



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE from AIHEC (6-8-2020)**

American Indian Higher Education Consortium

**̄Life is Sacred: A Statement of the Nation's Tribal Colleges and Universities**

***Naahilii beda'iina' nihit danilj.*** As Navajo, we say *Black lives matter*.

Diné College and Navajo Technical University

***Takomni Hasapa Oyate Wiconi Heca.*** As Sicangu, Hunkpapa, and Sihasapa Lakota, we say *Black lives matter*.

Sinte Gleska University and Sitting Bull College

***Takomni hasapa wiconi hecha.*** As Dakota, we say *Black lives matter*.

Cankdeska Cikana Community College

***Makade-bizaawizijig da-apiitenimidiwag.*** As Ojibwa, we say *Black lives matter*.

Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College

***Taaqsipait Iñuggutiñit Nuimanaqtut.*** As Iñupiaq, we say *Black lives matter*.

Iñisaġvik College

***Apiitendaagwadoon obimaadiziwiniwaan makadewiiaaseg.*** As Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, we say *Black lives matter*.

Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe College

***Leng-e-sot.*** As Lummi, we say *We take care of ourselves, watch out for ourselves and love and take care of one another*.

Northwest Indian College

***Waza ni wina nihunpra ha ni wina wakanchunk.*** As Hochunk, we say *Life is sacred*.

Nebraska Indian Community College

As Cree, we say *Black lives matter*.

Stone Child College

***Mashii shibisha aru ahgua'ac (Hidatsa).*** As Hidatsa, Mandan, and Arikara, we say *Black lives matter*.

Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish College

***Ha-duakag g s-cuckcu 'o wuḍ si has ha'icu.*** As Tohono O'odham, we say *Black lives matter*.

Tohono O'odham Community College

***Ndaq Dilhil'i bi'idag da'ilij.*** As San Carlos Apache, we say *Black lives matter*.  
San Carlos Apache College

***Takómni hásapá wičhóni héčha*** (*Dakota*). As Dakota and Assiniboine, we say *Black lives matter*.  
Fort Peck Community College

***Epiitendaagwak obimaadiziwiniwaan Mekadewiziwaad.*** As Anishinaabe, we say *Black lives matter*.  
Leech Lake Tribal College, White Earth Tribal and Community College, and Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College

***Takomni hasapa wiconi hecha. Takomni Hasapa Oyate Wiconi Heca. Mashii shibisha aru ahgua'ac.*** As Dakota, Lakota, Hidatsa, Mandan, Arikara, we say *Black lives matter*.  
United Tribes Technical College

***I n phénnîn ínbi wówátsí wá din chä múu*** (*Tewa*). As Native artists, writers, and designers from more than 90 Tribal nations learning on the ancestral lands of the Tewa people, we say *Black lives matter*.  
Institute of American Indian Arts

***Wəʔəʔáániḥʔəʔəʔh ʔiínʔikíitə́nəʔh ʔanáatéhch*** (*Aaniiih*). As Aaniiih and Nakoda, we say *Black lives matter*.  
Aaniiih Nakoda College

***Kade'aazijig gchipiitendaagoziwag.*** As Gnoozhekaaning-Anishinaabe, we say *Black lives matter*.  
Bay Mills Community College

***Apiitendaagoziwoog igo meKdewzhejig.*** As Saginaw Chippewa Anishinaabe, we say *Black lives are important*.  
Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College

***Este Ivste vpopoketv hayetv mvrakhv.*** As Muscogee Creek, we say *Black lives matter*.  
College of the Muscogee Nation

***Wąksik ho'ina wakąqąk sąą.*** As Winnebago, we say *Life is Sacred. (We all share in common, life.)*  
Little Priest Tribal College

***Baaishtaashiilishiipite Kuun Biilaaxpaakuuk.*** As Apsáalooke, we say *Black lives matter*.  
Little Big Horn College

***Apiitendaagoziwag mekadewizijig.*** As Ojibwe, we say *Black lives matter*.  
Turtle Mountain Community College

The nation's American Indian and Alaska Native tribal colleges and universities (TCUs), which are the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC), stand, kneel, pray, and act with our Black brothers and sisters and all who are oppressed and have felt the dehumanizing impact of racism, invisibility and hate. We send our condolences and prayers to the families of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and George Floyd and all the families whose loved ones are unnamed. We share your fight and your burden. We will not rest until together, we overcome the systemic, generational and unending brutality practiced against people of color under the authority of those who are sworn to serve and protect.

It is a sad truth that sanctioned disrespect and brutality occur daily in communities of color, yet too often go unreported. It has been happening for more than 500 years since Columbus and his crew sailed across an ocean and captured, enslaved, and murdered Indigenous people so that he could claim their land for his queen. Whether today's victims are "merciless Indian savages," as we are described in the Declaration of Independence (the same document that declares "all men are created equal"), or Breonna Taylor asleep in her bed, Ahmaud Arbery jogging down a street, or George Floyd lying on the ground under a police officer's knee, the root cause is the same: the systemic, generational inability to recognize the humanity of others, brought to this land by the first immigrant-colonizers and enshrined in this nation's founding documents.

Racism runs deep and wide across this land, like blood coursing through veins, beating to a drum-the heartbeat of hatred, living in the very document mayors, governors, generals, mothers, fathers, you, and I cite as our national ideal, our collective aspiration: "that all men are created equal."

Yet today's protesters and peacemakers give us hope: they are *redefining that phrase of division and hate*-their actions are a sustained shout from the mountaintop that the people of this nation have the faith and grace to believe that every human being is born with certain rights-that Black lives matter.

As tribal colleges, we lift our voices. We commit to taking up the charge issued to us by the Honorable John Lewis, "*It's time to make some good trouble-necessary trouble.*" It is time for all to stand and kneel and raise our fists in unity and equality; to review our own law enforcement training programs and practices (to share or to change); to work to ensure the right-and will-to vote in our marginalized communities; to provide forums for people to come together, talk, and heal and work toward a new Declaration of Independence and Equality-to do all that is needed to build a just world-a world in which our future generations are able to breathe.

*Wazągusra honj'ap ra naq wągojawi na* - The creator blessed us with life (Winnebago)

*Wičoni wakan* - Life is Sacred (Lakota)

*Naahilii beda'iina' nihil danilj* - Black lives matter (Navajo)

**About Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs):**

Currently, there are 37 AIHEC-affiliated TCUs in the United States, operating more than 80 campuses and serving more than 100,000 students and community members annually. TCUs were created in response to the higher education needs of American Indians and generally serve geographically isolated populations that have no other means of accessing education beyond the high school level. TCUs have become increasingly important educational opportunities for American Indian students and are unique institutions that combine personal attention with cultural relevance to encourage American Indians-especially those living on reservations-to overcome the barriers they face to higher education.