

Testimony of President Thomas Shortbull of Oglala Lakota College before the House Committee on Natural Resources oversight field hearing on "Indian Education" at 10AM on Friday 8/6/10 at 10AM at Cheyenne River College Center, Eagle Butte, SD

Honored Committee members and guests,

My name is Thomas Shortbull and I am President of Oglala Lakota College. The College was founded in 1971 by the elders of the tribe and chartered by the Oglala Sioux Tribal Council to provide educated human resources for the Tribe and to study and teach the Lakota language and culture. We are accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association and charter members of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium and American Indian College Fund.

OLC is unique in that we are decentralized and bring college courses from certificates to Masters to the students through 11 Instructional Centers (9 on the Pine Ridge Reservation, 1 on the Cheyenne River Reservation and 1 in Rapid City. There are 28,787 people on Pine Ridge Reservation, 14,642 on Cheyenne River Reservation and 15,000 Indian people in Rapid City mostly from Pine Ridge and Cheyenne River Reservations. Pine Ridge is over 3,750 square miles which is larger than the states of Delaware and Rhode Island and Cheyenne River is about 3,000 square miles. Cheyenne River has the poorest area in America (Ziebach County) and Pine Ridge the 2nd poorest (Shannon County) according to the US Census Bureau reports. 52.4% of the residents of both Reservations are below the poverty level. According to the Bureau of Indian Affairs the unemployment rates on both Reservations hover around 80%.

Indian Health Service reports show that the Pine Ridge Reservation had a higher rate of diabetes, alcoholism, heart disease, road accidents, other accidents and suicide than the American Indian population as a whole and all other races. The infant mortality and suicide rates are three times higher than the national average and the tuberculosis rate is eight times higher. Alcoholism affects nearly every family on the reservation.

USA Today published an article in December, 1997 on a Harvard School of Public Health study that found the life expectancy of Lakota men and women living on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation to be the lowest in the U.S. and the lowest in the Western Hemisphere except for Haitians. The article stated "the discrepancies found within the borders of the U.S. are as broad as the gap between the nations with the longest and shortest average lifespans on Earth.... people living in South Dakota suffer the same ills as people in developing nations similar to sub-Saharan Africa." The actual numbers show:

	Pine Ridge Reservation	U.S.
Men	61	77.5
Women	70	83.5

The Lakota are the people of Crazy Horse, Red Cloud, American Horse, Hump, and Gall. We fought at the Little Big Horn and were massacred at Wounded Knee. The 150 year history of the Lakota since contact with the encroaching settlers and gold seekers is a familiar story of wars with the United States, taking of lands, confinement to a reservation, breaking of treaties by the U.S. government and attempts to stamp out Lakota language and culture. U.S. government policies have reduced the Oglala Lakota to the poorest people in the country.

In June 1997 *The New York Times* said of the Pine Ridge Reservation: "It is as poor as America gets. A visit to Pine Ridge is a striking reminder that most reservations remain places of bone-crushing poverty." ABC News called the Pine Ridge Reservation "the ground zero of

poverty in America” when President Clinton visited in 1999 to proclaim Pine Ridge the first Indian reservation Empowerment Zone.

Statistics show the hard life of the reservation: alcohol related arrests = 90% of all arrests, people on food stamps = 22%, people on food commodities = 20%, and the high school dropout rate = 64%. The Bureau of Indian Affairs Higher Education program estimates that from 80% to 90% of Oglalas who attend college off the reservation drop out.

The over 4,500 K-12 students on the Pine Ridge Reservation have the lowest academic performance in South Dakota which aligns with the correlation of poverty and poor academic performance shown by research.

Our vision is Wolakolkiciyapi (Learning Lakota ways of life in community). Our mission is to provide educational opportunities to improve Lakota life including community services; certificates; GED; associate, bachelor, and graduate degrees. Besides preserving the culture the College is providing trained and educated professionals to begin taking over the educational and economic development of the Tribe. OLC is governed by Board of Trustees representing the 9 districts of the Reservation, tribal government, Council of Elders and students.

Amid the poverty, poor health and historical trauma, with over 1,800 students a semester and 150 graduates a year OLC is making a major difference in the lives of Oglalas.

We need full funding of the Tribal College Act to provide an adequate base of operations. We have been able to obtain competitive funding for many programs but this is not stable funding and keeps us from developing and sustaining needed programs.

We educate K-12 teachers but we need ongoing funding to provide stipends for students do student teaching. We educate school principals with our Masters in Lakota Leadership and Management : Education and Administration but we need funding to provide scholarships and funding for stipends when they do their internships.

We educate Registered Nurses with our Associates in Nursing and last year had 100% of our graduates pass the National Nursing exam (N-CLEX). We provide nurses for the hospital and clinics on Pine Ridge and the surrounding areas and even on Rosebud Reservation and in Rapid City. Nursing is an expensive program and we have been able to piece together competitive federal programs and endowed positions, but we need to have stable funding and increased funding to be able to serve more students.

We have recently started a Social Work degree and our Board at our recent retreat reiterated the tremendous need for social workers. We have had five young people commit suicide in the last two weeks. The tribe has 2 Emergency Youth Shelters but we need more halfway houses and more social work and counseling programs for our youth and trained people to staff them.

OLC educates carpenters and people in construction trades but we need to be able to train more. The Reservation has a need for over 3,000 houses and Oglala Sioux Lakota Housing is working on maintaining their current stock and finding funds to build more. We have two and three families with up to 18 people living in single houses. We need to be able to educate people to develop a housing market on the Reservation. We need middle class housing on the Reservation for young couples who are getting degrees and starting families and now have to leave the Reservations to find housing.

We educate the Early Head Start and Head Start teachers with Bachelors and Associates degrees in Early Childhood and operate the Pine Ridge Reservation EHS and HS programs for 611 students. We took over the programs at the request of the Oglala Sioux Tribe in 2005 and have upgraded personnel, brought all 26 classrooms to Head Start standards and stabilized the

financial management and instruction program. We need to have increased funding so we can pay competitive salaries to teachers with Bachelors and Associates degrees. We need to have the non-federal share match reduced so we don't have to scrape each year to raise it. We need Head Start to understand the realities of reservation life and make allowances for student turnover and attendance.

OLC has averaged 70% female student body for 40 years. We need to keep educating our women but we need to take major initiatives to attract our men into school. We also need resources to attract and serve veterans both men and women. The Lakota people have one of the highest rates of military service in America.

OLC educates people in business and entrepreneurship but we need more faculty and more scholarships to assist people to complete degrees in this area.

OLC has a Bachelors in Tribal Management and a Masters in Lakota Leadership and Management but we need funds for faculty in these areas and for scholarships so that tribal managers and other program managers can pursue these degrees.

OLC teaches Lakota language and has been able to start a Lakota Speaking Academy but we need funds to sustain, continue and expand the school.

OLC is embarking on an initiative for civic engagement for our students. We need resources to provide scholarship incentives and resources for an ongoing OLC student community service initiative especially in the areas of education, housing, and family support.

We have done well with what we have but to meet the tremendous needs of the Pine Ridge and Cheyenne River Reservations we need to be able to do more. We need funds to expand and maintain our Lakota Language Institute and to attract and retain distinguished Lakota scholars to save our language. We need funds to establish a Research Institute to do the studies and provide the data needed for the Tribe and programs to plan and implement programs. We need funds to establish a Development Center to provide training and technical assistance to tribal and non-profit programs on the Reservation in funding research, proposal development and grants management.

We have attached some statistics on the College to this testimony and we thank you for your time. We would be happy to meet further with you or your staff in the near future to pursue specific needs and initiatives.

Oglala Lakota College Statistics

PROGRAMS AND STUDENTS

	FA05	FA06	FA07	FA08	FA09
Enrolled	1,286	1,485	1,501	1,531	1,804
Indian Students	1,162 (90%)	1,351(91%)	1,357 (90%)	1,373(90%)	1,636(91%)
Male	386 (30%)	472 (32%)	443 (30%)	477 (31%)	543 (30%)
Female	900 (70%)	1,013 (68%)	1,058 (70%)	1,054 (69%)	1,261(70%)
Full Time Equivalent	1,021	1,137	1,141	1,179	1,422
Entering Freshmen	166	244	358	234	261
Seniors	221	231	242	227	252
Graduate Students	55	44	39	52	77
Early Entry				36	45
Average Age	31	30	29	29	28

Fall 2009 Instructional Center Enrollment

He Sapa	486	Pine Ridge	327	Pejuta Haka	186
Cheyenne River	247	Pahin Sinte	120	Eagle Nest	85
Lacreek	82	White Clay	58	Wounded Knee	96
Pass Creek	47	East Wakpamni	42	Piya Wiconi	28

The age distribution for students in Fall 2006 was:

Under 18	18-21	22-29	30-39	40-49	50-64	65+
0	214	499	311	197	108	6 1335

We have an extremely needy student body: 43.2% of all OLC students come from families living below the poverty level; at least 75.8% of all OLC students meet low-income guidelines; 91.9% of all OLC students are first generation; 97.2% of the Indian students are first generation; 39% of the OLC students are GED graduates; 75% of the entering freshmen at OLC need some form of remediation; of the 75%, 25% need extensive remediation; and 61% of the Oglala who complete 8th grade never graduate from high school;

The problems our students face include: single parents with lack of time and privacy for study, high levels of poverty, lack of academic preparedness, rural isolation and absence of common community services, alcohol abuse affects 98% of the families on Pine Ridge, family obligations where they are the major resource, and lack of public transportation.

Degrees offered include: **Master of Arts** in Lakota Leadership/Management. **Bachelor of Science** in Business Education, Elementary Education, Human Services, Business Administration(Management , Accounting , Tribal Management) Integrated Environmental Science, Agribusiness, K-12 Special Education, Lakota Studies, Information Technology. **Bachelor of Arts** in Lakota Studies, Sociology, History. **Associate of Applied Science** in Office Technology, Management Information Systems , Organic Agriculture, Human Services, Agri-business, Business Computers, Entrepreneurship, Customer Relations Management. **Associate of Arts** in Accounting, Agriculture, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Studies, Criminal Justice, Early Childhood, Elementary Education, General Business, General Studies, Lakota Studies, Natural Resource Management, Nursing, Pre-Health, Social Services /Counseling,

Tribal Management and Transfer Degree, Information Technology, Science/Engineering /Math (SEM), Life Science, Art.

One-Year Certificates are offered in all the Vocational-Technical Areas as well as General Construction, Electrical Technology, and HVAC. Other programs include secondary education certification, special education endorsement, Lakota Language certificate, Child Development Associate, General Equivalency Diploma, a summer artists series, and a tribal archives. There are 59 full time faculty of whom 38% are Lakota and 55% female. We also have 110 adjunct faculty who are drawn from Reservation entrepreneurs, educators, managers and other professionals.

Fall 2006 Majors included : General Studies 607; Business Administration 134, Early Childhood 51, Business Computers 31, Art 4, Agriculture and Natural Resources 12 , Lakota Studies and Education 64, Information Technology 20, Undecided 72, Human Services 119, Social Work 23, Masters Lakota Management/Leadership : Ed Administration 11, Entrepreneurship 11, Elementary Education 119, Construction Trades 28, Integrated Environmental Science 12, Nursing 80, TV Production 5, Tribal Management 4, Office Technology 19, Science Engineering and Math 11, Agriculture and Natural Resources 12

We offer and average of 320 courses a semester in the regular format and about 45 a semester in the picture-tel format and Moodle online.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Over the past 11 years OLC has conferred the following degrees:

Graduates:

	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09
MA	0	1	3	2	2	18	8	8	10	4	1
BS/BA	27	40	57	43	46	42	36	43	42	42	37
AA/AAS	90	89	73	85	99	98	87	106	96	80	75
Degrees	117	130	133	130	147	158	131	157	148	126	113
Certificates/ Endorsements	17	19	36	35	19	49	42	16	56	28	26

Certificates/Degrees Awarded by Department 2000 -2008

	Bachelors	Associates	Certificates
Agriculture and Natural Resources	2	4	2
Applied Science and Technology	88	188	184
Business (formed 2008)	9	15	
Education	98	141	22
Humanities and Language Arts	1	53	
Human Services (& Social Work)	136	134	
Information Technology (begun in 2001)	3	7	2
Lakota Studies	18	77	58
Math/Science	24	33	
Nursing		76	
Graduate Studies			
MA Lakota Leadership/Management		12	
MA LL/M: Ed Administration (2001)		44	

Since 1973 OLC has conferred the following number of degrees:

Masters = 65 Bachelors = 880 Associates = 2132 Total Degrees = 3077

A review of the time it took graduates to get their first degree was done with 2008 graduates with the following results of average number of years:

Certificate 11.28 Associates 11.5 Bachelors 12.4

Course completion rate (courses attempted vs completed in a semester) was 74% in 2005.

From 06 to 08 our graduates came from: GED 24%, Little Wound HS 13%, Red Cloud HS 11%, Pine Ridge HS 9%, Rapid City 9%, and 28% Other.

Of the graduates over 90% are employed or pursuing further education. At Little Wound Elementary School in Kyle 21 of 26 instructors are OLC graduates. At the Pine Ridge Hospital 50% of the registered nurses are OLC graduates. Three faculty are OLC graduates.

In a survey done on 2004 it was found OLC provided the following percentages of people in the following jobs on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation: Administrators 34%, Nursing Administrators 63%, Registered Nurses 48%, Social Worker/Counselors 43%, Elementary Teachers 37%, Lakota Studies Teachers 64%, Business Managers for schools 100%, Secretarial/Clerical 60%.

OLC's Community and Continuing Education Department provides Adult Basic Education, GED preparation and testing, life coping skills workshops in areas such as financial literacy and health, career counseling, and family literacy. The General Equivalency Diploma program assisted the following numbers to gain their GED's over the past few years:

GED	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	Total
	54	27	29	43	31	39	34	

At this time there are 337 active GED students.

Head Start graduates 2007 = 183 2008 = 174

College Center Satisfaction Survey 2008 N=250

Area Helpful/Very Helpful

School	90%
Financial Aid	85%
Course Schedule	89%
Academic Advice	89%
Tutoring	73%

Area

Most of the Time/Always

Center cleanliness	98%
Staff are friendly	90%
Computers available when needed	84%
Staff available to answer questions	87%
Place to study	79%
I do homework at the Center	33%
Center is open on schedule	93%
Center is open until scheduled to close	81%
I get classes I need at home center	66%
I can get a gas voucher when I need one	39%
Center library open when I need it	81%

Some Testimonials:

In 1986 Oglala Lakota College held an economic development conference focusing on the Pine Ridge Reservation. There were experts from other reservations, government agencies, etc. The number one problem that came from the meeting was lack of capital, no bank etc. As a result of this conference the Lakota Fund was formed in 1986. A report, *Study of Economic Impact of the Lakota Fund 1986 to 2005* (Springer Science Business Media 2/26/09 David A. Benson, Duke University, et al,) did a longitudinal study comparing Todd County on the Rosebud Reservation with Shannon County on Pine Ridge that showed the following:

Real Per Capita Income	1986	2005	
Shannon County	\$4,800	\$5,800	(+21%)
Todd County	\$8,200	\$8,000	(-2%)

“Lakota Fund has succeeded in raising real per capita income of Shannon county residents consistently and significantly throughout the 1987– 2006 study period. ... As a result, {it shows that} a well designed and highly successful micro-enterprise financing structure can confer large and significant private and social benefits (positive externalities) in that the sustained growth in real incomes (poverty reduction) builds net wealth and enhances further personal, household, and community successes in socio-economic, health (increased life expectancy, better health status), educational (human capital investment), and other dimensions of progressive quality living...”

“Tribal colleges significantly and positively impact workers’ incomes and significantly lower poverty rates, both of individuals and of families. Such data analysis clearly shows, for the first time on micro scale (i.e. an economy smaller than a state), that individual colleges promote economic development and that this economic growth can be demonstrated using very reliable but simple data in the most elementary of statistical correlations in such a way as to be useful to tribal and other local planners.” David Harris, Tompkins-Cortland Community College

“Let the Oglala tribe be known 50 years from now as not only ancestors of the greatest warriors and hunters but also as contemporaries of the best educated. Make college and a college degree a symbol of your success for a proud people, wiping out symbols of despair and surrender. One-hundred fifty years ago the Oglalas were masters of the Great Plains as warriors and hunters; proud, accomplished and determined in their mastery of horses, bison and their enemies, for that was necessary for survival. Now it is a new world and there are new requirements.”

Tom Brokaw, NBC News Anchor and Author at OLC 2001 Graduation

“The reason I am a supporter of Oglala Lakota College is because of you graduates and the effect I see the College having on the whole population of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. I think it’s been the greatest thing that’s happened here. It’s changed our reservation, it’s changed our perspective and it’s given us hope.”

John Yellowbird Steele, former President, Oglala Sioux Tribe

Strengths from The Higher Learning Commission/ NCA Accreditation Report 2003

"The mission has always been to assist communities and the Oglala Sioux Tribe in their development needs by providing highly skilled human resources for a changing environment who are secure in their personal identity and heritage."

" The Board of Trustees is committed to the vision, mission and purposes of the College as the force for stability on the Reservation and its best hope for the future."

"The campus is to be commended for its external fund-raising activity. This is essential because the College receives only \$3,916 pre full-time equivalent student from the Federal government even though Federal Public Law 95-471 authorizes \$6000 per student."

" Faculty and support staffs are to be commended for their dedication, energy, and commitment to student success. All conversations with those interviewed demonstrated a major concern for the welfare of students and are selfless in providing personal and College assistance to promote student success."

" An exemplary decentralized model for the delivery of academic programs and services needed by the people of Pine Ridge. The 10 regional sites, which utilize local community boards and distance education, are central to the College being able to fulfill its mission of service to such a vast (7000 square miles) and dispersed population.

"Oglala Lakota College is central to the mission and livelihood of the Lakota nation and should be commended for its leadership in the development and progress in addressing Lakota issues."

"Support staff at Piya Wiconi and the Center sites demonstrated an unusual selfless dedication to helping students succeed in attaining their educational goals."

"Oglala Lakota College's mission and vision statements are living documents, unifying the College and community in promoting the continuation of the Lakota culture and language."

"Significant improvement in the physical facilities, including 18 new buildings and other additions at Piya Wiconi and most regional sites, are helping to address a continuing concern for adequate facilities conducive to teaching and learning."

"The noteworthy external resource generation including a \$3 million dollar increase in grant generation from 1998 to 2002; a successful Phase 1 capital campaign which generated over \$6 million for facility construction and upgrades; and \$6.5 million raised of the \$10 million goal in the present campaign to endow 15 new faculty positions helps to address significant financial concerns for future viability."

"A distinguished and unique bison research project, which includes major grant support. The program incorporates web-based delivery and is important to Lakota culture. The program is attracting national attention."

"A unique Lakota Studies program at both the undergraduate and graduate levels which feature core courses, language requirements and community-based projects. All are central to a major

mission of the College, which is the perpetuation of Lakota culture. "

“In the past five years Oglala Lakota College has made tremendous strides in addressing board relations, leadership issues, capital and facilities development and financial stability. The College is a significant asset for the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation and all its communities. The College has done an exceptional job of establishing a presence in all of the districts within its community and completing significant upgrades to its facilities. The College has demonstrated that the district center model versus a main campus location works effectively to meet the various needs of its community. The leadership and governance have demonstrated a healthy understanding of its role and responsibilities to effectively manage the operations of the College. Therefore, the College has demonstrated a positive pattern of growth, stability, and continued improvement to warrant its first ten-year accreditation that includes follow-up action by the Commission.”

“The current fiscal, physical and human resources help to position the institution for its future. The new buildings at virtually all locations, the fiscal stability which has been achieved, the grant and private fund-raising successes, and the capital campaign to create 15 new faculty positions, all are positive indicators that the institution can continue to accomplish its purposes.”

“ Our institutional mission is unique in that we not only provide knowledge about the larger society, but about our tribal world. The students, Indians and non-Indians alike, have the opportunity to acquire an in-depth understanding about the history, philosophy, culture, and language of the Lakota people. Our dual mission enables us to instill a strong sense of tribal identity in Indian students.”

President Thomas Shortbull

The current members of the OLC Board of Trustees are:

Newton Cummings, Chairman, Lacreek District Representative; Rancher/Former Tribal

Chairman, Martin, SD.

Richard Red Owl, Tribal President's Representative, Entrepreneur/Artist, Batesland, SD.

Richard Iron Cloud, Education Committee Representative; Director, Oglala Sioux Tribe
Sweetgrass Suicide Prevention Project, Porcupine, SD

Dennis Brewer, Pine Ridge District Representative; Former, Director of Transportation
for Shannon County Schools, Pine Ridge, SD.

Bennett "Tuffy" Sierra, Vice-Chair, Wakpamni District Representative; Community
Leader/Counselor, Oglala, SD.

Peter Red Willow, Eagle Nest District Representative; Community Leader/Student,
Wanblee, SD.

John Her Many Horses, Wounded Knee District Representative; Community Leader,
Manderson, SD.

Phoebe Tallman, Pass Creek District Representative; Bilingual Teacher, American
Horse School, Allen, SD.

Ernie Little, White Clay District Representative; Administrator, Oglala Sioux (Lakota)
Housing, Oglala, SD.

Rhonda Two Eagle, Porcupine District Representative; Elected Secretary, Oglala Sioux
Tribe Executive Committee, Porcupine, SD.

Denise King-Red Owl, Medicine Root District Representative; Director, Oglala Sioux
Tribe Department of Energy, Kyle, SD.

Anthony Valella, Student Senate Representative, He Sapa Center, Rapid City, SD.

Gerald One Feather, Council of Elders Representative; Former Oglala Sioux
Tribal Chairman, Honorary Doctor of Lakota Language and Culture, Oglala, SD.

All BOT members are members of the Oglala Sioux Tribe and all reside on the
Pine Ridge Indian Reservation except Anthony Valella.

What Our Students and Others Say About OLC:

"With a family and job I am fortunate that courses are available in the evenings."

Mike Clinchers

"You are more than a number at OLC, you're a name"

Gaylen One Horn

"OLC provides learning opportunities to people from all walks of life whether they are in high school or grandparents."

Mona Brave

"OLC provides me the opportunity to pursue my career in nursing while I raise my children in my hometown with support from my extended family."

Misty Hunter

"The beauty of this college is that we are now giving these people the opportunity they never had before. But whether that continues depends on whether or not we have the ability to give them more money than they are getting now. They're not going to get it from Washington, or their Tribe. They have to get it from us. They have to get it from contributions."

Tom Daschle, former SD Senator and Senate Minority Leader

"You graduates have been educated in both ways, Lakota and non-Indian. Use those tools wisely and help our people become self-sufficient and proud as we once were."

Frank Fools Crow, Traditional Chief