapter on Oklahoma tribal colleges and the Comanche Nation College, a relative latecomer to the tribally controlled higher education movement rooted in Comanche culture and language, highlighting the core governing principles and criteria for faculty and administrators' performance evaluation. Next, Robin Williams and Cornel Pewewardy address student retention at TCUs, noting that student retention is a complex and pressing issues, and that the challenges facing individual American Indian students are rooted in over 500 years of controversial history. Gerald E. Gipp concludes the section with a chapter on leadership in TCUs, noting the ways in which the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 undermined traditional patterns of tribal leadership and emphasizing the importance of developing tribal leaders.

The final section of the volume is Part IV, "Our Future," in which Phil Baird begins with a chapter on TCU presidencies. Baird notes the importance of this topic because a third of TCUs are either addressing current vacancies or will have a presidential vacancy in the next 10 years. Marjane Ambler and Paul Boyer follow with a chapter about the history of the *Tribal College Journal*, founded in 1989, and the various purposes and audiences the journal has addressed in the past two decades. In the third chapter in the section, Carrie L. Billy and Al Kuslikis address technology at TCUs, including wireless access to the Navajo Nation in New Mexico, STEM job needs in tribal communities, distance learning, the AIHEC Virtual Library, efforts to blend traditional science and new technology, and technologies for collecting and securely storing elders' stories. Billy and Kuslikis elegantly liken TCU technologies to the development of ceramic containers by American Indian people, asserting how the need to adapt new technologies has always been integral to American Indian cultures. In the final chapter in the section, Cheryl Crazybull concludes by discussing the many challenges and issues that persist on American Indian reservations and the chronic funding problems of TCUs, while

also highlighting their major strengths and accomplishments in their community focus and level of indigenous accountability.

With *Tradition and Culture in the New Millennium*, Warner and Gipp have compiled a truly informative and well-crafted volume that reflects a history that is integral to the lives of those involved with tribally controlled higher education and fascinating to anyone interested in American education in general. A series on American education policy would certainly have been remiss without the rich and compelling history of tribally controlled institutions within the policymaking climate of the United States. The volume accomplishes several purposes: detailing the history of TCUs, creating a mosaic image of the 30,000 people currently being served by the 35 tribally controlled institutions of higher education in the United States and Canada, highlighting shared areas of ongoing concern across tribally controlled higher education, emphasizing the importance of directing future attention to redressing obstacles, and asserting many concrete strengths and promising qualities of TCUs. Several contributing authors cited that the majority of the American Indian population is under the age of 24 (in comparison with 36% of the overall US population), illustrating the role of TCUs for serving a growing need. Furthermore, the authors portray a picture of tribally controlled higher education as a vibrant and engaged field, in which TCUs are active collaborators with Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities in the United States, as well as internationally as part of the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium. Although the series editor suggested that *Tradition and Culture in the New Millennium* is the first volume of its kind, the contributors convey the message that it will not be the last, and scholars can look forward to seeing and participating in many more emerging insights into higher education from those involved with tribally controlled institutions.

## About the Reviewer

Lesley Graybeal is a doctoral student in Social Foundations of Education with a concentration in International and Comparative Education at the University of Georgia and an adjunct faculty member at Wake Technical Community College. Her research interests include knowledge and identity politics in non-formal educational settings, museum representation and rhetoric, and the use of new museology by Indigenous peoples.



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