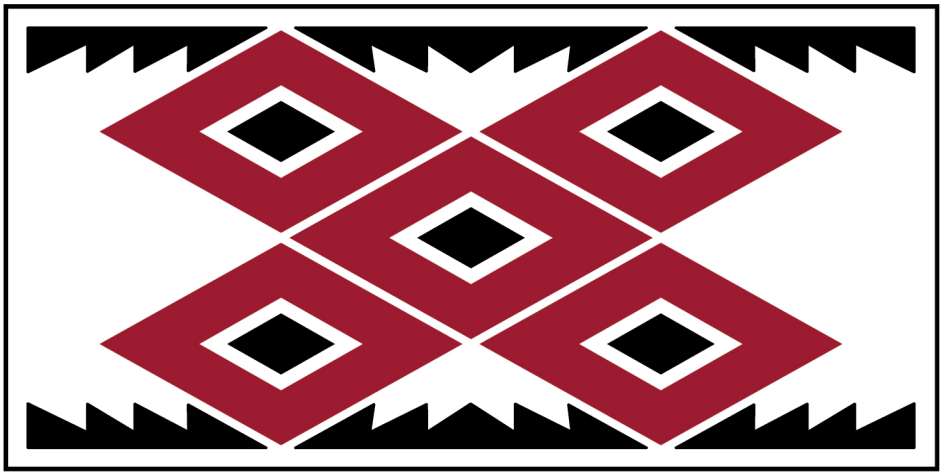


United Tribes® Technical College

Strategic Plan Annual Report
Year Five of Five

Submitted by:

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UTTC Office of Institutional Research

September 2026

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The United Tribes Technical College 2021-2025 Strategic Plan, aligned with the academic year, covered the period beginning fall 2021 and ending summer 2026. The plan was developed by a cross section of stakeholders from across campus to enhance success and bring accountability to the work conducted. The team felt being strategic in our decision-making was important to better utilize our limited resources and continually improve our services, programs, and overall campus community.[1]

The UTTC Strategic Plan advances the College's mission while supporting its vision for student success and achievement.

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 goals.

UTTC has completed the last year of a five-year Strategic Plan. As of the end of year four, the college has made significant progress with its established SMART goals. Some of the goals were retired during the plan.

This report highlights progress made 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

Strategic Area	Strategy	SMART Goals: By end of 2025-26 academic year, UTTC will…
1 **Commitment to Student Learning and Academic Success**	1a: Improve and sustain instruction through the assessment of student learning outcomes 1b: Continually improve academic offerings 1c: Expand academic supports for students	a) Increase credit completion rates overall at UTTC from 63% to 75%. b) Develop at least two articulation agreements with other TCUs. c) Increase the credit completion rates for new degree-seeking online students by 3 percentage points from 55% to 58%.
2 **Student Recruitment and Innovative Programming**	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	a) Increase college applications by 40% from 751 in fall 2019 to 1050. b) Increase college fall enrollment by 30% from 429 in 2018 to 558. c) Increase dual enrollment from 29 in fall 2018 to 50. d) Increase the number of programs of study available fully online at UTTC from 6 to 8. e) Offer a new CTE program TBD.
3 **Student Retention and Completion**	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	a) Fall to spring persistence rate for new and transfer students will exceed 70% annually. b) Fall to fall retention for new and transfer students will exceed 55% annually. c) Provide work-based experiences for at least 10% annually of students attending UTTC. d) Two new supports are available for online learners. e) Increase 4-year completion rates for FTFT students by 5 percentage points from 18% (2016 cohort) to 23% (2021 cohort). f) Increase percent of FTFT degree or certificate-seeking students who, within eight years of first enrolling, received a postsecondary award from the institution, remain enrolled at the institution, or who subsequently enrolled at another institution from 44% in 2018 to 50% (IPEDS Outcome). g) Essential Alumni services are identified through an alumnus needs assessment.
4 **Mission-Driven Institutional Effectiveness**	4a: Promote and document continuous improvement in all departments 4b: Expand research capacity at UTTC 4c: Integrate American Indian Culture and Arts	a) All departments will document at least one data-informed improvement per annual year. b) At least one new policy that advances expanding UTTC research culture and capacity development. c) Increase investment in research (positions, infrastructure, etc.) by at least 5% annually starting 2023-24 academic year. d) At least 4 new American Indian Culture and Arts courses are added to UTTC catalog. e) At least 4 American Indian Culture and Arts activities offered monthly (student activities calendar).
5 **Infrastructure and Fiscal Stability**	5a: Improve funding base and fiscal resources 5b: New construction and remodels 5c: Establish a firm fundraising foundation	a) Increase the number of annual donors from 44 (2019) to 150. b) Increase annual donations from $255,250 (2019) to $500,000. c) Make continuous and substantive progress on the UTTC master plan. d) Increase endowment to a total market value of $1 million. e) A five-year institutional budget projection is in place and updated annually.

UTTC Strategic Plan Final Report

Executive Summary

UTTC has completed the last year of its five-year Strategic Plan. This report provides a snapshot of the College's progress across five strategic areas, aligned with SMART goals developed in Year Two. Year Four focused on continuing progress, expanding support services for students, and addressing accreditation requirements.

Strategic Plan Organization:

UTTC's strategic plan is built around five key strategic areas. After the second year, the college established SMART goals to measure progress on these strategies.

Every major unit contributes to these goals and documents its efforts in unit plans submitted to the Office of Institutional Research. These reports provide valuable insight into how each department is advancing the college's institutional priorities.

Major highlights from the 2025-2026 academic year include:

- UTTC fully "Met" the Higher Learning Commission's criteria for accreditation. The next reaffirmation accreditation visit at UTTC will be held some time in 2030-2031.
- New AS degrees in Indigenous Fine Arts and Addiction Studies will be offered beginning Fall 2025.
- Automotive Technology program achieved renewed ASE Certification.
- Fall 2024 enrollment was 576 students, exceeding institutional goals.
- UTTC's work with the Postsecondary Data Partnership data has been nationally recognized.
- UTTC met with goal with the endowment valued at $3.382 million as of June 2026.
- Significant enhancements to the campus environment have been made, including concrete gateway signs at the front entrance, flowered landscaping, new decks, and building improvements.

Strategic Plan Progress

The table below outlines the current status of each institutional SMART goal. The narrative that follows in the full report offers highlights of the work carried out in support of this strategic plan's strategies. While not an exhaustive account, it provides a snapshot of the many activities and initiatives happening across the institution that contribute to our established strategic goals.

Currently, UTTC is making strong progress with 22 of its 25 SMART goals. Two of the goals remain in development and will be a focus over the next year. One of the goals regarding dual enrollment will be discontinued as it is no longer viable.

The chart on the following page provides a high-level summary of how UTTC is doing with each of its goals.

STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRESS CHART

Strategic Area	SMART Goals: By end of 2025-26, UTTC will...	Status
Commitment to Student Learning and Academic Success	a) Increase credit completion rates overall at UTTC from 63% to 75%.	✅
	b) Develop at least two articulation agreements with other TCUs.	✅
	c) Increase credit completion rates for new degree-seeking online students by 3 percentage points from 55% to 58%.	✅
Student Recruitment and Innovative Programming	a) Increase college applications by 40% from 751 in fall 2019 to 1050.	🛑
	b) Increase college fall enrollment by 30% from 429 in 2018 to 558.	⏳
	c) Increase dual enrollment from 29 in fall 2018 to 50.	🛑
	d) Increase the number of programs of study available fully online at UTTC from 6 to 8.	⏳
	e) Offer a new CTE program TBD	✅
Student Retention and Completion	a) Fall to spring persistence rate for new and transfer students will exceed 70% annually.	✅
	b) Fall to fall retention for new and transfer students will exceed 55% annually.	✅
	c) Provide work-based learning experiences for at least 10% annually of students attending UTTC.	✅
	d) Two new supports are available for online learners.	✅
	e) Increase 4-year completion rates for FTFT students by 5 percentage points from 18% (2016 cohort) to 23% (2022 cohort).	✅
	f) Increase percent of FTFT degree or certificate-seeking students who, within eight years of first enrolling, received a postsecondary award from the institution, remain enrolled at the institution, or who subsequently enrolled at another institution from 44% in 2018 to 50%.	✅
	g) Essential Alumni services are identified through an alumnus needs assessment.	⏳
Mission-Driven Institutional Effectiveness	a) All departments will document at least one data-informed improvement per annual year.	✅
	b) Develop at least one new policy that advances expanding UTTC research culture and capacity development.	✅
	c) Increase investment in research (positions, infrastructure, etc.) by at least 5% annually starting 2023-24 academic year.	✅
	d) At least 4 new American Indian Culture and Arts courses are added to UTTC catalog.	✅
	e) At least 4 American Indian Culture and Arts activities offered monthly.	✅
Infrastructure and Fiscal Stability	a) Increase the number of annual donors from 44 (2019) to 150.	⏳
	b) Increase annual donations from $255,250 (2019) to $500,000.	✅
	c) Make continuous and substantive progress on the UTTC master plan.	✅
	d) Increase endowment to a total market value of $1 million.	✅
	e) A five-year institutional budget projection is in place and updated annually.	✅

Symbols: ✅ Met/Expected, ⏳ Progressing, 🛑 Discontinued

2021-2025 Strategic Plan Summative Report

This report provides a snapshot of the College's progress across five strategic areas using SMART goals as key performance indicators of success. The following narrative describes UTTC's progress in each of the strategic areas. Highlights of departmental activities that are believed to have contributed to the progress made are also provided.

STRATEGIC AREA 1: COMMITMENT TO STUDENT LEARNING AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS

This strategic area focused on improving student achievement through enhanced academic pathways, targeted support, and partnerships that strengthen learning opportunities.

SMART Goals: *By end of 2025-26, UTTC will…*	Progress	Status
a) Increase credit completion rates overall at UTTC from 63% to 75%.	Credit completion rate AY 2025-26 overall was 78%	✅ Met
b) Develop at least two articulation agreements with other TCUs.	Five articulation agreements with other TCUs	✅ Met
c) Increase credit completion rates for new degree-seeking online students by 3 percentage points from 55% to 58%.	Credit completion rate AY 2025-26 for new degree-seeking online students was 81%	✅ Met

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

✅ SMART Goal: to increase credit completion rates overall at UTTC from 63% to 75%.

An anticipated outcome of improved instruction and student support is an increase in the proportion of attempted credits that students successfully complete. Credit completion rates are calculated by dividing the number of credits completed with a grade of "C" or higher by the total number of credits attempted. In AY 2025–26, UTTC's credit completion rate reached 78%, an increase of 15 percentage points from 63% in AY 2019–20. This improvement indicates that students are successfully completing a greater proportion of the credits in which they enroll.

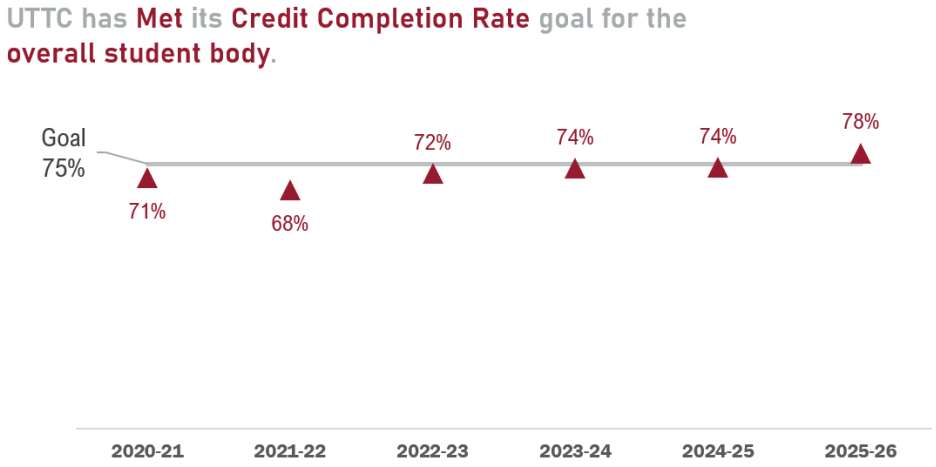


Figure 1: UTTC has continued to improve credit completion rates over the five-year period.

Factors contributing to success are largely faculty-driven through assessment of student learning at the course level, at the program level, and at the institutional level. In addition to assessing student learning in the classroom, each of the programs assesses student progress toward the knowledge and skills they are expected to have at the end of their program of study. Finally, student learning is also assessed toward the stated institutional learning outcomes. The data gathered through these assessment activities is used to make informed decisions regarding teaching, curriculum, and programs. Assessment of student learning is also conducted in campus services to measure student learning related to belonging, self-efficacy, growth mindset, and cultural connectedness.

Strategy 1b: Continually improve academic offerings

✅ SMART Goal: develop at least two articulation agreements with other TCUs.

UTTC has developed formal articulation agreements with each of the TCUs located in North Dakota as well as with two TCUs located out of state. In addition, the Engineering department has partnered with the other TCUs in the state to share courses. This arrangement helps to expand course availability, strengthens engineering pathways, reduces institutional costs, and leverages better use of faculty expertise. Following are the agreements that have been established during the last five years.

Computer Information Systems
UTTC has established articulation agreements with ***Navajo Technical University*** for environmental engineering and ***Bay Mills Community College*** for Computer Information Systems.

Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems
A broader North Dakota Agricultural Articulation Memorandum of Understanding was established among nine NDUS institutions, UTTC, ***Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish College***, and ***Sitting Bull College*** to facilitate transfer of undergraduate agricultural students. The agreement expands common course numbering and explores sharing instructional materials. Additional articulation agreements are also being developed.

Environmental Science and Research
An articulation agreement developed to transition students finishing their two-year degree at ***Cankdeska Cikana Community College*** to the BS Environmental Science and Research program at UTTC.

General Studies and Addiction Studies
An articulation agreement between UTTC and Minot State University (MISU) allows students who complete an AS degree from UTTC to transfer up to 12 credits into the Addiction Studies or Psychology BS program at MISU.

Engineering
STEM faculty at the five TCUS in North Dakota (***Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish College, Sitting Bull College. Turtle Mountain College, Cankdeska Cikana Community College***, and UTTC) are sharing and collaboratively teaching engineering and advanced mathematics courses to maximize limited instructional resources at these institutions. An articulation agreement has been established with ***Navajo Technical University*** for students to transfer seamlessly to Environmental Engineering BS.

Strategy 1c: Expand academic support for students

✅ SMART Goal: to increase credit completion rates for new degree-seeking online students by 3 percentage points (from 55% to 58%).

The UTTC online learning program continued to expand during the strategic plan period. As enrollment in online courses grew, institutional data showed that new students beginning their studies exclusively online were completing credits at lower rates than the overall UTTC student population. This gap highlighted the need for more targeted support for online learners. In 2024–25, new full-time students enrolled exclusively in online courses completed just 35% of the credits for which they enrolled, underscoring the importance

of strengthening the supports and services available to help online students persist and successfully complete their coursework.

UTTC worked with partners, including AIHEC, Achieving the Dream, and the American Indian College Fund to better understand contributing factors and design systems to better support online learners.

These improvements led to significantly better credit completion ratios for online learners, increasing by 46 percentage points from the previous year to the 2025-26 academic year!

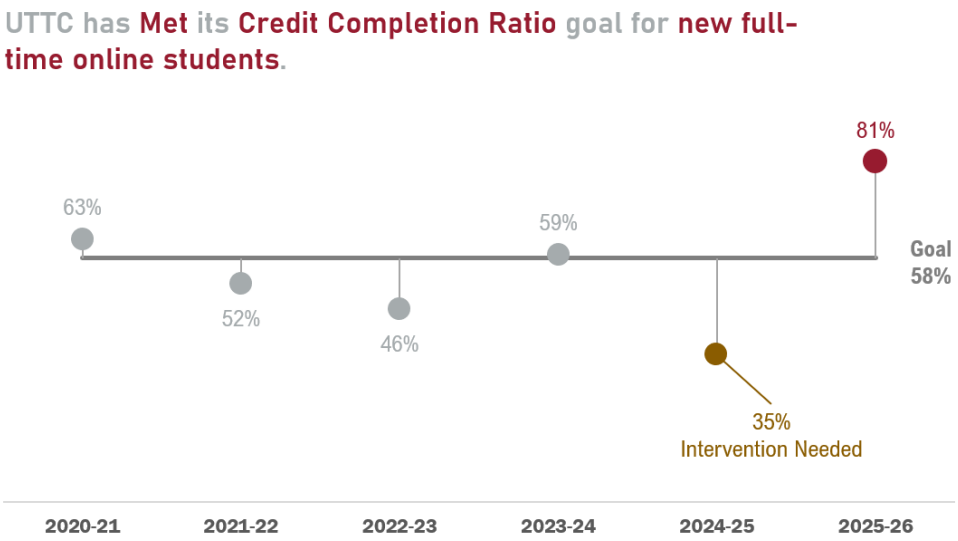


Figure 2: Credit Completion Ratios for New Full-Time, Online-Only Students

Factors contributing to improved student success included targeted efforts to address the needs of students experiencing the greatest academic challenges. UTTC implemented a coordinated set of strategies to strengthen the overall learning experience and improve student success, with particular attention to supporting online learners. These efforts included establishing and providing onboarding for new faculty, along with instructional design support to enhance online course design and delivery. Faculty were also provided opportunities for professional development through the Association of Colleges and University Educators (ACUE), which offers courses on teaching and student success strategies.

The College in now a member of the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA), strengthening the regulatory and quality-assurance infrastructure supporting its distance education programs. NC-SARA membership supports UTTC's ability to serve students who reside outside North Dakota and provides an additional structure for maintaining compliance as the College continues to expand its online offerings.

UTTC created and filled an Online Learner Success Coordinator (OLSC) position dedicated to supporting online students. The coordinator maintains regular contact with online learners, helps students navigate challenges, connects them with appropriate resources, and creates opportunities for meaningful engagement and connection. UTTC made data-informed improvements to the design and use of the College's early alert system. The Thunder Alerts are used to facilitate earlier identification of students experiencing academic difficulties and to provide more timely interventions using a tiered approach. UTTC also invested in Yellowdig, an engaging online discussion platform designed with a social-media-style interface to promote interaction, connection, and participation among online learners. Not only do some faculty use Yellowdig in their courses, the OLSC has used it to create a Virtual Student Union accessible to all students. These efforts represent a shift from students having to seek assistance toward a more proactive and intentionally designed approach to supporting all UTTC learners, online or on campus.

STRATEGIC AREA 2: STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND INNOVATIVE PROGRAMMING

This strategic area focused on increasing student enrollment through effective recruitment strategies and improving the efficiency of admissions and enrollment processes. In addition, this strategy focused on providing academic programming that aligns with Tribal and regional workforce needs to attract students.

SMART Goals: *By end of 2025-26, UTTC will…*	Progress	Status
a) Increase college applications by 40% from 751 in fall 2019 to 1050.	No longer a goal	Discontinued
b) Increase college fall enrollment by 30% from 429 in 2018 to 558.	2025 Fall enrollment was 513, an increase of 20% from fall 2018	Progressing
c) Increase dual enrollment from 29 in fall 2018 to 50.	No longer a goal	Discontinued
d) Increase the number of programs of study available fully online at UTTC from 6 to 8.	UTTC offered 6 programs of study online in the 2025-26 academic year	Progressing
e) Offer a new CTE program TBD	UTTC added the Commercial Vehicle Operations program	Met

Strategy 2a: Increase student enrollment through recruitment strategies

SMART Goal: to increase college applications by 40% from 751 in fall 2019 to 1050.

This goal was discontinued. The goal has been adjusted to increasing the conversion rates of applicants who enroll from 23% to 28% and will be addressed in the next strategic plan.

Strategy 2b: Streamline the admissions process for prospective students

SMART Goal: to increase college fall enrollment by 30% from 429 in 2018 to 558.

UTTC met its goal for fall enrollment in 2024 but fell below the target again in 2025. Fall enrollment is up 20% from the baseline of 429.

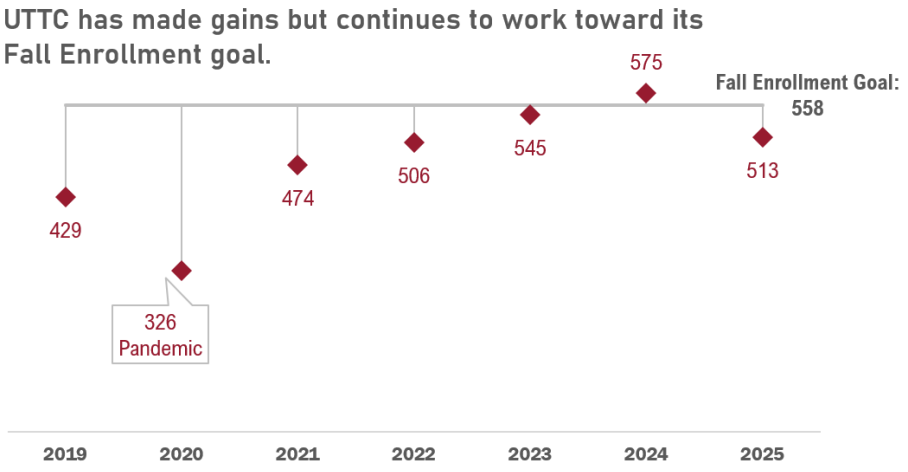


Figure 3: Annual Fall Enrollment

This goal was closely aligned and interrelated with the previous goal discussed above. UTTC has been working with our partner organizations to be more strategic about how we increase student enrollment. Part of the process was to look at how we were communicating with applicants to complete the admissions process. The Strategic Enrollment Plan now includes a focus on increasing the conversion rate of

applications to enrolled students by developing engaging and culturally responsive Admissions communication strategies, providing better information about Admissions requirements, using data to target recruitment strategies, and improving the orientation process for students. A key highlight of the student onboarding improvement process was the strengthened collaboration between Admissions and IT, who worked together to clarify and streamline procedures for issuing student IDs and emails. Financial aid, housing and meal services are also being integrated into the orientation and onboarding processes for students to improve those experiences. ***The new goal is to increase the conversion rate of admission application to enrollment 1% each year for next five years (28% to 33% in 2030)***. This goal is part of the new strategic plan that begins in AY 2026-27.

🛑 SMART Goal: to increase dual enrollment from 29 in fall 2018 to 50.

Despite grant funding intended to support the growth of UTTC's dual enrollment program, participation levels remained insufficient to establish a financially viable and sustainable program. As a result, **UTTC has retired its dual credit program**. The low enrollment and strong presence of Bismarck State College's dual credit offerings in local high schools. These conditions created a highly competitive environment that limited UTTC's ability to establish a sustainable presence in the dual credit market.

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

⏳ SMART Goal: to increase the number of programs of study available fully online at UTTC from 6 to 8.

During the reporting period, the College added the Elementary Education AS degree to its fully online offerings; however, it also retired the Paralegal AAS degree due to low enrollment. As a result, UTTC currently offers six programs of study fully online: Business Administration AS and BS, Criminal Justice AS and BS, Elementary Education AS, and General Studies AS.

The College had also planned to add the Addiction Studies program to its fully online offerings. However, implementation has been delayed by challenges in fully staffing the Social Work program, which provides four of the courses required for the Addiction Studies curriculum. In addition, neither these Social Work courses nor Biology 150 (required per matriculation agreement) were developed for online delivery as of the writing of this report. Consequently, the College was unable to add the Addiction Studies program to its fully online offerings within the planned timeframe. These program changes and implementation challenges resulted in six fully online programs rather than the eight targeted.

✅ SMART Goal: is to offer a new CTE program.

UTTC exceeded this goal with the addition of six new programs, each classified as CTE programs. UTTC receives operational funding under Section 117 of the Perkins V Act, which establishes the Tribally Controlled Postsecondary Career and Technical Institutions Program (TCPCTIP). The programs of study at UTTC qualify as Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs because they are intentionally aligned with the specific criteria set by Perkins V legislation. The ***Paralegal AAS*** program was added in 2022, effectively meeting the goal set. Although the Paralegal program has been retired, there have been six other CTE programs added to UTTC's menu of programs.

The ***Commercial Vehicle Operations certificate*** and the ***Fisheries and Wildlife Biology AS and BS*** programs were added in 2023. UTTC added the ***Indigenous Leadership AS*** program in 2024 and the ***Indigenous Fine Arts AS*** and ***Addiction Studies AS*** programs in 2025. These programs of study are well-aligned with Tribal and regional workforce needs, combine rigorous academic standards with hands-on technical training, and culminate in tangible and measurable outcomes.

STRATEGIC AREA 3: STUDENT RETENTION AND COMPLETION

This strategic area focused on creating a more connected and supportive student experience from enrollment through graduation and beyond. Efforts centered on strengthening services and supports across the student journey, improving the College's ability to track internships and post-graduation outcomes, and developing more intentional opportunities for alumni engagement. Together, these strategies were designed to strengthen continuity of support and maintain connections with students as they progressed through their education and transitioned into employment and life after graduation.

SMART Goals: *By end of 2025-26, UTTC will…*	Progress	Status
a) Fall to spring persistence rate for new and transfer students will exceed 70% annually.	Fall 2025 to spring 2026 persistence was 79%	✅ Met
b) Fall to fall retention for new and transfer students will exceed 55% annually.	Fall 2025 to Fall 2026 retention rate was 62%	✅ Met
c) Provide work-based learning experiences for at least 10% annually of students attending UTTC.	52 (10%) of students participated in internships or apprenticeships (520 full time degree seeking)	✅ Met
d) Two new supports are available for online learners.	Three new supports for online learners	✅ Met
e) Increase 4-year completion rates for FTFT students by 5 percentage points from 18% (2016 cohort) to 23%.	The 4-year completion rate for the 2022 cohort of new and transfer students was 33%	✅ Met
f) Increase percent of FTFT degree or certificate-seeking students who, within eight years of first enrolling, received a post-secondary award from the institution, remain enrolled at the institution, or who subsequently enrolled at another institution from 44% in 2018 to 50% (IPEDS)	66% of FTFT degree or certificate-seeking students, within eight years of first enrolling, received a postsecondary award from the institution, remain enrolled at UTTC, or subsequently enrolled at another institution (IPEDS)	✅ Met
g) Essential Alumni services are identified through an alumnus needs assessment.	Alumni have been surveyed	⏳ Progressing

Strategy 3a: Increase student retention through targeted retention strategies

✅ SMART Goal: fall to spring persistence rate for new and transfer students will exceed 70% annually.

UTTC achieved this goal in three of the five years during the strategic plan period, with a significant increase in the final year of the plan period.

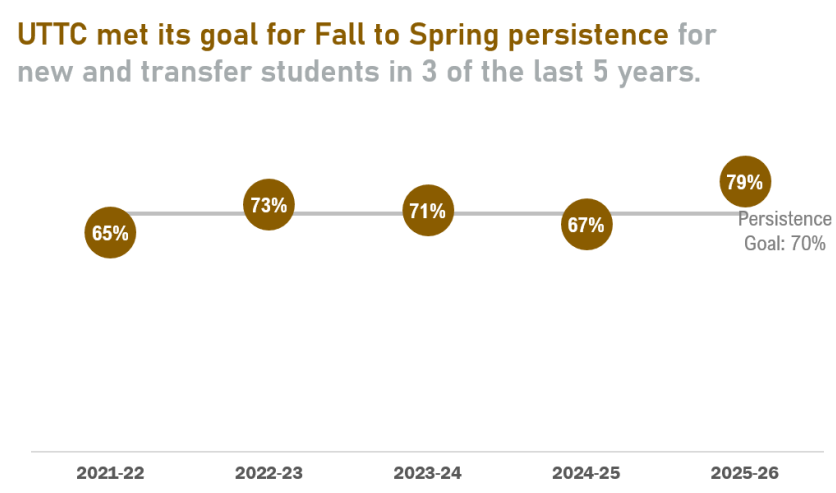


Figure 4: Fall to Spring persistence for new and transfer students starting in the fall cohort

✅ SMART Goal: fall-to-fall retention for new and transfer students will exceed 55% annually.

UTTC met this goal in the final year of the strategic plan period with a significant increase of 15 percentage points over the previous year.

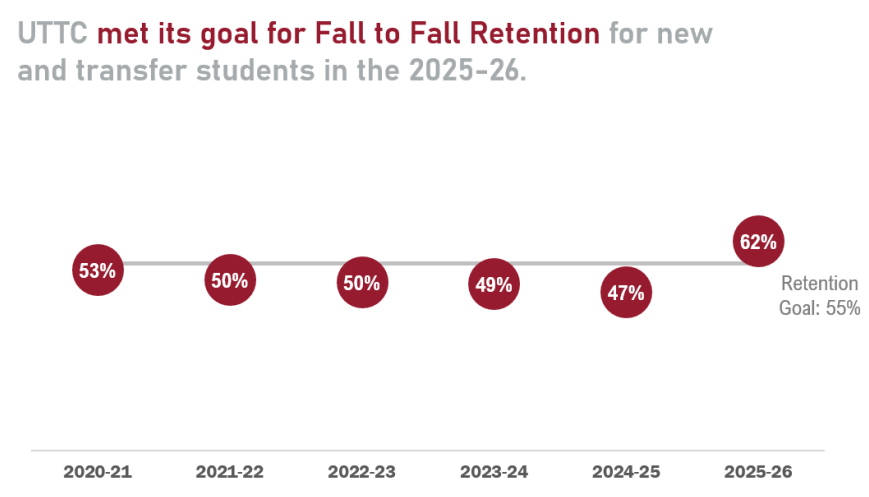


Figure 5: Fall to Fall retention for new and transfer students starting in the fall cohort

Several factors have contributed to improvements in student persistence and retention. Across the institution, UTTC has made a concerted effort to strengthen and target student support throughout the student lifecycle, from enrollment through completion. Data-informed decision-making has been central to these efforts, guiding the development of interventions and providing a means to monitor student progress. The following narrative highlights key institutional strategies and initiatives that have contributed to stronger student persistence and retention.

Revised Native American Tuition Policy

In Spring 2025, the General Education program review revealed that low credit completion ratios for new online learners may be linked to students taking more credits than they can manage, particularly in their first semester, because students had to be enrolled full time to qualify for the Native American Tuition Waiver (NATW). UTTC revised the NATW policy to better accommodate students taking less than a full-time course load. Now students taking at least 6 credits may qualify for the NATW during the fall and spring semesters.

Retention System

The early alert system is revised and updated on an annual basis to better support students. The system was rebranded as “Thunder Alerts” and messaging to students revised to be clearer about what the concern is, provide a direction for addressing the concern, and to provide information about how resources available to help them. The messaging to students is student-friendly, grounded in trauma-informed practices, and incorporates the Thunder icon to reinforce a sense of connection and institutional support.

The system follows a tiered approach to intervention, with initial concerns addressed directly between the student and faculty member. When concerns remain unresolved, they are escalated to the next level, allowing academic advisors and other appropriate support services to become involved and provide additional assistance. This approach emphasizes early, supportive intervention while ensuring that students receive appropriate and timely assistance as their needs arise.

Campus Security keeps the campus community safe

Safety & Security staff continually work to keep the campus safe and to improve customer service and communication. In response to student feedback, the department participated in customer service and communications training, in addition to training in advanced first aid, CPR, and AED to ensure that the UTTC campus community and students are safe.

Campus and Student Life Services Support Students

Student Life departments work collaboratively to advance UTTC's institutional goal of Personal and Social Responsibility, reflected in the institutional learning outcome that graduates will demonstrate the skills necessary to live and work in a global society. This outcome encompasses four areas of student learning: belonging, self-efficacy, growth mindset, and cultural connectedness. In collaboration with campus services, Institutional Research developed and validated a survey to assess student learning in these four areas. The validated survey is now used regularly as part of UTTC's co-curricular assessment process to measure student learning and inform decisions about student life services provided for students.

Figure 6 presents the most recent results from the survey that was completed in spring 2026.



Figure 6: Students scored highest on Growth Mindset and Cultural Connection

Family and Housing Services

UTTC provides childcare, housing and elementary school services for students. These programs are important for our students who have families. Campus housing space, particularly single-family housing, is limited as are childcare slots and sometimes students must be placed on a waiting list until a space opens. Following is a summary of students served in the 2024-25 academic year.

Table 1: Number of participants in housing and elementary school services

Services	# Summer	# Fall	# Spring
Children served at Child Development Center	25	42	38
Children served at Theodore Jamerson Elementary School	0	89	91
College students in campus housing	67	200	170
Individuals served by Housing including students and family members	245	366	335
On campus housing waiting list or turned away	7	5	5

Health and Wellness Services Support Students

The Health and Wellness services provide a wide range of wellness, advocacy, cultural, and resource-based programming throughout the year. Cultural activities are provided on a regular basis for students and their families. Mental health, chemical health, counseling, disability services, and domestic violence advocacy services are available to students as needed. The Student Health department offers clinical services (e.g. vaccines and immunizations, medical exams and sports physicals, and preventative care screenings, as well as referrals to community providers as needed. The department also manages the Campus Cupboard, which provides food and sundries for students who need it.

During the final year of the strategic plan, the Health and Wellness Department expanded efforts to provide accessible health, wellness, and recovery supports, particularly for online learners. Initiatives included opportunities for creative expression and peer connection, recovery resources, and telehealth chemical

dependency services. Although participation varied across these offerings, their implementation reflects the department's continued commitment to addressing students' diverse health and wellness needs and expanding access to supportive services. These efforts also highlighted the importance of monitoring participation and engagement to inform future planning and service delivery. Following is a summary of services that were provided in the 2025-26 academic year.

Table 2: Number of participants in Wellness services offered Summer 2025 through Spring 2026 terms

Services	# Provided
# Transportation services provided for health purposes in the community	66
# Campus Cupboard visits where students received food or supplies	302
# Students who received financial literacy education through Campus Cupboard program operations	209
# Wellness clinic services or visits (Student Health, Counseling, Chemical Health, etc.)	1,480
# Students who completed Medicaid applications	12
# Students who completed Accuplacer tests	94
# Cultural activities participants	1,338

Academic Retention Strategies

Across academic departments, UTTC continued to strengthen the integration of instruction, academic support, student services, and experiential learning to improve student engagement, persistence, and retention. Faculty have increased proactive, personalized outreach, used institutional data and retention tools to identify students experiencing academic difficulties, and provided individualized guidance on academic pathways, program progression, and transfer opportunities. The Student Activities and Retention Coordinator promotes engagement in campus life through activities designed to meet the needs of younger, single students, while the establishment of the Student Union provides a central gathering space with food options that encourage social interaction and peer connection. These efforts are complemented by expanded tutoring, virtual office hours, online learning resources, and more flexible opportunities for faculty and peer interaction, particularly for online learners.

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

✅ SMART Goal: provide work-based experience for at least 10% annually of students attending UTTC.

Career advising and soft skills seminars

The Transfer & Career Services Coordinator provides support and guidance for students. She provided career advising sessions that impacted 291 students and had 56 students who participated in soft skills training workshops and seminars in the 2024-25 academic year. Students have access to a range of work-based learning opportunities, including on-campus and off-campus research internships, non-research internships (both paid and unpaid), and apprenticeships. According to unit plans submitted by programs and enrollment services staff, there were a total of 163 research experiences, 7 of which were completed internationally. See Table 3 for the number of work-based experiences accessed by students each term:

Table 3: Students in Work-based experiences as documented in Unit Plans

Work-Based Experience	Summer 2025	Fall 2025	Spring 2026
On-Campus Research Internship	18	22	11
Off-Campus Research Internship	12	10	6
International Research Experience	1	6	10
Non-Research Internship	0	21	16
Apprenticeship	0	3	3
% of Enrollment Participating:	19%	12%	10%

✅ SMART Goal: two new supports are available for online learners.

New resources for online learners

Several supports have been implemented for online learners. UTTC required synchronous meeting times for online courses so that faculty could interact directly with online students. This is designed to facilitate regular and substantive student-teacher and student-student interaction to build relationships and to build trust. In addition, UTTC has implemented a new, more student-friendly discussion platform called ***Yellowdig***. Yellowdig, is designed to promote and track student and faculty interactions and uses game technology to engage students and enriches the course experience for both students and faculty. Third, UTTC has hired an ***Online Learning Support Coordinator*** as a dedicated point of contact for online students. In addition, she is developing strategies for enhancing online learner engagement and connection with UTTC. Finally, UTTC implemented ***Brainfuse,*** a tutoring software that is available for all students to use, whether they are located on campus or studying remotely.

Orientation and onboarding support for online learners

After a process review was conducted by an evaluation partner, we discovered the need to conduct placement testing with our online learners. Implementing placement testing for online learners helps us to better advise them in course selections and course loads. Welcome week activities are now offered for new students studying completely online to provide a warm welcome and help them begin to develop a stronger sense of belonging with the institution.

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

✅ SMART Goal: to increase 4-year completion rates for FTFT students by 5 percentage points from 18% (2016 cohort) to 23% (2021 cohort). **FTFT students are first-time, full-time students.*

UTTC has consistently met this goal in the last several years. UTTC is re-evaluating this goal to determine a more appropriate goal for the next strategic plan.

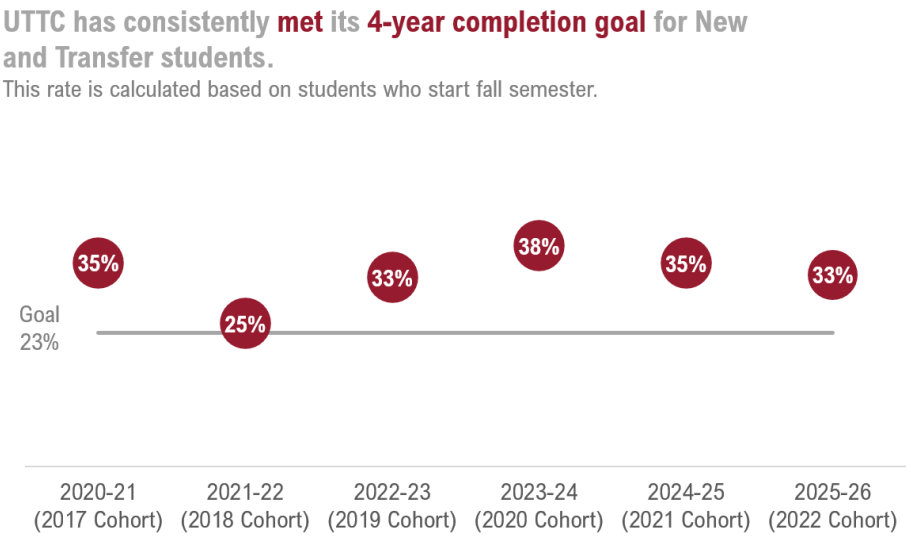


Figure 7: IPEDS 8-year enrollment and completion of First Time Full Time

Several improvements have been made to the student advising process. UTTC has strengthened advising through recommended course sequences and graduation pathways for each program. Advisors use research-based momentum metrics—including credit completion ratios, credit accumulation, and gateway course completion—to inform advising practices. In coordination with support services, strategies such as adjusting credit loads and prioritizing first-year gateway math and English courses have contributed to improved student credit completion.

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

✅ SMART Goal: increase percent of FTFT degree or certificate-seeking students who, within eight years of first enrolling, received a postsecondary award from the institution, remain enrolled at the institution, or who subsequently enrolled at another institution from 44% in 2018 to 50% (IPEDS Outcome).

The cohort of FTFT students are derived from eight years prior to the completion year. For example, the rate for 2020-21 is based on the cohort that began in fall semester 2012. The most recent data is based on the cohort of first-time, full-time students who started in the fall of 2017, as reported to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

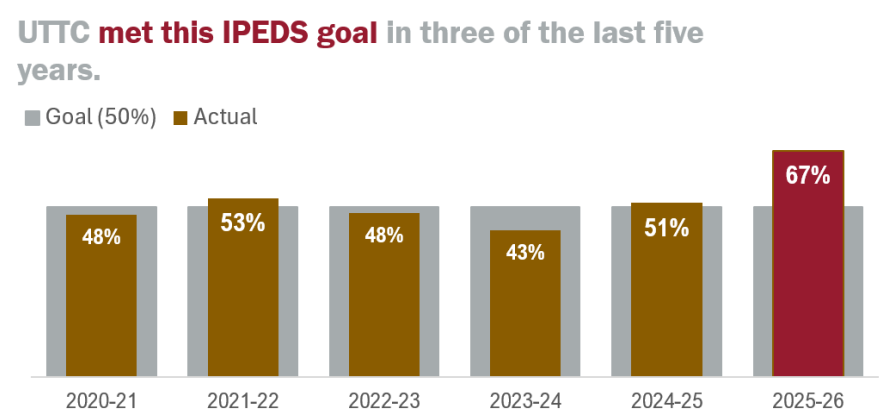


Figure 8: IPEDS Outcome measure of students who graduated, are still enrolled, or transferred to another institution

There were 105 FTFT students in the 2017 fall cohort. Of these, 37 were awarded certificates or degrees, none were still enrolled at UTTC, and 33 transferred to other institutions within eight years from first enrolling at UTTC. This is a 16-percentage increase from the previous year.

Strategy 3e: Develop comprehensive alumni services

⏳ SMART Goal: to have essential Alumni services are identified through an alumnus needs assessment.

Building Pathways to Rural and Tribal Employment (BPRTE)
UTTC has partnered with the College Fund on an initiative entitled *Building Pathways to Rural and Tribal Employment* (BPRTE). Through BPRTE, alumni data has been collected at the Tribal Leaders Summit and at the International Powwow. Graduates were surveyed about their experiences with transitioning from college to employment and how UTTC might better support them after graduation. Alumni who completed the survey received an incentive package that included an Alumni T-shirt, buttons, and a UTTC tumbler.

Survey respondents were also asked about how they would define "meaningful employment". This definition is being used to inform career services activities. Enrollment Services is using the survey data to collaborate with College Relations in developing alumni services strategies.

Alumni webpage in development
College Relations is working on building an Alumni webpage. The page will highlight UTTC alumni and strengthen the college's ability to reconnect, track, and engage with former graduates.

First destination survey
Career Services regularly distribute a first destination survey to graduates approximately six months after graduation. Enrollment Services is working on strategies to address low response rates for this survey. In addition, some of the academic programs track their graduates. This is another potential source for alumni information.

STRATEGIC AREA 4: MISSION-DRIVEN INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

While all areas of the strategic plan are mission-driven, the strategic focus of mission-driven institutional effectiveness centers on ensuring that UTTC operates with excellence, accountability, and alignment to its mission. This includes a commitment to documenting continuous improvement in all departments to strengthen programs and services. It also includes expanding the college's research capacity through thoughtful policy development and sustained investments in personnel and infrastructure.

In addition, this area works toward enriching the student experience by broadening opportunities to engage with American Indian culture and arts through new courses and regularly offered cultural activities. Together, these efforts advance institutional quality while honoring and promoting the cultural foundation at the heart of UTTC's mission.

SMART Goals: *By end of 2025-26, UTTC will…*	Progress	Status
a) All departments will document at least one data-informed improvement per annual year.	UTTC recognized for data informed progress through awards, presentations, and publications; RNL Data	✅ Met
b) Develop at least one new policy that advances expanding UTTC research culture and capacity development.	Several policies have been developed and adopted	✅ Met
c) Increase investment in research (positions, infrastructure, etc.) by at least 5% annually starting 2023-24 AY.	Estimated $25.7 million sponsored programs and research portfolio	✅ Met
d) At least 4 new American Indian Culture and Arts courses are added to UTTC catalog.	14 new courses added to UTTC catalog	✅ Met
e) At least 4 American Indian Culture and Arts activities offered monthly (student activities calendar).	American Indian Culture and Arts activities are offered monthly	✅ Met

Strategy 4a: Promote and document continuous improvement in all departments

✅ SMART Goal: all departments document at least one data informed improvement per annual year.

Unit Plans document continuous improvement
Every department is asked to complete a Unit Plan. Each year, each department chooses one or more areas of the strategic plan to work on that relates to their work. In the Unit Plan, the department sets an achievable goal, describes how they plan to meet that goal, and how they will measure progress toward that goal. This is data informed planning and continuous improvement.

Faculty and staff data discussions
Data discussions are held regularly with faculty and other academic personnel through Faculty Friday data discussions and professional learning activities at the beginning and end of each semester. Data discussions provide opportunities for faculty and staff to make informed decisions about their own practice.

Continued work with partnering organizations
UTTC will continue to work with its partners on several initiatives, including the American Indian College Fund, AIHEC, Achieving the Dream, and other partners to continually to develop our capacity to better serve our students and to promote stronger student outcomes.

Strategy 4b: Expand research capacity at UTTC

✅ SMART Goal: to develop at least one new policy that advances expanding UTTC research culture and capacity development.

New policies created and enacted

- Research Faculty position type created
- Research Faculty designation with a separate line in the salary scale created to identify the unique requirements and expectations of research faculty
- Sabbatical Policy provides opportunity for intensive training or Intergovernmental Personnel Act positions with federal agencies
- Course-release policy provides opportunities for faculty to buy-out teaching time (with supervisor approval) to conduct research during the school year when appropriate
- An Internal RFP process promotes UTTC faculty/staff research expansion and support for new PI in different fields of expertise
- Vehicle leasing through federal grants policy is now an option and one that was used to purchase and lease a vehicle for IRRC
- Post-baccalaureate Research Assistants programs (like RaMP) provide 12-month research full-time research assistants
- Archive receives support from Mellon Foundation Initiative to advance the development of its archive and widen its scope of service as part of the college library and make its archive collections accessible to a wide audience.

Research protocols to address tribal data sovereignty

The Institutional Review Board policy and bylaws are being revised to address tribal data sovereignty. When that decision is finalized, the research protocol information will be posted on the UTTC website.

Library and Archives developing with support Mellon Foundation grant funds

The Library and Archives received a grant from the University of North Dakota/North Dakota Tribal College System Mellon Foundation Initiative to help expand access to our archival materials. With this support, archival supplies were purchased, and the college joined the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums (ATALM). The Archivist completed specialized training in archival and museum studies as well as digital humanities to strengthen preservation and outreach efforts. Student interns are hired through the grant project to help prepare materials and other holdings for the digital archive.

✅ SMART Goal: to increase investment in research (positions, infrastructure, etc.) by at least 5% annually starting 2023-24 AY.

The UTTC Intertribal Research and Resource Center (IRRC) expanded UTTC's research capacity through investments in personnel, laboratory equipment, facilities, and collaborative research opportunities. Although federal budget reductions resulted in the elimination of a third Research Faculty position, the institution continued to build its research infrastructure through external grants and partnerships.

UTTC Intertribal Research and Resource Center (IRRC)

The UTTC IRRC, funded by the National Science Foundation, provides research, outreach, training, and education and conducts community-based research that focuses on issues relevant to tribal nations in the Northern Plains.

Research Facilities, Equipment, and Personnel

An NSF equipment grant funded the purchase of a $116,000 scanning electron microscope (SEM). Additional laboratory investments included a gold sputter coater for SEM samples, Type I and Type II water purification systems, advanced analytical balances, and specialized research equipment. Through the IRRC TEA Center and Research DEN (Dakota Equipment Nexus) awards, UTTC also acquired a Sanger DNA

sequencer, automated DNA extractor, microplate reader, three trinocular stereoscopes, wildlife drone package, and field vehicle.

A U.S. Department of Education RDI grant supported the hiring of a full-time laboratory equipment technician in summer 2024. Construction on the $2 million Science and Technology Center (STC) addition began in summer 2025. The addition will provide office space and two new laboratories, expanding research capabilities through the Research DEN. IRRC grants also contributed to research benches and outdoor classroom tables for the new Land Grant NetZero Greenhouse.

Research Partnerships and Grant Development
UTTC expanded its research and training opportunities through a Cyber Consortium award of $817,000 to support data science and cybersecurity training. A consortium proposal for a federal GRANTED award to strengthen sponsored programs and research office capacity was submitted but not funded after federal funding was withdrawn in spring 2025. The consortium plans to pursue NIH and NSF GRANTED opportunities during 2025–2026.

Other departments, including Pre-Engineering, Environmental Science and Research, and Land Grant, are also increasing research capacity through external grants. A research enterprise profile completed in December 2024 documented 61 active awards totaling $25.7 million, including $1.38 million designated for research-specific activities. These figures demonstrate the breadth of UTTC's sponsored programs and research portfolio.

In the most recent year and despite potential constraints from federal budget limitations, UTTC continued strengthening research capacity. The STC addition was completed and opened, including two new laboratories and associated research infrastructure. Smaller equipment was purchased through other existing grants. Collaborations through opportunities such as RADcon and the TCUP Hub helped to expand research access, professional development, and institutional partnerships. These activities built on prior investments and strengthened UTTC's research capacity and infrastructure while advancing the long-term sustainability of its research enterprise amid evolving federal funding conditions.

Strategy 4c: Integrate American Indian Culture and Arts

✅ SMART Goal: at least 4 new American Indian Culture and Arts courses are added to UTTC catalog.

This has been accomplished with the addition of ***14 new courses*** that are part of the Indigenous Leadership and Indigenous Fine Arts AS degrees.

Indigenous Leadership and Fine Arts degrees add culture and art courses
New cultural courses developed include Indigenous Beadwork of North American, Indigenous Ceramics of North American, Contemporary Indigenous Art, Indigenous Jewelry, Indigenous Language I and II, Intro to Indigenous Culture Competency I and II, Intro Indigenous Leadership, Intro Federal Indian Law, Indigenous Leadership & Ethics, Indigenous Workplace Communication, Indigenous Rights, Advocacy, and Social Justice, and Indigenous Leadership in Practice Capstone.

✅ SMART Goal: at least 4 American Indian Culture and Arts activities offered monthly (student activities calendar).

Cultural activities are now provided for students on a regular basis during the year. Weekly Inipi (sweat lodge) and regular drum practices, along with other cultural events constituted offerings of an average of 7 cultural events per month, exceeding the goal.

UTTC hosts community graduation Powwow
UTTC hosted a graduation powwow and invited graduates from UTTC as well as from the area high schools and from the other colleges in Bismarck. High school and college graduates celebrated together and were recognized for their achievements.

STRATEGIC AREA 5: INFRASTRUCTURE AND FISCAL STABILITY

This strategic area focuses on improving the physical infrastructure and ensuring long-term fiscal health and sustainability. UTTC continues to pursue opportunities to grow its endowment, strengthen donor relationships, and develop financial strategies that support long-term institutional stability and growth.

SMART Goals: *By end of 2025-26, UTTC will…*	Progress	Status
a) Increase the number of annual donors from 44 (2019) to 150.	110 donors	⏳ Progressing
b) Increase annual donations from $255,250 (2019) to $500,000.	$22,533,186 received in 2025-26	✅ Met
c) Make continuous and substantive progress on the UTTC master plan.	Substantive progress documented	✅ Met
d) Increase endowment to a total market value of $1 million.	$2,026,223 as of August 2024	✅ Met
e) A five-year institutional budget projection is in place and updated annually.	Five-year budget projection is provided annually	✅ Met

Strategy 5a: Improve funding base and fiscal resources

⏳ SMART Goal: to increase the number of annual donors from 44 (2019) to 150.

College Relations reported 99 donors in the fall and 11 donors in the spring of the previous year. This constitutes a total of 110 donors. The donor list has grown since 2024, and the college has maintained connections with current donors. The "***Feel the Thunder***" capital campaign continues to progress alongside annual fundraising efforts, with ongoing coordination with PACE Fundraising, LLC, donor outreach, and development of campaign materials and partnerships.

✅ SMART Goal: to increase annual donations from $255,250 (2019) to $500,000.

College Relations reported that a total of $22,533,186 was received through donations last year. In the fall, UTTC received $22,459,336, in large part due to a generous donation from the McKenzie Scott Foundation. In the spring, $76,850 was collected.

Ongoing fundraising for Events Week is designed to raise institutional funds to support student scholarships. The ***Feel the Thunder*** capital campaign is designed to raise funds for a new athletic facility.

Strategy 5b: New construction and remodels

✅ SMART Goal: to make continuous and substantive progress on the UTTC master plan.

Substantive progress continues on the UTTC master plan. Remodels and maintenance projects help keep the campus healthy, safe, and up-to-date.

New lighting and signage now highlight the campus' front entrance, creating a more welcoming arrival experience. New parking lots, the NetZero Greenhouse, solar power, a bus garage, new and repaired streets, the addition to the Science and Technology Center, and cold storage facilities have been completed.

UTTC is in the planning stages for several major projects and is preparing to launch others. Currently, $37 million has been earmarked for projects scheduled to begin in the coming year and in spring 2027. North Dakota has a short construction season, and unpredictable weather can slow progress on projects, so it is important to be prepared. A selected list of major projects completed is provided in the table below:

Highlights of Construction and Remodel Project Completed	
YEAR ONE	
Education building renovation	UTTC Student Union (small gym remodeled space)
Streetlights on south campus updated to LED	New HVAC system installed in Child Development Center
Cafeteria renovation and redesign	New bleachers installed in gymnasium
YEAR TWO	
Generator installed in the Wellness Center	HVAC and generator installed in the Skills Center
Generator installed in the Security Building	Air conditioners and furnaces replaced in student units
Generator installed in Cafeteria	Wi-Fi installed in student dorms and housing units
Security cameras expanded	Fiber connections installed for faster internet speed
YEAR THREE	
Campus main entrance relocated for better traffic flow	NetZero Greenhouse constructed
All Nations Circle Extension Paving Project	Generators installed in Science & Tech and Maintenance
Office spaces build for IT and Maintenance	Offices built for Athletics staff
Sitting Bull dorm parking lot resurfaced and repainted	Landscaping work on north side of campus
YEAR FOUR	
East Intersection Paving Project	Cold Storage building constructed
All Nations Lighting & Signage Project	Bus Garage constructed
Sakakawea Hall Dorms Parking Lot Project	House Moves Project
Green House Parking Lot Project	Building 6, 7, 10, 11 Decking & Landscaping Project
Education Building Landscaping Project	Cultural Building Deck and Landscaping Project
TJES Secure Entrance Project	Building 45 & 74 Demolition Project
YEAR FIVE	
Japanese/American Internment Memorial Project	Science & Tech Center Expansion Project
Sakakawea Hall Renovation Project	Relocate 4 residential housing units
Coed Dorms Parking Lot Replacement Project	All Nations Circle – North Road Reconstruction Project
Wellness Center Solar Microgrid Project	Building 6/7 new parking lots
Cafeteria Roof Replacement	Building 6/7 remodel
PROJECT SCHEDULED OR PLANNED	
JBC/Wellness Center Exterior Replacement Project	Thunder Dome Sports Complex Project

Strategy 5c: Establish a firm fundraising foundation

✅ SMART Goal: to increase endowment to a total market value of $1 million.

UTTC met with goal with the endowment valued at over **$3.382 million** as of June 2026.

✅ SMART Goal: five-year institutional budget projection is in place and updated annually.

A five-year budget is now prepared annually by the Chief Finance Officer. The five-year projection is based on cash flow, annual audit information, past spending, and projected income. This is a Higher Learning Commission accreditation requirement. The budget projection is shared annually with the Board of Directors.