



Board for International Food and Agricultural Development

Working Group on Minority Serving Institutions

Expanding the Role of Minority Serving Institutions in the Work of USAID¹

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A note from William B. DeLauder, Chair, Board for International Agricultural Development (BIFAD) Working Group on Minority Serving Institutions and BIFAD Member

This report reflects a new level of energy and interest for engaging the U.S. Minority Serving Institutions (MSI) of higher education in USAID's development agenda. Building on the outcomes of the MSI workshop in Washington, D.C. in late September, representatives from the 1890 land-grant and Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Colleges and Universities, and the 1994 Land-Grant Tribal Colleges and Universities demonstrated at the BIFAD program at the World Food Prize in Des Moines in October 2010 the range of impacts they can have in global development, and the services they can offer to USAID, especially in small farmer and rural development, areas that are becoming a bigger part of the Administration's global food strategy.

BIFAD is very encouraged that USAID is recommitting itself to working with MSIs as partners in its reinvigorated agricultural programming, and new strategic themes under USAID Forward Reform. The increasing flow of resources being directed towards agricultural development offers an important opportunity for meaningful growth in MSI's work internationally. We look forward to reaching a higher level of cooperation between the MSIs and USAID in the years ahead.

William B. DeLauder
President Emeritus
Delaware State University

Background

In 2009-2010, efforts to both broaden and deepen the involvement of Minority Serving Institutions (MSI) in United States Agency for International Development (USAID) agricultural programming were renewed and under the auspices of the Board for International Food and Agricultural Development (BIFAD) an MSI Working Group was formed. Members of the group included representatives from the MSIs, USAID, and the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU). The purpose of the working group was to grow a stronger partnership between USAID and the MSIs by identifying recommendations to increase the participation of MSIs in USAID initiatives.

In late September 2010, as a result of Working Group planning, BIFAD support, and APLU implementation, a workshop was organized in Washington, D.C. It was attended by over 30 representatives of the nation's MSIs to develop a strategy and to identify recommendations for increasing their engagement in USAID programs. Sponsored by BIFAD, the meeting brought together participants from eleven Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), eight Tribal Colleges and Universities, and seven Hispanic Serving Colleges and Universities or associations. They were joined by staff members from USAID and the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU). BIFAD was represented by Dr. William B. DeLauder, President Emeritus of Delaware State University, who introduced and presided over the meeting. USAID leadership was represented by Karen Turner, Director of the Office of Development Partners, under whose auspices BIFAD is located. The workshop allowed education leaders and government officials to share perspectives on the current status and direction of the Title XII Higher Education Collaboration and to highlight the contributions that MSIs can make to international agricultural development efforts.

USAID Forward

The meeting took place as USAID Administrator Shah introduced new reforms at USAID, called USAID Forward, and only days after President Obama's historic declaration of a new U.S. Global Development Policy, which announced the critical role of development work as an integral component of U.S. foreign policy. The policy calls for changes in the definition, goals, and process of development to emphasize not simply the number of dollars spent or the quantity of food shipped to countries in need, but rather the achievement of effective results in reducing poverty, advancing health and prosperity, and strengthening civil society around the world.

"Our investments in development—and the policies we pursue that support development—can encourage broad-based economic growth and democratic governance, facilitate the stabilization of countries emerging from crisis or conflict, alleviate poverty, and advance global commitments to the basic welfare and dignity of all humankind."

-President Obama, September 2010

The launch of Global Health Initiative, Feed the Future (FtF), and the Global Climate Change Initiative all reflect new “whole of government” approaches to solving key development challenges. FtF offers a comprehensive approach to reducing hunger and poverty by increasing the productivity of key food staples and strengthening small-holders’ access to markets. It also aims to reduce malnutrition. USAID missions are engaged in the process of developing new

TITLE XII PROVISIONS

One part of the Title XII legislation (Section 297) describes the programs that can be carried out to both “utilize and strengthen the capabilities of United States universities with public and private partners of universities” as well as to support the capacity of developing country agricultural institutions. The legislation seeks to enhance the involvement of U.S. universities in the international network of agricultural science both broadly (e.g., in the work of international agricultural research institutions) and very concretely (e.g., in specific activities in developing countries).

The types of programs the legislation describes include engaging U.S. Universities not only to increase the capacity of developing countries to teach the various agricultural sciences and to conduct agricultural research, but also to improve extension services and develop educational and scientific exchange programs,

The legislation further notes that these programs have value to U.S. agriculture as well, and, in line with current thinking about “whole of government” seeks to link existing programs together that are conducted by different Federal and State offices. It also speaks to the value of links with the private sector.

strategies under the FtF initiatives, in coordination with other donors and according to the priorities of the national governments in the countries in which they are located.

At USAID, these new strategic initiatives set the scene for a dynamic moment to create a different vision for foreign assistance, through streamlined procurement processes and focused country-led programming. Procurement reform is shifting the orientation of development work away from short-term, output-oriented goals towards a longer-term perspective that supports successful outcomes. Greater attention to building local capacity for program implementation is a central component to the reform program, a goal to which MSIs can make a strong contribution. Another component is increasing competition among a wider diversity of U.S. actors, including small and minority-owned entities, through a greater number of smaller, direct contracts and grants. This shift away from the large Indefinite Quantity Contracts (IQCs) holds enormous potential for MSIs as well.

These changes are also influencing USAID’s relationships with the higher education community. The legislation known as Title XII¹ (amended in 2000) identifies a leading role for U.S. universities to work with their many partners to achieve the goals of “ensuring food security, human health, agricultural growth, trade expansion, and the wise and sustainable use of natural resources” – agriculture in all its dimensions – through research, education, extension/outreach, and policy formulation. As part of the U.S. university community, the MSIs are included

in this charge to address critical international agricultural development needs that pertain to human and institutional capacity building. Increasing the engagement of U.S. universities and colleges in the networks of international agricultural sciences is a key Title XII objective and one

¹ Title XII is entitled, “Famine Prevention and Freedom From Hunger,” and is an amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. Title XII was initially signed into law in 1975 and amended in 2000. .

that is ever more critical to transforming S&T progress in the U.S. to the benefit of agriculturally developing countries facing growing threats to food security.

A new policy on Human and Institutional Capacity Development (HICD) has been approved that seeks to move beyond only training scientists towards improving institutions: addressing “the effectiveness of research systems in developing and delivering new technologies and management practices to small-scale producers.”² A second direction involves consultation with the university community in a planned research program that has been incorporated into the FtF Initiative.

Another new program under discussion is based on the recognition that at a time of growing global food insecurity, energy shortages, and resource degradation, universities have an increasingly critical role to play in promoting Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) in agricultural development. The proposed Title XII 15/30 Higher Education Collaboration Foresight Program sets out a collection of long term goals and short term objectives that would enhance the USAID-U.S. university partnership to boost scientific capacity and to expand participation in scientific networks around the world. The multi-step process would inventory STI capacities and conduct gap analyses in developing countries at the request of their governments. The results would be used to construct a plan to help these nations to achieve a safe, secure and sustainable food supply by 2030 under conditions of climate change. Based on these analyses, new investments would support university to university collaboration between the U.S. and developing countries.

MSI Contributions to U.S. Foreign Assistance

The MSIs are uniquely well-positioned to help achieve the vision of broad-based economic growth that, as President Obama noted, “advances the basic welfare and dignity of all humankind.” The MSIs have relevant experience working with underserved and underprivileged groups. Although constrained by many years of declining agricultural funding, as were all agricultural colleges and universities, the MSIs have continued to bring to international development work the same passion and vision that propels them in their work with indigenous and underrepresented communities in the U.S.

In recognition of the past and potential contributions to international development by MSIs, the BIFAD voted to recommend the creation of a USAID/MSI Task Force with an overall charge to improve and maintain the USAID and BIFAD’s relationship with the MSI community, and more importantly, to expand the involvement of MSIs in the work of USAID, as a valuable resource. This recommendation was the most important to emerge from the MSI exercise because of its potential to enhance the relationship between the MSIs and USAID, to monitor outcomes of the relationship, and to hold the agency accountable for results.

For the MSI community, this declaration gives expression to the collective energy of their diverse institutions and their readiness to work in partnership with USAID.

The MSI community:

- Affirmed its **commitment** to working with USAID and asked that USAID reaffirm its willingness to expand opportunities for MSIs in development work;
- Described its **capacity** to provide world-class scientific leadership;
- Demonstrated the depth and breadth of its **experience** in working internationally; and,
- Articulated a **vision** for strengthening their future engagement in carrying out USAID’s development agenda.

Commitment

The MSI representatives strongly support the establishment of a USAID/MSI Task Force. Some suggested that the Task Force be modeled on the successful USDA/1890 Task Force whose members are appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture in consultation with 1890 community representatives. The work of that group, which was established to promote cooperative efforts between USDA and the 1890 land-grants, includes a range of activities, such as a scholars program and institution building. A similar approach could be taken by USAID, supported by a possible Memorandum of Understanding to formalize its institutional and financial support.

To improve the links between USAID and the MSIs, several MSIs offered to open their campuses to greater engagement in the training of USAID staff. One suggestion was to establish an opportunity for U.S. staff members from Washington, D.C. to spend time as “practitioners in residence.” Another thought was to offer university stays to USAID’s Foreign Service Nationals, providing them with both training and a wider exposure to U.S. life and culture. The involvement of USAID staff on MSI campuses would improve the MSI’s ability to respond to USAID needs and would also help to encourage a “culture of public service” among the current generation of students – and next generation of development leaders. Programs such as the USAID-funded Afghan Merit Scholars Program, which now brings Afghan scholars to Purdue University to complete graduate degrees in agriculture and English, could be designed to offer similar opportunities to graduate students from other countries to study at MSIs.³

MSIs are also ready to send experienced faculty to work in USAID offices, in Washington, D.C. and/or overseas, during their sabbaticals or as part of other organized programs. New exchange programs building on the best practices of previous efforts such as the Interagency Personnel Agreements (IPA) or the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) fellowships are possible models.

Other examples include those offered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It has programs for both faculty and students. For example, the Research Experience for Undergraduates program could be a model for developing an “Overseas Experience for Undergraduates” internship program. In the mechanism envisioned for USAID, the process might operate by awarding funding through a competitive process to students at MSIs to travel overseas to experience and work on USAID activities as part of their education.

Capacity

MSIs represent a rich segment of the wider range of all U.S. colleges and universities. They have valued characteristics that make their campuses particularly suitable for engagement in international work. Some of these characteristics are that MSIs:

- have extensive experience working with populations who reflect ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity;
- have cultural sensitivity to the conditions in developing countries that can be used to foster strong collaborations with peoples and institutions overseas;
- have already established, based on their diverse communities, a strong network of relationships overseas among students and faculty. Many of these links are individualistic rather than programmatic, but it would not be so difficult to build up greater institutional linkages from these personal connections;
- have considerable agricultural-related technical expertise among their faculty and students;
- offer a comparative advantage in applied research, particularly in the areas of natural resource management and agricultural sciences;
- are familiar with the constraints experienced by lower-income, dispersed, and rural indigenous communities in the U.S., and have the experience and capacity to work effectively with similar types of populations in developing countries;
- are enthusiastic about creating new partnerships across the different MSIs and between MSIs and other types of universities.

MSI faculty members are equipped to work with diverse communities. Their experiences teaching and working with multicultural and often resource or income poor populations can be harnessed for work among poor and vulnerable populations overseas. They know how to listen to the voices of the groups with which they work and to translate their voiced needs into plans of action by using applied and participatory research methodologies such as Rural Rapid Appraisal, Community Based Participatory Research, and Appreciative Inquiry. They are abundantly familiar with the challenges and needs of small farmers and producers in a wide range of climatic and geographical conditions.

The MSIs have established extensive networks of faculty and students across many international arenas. Tribal Colleges and Universities, for example, helped initiate the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WIN-HEC), which was co-founded by Maori higher education institutions in New Zealand. All MSIs can further mobilize these types of connections if supported by new opportunities for building the local capacity of developing country governments and civil society institutions. New USAID policies emphasize the preparation of locally-prepared and locally-owned development plans. USAID support will also prioritize capacity building for those local institutions and organizations that are critical to maintaining the sustainability of USAID programs in that developing country.

To continue and expand on these achievements, MSIs and other small organizations and firms would benefit from planned innovative procurement processes that capitalize on these strengths and help to overcome common constraints. Many MSIs, for example, because of limited research funding and heavy teaching loads, face difficulties in meeting cost-sharing requirements based

on faculty time. A lack of funds for replacement faculty limits opportunities for engaging in development work. MSIs also would benefit from new types of institutional strengthening grants, especially to upgrade information technologies and other educational infrastructure.

Experience

MSIs have participated in virtually all types of USAID international agricultural programming, and identifying their role was an important goal for BIFAD from its earliest planning sessions since the late 1970s.⁴ MSIs have benefited from a series of different awards, including the HBCU Research Grants Program, the Program Support Grants Program, and the University Development Linkages Program (UDLP), the Collaborative Research Support Programs, and more recently under programs such as the Association Liaison Office for University Cooperation in Development (ALO), Higher Education for Development (HED) and the Africa-U.S. Higher Education Initiative. The majority of the HBCUs, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and Hispanic Serving Institutions are eligible institutions under Title XII.

In the early 1980s, special attention was given to assisting the HBCUs to participate in and benefit from federal government programs. USAID announced its five point programs for the HBCUs in 1983 with the initiation of joint contracting by HBCUs and larger universities, increased use of HBCUs on short-term field assignments to USAID missions, competitive grants programs to HBCU faculty members to conduct research on problems of significance to developing countries, and engagement of HBCU faculty in employment opportunities at USAID. Grant awards were limited to under \$100,000 each; nonetheless, by 1991 the overall size of the program had reached nearly \$2 million annually and 152 research projects had received awards, many of which addressed agriculture, nutrition, and other rural development topics. USAID's Program Support Grants Program linking 1862 land-grants with the 1890 land-grants also sought to strengthen the institutional capacity of the latter group to conduct development assistance.⁵

In part as a result of their longer history, the HBCUs have a long record of involvement in USAID-funded agricultural programs, especially (though not only) as part of the Collaborative Research Programs (CRSP). The CRSPs have conducted research on key commodities relevant to the farmers in both the developing world and in the U.S., such as peanuts, sorghum and millet, beans and cowpeas, fish, and livestock, among others. Universities such as the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, a fisheries center; North Carolina A&T University, with expertise in peanuts; or the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore's work on integrated pest management are only three of many dozens of cases of HBCU engagement in the CRSP programs.

Tuskegee University is an HBCU with a long and distinguished history of international programs in agriculture. It has worked across the globe providing assistance in agricultural extension and has worked on research topics ranging from animal nutrition and crop science to biotechnology and small business development.⁶ Lincoln University in Missouri is another school with significant experience overseas. They have recently worked on USAID-funded activities in Malawi, with the Bunda College of Agriculture, and in Nepal with the Tribhuvan University, both in cooperation with other US land-grants, among other projects.⁷ Prairie View University in Texas is also implementing components of the Ethiopia Sheep and Goat Productivity Improvement Program (ESGPIP) in East Africa.

In 2000, seventeen Tribal Colleges and Universities were represented at a conference to discuss international outreach, co-sponsored by the American Indian Higher Education Consortium and the National Association for State Universities and Land Grant Colleges (NASULGC), now the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU). This initial conference on this subject solidified the commitment of tribal institutions of higher education to link to their indigenous counterparts overseas, a process formally inaugurated at the World Indigenous Peoples Conference in Education in Hilo, Hawaii one year earlier. At that meeting, US tribal college presidents met with Maori higher education leaders from New Zealand, the first step in what has since become a broader effort to support and strengthen U.S. Tribal Colleges and Universities engagement in international programs and partnerships.⁸

An innovative example of outreach involves the Haskell Indian Nations University in Kansas. It was awarded a USAID grant under the Association Liaison Office for University Cooperation in Development (ALO) to create a community-based water quality monitoring program in several central Siberian villages in conjunction with Gorno-Altai State University in Russia and both Kansas State University and the University of Kansas. The project, which was facilitated through student and faculty exchanges, not only provided communities with skills for the specific goals of testing local water quality, but also helped to introduce new techniques and models for communities to use in forging links to local government and economic development programming.⁹

Other schools, such as Salish Kootenai College in Montana, have developed distance learning classes to reach widely dispersed populations with quality courses at a reasonable cost. The Internet-based curriculum has already been serving indigenous populations not only in the U.S. but also overseas. And the College of Menominee Nation has, since 2005, had an agreement with Galen University in Belize to develop coursework on the sustainable management of natural resources. It is one of several outreach programs to indigenous communities around the world.¹⁰

Hispanic Serving institutions (HSIs) individually have also made important strides in establishing international initiatives that have an impact on the development of other nations. Most often it has been through alliances or partnerships with other educational institutions or other organizations. A number of HSIs have enjoyed the benefits of receiving grants through Higher Education for Development (HED) program.

Florida International University, the number one institution in the nation in awarding Bachelor's and Master's degrees to Hispanic students, has a number of such programs. For example, FIU's USAID-funded Global Water for Sustainability Program (GLOWS) has been coordinating and implementing programs aimed at increasing social, economic, and environmental benefits through healthy aquatic ecosystems and sustainable water resources management in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, for over six years. GLOWS programs are active in Peru, Ecuador, Republic of Georgia, India, Tanzania, Kenya, Rwanda, and several other African countries.

The University of New Mexico is another example of a large Hispanic-Serving Institution that is active internationally across several departments. It has conducted work on family medicine education in economically developing countries and has carried out innovative work and initiatives, particularly in Latin America, through the Office for Latin American Initiatives.

For several years, the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) has organized and worked closely with the joint USDA-HACU Leadership Group, comprised of five USDA

executives and five presidents of higher education institutions. It has been called “a tremendous example of how partnerships can improve government possibilities,” in the words of a former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture.

The work in agriculture, including international initiatives in developing countries, will continue to grow as there are now over one hundred HACU member institutions that are potential Hispanic-Serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities.

The Way Forward

Summary of Workshop Recommendations

The first recommendation was **to establish a USAID/MSI Task Force** to move the MSI/BIFAD/USAID agenda forward.

At the meeting, a discussion about the structure and composition of such a group included the suggestion that the MSI members to the Task Force would be recommended by the community. Members from USAID would be identified in consultation with the MSI Program in the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization. The final composition of the group would be reviewed by BIFAD before being conveyed to the Administrator. This group would be charged to monitor outcomes of the relationship and to hold the Agency accountable for results. The details of the structure and membership of this USAID/MSI Task Force shall be developed by BIFAD in consultation with the MSI Working Group and the relevant units in USAID, including Office of Development Partners and the MSI Program Coordinator.

As part of its mission to build a stronger partnership, between the MSIs and USAID, the Task Force would channel views of the MSI representatives on policy and implementation issues to USAID, including on such topics as revisions of higher education policies and issues addressed in USAID’s Automated Directed System (ADS).

The workshop participants also recommended that, once established the USAID/MSI Task Force hold periodic meetings, including a larger, annual meeting with the wider MSI community and USAID staff members, to encourage dialogue, develop new programs, and review completed projects.

Secondly, the MSI community also agreed to work jointly towards developing for themselves a second mechanism through which the HBCUs, the Tribal Colleges and Universities, and the Hispanic Serving Institutions would coordinate and communicate among themselves on international development issues and opportunities.

This would operate independently from the BIFAD-initiated and supported USAID/MSI Task Force. The group expressed the expectation that it could

develop a broader effort to involve more institutions and to work on a wider range of development or other topics.

The workshop participants also recommended that:

- USAID should make MSIs a policy priority
 - Higher education documents should reflect this
 - MSI outreach office should promote this
 - A possible MOU between USAID and MSIs would support this
- Communication between USAID and MSIs and among MSIs be improved
 - BIFAD to establish two-way communication channel with MSIs
 - Creating a calendar of regional meetings between USAID and MSIs to increase diversity of voices in international development
 - Identify opportunities for collaboration among different types of MSIs
- Grant opportunities for MSIs be increased, including
 - Planning and strengthening grants for specific activities, such as:
 - Opportunities for grant proposal-writing workshops for MSIs
 - Helping MSIs to create new methodologies to reach under-served communities.
 - Faculty exchanges and internships involving MSIs.
 - USAID tapping agricultural expertise of MSIs
 - USAID to maintain an up-to-date inventory of MSI institutions and their capabilities, their faculty resources as well as their academic, research, and extension or outreach programs.
- New flexible procurement mechanisms for MSIs and other small institutions be developed
- Long-term training and education at MSIs be supported, including:
 - Finding more opportunities for foreign graduate students' study at MSI
 - Designing robust, funded student internship programs in the MSI communities that will foster their participation in public service and link them to faculty members with international experience.

At the BIFAD meeting in Des Moines, Iowa, in October 2010, a presentation was given on the Workshop and its recommendations. As a result, the following resolution was adopted by BIFAD members:

The Board For International Food and Agricultural Development applauds the effort of the Minority Serving Institutions Working Group, the excellent leadership of Dr. William DeLauder, and the strong commitment of USAID to expand the role of MSIs in Title XII programs and activities. The Board approves the recommendations of the Working Group and instructs [it] to proceed with developing a White Paper to provide a roadmap to ensure the dialogue between USAID and Minority Serving Institutions continues. It is the Board's intention to use the White Paper as a benchmark for evaluating the Agency's performance in its relationship with Minority Serving Institutions.

This White Paper will now be reviewed by the BIFAD. They will forward their recommendations to the USAID Administrator for his consideration.

Board for International Food and Agricultural Development Minority Serving Institutions (MSI) Working Group Members

William B. DeLauder, Chair, Delaware State University, *BIFAD Board Member*

Walter Hill, Tuskegee University

John Phillips, American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC)

Freddie L. Richards, Prairie View A&M University

Alvaro Romo, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU)

Chad Waukechon, College of Menominee Nation

Roy Zimmerman, Higher Education for Development (HED)

Calvina Dupre, USAID (OSDBU)

Gary Bittner, USAID (EGAT/HD/HEW)

Rockfeler Herisse, USAID (ODP/PSA)

Ron Raphael, USAID (EGAT/ED/PT)

Lorenzo Esters, Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (A•P•L•U)

USAID BIFAD Staff:

Ronald Senykoff [Retired October 2010], Susan Owens [Since December 2010], John Becker, and Aaron Miles

Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (A•P•L•U):

Kathie L. Olson, Kerry Bolognese, and Elizabeth Armstrong

ENDNOTES

¹ This White Paper draws heavily on the workshop minutes prepared by Patty Hill (2010) of Encompass LLC.

² Clara Cohen 2010 “Developing Institutional and Human Capacity for Agricultural Research” (processed).

³ <http://www.worldlearning.org/aidbpabc.cfm>

⁴ USAID 1978 *Report to the Congress on Title XII “Famine Protection and Freedom from Hunger” of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended*. (Fiscal Year 1977). Washington, D.C.: USAID. [PN-AAF-683]

⁵ USAID 1983 *The Title XII Partnership. A Report to Congress on Title XII “Famine Protection and Freedom from Hunger” of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended*. (Fiscal Year 1982). Washington, D.C.: USAID; USAID 1992 *The Title XII Partnership. A Report to Congress on Title XII “Famine Protection and Freedom from Hunger” of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended*. (Fiscal Year 1991). Washington, D.C.: USAID.

⁶ <http://www.gesso.net/usaid/html/01msi/tuskegee.htm>

⁷ <http://www.gesso.net/usaid/html/01msi/lincolnm.htm>

⁸ Phillips, John (ed.) 2000 American Indian Higher Education Consortium 2000 *Globalization of Tribal Colleges and Universities: Proceedings and Reference Guide*. Washington, D.C.: USAID, USDA, and AIHEC.

<http://ww2.aihec.org/Shared%20Documents/International%20Programs/proceedings.pdf>

⁹ Phillips, John (ed.) 2000 American Indian Higher Education Consortium 2000 *Globalization of Tribal Colleges and Universities: Proceedings and Reference Guide*. Washington, D.C.: USAID, USDA, and AIHEC.

<http://ww2.aihec.org/Shared%20Documents/International%20Programs/proceedings.pdf>

¹⁰ Information shared by Prof. Melissa Cook of the College of Menominee Nation from a poster, “College of Menominee Nation, Sustainable Development Institute” presented at the MSI workshop in Washington, D.C. (September 2010).