

PROBLEMS AS PERCEIVED BY NATIVE AMERICAN BUSINESS  
STUDENTS TRANSFERRING FROM TWO-YEAR COLLEGES  
TO FOUR-YEAR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS  
IN OKLAHOMA

By

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Historically, Blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans have been the least likely to persist and to complete higher education even at the bachelor's degree. According to Wilson (1990), only 15 percent of all students attending four-year institutions graduated within four years, and fewer than half of the total population of students complete a bachelor's degree after six years. With regard to minorities, however, Wilson (1990) stated that:

- \* Only 24 percent of black students had earned a degree after six years.
- \* Only 20 percent of Hispanic students had done so.
- \* Fifty-four percent of Hispanic students and sixty-three percent of black students enrolled in four-year colleges had dropped out for good within six years (p. 10).

Oklahoma has the second largest Native American college enrollment in the United States, 8,014 (Evangelauf 1990). With enrollment of this number of individuals, Oklahoma educators may find it in their interest to retain these students in higher education. If so, they may wish to focus on keeping the already enrolled students and also on recruiting new ones.

Oklahoma has a large Native American population. In 1980, Census figures showed Oklahoma's Native American population to be 169,292 (Tulsa World 1983). Oklahoma public schools have 64,632 Native American students in attendance (Oklahoma State Department of

Education, 1989), which indicates a larger number of Native American students could enroll in higher education.

According to a report prepared for the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education in 1983, Native American students made up 3.6 percent (5,624) of the total enrollment (154,469) in public higher education in Oklahoma. College attendance by these students increased from 1983 to 1990. In spite of significant enrollment gains over the years, Native American students still participate in Oklahoma higher education at only 50 percent of the rate of other students (Oklahoma Higher Education Report, 1984).

According to the Oklahoma Higher Education Report (1984), Oklahoma colleges enroll 5.9 percent of all Native American students in the United States, but compared with the Native American population, 5.6 percent of the total, Native Americans are under-represented in Oklahoma higher education. This number is somewhat larger in 1990 due to the fact that more Native Americans have become more willing to state they are Indian than they have in the past. The dropout rate of Native American students in Oklahoma is 30.3 percent, compared with a rate of 27.2 percent for all students. Even though the progression rate of Native American students through the state system is the highest of any minority group, the low overall participation rate means a smaller potential pool of Native American graduates. Their participation in graduate and professional education is even less than at the undergraduate level (Oklahoma Higher Education Report, 1984).

### Nature of the Problem

Research examining success of transfer students in their new educational environment indicates the need for students to have a good academic background, economic stability, and social skills. Culturally engendered traits of Native Americans such as belief systems concerning worship and medicine, value systems, and concern for the needs of the tribe, might affect their ability to be successful in a transfer environment. It would be helpful to know what Native Americans consider barriers to their success as transfer students to make assumptions on possible changes in the education and infusion of this population into four-year college environments.

While most studies addressed the cultural conflict of the Native American student trying to live in the white man's world, no studies were found that specifically examined the cultural traits of Native Americans as contributing to students' perceptions of academic, cultural, and personal problems encountered when transferring from two-year institutions to four-year institutions in colleges of business.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this investigation was to identify what Native American business students transferring from two-year institutions perceived as problems that impacted on their success in business programs in the areas of academic, cultural, and personal aspects at

regional baccalaureate degree-granting state institutions in Oklahoma.

#### Scope and Limitations

This study was limited to information about Native American two-year transfer business students from the state-funded regional universities in the state of Oklahoma.

The population of this study was Native American students majoring in business at two-year colleges who transferred to four-year regional institutions in Oklahoma in the Fall of 1989. The study was also limited to the population of Native American students enrolled in each of the Oklahoma regional institutions at the time of the study.

#### Definitions

Native American - Identification of Native American heritage by the student at the time of enrollment in an institution of higher education.

Indian - Used as synonymous with Native American.

Regional University - An institution that includes both lower and upper division studies that lead to a bachelor's degree. It may further be defined as having a limited number of programs leading toward the first professional degree and graduate study below the doctoral level principally in teacher education.

College of Business - A college or school within a university that offers all of the programs in the area of business.

Ethnomethodology - A branch of sociology dealing with non-specialists' commonsense understanding of the structure and organization of society.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature centered on the examination of dissertations, journals in education, and education reports. In spite of the lengthy studies on transfer problems and four-year institutions, the major focus of this study was on minority students. Transfer processes of Native Americans were explored as to student characteristics and deterrents or problems. Indian education aspects included the cultural system, cultural conflict, effects of differences, and learning styles as they pertain to public education.

#### Transfer Process

Community college students are substantially less likely to complete a baccalaureate degree than those who initially enter a four-year institution. In Watkins' (1990) study, she found that one-third of the students enrolled in two-year colleges plan to continue their education, but less than a third of community college students in Texas, Tennessee, and California transferring to four-year schools were receiving associate or baccalaureate degrees after six years (Ginsberg and Bennett 1989). Since minority students are disproportionately more likely to enroll in community college than their nonminority counterparts, the premise is the majority of the

ones who do enroll in a four-year institution will not graduate.

A study by Ginsberg and Bennett (1989) found that an important measure of success in higher education is the level of attainment of students. They concluded that minorities do not fare very well. They also found that recruitment, retention, and success of minority students in higher education is a major concern for colleges and universities because minorities' attainment of bachelor's degrees has declined.

"One reason community college students are less likely to get a B.A. is because they have to transfer. It's like going from Washington to Los Angeles and transferring in Chicago. You might miss the plane" (Watkins 1990, p. 37).

#### Student Characteristics

According to Johnson (1987), community college transfer students, when compared with four-year college students, tend to be less self-confident socially and academically, to have lower academic ability and motivation, and to be half as likely to aspire to education beyond the baccalaureate degree. Johnson found that two-year college students have a strong vocational purpose for attending college, problems coping with academic demands of the university, and express a need for more faculty-student interaction. They also tend to generally be older, more likely to be married and have children, more likely to work and have less family income, and receive fewer scholarships or grants.

Volkwein, King, and Terenzini (1986) concluded that transfer students are likely to possess the increased maturity that typically comes with age. They have already made the initial adjustments in the transition from high school to college and are likely to have decided on specific academic and career goals. They change majors less frequently than freshmen and probably have a better sense of purpose and direction.

#### Deterrents or Problems

McIntosh (1987) reported that fewer cultural pressures are present at the community college and four-year college than at the universities. However, at the university level, Native Americans distrust the institution, have unrealistic concepts of rewards for education and expectations of the university environment, and lack proper academic counseling. Watkins (1990) indicated that unneeded complexity deters many minority students. She states streamlining the transfer process from two-year institutions to universities is critical if achievement of minority-group students in higher education is to be increased.

In Watkins' study (1990), perceived negative aspects of transferring included: having to make two transitions, losing credits while transferring, and feeling that college was a waste of time. Students tended to attribute problems in the transfer process to inadequate information and advice, faulty transfer arrangements, or ambiguities in printed information. Minority students in general were aware of guidelines for the transfer process, but because of



their cultural backgrounds, they each interpreted those guidelines differently.

Braxton, Brier, and Hossler (1990) determined problems encountered by four-year college students included the following:

- (1) not being able to take desired courses,
- (2) not being able to enroll in courses at convenient times,
- (3) difficulty balancing academic workload with demands at home or work,
- (4) being troubled by personal problems,
- (5) difficulty financing college expenses, and
- (6) difficulty taking desired courses (p. 243).

According to Falk and Aitken (1984, p. 10), additional reasons given for leaving school were:

1. Lack of transportation, clothing, medical expenses, and child care.
2. Lack of personal motivation.
3. Lack of good academic preparation in high school.
4. Lack of parental support.
5. Lack of individual faculty who took an interest in students.

Anderson (1974) states that both ability and socio-economic background affect college attendance, but ability has more influence. Personal and motivational factors may be more important determinants of college achievement than the socio-economic level of the parents. However, the majority of college dropouts come from lower socio-economic groups attending college.

According to Scott (1986), virtually every reference in the literature concerning American Indian students in institutions of higher learning tells the same story. One, smaller proportions of Indians than whites finish high school and go on to college. And two, Indians who do go to college are less likely to complete degree

programs than are white students.

Amiotte (1988) reported the following key problems of Native Americans:

1. Poor academic background--low scores in reading and math, and low level of parents' education.
2. Culture shock--non-competitive to competitive, rural to urban, Indian values versus white values.
3. Inadequate counseling and tutoring (p. 5).

#### Recommendations for Improvement

According to Amiotte (1988), by assuring in the college or university mission that minorities and poor people have access to their knowledge and learning at the same levels that the rest of society does, a step for improvement is made. Universities can become a physical presence in the minority community by forming relationships with minority community colleges, tribal colleges, and community-based colleges.

Other recommendations for improvement according to Palmer (1990) include:

1. College involvement in efforts to improve student academic skills before college matriculation.
2. Improved course and program articulation between 2- and 4 -year institutions.
3. Identification, assessment, counseling, and tracking of potential transfer students.
4. Development of information systems to perform tasks of informing students of transfer requirements and monitoring student progress toward goals (pp. 53-54).

And Falk and Aitken (1984) also made the following recommendations:

1. Indian student organizations.
2. Faculty and staff who are supportive and interested in Indian students.
3. Special counseling programs.

4. Indian studies programs.
5. Institutional commitment to improving the retention rate for Indian students.
6. Recruitment of Indian administrators and retention of all Indian personnel (p. 9).

And, too, Amiotte (1988) recommended the following:

1. More imaginative and effective recruiting.
2. Work on retention--monitoring, mentoring, advising.
3. A climate that welcomes and nurtures individuals from minority backgrounds.
4. More funding and employment (p. 6).

An Alaskan School District provides a post-secondary counselor for Native American students when they are about to graduate from high school. The counselor, who is knowledgeable of the backgrounds of the students and their families, takes on the responsibility of guiding these students through their college years, providing support and system know-how that middle class students routinely receive from their parents. This program is lodged in the central office of the K-12 district and is student-based, rather than institution-or mission-based. Upon implementation of the program, the dropout rate of this project fell from 50 to 16 percent (Kleinfeld, Cooper, and Kyle, 1987).

#### Indian Education

Tribal leadership encourages Indian youth to pursue formal studies. The current American Indian view of education is that education is the mechanism which enables Indian people to control their own destiny. Education will prove to be the key to preparing them for current and future employment opportunities and improving the quality of life for themselves and their tribe or native

community (National Education Association 1983).

The leadership also recognizes unalterable circumstances, such as language and culture, impede school performance. Educational institutions have difficulty bridging the gap between norms common to formal school structures and cultural values retained by Indian families and communities. Educators view differences in learning styles among children from diverse cultural groups as educational deficiencies or cultural deprivation (Red Horse, 1986).

Can one imagine what it feels like to be an Indian caught in a non-Indian system? Try to imagine being an American but your history is not in the American history books. Your government--while a legal part of the structure of governments--is not recognized by other governments. You can vote but are not part of the party system. All the things which you value and which give you identity are belittled or alien to your classmates. In short, you may study America, but in a myriad of ways you are excluded from it. Under these circumstances, consider whether or not enrolling in college is a rational act in an irrational situation (Tijerina and Biemer, 1988).

Being American Indian is no problem in itself; but being American Indian in a non-Indian world frequently is. They often feel somewhat alienated from the school environment. While the adjustments are greater for students raised on the reservation, youths raised off the reservation experience similar cultural adjustments (National Education Association, 1983).

Racism has been the cause of some of the problems Indians face and that racism still exists in subtle and not so subtle ways. One of the key ways it persists is in the thought that minorities must adopt the values of white society to gain knowledge and to take a full part in this country's bounty (Amiotte, 1983).

### Cultural System

Belief systems among Indians are sacred and holy and vary from tribe to tribe. Indians do not separate sacred from secular aspects of their life (Locust, 1988).

Locust (1988) indicates the following beliefs apply to the majority of tribal members:

1. A Supreme Creator exists. In this belief system lesser beings exist also.
2. Humans are threefold beings made up of a spirit, mind, and body.
3. Plants and animals, like humans, are part of the spirit world. The spirit world exists side by side with, and intermingles with, the physical world.
4. The spirit existed before it came into a physical body and will exist after the body dies.
5. Illness affects the mind and the spirit as well as the body.
6. Wellness is harmony in spirit, mind, and body.
7. Unwellness is disharmony in spirit, mind, and body.
8. Natural unwellness is caused by the violation of a sacred or tribal taboo.
9. Unnatural unwellness is caused by witchcraft.
10. Each of us is responsible for his or her own wellness (p. 317).

According to Sanders (1987), some of the differences between Indians and Anglos are:

- (1) Verbal skills are more highly prized by Anglos than by Indians, who hold reticence and nonverbal communication in high esteem.

- (2) Anglos see Indians as lacking time-management skills or being self-centered because of their present-time orientation.
- (3) Concern for family is evident in the high absentee record of Indian students. Any crisis in the home or within the family system will precipitate an absence (pp. 84-85).

Red Horse (1986) indicates that Indians relish competition between groups, but not between individuals. Indian students who are asked to answer a question that a peer has missed might choose to avoid embarrassing the other student. They are still taught to respect elders and teachers and to not speak unless spoken to.

Navajos are taught that time is infinite, that one must cooperate with others, be submissive, humble, and share with others, work to satisfy present needs, and be in harmony with nature. Disharmony within oneself causes physical and/or mental illness (Fleming, 1982).

Many fundamental Indian values are not compatible with American culture, and some are directly opposite to the principle of the competitive capitalistic order of the American society. The lifestyle of the Indian student is totally different from the Anglo; the Indian places high value on nature and on family and finds competition totally unacceptable (McIntosh, 1987).

McIntosh further stated that a primary goal of American post-secondary education is to enable individuals to achieve status and success in society. Society measures success by the material rewards which one accrues with the emphasis being on individual competition. American Indian culture, however, has goals that are neither competitive nor meritocratic. Instead, generosity,

reverence for the earth, and wisdom are basic values.

### Cultural Conflict

Locust (1988) argues that fundamental differences exist between the belief systems of American Indians and those of non-Indians, and lack of knowledge has led to discriminatory treatment of Indians.

Cultural deprivation or cultural conflict (or both) are cited repeatedly in explaining failure rates of Indian students. According to the cultural deprivation argument, Indian students do not fare well in school because of their relative economic disadvantages. The educational experience of Indians parallels that of poor whites and blacks from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. However, the cultural conflict argument offers a different explanation. Indians do poorly in school because the educational system has been one of the major battle grounds in the confrontation between Indian and white worlds. As the substance, networks, and activities of education in white schools typically champion white values and practices to the exclusion of Indian ones, fitting in and succeeding in school create special problems for Indian students committed to Indian culture (Scott, 1986).

Based on a report by the National Education Association (1983), the Indians believe that direct personal criticism and harsh discipline damage a child's self-image and are to be avoided. The report further stated that noncorporal means of discipline are preferred. When direct criticism of an American Indian is made by a teacher or other school official, strong reaction may occur since

this is seen as rude and disrespectful behavior.

Emphasis placed on time and scheduling may also cause problems. Most non-Indians are unaware that Native American cultures have an entirely different view of time. It is viewed as flowing, as always being with us. Many American Indian languages contain no word for time (National Education Association, 1983).

Another value centers around moderation in speech, coupled with keen listening and observational skills. When living in their own societies and seeing the same small groups of individuals daily, small talk was unnecessary. Being a good listener is highly valued. They have continued to develop a keen sense of perception that detects verbal insincerity in others. Most note fine details and are careful observers of nonverbal messages and signals. They are taught to be soft spoken and moderate in speech; yet, in the classroom, social behavior is measured by a student's ability to verbalize. Importance is placed on expressing one's individual opinion. The difference in degree of verbosity may cause some non-Indians to view them erroneously as shy, withdrawn, disinterested, or unsociable (National Education Association, 1983).

Most Native Americans have a low ego level and do not generally promote their individual needs or desires over those of others. They stress the importance of personal orientation over task orientation. School procedures emphasize individual, not group, accomplishments (National Education Association, 1983).

Native Americans have a tendency to avoid looking at others, particularly adults, directly in the eye as it is considered



disrespectful behavior. Among some tribes, prolonged eye-to-eye contact is associated with anger. Particularly in emotional moments, they tend to look away rather than possibly causing embarrassment to the individual who is angry or upset (National Education Association, 1983).

The American Indian people usually prefer to avoid disharmony and so withdraw from unpleasant situations. This accounts in part for being stereotyped as being stoical (National Education Association, 1983).

A cultural base must be developed or maintained. Values such as wisdom, bravery, respect for others, respect for the earth, generosity, fortitude, and sense of sacred time lend themselves very easily to such terms of modern leadership and future transformation of the world as sense of spirituality, information systems, entrepreneurship, sensitivity to employees and customers (and students), ecological awareness, caring for each other, persistence toward a vision, and having a sense of timing in tune with natural cycles (Amiotte, 1988).

#### Effects of Cultural Differences

Huffman, Sill, and Brokenleg (1986) found that college achievement for whites is related to social factors, such as high school grade point average and parental encouragement to attend school, whereas retention of native cultural traditions seems to contribute to higher education success for Sioux students. Even though the factors may be the same, they affect whites and Indians

differently.

The minority status of being Indian revolves around attachment to Indian culture. To go to college, Indian students typically leave small towns or reservations in which Indian ways are meaningful and enter different environments. Those fully comfortable with and committed to white ways are better able to cope with the college experience than are Indian students culturally attached to the heritages of their tribes (Scott, 1986).

McIntosh (1987) found that lack of previous educational skills was the top reason for dropping out of school. Other reasons listed were: financial problems and lack of role models.

Some have limited or nonexistent English proficiency. They are likely to have been raised among other relatives who speak their native language. Due to the fact that their grasp of English may not be strong or fluent, they may need a longer time to formulate their responses which may affect their degree of verbal skills (National Education Association, 1983).

The strain on Native American children of trying to learn mainstream ways while grappling with the meaning of their heritage remains a central problem in education. It produces what many now view as a self-perpetuating cycle of low self-esteem and academic difficulties. Success comes at the expense of culture (Red Horse, 1986).

Irreversible damage has been done to the self-image of many American Indian youngsters after hearing years of derogatory, erroneous, or stereotyped information about their culture. Their

feelings of self-worth are diminished (National Education Association, 1983).

The Navajo say that many of their kids are ashamed of themselves. They don't know who they are or where they come from. A lot of them are so ashamed they won't even say their Indian names in public (Red Horse, 1986).

Where Indian characteristics and values are not recognized, Indian students who cherish Indian ways must suppress that regard or run the risk of negative evaluation. Negative evaluation leads to one of four responses: the student can try harder to be "less Indian," change the criteria by which he or she is being evaluated, accept devaluation and develop poor self-esteem, or withdraw from the institutional setting altogether. Indian students committed to Indian ways frequently choose to "escape" (Scott, 1986).

Universities expect the Indian student to blend bi-culturally just as any ethnic minority in order to succeed academically. All are, theoretically, treated equal and this in itself is a form of prejudice or ignorance. McIntosh (1987) believes there should be individual assessment based on inheritance and environment, that to treat a heterogeneous group of people who differ in their capabilities, experience, and training as equally prepared for education is unrealistic.

According to Scott (1986), greater measured ability, higher socio-economic background, and a higher percentage of "non-Indian" blood are expected to reduce attachment to Indian culture, facilitate subsequent integration into the university community, and

thereby increase the likelihood of completing college. The more affluent the student's family or the more "non-Indian" blood the student has, the less likely it is that he or she is committed to Indian culture.

### Learning Styles

In determining the effects of cultural differences on educational practice, studies are normally concerned with issues of language, learning patterns, and preferred communication styles. Seldom do they consider how differences in belief systems might affect educational styles (Locust, 1988).

Visual learning is an important part of the Indian culture. Because most public schools rely on verbal modes of learning, experts say, they may actually work against the strengths of Indian children, such as keen analytical skills and unusually refined spatial abilities (Red Horse, 1986).

Indians learn by observation, manipulation, and experimentation in their homes, but in school the learning experience is limited to verbal instruction, reading, and writing (Swisher and Deyhle, 1990).

According to Heerman (1984), by ignoring the Indian culture, the school system has also ignored the only psychologically feasible way of motivating the Indian student, namely by his value system.

### Recommendations

Problems result in part from cultural and socio-economic differences of non-Indian teachers with those of Indian students.

To motivate and attract American Indian students, there is a need to understand their cultural background, value systems, goals, and needs (Kinzer, 1972).

Foreman (1984) believes that low self-esteem, poverty, confusion, and dismay are price tags of being American Indian. Any change in American Indian education would have to be accompanied by massive societal change, and that would have to occur in each local community suited to that particular setting. Teachers and educational systems can provide little real learning to the child from another culture without some mutual understanding of the differences in the two cultures. This should include the value systems inherent in the settings and the persons within them.

The university Indian programs that reinforce a student's connection to parents, community, and tribe are the more effective ones. Many such programs hire Indian students during breaks to recruit new students from home (Tijerina and Biemer, 1988).

Little Soldier (1989) discusses how to teach Native Americans in ways that are compatible with their culture. He contends that our schools have not done much to improve the self-esteem of Indian students and that cooperative learning could help students learn to accept one another. Cooperative learning has been found to be useful in raising academic achievement and promoting interracial friendships in urban classrooms. Learning styles and social and communication patterns of the students need to be addressed in the classroom. If Indians are to have a wider array of choices in their adult lives, our schools must be more responsive to the major

problems in Indian education and more willing to experiment to find solutions.

Sanders (1987) provides suggestions for creating an environment and methods for classroom teaching designed to enhance the development of a positive self-image that will facilitate academic success for American Indian students.

New programs designed to help Indian students adjust are deemed necessary because traditional support services available to all students are underutilized by Indians (McIntosh, 1987).

Wright (1985) conducted a study of special student services and their impact upon the achievement and retention of American Indian college students. Special student programs provide supportive academic personal services to disadvantaged students.

American Indian students have particular need of support services which can address their unique academic, social, cultural, and psychological needs. Many such programs and services have been developed at colleges and universities in an attempt to meet such needs (Wright, 1985).

Recent research has identified social integration with whites as one of the strongest predictors of academic success among Indian college students. Race, ethnicity, and socio-economic status affect rates of success, not simply because of direct effects on academic performance, but also because they determine the chances of being accepted in a school's social system. Awareness of one's place in the social arena is tightly tied to self-evaluation and self-esteem. Fitting into university life can enhance the emotional, social, and

technical resources needed to succeed academically (Scott, 1986).

In education, Indian students have been counseled to become "less Indian" as a conscious strategy for doing better in school. If this is what is meant by success, many Indians would not consider dropping out of school a mark of failure. For many, success in education means mastering the whites' ways on one's own terms by maintaining some commitment to Indian values and tradition. In essence, the issue is not whether assimilation should take place but rather how much, how fast, and under whose direction (Scott, 1986).

One reason for the high dropout rate of American Indian students is due to poor self-image. It is important to the students to feel wanted and part of the school. They need to feel accepted as individuals and as American Indians. Participation in extracurricular activities is seen as a way to counter the dropout problem. Infusion of positive, factual, and updated material about their cultures in the curriculum is critical (McIntosh, 1987).

It has been demonstrated that American Indian students can be assisted to remain in school longer and become productive citizens. This can be done by gaining information on the students' tribal background and cultural values, improving the curriculum by inserting culture specific facts to maintain student interests, recognizing student needs and concerns, improving relationships between the American Indian community and the school, and learning new teaching strategies recommended by experienced educators of American Indian youths (National Education Association, 1983).

According to the National Education Association (1983), American Indian students must begin to feel better about themselves. With an improved self-image, they will be able to envision themselves as successful contributors to their people and can recognize the unlimited opportunities that are available.

### Tribal Colleges

Tribal colleges emerged as the century's most significant advancement in Indian education because they are innovative in their instruction, methodology, and delivery of post-secondary educational services to the peoples they serve (Wright, 1985).

Wright (1985) indicated the major strength of tribal colleges is that local control enables the tribes to meet the unique academic-cultural needs of the communities they serve. They make post-secondary education accessible, affordable, and culturally appropriate. Indian students prefer tribal colleges because they encounter social isolation and alienation at off-reservation institutions and other colleges are too far from home.

Effects of Attendance. The tribal college meets the unique educational needs of reservation American Indians better than any existing institution of higher education. Preliminary data suggest that an Indian student who attends a tribal college before transferring to a four-year off-reservation institution is twice as likely to graduate with a bachelor's degree (Wright, 1985).

According to Wright (1985), Indian students now have the option of attending a post-secondary institution in which their cultural



integrity is respected and in which their tribal heritage is not ignored or actively repressed. Students are now attending community colleges who would not have in the past because the colleges are part of the community.

Tribal colleges, as entities of tribal governments, promote the self-determination aspirations of Indian people. The colleges also strive to integrate traditional disciplinary knowledge of mainstream society into their academic programs (Badwound and Tierney, 1988).

Population. Tribal colleges generally serve from 51 to 480 students who are widely dispersed on reservations. The communities served by these colleges are culturally distinct and socio-economically disadvantaged--experiencing massive unemployment, extreme poverty, major health problems, high incidences of alcoholism, suicide, and other social problems. The typical student is a 30 year-old married woman with 2 children. She is working, is often the sole support of her dependents, and has poor academic preparation and poverty level income (Badwound and Tierney, 1988).

Programs. All tribal community colleges offer the study of tribal culture and history in a variety of formats. Most have distinct programs which focus on local tribal culture and language. Group dynamics, processes, and interactions are critically important and concern for group is demonstrated by constant interaction to share ideas, information, and problems (Badwound and Tierney, 1988).

Five major educational program goals that tribal colleges share are: (1) adult/continuing education, (2) general or transfer

education, (3) vocational education, (4) service to the tribe(s), and (5) preservation and transmission of tribal culture (Wright, 1985).

#### Summary

A number of researchers have conducted studies of the two-year transfer process. They have identified student characteristics and deterrents or problems. In doing so, they have related these principally to Caucasians, blacks, and Hispanics. Those studies focusing on American Indian students did not involve the interview technique utilized in this study, did not examine Native American students in a particular academic discipline, and suggested that further research was needed. Recommendations for improving the academic experiences for minorities generally demanded better programs from institutions and cited the need for additional research in various areas pertaining to minority education.

In tribal colleges, Indian education included public and tribal education. Aspects identified in public education emphasized "white man's" culture and learning styles. Indian education focused on tribal culture, cultural differences, and learning styles. Recommendations for improving Indian education were understanding, community reinforcement, different teaching methods and curriculum, and elimination of prejudice.

Tribal colleges were found to be of significant value to Indians because they promote the culture within their programs and relate to the population they serve. They are also located within

the communities so the Indians do not have to travel far from home to attend. It was also found that students who attend tribal colleges are less likely to drop out of school before attaining a degree.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to identify what Native American business students transferring from two-year institutions perceived as problems that impacted on their success in business programs in the areas of academic, cultural, and personal aspects at regional baccalaureate degree-granting state institutions in Oklahoma.

This investigation is a qualitative study in that it focuses on the perspectives of Native American transfer students. Ethnomethodology is deemed appropriate in this type of study. According to Foreman (1984), ethnomethodology is most effective when the researcher interacts on a one-to-one basis with individuals in the study.

#### Population

The population for this study consisted of all Native American business students, which was comprised of 35, who transferred to an Oklahoma regional educational institution in the Fall of 1989. The population was identified by representatives of each regional institution.

### Procedures

Each of the five state regional institutions were personally visited by the investigator early in the fall semester of 1989. Lists and schedules were obtained of those Native American students who first transferred to the College of Business at those institutions in the Fall of 1989. The participating universities were Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, Central State University in Edmond, Southwestern State University in Weatherford, East Central State University in Ada, and Southeastern State University in Durant. Northwestern State University in Alva did not have any Native American transfer students enrolled in the College of Business in the Fall of 1989.

Visits were made to the Registrars and Academic and Student Affairs Deans at each of the institutions to obtain names and schedules of Native American business students who had transferred to the four-year institutions. The professors of the classes on the students' schedules were contacted and permission was granted to talk with the students as they came to classes or as they left classes. At that time, the interviewer explained what was being done, what the procedure would be for interviewing, and appointments were made for interviews of the students.

For the initial visit, a two-day trip was made to Edmond and Weatherford and a two-day trip was made to Ada and Durant. A trip was not necessary to Tahlequah as the investigator resided there. During interviewing, three days each were spent at Northeastern

State University and Central State University, two at Southwestern, and one each at East Central and Southeastern.

Participation in the study was voluntary and anonymity guaranteed. Students names were not recorded on paper or on recording tapes. Students were aware they could withdraw at any time. Except for one student, the students agreed to have the interviews tape recorded. That student was uncomfortable with the recorder so written notes were recorded instead. Written notes were also recorded for one student who was interviewed by telephone.

A total of 12 students were interviewed out of a possible 35. Several attempts were made by telephone and by personal visits to classes to contact each student of the 35. One student who agreed to be interviewed did not keep the appointment. One other simply did not have the time available. The rest were absent from classes at the time contacts were made and then could not be reached by telephone.

The first interviews were conducted at Northeastern State University. Five students were contacted and interviewed. Three students were contacted and interviewed at Central State. Two students at Southwestern State were contacted and interviewed, and one student was contacted and interviewed at both East Central and Southeastern State.

Interviews were scheduled in the investigator's office at Northeastern State University. At Central State University, a conference room in the Student Union was made available for interviews. At the other schools, classrooms not being used were

utilized for the interviews. Interviews lasted 20 to 45 minutes depending on how much time the student had available and how long the student wished to talk. The interviewer was limited in that a list of predetermined questions could not be asked each student as this study was qualitative in nature. However, problem areas, which included academic, cultural, and personal aspects, were identified from the review of literature, and the interviewer directed questions to those areas. These areas are listed in Appendix D. After the students read and signed the consent form, which is contained in Appendix F, they were asked if they had any problems in transferring to the four-year institution. The interviewer then made comments or questions as deemed appropriate.

#### Data Analysis

The data analysis technique used for this study was induction. "Generalizations are not found in nature; they are active creations of the mind" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 113). Induction is a generalization process which enables the researcher to move from specific facts or data to general conclusions, unlike the deductive analytic process in which analysis moves from general premises to specific conclusions. Induction is an open process that "goes beyond the bounds of the particulars, making assertions that presumably apply not only to its generating particulars but to all other similar particulars" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 113). This process results in the creation of probable inferences from the data collected (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

## Research Criteria

Traditional quantitative research criteria include internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity. A qualitative study requires alternative definitions. These criteria are termed credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

### Credibility

Research must be conducted in such a manner as to ensure that the subject is accurately identified and described. To achieve this, the researcher attempted to adequately state the parameters of the research setting, population, and theoretical framework in order for the research to be valid.

Names of universities with which participants were associated are included in Appendix A. A list of contact persons at the universities is in Appendix B. Appendix C contains a list of the names of two-year institutions that were identified as ones that had been attended by the participants. Appendix D contains a list of the general areas addressed in the interviews. One interview transcript is included in Appendix E, and a copy of the Consent Form is in Appendix F.

### Transferability

Transferability takes the place of generalizability. As complete a data base as is possible will be provided so that those who wish to apply this study to their own situations may make their own transferability judgments (Lincoln & Guba, 1989). Transfer



ability can be achieved if the investigator provided sufficient descriptive data to enable anyone seeking to make a generalization in determining problems encountered in the process of Native American students transferring from two-year institutions to colleges of business in four-year regional institutions in Oklahoma.

#### Dependability

Methodological changes and shifts in constructions are expected products of an emergent design dedicated to increasingly sophisticated constructions. Far from being threats to dependability, such changes and shifts are hallmarks of maturing - and successful - inquiry (Lincoln and Guba, 1989).

#### Confirmability

"Confirmability is concerned with assuring that data, interpretations, and outcomes of inquiries are rooted in contexts and persons apart from the evaluator and are not simply figments of the evaluator's imagination" (Lincoln & Guba, 1989, p. 243). Data sources must be documented and interpretations of data flow from logic.

These four criteria were achieved through member checking and an audit trail.

Member checks. Member checking is the process of ascertaining that the researcher's interpretations of what a respondent said are truly what was meant by that respondent. Member checks were

conducted at the end of each interview so that respondents could clarify, offer additional information, or confirm facts and interpretations. Member checking takes the place of the traditional method of triangulation because triangulation assumes that phenomena do not change from person to person, and, therefore, can be checked. As used in this study, member checking verifies that the constructions of reality collected are those intended by respondents, while triangulation verifies specific facts related to the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1989).

Audit trail. The audit trail consisted of interview transcripts and tapes and additional interview notes and documents.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

The purpose of this investigation was to identify what Native American business students transferring from two-year institutions perceived as problems that impacted on their success in business programs, in the areas of academic, cultural, and personal aspects, at regional baccalaureate degree-granting state institutions in Oklahoma. Those Native American business transfer students were identified and interviews conducted at each of the regional state institutions.

Information presented in Table II is a compilation of the categories deduced from interviews held with each of the participants. These categories identify general information on the backgrounds of the participants, perceived problems associated with attendance at a four-year institution, and activities associated with college life.

Four categories of responses were not of sufficient importance or insufficient information was given by the participants to be included in this analysis. They are:

1. Size of community from which the student was raised,
2. Making friends,
3. Utilization of free time,
4. Grade average attained.

TABLE I  
CLASSIFICATION OF GENERAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND  
CATEGORIES OF CONCERNS OF NATIVE AMERICAN  
TRANSFER STUDENTS

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Information relating to the personal background of participants:

Tribal membership of participant or family observance  
tribal customs of participant or family

Information relating to transfer and attendance at four-year institutions:

Transition from junior college  
Credit transfer from junior college  
Enrollment at four-year institution  
Obtaining financial aid at four-year institution  
Advisers at four-year institution  
Teachers at four-year institutions  
Type of classroom instruction preferred  
Types of examinations preferred  
Housing while attending a four-year institution  
Discrimination felt while attending a four-year institution

Activities associated with college life:

Participation in sports at four-year institution  
Participation in student organizations at four-year institution  
Participation in Indian Clubs

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One of the areas cited by researchers that impacts on Native American students is adjusting to a different society, regardless of the academic discipline the student chooses. The comments made by the participants did not reveal this as a problem. While these individuals recognize themselves as "Cherokee" or "Seminole," they

do not believe that tribal designation has any effect on their performance as a college student. One participant did make the comment that there was a need in tribal management for Indian individuals who have a business administration background. Another commented that most Indians major in psychology or sociology and that they do not need to be analyzed, they need jobs.

Information in Table II gives a breakdown of the tribes represented in the study and the number of participants from each tribe.

TABLE II  
TRIBAL MEMBERSHIP OF NATIVE AMERICAN  
TRANSFER STUDENTS

Tribe	Number of Transfer Students
Cherokee	3
Osage	2
Seminole	1
Creek	1
Cheyenne	1
No tribe indicated	<u>4</u>
Total	12

Comments regarding tribal membership and possible impact on the student include:

We do not talk about being Indian. I am Cherokee and Osage.

I am an Osage Indian. I don't think it matters as to how well you do in college. Mother is a full blood. She speaks the language. I understand it but cannot speak it very well. It doesn't matter.

I am a full blood Cherokee. It doesn't make any difference as far as school is concerned.

Other comments concerning tribal membership included:

I am Creek-Seminole.

My grandfather was the last Chief of the Osage.

The second category related to personal background is that of the observance of tribal customs by the participants or by their family members. In most instances tribal customs were not practiced by the participants. Only two individuals made peripheral or indirect connections with customs and connection with college or a need for higher education. These comments include:

My father had a bachelor's degree from (Name of University). He practiced customs to some extent. He always emphasized the importance of education. Dr. Pratt, an Osage here, has a doctor's degree and was a role model for me. I have known him since I lived in Hominy.

Indian customs? I don't participate. My mother is Indian. My dad is German. Mom will go and watch, but she doesn't participate.

I do not observe tribal customs. My grandfather is one-half Indian. He is quiet and gentle. He never hurt anybody. If he says something, it is usually funny.

We do not observe tribal customs in our home.

My family partially observes Indian customs,  
probably as much as some.

My daughters dance for fame, fortune, and fun. Tribal customs are very important in our family. We have a big celebration once a year. That is our religion.

The next class of categories derived from an examination of the responses of the participants relates to their transfer, adjustment, and life at a four-year institution.

The first category identifies comments from participants as they related with transition from the junior college. These comments include:

If I had it to do over again, I would stay at the junior college for two years. I only stayed one. I would have taken all the basics there because they were easier there than here. I have to spend too much time on them here and less time on my business courses.

The shock of a bigger school--the only other problem I see is that classes are different here. At the junior college it's just like high school. Classes are harder; lectures are more--higher level, maybe.

A junior college definitely helps in the transition from a small high school to a four-year college. Most of my friends attended two-year colleges.

Junior college is good for some people. The work is not equivalent. There's more additional help at the junior college. My

classes were not harder than high school. Instructors here do not help when you have problems.

I did not have any problems with transfer.

The next category deals with transfer of credits and their acceptance at the senior institution. The comments include:

No particular problems transferring. I had to retake word processing. They use different machines. I had to retake it because of the machines, not the course level.

The main problem is that you have to retake some of the classes. Marketing class was 2000 level at (name of junior college). I also had to retake a three-hour speech class because it was only two hours at (name of junior college).

I didn't take a computer course at junior college, and I found out I had to take it to graduate. At junior college, they do not let you know what you are going to need at the four-year college.

I took three semesters and one summer course with computers and the computer courses didn't transfer. I wanted to go to (name of junior college) but couldn't afford it. I found a lot of my courses would not transfer to (name of junior college). I wish they would have set rules (statewide articulation). (Name of junior college) said everything I had would transfer. I only had one that would not transfer. This is a problem. Some advisers at (name of junior college) were accurate. I know people who lost hours transferring. Advisers did not know what other colleges would accept. Students should check with a four-year school themselves and not depend on advisers.



Transfer of credits is the only thing I had trouble with. They are nice about getting people to come here. But once I got down here it was difficult to get someone to talk to me about my credits. At junior college, I took marketing and management. I didn't think they would accept them for higher division so I put them on enrollment for a retake. I expected to retake them again. They didn't tell me that classes would be accepted.

The transfer of hours was probably my fault. I should have gone in the Summer and gone over my hours. They were too busy in the Fall and it was too late to change classes. I am having to double up now. I took 18 last semester so I can graduate.

I couldn't transfer a 2000 level, same course, because it needed to be a 3000 level course. It will probably help me to take it over.

The next area concerns the enrollment process and problems encountered at four-year institutions.

I had conflicts in scheduling and cannot get instructors I can learn from.

Some classes are offered only in the Spring and Fall. They told me too late so I have to take an extra semester.

Getting transferred is hard. Friends made a trip here and couldn't enroll because it was the wrong day. There are too many rules and they're too strict. Some business classes were closed and that affects when I can graduate.

Punctuality is important in enrolling. I have not had a problem with classes being cancelled.

One of the more important concerns of college students today is financial aid. The information obtained from these transfer students reflected their concerns.

You never know how much you are going to get. I won't find out for next year until the middle of the Summer.

I have financial aid. There were quite a few delays. I feel that every time I have financial aid, there is a delay. Once I received the information back a couple of months later when it was too late that I couldn't do anything. They are not punctual. There is no one there when you turn it in to go over to see if information is correct. I didn't receive my loan from last year until this year. They did let me go on the assumption that my loan would come through.

It doesn't make any difference if you are Indian or not. The financial aid office at (name of university) is incompetent. They misplaced my papers three times. There was also late notification for deadlines.

This semester I still don't have financial aid. They said it would be the first of July. This is the first time it's been late. They put my tuition on hold, but I don't have books.

I have financial aid. I work part-time. If you work, you don't get as much financial aid. It doesn't pay to work. My mother took care of the paperwork.

We had to wait two days in the financial aid office. There were about 100 people on the list.

I had work study one year. I got it, but I didn't know it until second week. Then I didn't know I was supposed to go find the job.

Other comments related to financial aid included:

I work about 20 hours a week.

I had a summer job in 1988, but it didn't work out.

I work at (name of Country Club) and go to school.

The next area concerns advisers at four-year institutions. The problems were diverse and include:

I have seen my business adviser once. I have been to her office several times to discuss my major, but I've only seen her once.

I don't think I have an adviser in business. When I transferred, the adviser gave me a piece of paper with courses on it. I did get a notice that my adviser had been changed. At (name of junior college) the adviser checked on your progress periodically. Here at (name of university), you enroll yourself and you find out if you have taken everything to graduate. They just don't help you here. My friend's adviser couldn't even help him on which classes he needed to take.

Counselors (advisers) are not helpful. No help at all. When I first declared business as my major, I had to talk to them. They make you feel small. I don't like to have to talk to them. They make changes for no reason. I'm paying the bill, so I should take the classes I want to unless there is a reason. If so, they should tell me why. Students are scared to talk to advisers. They are

always in a hurry to get you out of their office.

It doesn't matter what kind of student you are: black, white, or red. You get more done on your own.

I have a good adviser and this semester is okay.

My adviser didn't know anything about jobs or even the graduate program. He told me to go see someone else. I just scheduled myself.

The advisers cause me stress. I need their help, but they don't want to see me or have time for me.

I just go to see him when I have to and that's to get my schedule signed.

I don't like talking to mine.

She's here most of the time. Whenever I asked her about my GPA, she said I only had to take six hours next summer. The registrar told me I had to bring my GPA up in my major, so I had to enroll in another class. My adviser didn't tell me this. I kept asking her so I wouldn't have this happen.

Closely related to opinions of advisers is that of teachers.

Four of the subjects offered comments concerning their instructors.

These comments are:

At (name of junior college) I knew the teachers. I don't know the teachers here. I don't seem to communicate with the teachers here. You could go to their office and talk with them, but I don't feel comfortable doing that here.

At the junior college all the teachers know your name. You don't know your professors here.

The teachers at (name of junior college) will go out of their way to help you.

Transfer students have the last choice of teachers and no one tells you anything about them.

When asked about kinds of classes the students had and which they preferred, comments generated concerning instructional procedures included:

I prefer hands on. I do better where you work on it in class and can do it right there rather than take it home.

I like my classes in my major field best. I like group participation because you get to know the teacher and other students. My speech class (name of junior college) was participation.

It depends on what they are teaching. Lecture is better if it is difficult. In my computer class the instructions are in the book and you learn from doing it over and over again.

I prefer group instruction to lecture. It is easier to learn in group discussion type classes.

Most of the classes I have taken here are hands on classes.

Microcomputer applications, records management. I have had only a few lecture classes.

I've had one class in group participation. That was business communications.

I prefer lecture courses, which is all I have.

The classes at (name of junior college) helped me. English was probably easier at (name of junior college).

Most of my classes are lecture. I prefer taking notes.

I prefer lecture to group type classes.

I have lecture classes here.

I don't care for lecture classes. I like to get involved myself--learn hands on.

I prefer lecture classes and computer classes where you work on your own.

Lecture classes are boring. I like to get involved in group activities. My favorite classes are economics and finance.

I have all kinds of classes. My favorite is class participation. The teacher lets the class control class, but he doesn't test on the interesting part. I don't like this class because I don't know what to study. The material isn't covered thoroughly.

You read the chapter and have a quiz. Then you discuss the material in the book to know what the test will cover.

The next group of comments relate to the kinds of examinations students indicated that they preferred and some comments relating to the kinds of exams that they have had.

Most of my exams are multiple choice and essay. I prefer multiple choice. I didn't think I was that good at writing. My teachers say I am above average. Essay is okay if you know the material.

All of my exams have been objective except one in business communications last semester. He gave 13 essay questions on one exam.

I prefer objective. I can't think of what to say on essay.

I don't prefer multiple choice because when you get down to it, you either know it or not. Multiple choice is a guessing game. I've had two essay type tests. I like fill-in-the-blank. I made 98 on 5 essay questions.

The type of tests I've been given depends on the class. I prefer multiple choice exams. If there are 20 essay questions, you don't have enough time. With multiple choice I can usually find the right answer as long as it's not too particular.

All my tests are multiple choice. I like essay questions better because in multiple choice questions you make a choice. In essay you can explain yourself. They're easier. I have had one essay test in all the time I have been here.

I have multiple choice, true-false tests here. With essay you can tell what you know. I like it better.

I hate True-False. They pick out one sentence that may or may not be important. You have a 50-50 chance of guessing. I like objective if the right answer is there and the teacher doesn't try to be tricky. Essay I like too because you can say something and get some points. I like it where the test is half and half. I hate six chapter tests.

All the tests that I have had here are multiple choice. I had never seen a scantron sheet before. I can't believe you have to pay for the sheets. At this school, you have to pay for everything.

All of my classes have been multiple choice on scantron. I'm taking my first essay test this year. I think I prefer You can

show your knowledge better than with multiple choice. You can guess at multiple choice.

I prefer multiple choice. I had a 15 essay type test. It was difficult.

Comments relating to living arrangements or housing were also diverse. They included:

I have trouble keeping it going. I wish I had gone back to the dorm. I liked having people around all the time. Studying is easier in an apartment. I room with one other girl.

I live in the dorm and everything is fine and in good shape.

I will be moving out of the dorm next semester. I don't like the living environment. I will be moving out. There won't be anyone to tell me to be quiet.

We bought a house when we came to (name of university). My husband is going to Optometry school for four years.

The first two years I lived on campus. Now I live off campus. I had no problems with housing because the basketball coach took care of it.

The dorm isn't bad. It has a good study environment. If it gets noisy, I go to the library. The older dorms are noisier.

I live in an apartment at (name of university) and was in the dorms at (name of junior college). We had to come early to find an apartment. We had to live in (name of city) first because we couldn't find an apartment here.

My housing was all taken care of when I arrived through my scholarship.



I'm on financial aid. I didn't have any problems.

The next collection of comments concerns impressions relating to discrimination. They include:

I have never run into any problems being a minority, American Indian.

I don't feel part of a minority group, but I don't look much like an Indian. With friends we kid around about being an Indian.

I don't feel like a minority. Around Ponca City, there are a lot of reservations: Red Rock, Otoe, Tonkawa. People from there I know don't feel they are a minority. They aren't considered minority here.

(Name of university) doesn't have any tolerance for the fact that my family comes before coming to class.

I don't feel I'm in a minority. Most people don't think of me as an Indian. I was not enough Indian to get a scholarship.

I really don't have any problem with being a minority, but you can't tell that I'm Indian.

I haven't noticed any prejudices being Indian. In ever even thought about it. It might be to my benefit because of my tuition being paid by the Indians.

The last category deals with three concerns which relate to extra-curricular activities. These three concerns are:

Participation in sports  
Membership in student organizations  
Participation in an Indian Club

The comments submitted by participants concerning involvement in sports include:

I think it silly to think that just because you are Indian that you play sports different.

I know one coach who wanted blacks and Indians to play sports-- probably because he got some money or the school got some money.

I've run across only one Indian golfer.

Most of the comments relating to participation in sports made no reference to minorities or Indians.

Golf is harder to get into than most sports because most high schools don't have it. It's not real competitive. In high school, golfers are not the big athletes. It's considered the pansy sport. Golf is an expensive sport. You have to have connections or money. You don't see a lot of black people in golf. It's more a country club type sport. If my Dad hadn't been a golf professional, I probably wouldn't be in it.

I'm involved in intramural sports, but not clubs. I play golf here in (name of city). It's an expensive hobby. I have borrowed equipment. I see females that play better than I do.

I played football and wrestled in high school.

Relatively few comments were provided concerning school clubs.

Those that were offered include:

I don't belong to student organizations. I play racquetball and walk.

I'm married and I don't have time for clubs.

It has been difficult getting used to being here and getting away from everyone at home. That was hard for me but I don't think joining a club will help.

I belong to the Accounting Club.

I joined the Accounting Club but have a conflict because I work from 11:00 to 6:00 in the office.

I probably need to join an organization. My husband has joined the Optometry Club.

I belong to the Collegiate Secretaries International.

I'm active in Phi Beta Lambda.

I attend Christian Fellowship and activities on the floor of the dorm. I've had to study more this year.

The last comments concern membership and participation in Indian Clubs. Relatively few of the individuals made any comments relating to belonging to or participating in Indian Club activities. The comments of those that did include:

I would join the Indian Club. The Indian counselor is good to visit with but is long-winded.

I received one thing one time from the Indian Club. I couldn't find them if I had to.

#### Summary of the Data

This investigation was designed to solicit comments of students enrolled at the four-year state universities of Oklahoma in the discipline of Business, who were identified as Native Americans, and who had transferred from a two-year community or junior college.

The data was compiled and a summation of the data follows.

The participants in this study represented five Indian tribes. Four participants indicated no tribal membership. The comments of the participants revealed that they did not see any relationship of tribal membership and the success or lack of success at the universities they attended.

Comments relating to the practice of tribal customs are viewed as not having any relationship with retention and success of these students at four-year institutions. Generally speaking, tribal customs were not practiced by the individuals. One particular subject noted that the practice of tribal customs was their religion.

The next class of categories views the students adjustment to the specifics of enrollment, financial aid, and general adjustment to life at a four-year institution.

The first of concerns in this category relates with transition from a two-year college to a four-year college. Most of the subjects felt that the two-year college experience was important in the adjustment of getting away from home, and responding to the different types of demands confronting college students as opposed to high school students. The specific problems encountered centered on their perceived failure of communications between two-and four-year institutions and the affiliation agreements existing between two-year and four-year institutions. This was directed more specifically to courses in the major discipline, business administration, as opposed to difficulties encountered in transfer

of general education requirements.

The next area, the enrollment process, communication problems appear to be a major concern also. Some of the participants had problems because of insufficient information concerning the exact time of enrollment, others had problems in that desired classes were closed. Both of these can be related either to insufficient information or the fact that the decision to attend a particular institution was made after pre-enrollment periods or enrollment information sessions were carried on by four-year institutions.

Most of the participants had problems with getting financial aid which included uncomfortable relationships with the financial aid office or financial aid being delayed for a variety of reasons. None of the participants identified these problems being related to the fact that they were Indian. Uncertainty of amount of financial aid and when they were to receive the aid were common comments.

The next area of concern identifies problems encountered with availability of advisers, competence of advisers, and a comparison of the functioning of the adviser at four-year and two-year schools. The general feeling of the Native American students interviewed is that advisers at the four-year institutions are not available when needed, information that they give is frequently incorrect, and a general feeling of mistrust or incompetence of four-year school advisers is present.

Comments of comparison of advisers of four-year and two-year schools identified a closer or "parental" nurturing by advisers of two-year schools.

Closely related is the next area dealing with differences between instructors at four-year and two-year schools. The general view is that there was a closer identification with teachers at two-year schools than at four-year institutions. Comments generally centered around the warmth of the teachers at the community colleges and the "coldness" of teachers at four-year schools.

When comments relating to the type of classroom instruction preferred many indicated "hands-on" or laboratory arrangement as being preferred. Some did indicate a preference for lecture procedure, particularly for difficult subject matter.

As to testing procedures, a significant majority of the students preferred objective type examinations. Some comments were made concerning the fact that on essay examinations writing most anything will make it possible to get some points. A note was made concerning objective type examination in that you either know the material or you do not.

No general interpretation could be made concerning housing arrangements. Most preferred non-dormitory living arrangements even though three of the participants commented on the fact that dormitory life offered opportunity to study.

When making comments concerning instances of discrimination, all students felt that there was no discrimination and they did not feel as though they were minority students. Another comment that was made was the fact that they lived in an environment where there were Indians all around them and, therefore, there were no instances of discrimination.

The concluding comments made concerned participation in sports, student organizations, and Indian Clubs. The general impression gained was that these were not significant concerns of the participants in this study and there were no fundamental anti-Indian sentiments in these clubs. Most participated in those clubs that were related to their major interest in school, such as Accounting Clubs, Secretarial Science Clubs and other subject-related organizations.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

The focus of this study was to identify what Native American business students transferring from two-year institutions perceived as problems that impacted on their success at regional baccalaureate degree-granting state institutions in Oklahoma.

Interviews were conducted with Native American business transfer students enrolled at the regional schools in Oklahoma in the Fall of 1989. They were so designed as to elicit information regarding academic, cultural, and personal problems and their impact on the success of the students. Since this was a qualitative study, no list of predetermined questions were utilized. Only general areas were addressed.

Thirty-five students were identified at five of the six regional institutions. Northern State University had no Native American students enrolled in the Fall of 1989. Students were contacted and 12 students were available to be interviewed. The interviews were audio recorded with the exception of two which were handwritten.

They were transcribed and analyzed according to content under different headings which turned out to be: general background



information, perceived problems with attendance at four-year institution, and activities associated with college life.

Background information included tribal membership and observance of tribal customs. The students did not believe that tribal designation had any effect on their performance as college students. In most instances, tribal customs were not practiced by the participants and very little by family members.

Transfer, adjustment, and life at a four-year institution was the next category. Topics discussed included: (1) the transfer process, (2) course credit, (3) class schedules, (4) financial aid, (5) advisers, (6) teachers, (7) types of classes, (8) housing, and (9) discrimination.

In discussing transferring, a general consensus was that classes were easier at the junior college level, some courses would not transfer, scheduling of classes was difficult at the four-year institution, and a lot of problems in getting financial aid were mentioned.

Concerning advisement, teachers, and classes, a majority of the students were dissatisfied with their advisers for a variety of reasons. Most stated they did not know their teachers at four-year institutions very well and did not feel comfortable talking with them. The students were in various types of classes including lecture, hands on, and group participation. They preferred as many different kinds of exams as there are available. Many of them were administered multiple choice exams in their classes but preferred essay-type test questions.

Most of the students had no problems obtaining housing. However, some were dissatisfied with where they were living. Some students commuted and it seemed to present no problem.

Only one student felt discriminated against because of being Native American and that was related to absences from school because her family came first. This person also was one of the few full-blooded Indians interviewed.

The last category deals with extra-curricular activities: participation in sports, membership in student organizations, and participation in the Indian Club. Several of the students participated in sports but didn't believe being Indian made any difference. Some reference was made to the fact that golf was an expensive sport so, therefore, few Indians played golf. About half of the students belonged to campus organizations. None of them belonged to the Indian Club, and one indicated he had no idea how to make contact with the Club.

### Conclusions

It is concluded that:

1. No cultural characteristic was identified that impacted on the success of the participants of this study at four-year institutions.
2. Indian transfer students in this study do not think of themselves as being minority students.
3. These American Indian students did not consider discrimination as a factor in success or non-success.

4. Some Native Americans experienced difficulty with transfer of courses from two-year to four-year institutions.

5. Problems with the administration of financial aid at four - year institutions were identified.

6. Difficulties in getting satisfactory academic advisement was below their expectations.

7. These transfer students experienced difficulty in discussing academic matters with professors at four-year institutions.

#### Recommendations

Communications between two-year and four-year institutions should be improved to insure that existing articulation agreements are thoroughly understood and that misinformation concerning courses that will transfer and those that will not transfer be minimized.

As a result of this study and the expressed concerns of the participants, it is recommended that institutions examine the operations of the financial aids office to determine the practices of that office as it relates to the students they serve. It is further recommended that the professional staff and clerical assistants undergo a formal training program to sensitize these individuals to the kinds of problems that Native Americans students may have.

An additional recommendation focuses on the adviser system utilized particularly in four-year institutions with whom participants of this study have had experience. The professional faculty should undergo training so that accurate and timely

advisement may be administered to all students. It is further recommended that an annual orientation for all new faculty be conducted to insure the communication of the principle that the institutions are concerned about the progress and success of their students.

It is recommended that faculty at four-year institutions should be encouraged to promote dialog with those students recognized as transfer students to minimize their anxieties.

It is also recommended that a more careful, probing interview technique be employed by a researcher to determine specifically the details of the problems associated with the difficulties encountered with the administration of financial aid and the advisory system of the regional universities. These were major problems found in this study and also reported in the literature.

It is recommended that comparison studies be conducted: (1) of Native American business majors with non-Native American business students, (2) of Native Americans with non-Native Americans in other disciplines, and (3) of Native American students with other ethnic groups to determine if the problems cited in this study are unique to Native Americans.

The United States needs many more prepared minorities for professional positions, not only in the public sector but also in the private sector. A better understanding of what attracts and retains minority student in higher education can enable educational

institutions to better meet the students' needs as well as better meet the needs of our society.

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## APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITIES WITH WHICH PARTICIPANTS  
WERE ASSOCIATED

1. Central State University, Edmond, Oklahoma
2. East Central University, Ada, Oklahoma
3. Northeastern State University, Tahlequah, Oklahoma
4. Southeastern Oklahoma State University, Durant, Oklahoma
5. Southwestern Oklahoma State University, Weatherford, Oklahoma

APPENDIX B

CONTACT PERSONS AT UNIVERSITIES

1. Mr. Darrell Gilliland, Central State University, Edmond, Oklahoma
2. Ms. Pamela Armstrong, East Central University, Ada, Oklahoma
3. Dr. Wes Little, Northeastern State University, Tahlequah, Oklahoma
4. Ms. Shirvee L. Hinchey, Southeastern Oklahoma State University, Durant, Oklahoma
5. Mr. William W. Wilmeth, Southwestern Oklahoma State University, Weatherford, Oklahoma

APPENDIX C

TWO-YEAR INSTITUTIONS FROM WHICH  
PARTICIPANTS TRANSFERRED

1. Eastern Oklahoma State College, Wilburton, Oklahoma
2. Murray State College, Tishomingo, Oklahoma
3. Northeastern Oklahoma A&M Junior College, Miami, Oklahoma
4. Northern Oklahoma College, Tonkawa, Oklahoma
5. Rogers State College, Claremore, Oklahoma

## APPENDIX D

### GENERAL AREAS ADDRESSED



Information relating to personal background such as  
tribal membership and observance of tribal customs

Information relating to transfer and attendance at four-year  
institution such as: acceptance of courses for credit,  
enrollment procedures, financial aid, housing, nature of  
advisory process, and nature of instructors and classroom  
routine.

Activities associated with college life such as sports  
participation, extracurricular organizations, and Indian  
club.

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Case No. 3, Kimberly \_\_\_\_\_

Recorder no. 156-345

I grew up in Kaw City, a small town by Kaw Lake.

We do not talk about being Indian. I am Cherokee and Osage. My grandmother's great grandmother was married to Kit Carson. No record of that. Records on my Dad's side show that I am Cherokee.

I have not noticed any discrimination.

I attended junior college at Tonkawa.

A junior college definitely helps in the transition from a small high school to a four-year college. Most of my friends attended a two-year college.

Main problem is that you have to retake some of the classes. I had to retake a three hour speech class because it was only two hours at Northern Oklahoma Junior College. Marketing class was 2000 level at NOJC and at Central State University was a 3000 level, so I had to retake it.

I did not take a computer course at Junior College, and I found out I had to take it to graduate. At the Junior College, they do not let you know what you are going to need at four-year school.

Getting transferred is hard. I made a trip here with friends and could not enroll because it was the wrong day. Too many rules and too strict.

They do not have transfer orientation that I know about.

Central State does not orient you. It is very difficult. Might have been better if I lived in the dorm.

I am on financial aide. I did not have many problems. People here at Central State do not know enough about the things we need to do.

We had to wait two days in the financial aide office. About 100 people were on the list. We waited from 7:00 to 5:00 and came back the next day.

I work about 20 hours a week.

At junior college all the teachers knew your name. You don't know your professors here.

I do not think I have an adviser. When I transferred, the adviser gave me a piece of paper with courses on it. I did get a notice that my adviser had been changed. At Northern, the adviser checked on your progress periodically. Here you enroll yourself and you find out if you have taken everything to graduate. They just do not help you here. My friend's adviser could not even help him on which classes he needed to take.

I prefer lecture courses which is all I have.

All tests are multiple choice. I had never seen a scantron sheet before. I cannot believe you have to pay for the sheets. At this school you have to pay for everything.

I live in an apartment at Central State and dorms at Northern. We had to come early to find an apartment. We had to live in Oklahoma City because we could not find an apartment here.

I was a cheerleader at Northern but I do not belong to any clubs here at Central State.

APPENDIX F

CONSENT FORM

The undersigned participant in this research involving Native American two-year transfer students to four-year institutions in regional colleges in Oklahoma is aware that the participant's identity will remain anonymous and there will be complete confidentiality of records identifying the participant. This research is being conducted to identify students' perceptions of problems encountered in transferring to four-year institutions.

Voluntary recorded personal interviews will be conducted to obtain data for this study. Participant may refuse to be interviewed and/or elect to leave at any time during the interview process with no penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is entitled. Participant's institution will not have access to this information.

The study is to benefit Native American students in making the transfer from two-year institutions to four-year institutions an easier process, either by correction of the problems by the institutions or by the students' awareness of knowing what to expect.

Date

Participant

Witness

Judith Clarke

2  
VITA

Judith C. Clarke

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: PROBLEMS AS PERCEIVED BY NATIVE AMERICAN BUSINESS STUDENT'S  
TRANSFERRING FROM TWO-YEAR COLLEGES TO FOUR-YEAR  
EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN OKLAHOMA

Major Field: Occupational and Adult Education

Biographical:

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1939, the daughter of Albon L. and Hazel L. Crosby.

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University at Pittsburg, Kansas, in May, 1972; received  
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Commerce, Oklahoma, August, 1972, to August, 1975;  
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to present.