

UNITED TRIBES[®] TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Strategic Plan Annual Report Year Two of Five

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UTTC STRATEGIC PLAN

Annual Report

August 2023

The United Tribes Technical College 2021-2025 Strategic Plan was developed by a cross section of stakeholders from across campus to enhance success and bring accountability to the work conducted. It is important to be strategic in our decision-making and to better utilize our limited resources to continually improve our services, programs, and overall campus community.¹

The UTTC Strategic Plan is aligned to UTTC's institutional mission and supports the institution's vision for its students.

Unit Action Plans are developed and carried out by each major unit across the institution. The Unit Action Plans document departmental action toward achieving the college's strategic goals.

Information from unit plan reports has been summarized to highlight some of the major institutional accomplishments toward achieving the college's strategic objectives.

UTTC has completed the second year of its five-year Strategic Plan.

The following narrative provides highlights of progress made in the second year toward achieving the goals established in UTTC's 2021-2025 strategic plan.

Mission and Vision

UTTC Mission Statement

United Tribes Technical College provides quality post-secondary education and training to enhance knowledge, diversity, and leadership for all indigenous nations.

UTTC Vision Statement

United Tribes Technical College strives to build cultural, educated, and healthy leaders who empower and serve their communities.

¹ UTTC President Leander "Russ" McDonald, PhD (Dakota/Sahnish/Hidatsa), President's Message; UTTC Strategic Plan 2021-2025, p. 2

THE 2021-2025 UTTC STRATEGIC PLAN ADDRESSES FIVE STRATEGIC AREAS

<p>1</p> <p>Commitment to Student Learning and Academic Success</p>	<p>1a: Improve and sustain instruction through the assessment of student learning outcomes 1b: Continually improve academic offerings 1c: Expand academic supports for students</p>
<p>2</p> <p>Student Recruitment and Innovative Programming</p>	<p>2a: Increase student enrollment through recruitment strategies 2b: Streamline the admissions process for prospective students 2c: Provide innovative academic programs that align with Tribal and regional workforce needs</p>
<p>3</p> <p>Student Retention and Completion</p>	<p>3a: Increase student retention through targeted retention strategies 3b: Improve quality and integration of services throughout the learner experience 3c: Improve advising processes for new, returning, transfer, and continuing students 3d: Improve tracking of internship and job placement or transfer rates 3e: Develop comprehensive alumni services</p>
<p>4</p> <p>Mission-Driven Institutional Effectiveness</p>	<p>4a: Promote and document continuous improvement in all departments 4b: Expand research capacity at UTTC 4c: Integrate American Indian Culture and Arts</p>
<p>5</p> <p>Infrastructure and Fiscal Stability</p>	<p>5a: Improve funding base and fiscal resources 5b: New construction and remodels 5c: Establish a firm fundraising foundation</p>

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2022-2033 ACADEMIC YEAR

Strategic Area #1: Commitment to Student Learning and Academic Success

1a. Improve and sustain instruction through the assessment of student learning outcomes

Institutional assessment of student learning is on track. The Assessment of Student Learning (ASL) Committee is responsible for coordinating and monitoring assessment of student learning activities on the UTTC campus. This committee guides the assessment of student learning toward Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) according to an established schedule. The ASL field tested the ACT WorkKeys with committee members followed by a pilot with students to assess Quantitative Reasoning. The results will be analyzed and discussed to determine the next steps. Work continues with assessing student learning of Personal and Social Responsibility in the co-curriculum. The Institutional Research Office has been working with the Vice President of Campus Services to conduct a factor analysis on the survey data collected in Spring 2022. The data is intended to help the college better understand how campus life services help students develop a sense of belongingness, self-efficacy, and growth mindset, as well as knowledge of diverse cultures, identities, and societies.

19 PLOs assessed and documented in the 2022-23 academic year. Student assessment at the program level is tracked in WIDS. WIDS is a web-based software application used to document and track Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) assessment. Student work assessed included papers and oral presentations, portfolios and projects, performance and skills demonstration, among others. Assessments were completed by faculty, college staff, and program advisory council members, which include employers. There were three PLOs that were not met and the other sixteen were met. Department chairs and faculty use this assessment information to improve their programs and how they support students. When student performance expectations are not met, the programs look at what they are teaching, how they are teaching, and how they are assessing student learning. Even when the performance expectations are met, faculty use this opportunity to discuss ways the program can continue to be improved. They also use the information to inform budgeting for the upcoming academic year to carry out changes.

1b. Continually improve academic offerings

New articulation agreements established between UTTC and Minot State University (MISU). This articulation agreement, which will be effective Fall 2023, indicates that students who complete an Associate of Science (AS) degree from UTTC will be considered to have completed their general education courses and be able to transfer up to 12 credits into the Psychology Bachelor of Science program at Minot State University. Students who receive the Associate of Arts or Associate of Science from UTTC and meet MISU admission criteria will be accepted without further review at MISU to the Psychology major. A similar articulation agreement for students interested in Addiction Studies at MISU. Final admission to MISU is contingent on submission of the student's application.

TCUs in North Dakota share coursework. The Engineering department collaborated with four other TCUs in North Dakota to offer shared courses. STEM faculty from UTTC, Cankdeska Cikana Community College, Sitting Bull College, Turtle Mountain Community College, and Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish College shared engineering and advanced mathematics courses a taught them collaboratively. Students from each of the colleges could enroll into these courses taught using distance technologies. Engineering and advanced math courses typically have lower enrollments. Course sharing is a way to maximize limited instructional resources and bring together students from partner colleges. Six engineering and three advanced math courses were taught during the 2022-23 academic year.

1c. Expand academic supports for students

UTTC joins NC-SARA. The US Department of Education requires that colleges ensure they have permission to offer higher educational services in each state from which any student studies online. NC-SARA is the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement. NC-SARA helps colleges with multi-state reciprocity when offering online courses across state lines. Membership in NC-SARA means that UTTC is part of the network of states and colleges that have agreed to reciprocity with online courses and is critical to expanding its online programming.

Onboarding process developed for faculty. When you support faculty, you support students. A resource is now available in MyUTTC and accessible by faculty. The resource includes web-based reference and training materials developed by UTTC's instructional designer and the dean of instruction.

Strategic Area #2: Student Recruitment and Innovative Programming

2a. Increase student enrollment through recruitment strategies

UTTC developed a Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) plan. The SEM plan, developed in collaboration with the College Fund, is a comprehensive approach to managing the entire enrollment process, from attracting prospective students to supporting their success throughout their academic journey. The goal is to ensure the plan aligns with institutional goals and enrollment strategies to optimize student recruitment, retention, and graduation rates. The framework for the SEM plan includes integration of services, data-informed decision-making, recruitment, optimization of financial aid and scholarships, and evaluation of processes. The SEM plan outlines the college's strategies for meeting enrollment goals.

UTTC recruits students using a variety of methods. The college uses digital and traditional marketing, including social and other media. Enrollment management personnel attend college fairs and conduct campus tours. Partnerships with schools and community organizations also aid in the process of recruiting students to UTTC. Enrollment goals for traditional and transfer students are: 1) Increase applications of traditional and transfer students by 15% over three years to 770 applications and 2) Increase student enrollment by 15% over three years to 496 students. UTTC is in the process of setting enrollment goals for online and dual credit students.

Online marketing strategies are continuing to build a following. A new headline video is highlighted on the main UTTC.edu page. Marketing for the Spring of 2023 focused on advertising during boys and girls high school basketball games and tournaments. The areas reached include the Bismarck-Mandan area, New Town, Standing Rock, and Spirit Lake. The advertisements were placed with Midco, BEK, PSP Network, and the radio station in Devils Lake. As of May 2023, UTTC had 14,392 Facebook page likes and 2,038 Instagram followers. In addition, 1,500 UTTC calendars were produced for distribution.

2b: Streamline the admissions process for prospective students

The college has streamlined admissions for new and prospective students through the Achieving the Dream Holistic Student Support project in the first year of this strategic plan. UTTC analyzed the admissions processes and identified areas that caused bottlenecks. Changes were made to address the bottlenecks and streamline the process for students so they could move more quickly through the admissions process. The refined admissions process was integrated into the Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) plan. UTTC has also optimized financial aid packages and scholarships to make education affordable for a broader range of students. Communication about financial assistance options was also redesigned to make the process more intuitive. UTTC enrollment services continues to analyze what works well and what can be improved each semester. Enrollment numbers and progress toward goals are assessed. The information is used to update the SEM strategies as appropriate.

2c: Provide innovative academic programs that align with Tribal and regional workforce needs

Two new programs of study are being added at UTTC. A Fish and Wildlife BS degree is currently in development. Included in this degree plan is a 4+1 articulation agreement with the University of North Dakota intended to help graduates earn a master's degree in five years rather than six. The other program of study that is begin added is an Indigenous Leadership AS degree. The Indigenous Leadership program of study will be developed on the coming year with an anticipated start in Fall of 2024.

UTTC is expanding its dual credit options for high school students. The Monarch Project, funded through a grant from the US Department of Education Office of Indian Education, is working toward increasing dual credit and early college options for high school students in the area. The project is working with the high schools in Bismarck, Mandan High School and the Brave Center, Solen High School, and Standing Rock Community High School. Standing Rock Community High School works primarily with Sitting Bull College, but the other high schools are working with UTTC to offer more dual credit options for their students. Courses offered at UTTC have been mapped to the ND MISO3 codes for high school credit and others identified as appropriate for early college. Although Bismarck and Mandan Public Schools have dual credit agreements established with Bismarck State College (BSC), the Monarch Project is working to offer courses not provided by BSC. The project is also working with Mandan Public Schools to offer CTE courses at their new CTE Center currently under construction. UTTC offered a dual credit welding course as well as a Tribal Arts course for high school students in summer 2023.

Strategic Area #3: Student Retention and Completion

3a: Increase student retention through targeted retention strategies

 The early alert system was revised based on faculty and student input. First, the alerts were rebranded as “Thunder Alerts” and the Thunder icon attached. In addition, the Thunder Alerts messaging to students was revised. It was important that the message clearly indicate that the message was system-generated and not sent directly from faculty when an alert was submitted. The Thunder Alert message emailed to students now indicates the type of concern, a help tip, and a suggestion for addressing the concern.

Athlete persistence rates improving. Student athletes can have demanding schedules that include attending classes, homework, rigorous practices, and games on the road, in addition to other family or community responsibilities. This year, 13 of the 15 (86%) players on the men’s basketball team returned from fall to spring semester, and 11 of 15 (73%) players on the women’s basketball team returned from fall to spring semester. The overall persistence rate for athletes was 80% for the 2022-23 season.

3b: Improve quality and integration of services throughout the learner experience

Admissions to Housing workflow improved. Workflow had been improved between admissions to housing. These improvements have resulted in reduced numbers of student charges errors, expedited meal plans for students, and reduced workload for Housing and Admissions staff.

Financial resources for students expanded. New scholarships have been added to the menu of opportunities on the UTTC webpage. The work study process was updated to better accommodate students.

Campus daycares help parents. The daycares on campus have developed a system to support students who are parents of children in the daycares complete their monthly billing obligations. Directors work to help parents find additional resources for childcare needs as necessary.

The UTTC Wellness Center provides needed services to students. The Campus Cupboard continued to be a resource for students, serving approximately 150 students during the 2022-23 academic year. 125 students monthly sought in-person Wellness counseling sessions and 59 students applied for Medicaid coverage during the Medicaid campaign in the spring 2023.

3c: Improve advising processes for new, returning, transfer, and continuing students

New Transfer & Career Services Coordinator position filled. Jaimie Merrick, a recent UTTC Business Administration BS graduate, has been hired as the Transfer & Career Services Coordinator. This new position is designed to help incoming transfer students as well as outgoing graduates. Jaimie makes sure students transferring into UTTC get credit for transferrable courses successfully completed at other institutions. Jaimie also helps students find employment or transfer on for further education when they graduate.

Students entering on probation get extra support. Sometimes, when students transfer into UTTC from another college, they enter with a low GPA. This means that they start their UTTC experience already on probation. Students who enter UTTC on probation meet with our Student Activities & Retention Administrator and work through an Academic Success Plan (ASP). The ASP is designed to help students get back on track.

3d: Improve tracking of internship and job placement or transfer rates

Internships and apprenticeships opportunities are growing. Career services works with employers and faculty to develop internship opportunities for students. In the 2022-23 academic year, there were 95 internship placements. Graphic Design students created a media guide for the City of Bismarck. In addition, UTTC received grant funding to support apprenticeship program development.

3e: Develop comprehensive alumni services

Alumni engagement is growing. A signup form was created in MyUTTC designed to collect alumni contact information. 130 basketball games dating from 1989 to 2005 were uploaded to the UTTC YouTube channel. Former players and families have helped to grow our YouTube followers to 1,160 as of May 2023. 9 men and 8 women former UTTC basketball players participated in the annual alumni game.

Strategic Area #4: Mission-Driven Institutional Effectiveness

4a: Promote and document continuous improvement in all departments

Unit action plans document progress toward strategic goals. Unit Action Plans are used to engage the whole campus toward strategic goals in this plan. Twenty-six units across the UTTC campus community each developed a plan of action oriented toward achieving the college's strategic goals as stated in the strategic plan. There were a total of 26 units across the campus (16 from academic, 5 from campus services, and 5 units from administration). Each of these units develop an action plan at the beginning of the academic year and the provide a report of progress in December and again in May.

Office of Institutional Research engages stakeholders in continuous improvement. OIR: Faculty data discussions; student data party; factor analysis of co-curriculum; OIR professional development (completed AIR courses); Employing research site coordinator who can assist with data entry and coordinating event logistics for OIR; learning how to do correlational statistics to analyze co-curricular data

Audit recommendations addressed. UTTC undergoes a financial audit every year. Every audit uncovers areas for improvement. Audit recommendations guide continuous improvement. This recommendations from the past year have resulting in improvements in time and effort reporting and in fixed asset documentation processes. An asset disposal form has been developed and a team led by Finance has been designated to oversee the process.

4b: Expand research capacity at UTTC

Partners provide research experiences for students. An MOU has been established with the USGS to offer internships and assist UTTC with curriculum development. UTTC has established other partnerships and MOUs with Ducks Unlimited, North Dakota State University (NDSU), University of North Dakota (UND), US Geological Survey (USGS), US Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Science Foundation (NSF), among others. Students are provided research opportunities through these partnerships. Several students accepted summer research positions offered by partners: Ebony Schultz with Ducks Unlimited working on duck/bird count research; Tanner Veo with NSF REU position at UND in the chemistry department; Audrey Hall with University of Hawaii in The Indigenous Knowledge and Earth and Environmental Convergent Science Program; Trenton Chalmers with NSF REU at UND in the Biological Science Department; and Sara Fruetel with the University of Montana working with the CURE program. Other research placements for students included Brett Alberts who worked at USDA-ARS on a climate science project, Kate Gates who worked at USDA-ARS on a plant root project, James Richards who worked with the Department of Natural Resources in Montana on a fire ecology research project, and Marshall Smith who worked with AIHEC and USDA on a research project in North Carolina.

Faculty provide research experiences for students. UTTC faculty conduct and publish research. Dr. Hona published several papers in the past year. Alexa Azure has been working with Dr. Hona on the development of a new material. Ms. Azure secured funding to expand the reach of her IRRC funded PFAS project to include community members, which will expand this type of research to CCCC, TMCC, SBC, and SWC. Dr. Warnakulasooriya and some colleagues recently published their findings in a peer-reviewed journal.

Full-time and adjunct faculty also support students in research. Grace Colelay worked with Sajjad Akam at Iowa State University to work on climate research in soil sediment. Dr. Warnakulasooriya mentored a student in physics research which they presented at the Tribal College Research Symposium. Dr. Asare mentored two students in statistical research related to the Missouri River. Faculty often engage students as researchers in their research projects. Kipp Kreuger worked with Mandy Guinn and the bats program. Kianna Stroh worked with Emily Biggane on Cancer Research. Robert Sam and Abby Decoteau had their research manuscripts accepted to Native Science Report.

4c: Integrate American Indian Culture and Arts

Cultural experiences are offered for UTTC college students. Membership in the SAGE club increased to 25 students. Three students attended the FALCON conference. The Sustainable Ag and Food Systems program incorporated native tobacco, hemp, and Hopi blue corn crops into the curriculum and planted 5 new types of medicinal native plants. Six students attended a Food Sovereignty event out of state.

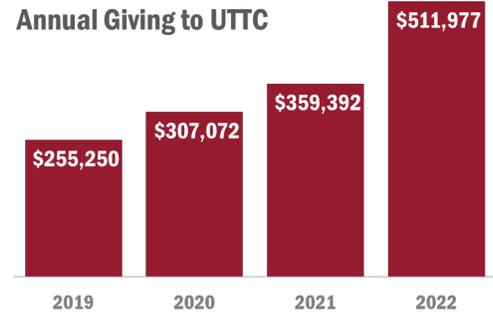
Cultural experiences are offered for the UTTC community. The childcare centers provide cultural events for the children and families who use their services. The centers also provide cultural awareness professional development for staff. Language presentations are provided to students at Theodore Jamerson Elementary. Prayers are offered in L/Dakota with students when appropriate. There were documented 800 participants in culturally relevant events publicly offered in fall 2022 and 1436 in spring 2023. In addition, 62 college students, 25 K-12 students, 25 community members, and 5 UTTC employees participated in Native Arts Learning and Sharing cultural activities funded by AICF.

Strategic Area #5: Infrastructure and Fiscal Stability

5a: Improve funding base and fiscal resources

Annual Giving continues to grow. Annual giving has steadily increased over the past four years. In fact, annual giving has doubled since 2019 to over half a million dollars. The number of donors has also increased significantly, tripling from 44 donors in 2019 to 130 donors in 2022.

Athletics plays a role in fundraising. The athletics department actively seeks donors. UTTC employees donate as well as others who are not currently affiliated with the college. There were 6 new external athletics donors added this year, one of which is an alumnus.



Strategy 2021.5b: New Construction and Remodels

Campus renovations ongoing. The All Nations Extension Paving Project plans were completed and the contract was awarded. Generators were installed in the Wellness Center, the Security Building, and in the cafeteria. A new HVAC system and generator were installed in the Skills Center. All air conditioners and furnaces were replaced in the student residential units.

Internet connectivity expanded on campus. Wi-Fi was installed to individual student dorms and student housing units. Additional security cameras were installed throughout campus to increase the safety of students, staff, and faculty. Fiber connections were installed on campus to provide faster internet speed.

New construction is progressing. Plans for the Netzero Greenhouse project have been completed and funding secured. The timeframe for construction was moved back to accommodate adjustments needed to the location. This project requires approval from the Federal Aviation Administration because the college is located so close to the Bismarck airport. Construction is planned to begin in late summer or early fall. A storm water mitigation project is planned for the south campus. The mitigation project is required before any further construction can be completed on the south campus. The contract and plans for the project have been approved by the USDA.

5c: Establish a firm fundraising foundation

Capital campaign plans developing. College Relations is working the BWF on fundraising consultation to begin a long-term capital campaign. Discussion is being held about the role of UTTC Board of Directors members in a Capital Campaign.

STRATEGIC INSIGHTS AND NEXT STEPS

UTTC has made significant progress in the spirit of its 2021-2025 Strategic Plan. The strategies indicated in each of the strategic areas remain relevant and important. However, the approaches to carrying out the strategies outlined in the document are becoming less germane to institutional action and context. The objectives and activities that were embedded into the plan may have been too prescriptive. Unanticipated forces and external support from ATD, AICF, NSF, The College Fund, and others have caused deviation from the objectives and activities that were anticipated in the original writing of the document while promoting institutional growth in the strategic areas. SMART goals, rather than prescriptive activities, will allow greater flexibility for the institution to move toward its strategic objectives. The IR Director will facilitate a midpoint review with stakeholders and make adjustments to the plan that better reflect current initiatives and context.