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AIHEC Applauds the Introduction of the Fostering Undergraduate Talent by Unlocking Resources for Education (FUTURE) Act

Washington, D.C. – The nation’s 37 Tribal Colleges and Universities, which collectively are the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC), applaud Senators Doug Jones (D-AL) and Tim Scott (R-SC) for introducing the bipartisan Fostering Undergraduate Talent by Unlocking Resources for Education (FUTURE) Act (S. 1279). The FUTURE Act will ensure continued support for Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) and Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) by reauthorizing vital mandatory funding for TCUs within the Strengthening Institutions program (Title III) of the Higher Education Act. The mandatory funding will cover the next two fiscal years and three academic years.

“AIHEC is thrilled that Senators Jones and Scott have introduced the FUTURE Act, which is critically important to Tribal College students and our tribal communities. This funding supports TCUs across 16 states – it provides \$30 million annually for critical student support services, library services, curriculum development, building updates and construction,” said Carrie Billy, AIHEC’s President & CEO. “This legislation is vitally important to the success of our students, as well as our tribal communities and the states in which TCUs are located. We urge Congress to ensure its swift enactment.”

“The Strengthening Institutions funding is essential for academic operations on our campus. Without this funding, we would most likely close our doors,” emphasized President Cynthia Lindquist of Cankdeska Cikana Community College (Fort Totten, ND).

“As Tribal Colleges, we are concerned with the quickly approaching expiration date. We need Congress to swiftly pass this bill for us to reassure our students and community members that courses and services will be available in the fall,” said David Yarlott, Jr., AIHEC’s Board Chair and President of Little Big Horn College (Crow Agency, MT).

Without Congressional action, the current Title III funding will expire in September, at the end of the current fiscal year. The FUTURE Act would sustain mandatory funding at current levels: Tribal Colleges and Universities at \$30 million, Alaska Native Serving Institutions and Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions at \$15 million, and Native American Nontribal Serving Institutions at \$5 million. A bipartisan companion bill (H.R. 2486) was introduced in the House by Representatives Alma Adams (D-NC) and Mark Walker (R-NC).

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The American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) comprises the nation’s 37 Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs). TCUs are public institutions of higher education operating more than 75 sites in 16 states and serving approximately 160,000 American Indians, Alaska Natives, and other rural residents each year in academic and community-based programs.

