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Board of Directors of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium Convene first meeting under new President and CEO

Polson, MT – The American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC), which is comprised of the nation's Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), convened its first Board of Directors' meeting since announcing the appointment of Carrie L. Billy, as its new President and CEO, effective June 1, 2008.

"Carrie already knows what is needed for a reservation-based college to thrive" said Cheryl Crazy Bull, Chair of the AIHEC Board of Directors. "I am very excited to have Carrie as the new president of AIHEC. She has a deep understanding of the mission of tribal colleges and she is very creative making her an exceptionally effective advocate for tribal colleges and the AIHEC organization".

The agenda Ms. Billy and the newly reorganized AIHEC team arranged for the TCU Presidents' Summer Board meeting and retreat, convened recently on the campus of Salish Kootenai College in Pablo, Montana included interactive sessions with Jamie Merisotis, President and CEO of the Lumina Foundation for Education, who discussed opportunities for increasing student success and attainment at TCUs; Dr. Vincent Tinto, of Syracuse University, one of the nation's leading experts in higher education teaching and learning especially in the area of student retention, who conducted a session titled 'Student success does not arise by chance'; and Joan LaFrance, principal of Mekinak consulting in Seattle, Washington who presented an overview of the NSF funded Indigenous Framework for Evaluation, an evaluation model that incorporates traditional concepts of knowledge and learning to be used in training educators in Indian Country.

Ms. Billy joined the AIHEC staff for the second time in 2001, as Deputy Director and Director of STEM Development, having served as Executive Director of the first White House Initiative on Tribal Colleges and Universities (WHITCU) that was established by President Clinton. Under her leadership, the initial WHITCU office spearheaded the creation of a number of vital new programs and initiatives within a variety of federal departments and agencies that were funded. These programs continue to help TCUs to build their overall capacity, including basic infrastructure, to expand programs and services to their students and their communities. Prior to her work at WHITCU, Ms. Billy spent several years on Capitol Hill working as a senior staff member in the Office of Senator Jeff Bingaman.

An enrolled member of the Navajo Nation, Ms. Billy is a graduate of University of Arizona and Georgetown University Law Center.

THE AMERICAN INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION CONSORTIUM (AIHEC) a 501(c)(3) located in Alexandria, Virginia, is the *collective spirit and unifying voice* of the nation's Tribal Colleges and Universities. AIHEC provides leadership and influences public policy on Indian higher education through advocacy, research, and program initiatives; promotes and strengthens Indigenous languages, cultures, communities and tribal nations; and through its unique position, serves member institutions and emerging TCUs.

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