

**MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT
BETWEEN
THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AND
THE AMERICAN INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION CONSORTIUM**

I. PARTIES

The parties to this Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) are the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) which, for the purposes of this MOA, represents only the “1994 Institutions” as cited in section 532 of the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 301 note).

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this MOA is to carry out the mandate of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996, Pub. L. No. 104-127, to establish programs to ensure that tribally controlled colleges and universities and American Indian communities equitably participate in USDA employment, programs, services, and resources. The MOA establishes a cooperative framework for the parties to conduct USDA 1994 Land-Grant Institution (Tribal Colleges) programs and activities that will enhance the capability of American Indians to attain educational excellence and to contribute positively to the fulfillment of the USDA’s mission. The program will be directed toward: promoting agricultural careers (including natural resource management) and professional attainment among students attending AIHEC member institutions; increasing employment opportunities in the USDA for students attending AIHEC member institutions; strengthening AIHEC member institutions and supporting their full integration in to the land-grant system and programs, and supporting the development of AIHEC. The Partners of the Program are the USDA and AIHEC.

III. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the program are to achieve the full integration of the Tribal Colleges into the land-grant system and ensure their full participation in the USDA’s land-grant programs, develop Departmental programs and coordinate Agency activities to increase employment and educational opportunities in the USDA for students and educators of AIHEC member institutions, as well as to target and provide USDA resources for strengthening Tribal Colleges. In accordance with the stated purpose of this MOA, programmatic efforts will be made to:

- (1) Ensure participation in grant and excess property-acquisition opportunities for AIHEC member institutions;
- (2) Undertake USDA student and faculty programs with AIHEC member institutions;
- (3) Offer USDA employment opportunities for students at AIHEC member institutions;
- (4) Provide linkages between AIHEC member institutions and USDA's Rural Development Programs;
- (5) Establish capacity building programs, including technical assistance, facilities rehabilitation and enhancement, and loan of USDA personnel for teaching, research, faculty, and administration to AIHEC member institutions;
- (6) Ensure greater participation of AIHEC member institutions in the USDA's extension, research, and data collection activities; and
- (7) Assist AIHEC member institutions in their efforts to help Tribal Governments and American Indian people become better stewards of their land and natural resources.

IV. USDA/AIHEC LEADERSHIP GROUP

The USDA and AIHEC will jointly establish a USDA/AIHEC Leadership Group to serve as an advisory body for all partnership initiatives. The Leadership Group will provide guidance to ensure that mutual benefits and interests are served by USDA/AIHEC partnership initiatives. This group shall consist of an equal number of members from USDA and employees or officials of AIHEC member institutions. The Secretary of Agriculture shall appoint a Chairperson of the USDA/AIHEC Leadership Group and the USDA members. The President of AIHEC shall appoint a Co-Chairperson of the USDA/AIHEC Leadership Group and the AIHEC members. The USDA/AIHEC Leadership Group will meet on a scheduled basis as determined by the members.

V. RESPONSIBILITIES

In fulfilling the objectives of the program, the parties agree, subject to applicable legal limitations, to participate in and be responsible for activities as follows:

The USDA will:

- (1) Provide AIHEC and AIHEC member institutions with information on employment and program opportunities within the USDA;
- (2) Participate in annual conferences sponsored by AIHEC and the National Indian Education Association, career fairs, and on-campus career orientation and recruitment activities, assist in outreach efforts, and explore opportunities for the provision of student career counseling and mentoring;
- (3) Explore scholarship, internship, fellowship, and cooperative education opportunities at USDA and coordinate planning for precollegiate and collegiate programs for students enrolling at AIHEC member institutions;
- (4) Provide opportunities for USDA employees to serve at AIHEC's central headquarters and AIHEC member institutions as executives on loan or technical advisors and for faculty members of AIHEC member institutions to serve temporarily in positions at USDA;
- (5) Encourage its agencies to enter into contractual agreements with AIHEC member institutions to promote special initiatives of mutual interest, including, but not limited to, programs to advance extension, research, and data collection activities at AIHEC member institutions and programs to assist AIHEC member institutions in their effort to encourage greater stewardship of their lands and natural resources;
- (6) Provide assistance to AIHEC member institutions. Such assistance may include, but not be limited to the following: satellite hookup support, instructional services, development of curricula, technical infrastructure, and research and facility support, access to Federal surplus and excess property, loaned executives and teaching and research faculty, assignments of USDA liaison officers, educational workshops for instructors, and technology transfers to AIHEC member institutions;
- (7) Encourage cooperative program activities between AIHEC member institutions and other institutions of higher education that have working relationships with USDA;

- (8) Provide opportunities for representation of AIHEC member institutions on relevant advisory boards and commissions established by the Secretary, including, but not limited to, the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board; and
- (9) In cooperation with AIHEC, participate in a conference on an annual basis for AIHEC member institutions and USDA officials and employees, which will provide a cost-effective opportunity to dialogue with one another, promote stronger and more effective partnerships and programs, and exchange information on new and existing programs.

AIHEC will:

- (1) Provide member institutions of AIHEC with information on employment, training, grant, and excess-property opportunities with the USDA to maximize the equitable representation of American Indians in USDA-funded programs;
- (2) Assist AIHEC member institutions in the development and implementation of programs to prepare students for careers identified as important by the USDA through degree programs at AIHEC member institutions and through cooperative arrangements with other institutions offering broader and more advanced training opportunities. Provide outreach and recruitment into secondary- and lower-grade levels to accomplish similar goals;
- (3) Assist AIHEC member institutions in establishing partnerships with State and private 4-year institutions and other AIHEC member institutions to facilitate transfer of students into baccalaureate and advanced degree programs, if not offered at an AIHEC member institution;
- (4) Provide facilities and services for hosting special educational and training programs;
- (5) In cooperation with the USDA, participate in a conference on an annual basis for AIHEC member institutions and USDA officials and employees; and

- (6) Assist in the execution of projects such as forums and workshops directed toward increasing employment and training opportunities in the USDA for students and educators of AIHEC member institutions.

The Partners of the Program will:

- (1) Negotiate a separate cooperative agreement to establish a student internship program under section 922 of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996, Pub. L. No. 104-127.

VI. COSTS

Nothing herein shall be construed as requiring the USDA or AIHEC to expend funds on behalf of the purposes, objectives, and responsibilities set forth in the MOA, except as agreed to by the parties to this MOA in separate written agreements to the extent permitted by law.

VII. EFFECTIVE DATE

This MOA becomes effective when both parties have signed the agreement. The MOA shall remain in effect until amended by mutual written agreement or terminated by either party. The MOA may be terminated at any time by either party upon 60 days written notice to the other party.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

/s/
Dan Glickman

February 3, 1998
Date

AMERICAN INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION CONSORTIUM

/s/
President

February 3, 1998
Date