Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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WASHINGTON – Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs Aurene M. Martin today announced that the Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College (SCTC) in Mt. Pleasant, Mich., and the Tohono O'odham Community College (TOCC) in Sells, Ariz., have been deemed eligible for assistance under the Tribally Controlled Community College Assistance Act of 1978 (P.L. 95- 471). Under the Act, the Secretary of the Interior has authority to make grants to tribally-controlled colleges or universities for the purpose of continued and expanded educational opportunities for Indian students. Both tribal colleges have been granted initial candidacy for accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, one of six regional institutional accrediting associations in the United States.

"I congratulate Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College and Tohono O'odham Community College for the tremendous progress they have made since their founding," Martin said. "These institutions are valued members of the higher education community and will be welcome additions to the family of BIA-funded tribal colleges."

Chartered by the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan in 1998 as a two-year institution, SCTC provides academic, occupational, vocational, cultural and lifelong learning programs in an environment that emphasizes Ojibwa culture to tribal members, students from other tribes and the general public. The college offers Associate of Arts degrees in General Studies, Native American Studies and Business.

TOCC was chartered by the Tohono O'odham Tribal Nation in 1998 to strengthen the Tohono O'odham people and enhance their culture, values, traditions and way of life through higher education. Under a reciprocal agreement with the Pima Community College District, TOCC students are dually enrolled at both schools in order to earn approved college credit that meets all accreditation standards and to become eligible for financial assistance. TOCC is a two-year institution offering undergraduate degrees in general studies, social services, early childhood education and child development, administrative and office support, computer systems, business and building and construction technologies.

The BIA currently funds 25 tribally-controlled colleges and universities across the country and directly operates two post-secondary institutions of higher learning: Haskell Indian Nations University (HINU) in Lawrence, Kan., and the Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI) in Albuquerque, N.M. The Bureau also offers financial assistance to Indian undergraduate and graduate students through tribal scholarship programs and the American Indian Graduate Center (AIGC).

The Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs has responsibility for fulfilling the Department's trust responsibilities to individual and tribal trust beneficiaries, as well as promoting the self-determination and economic well-being of the nation's 562 federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes. The Assistant Secretary also oversees the Bureau of Indian Affairs, which is responsible for providing education and social services to approximately 1.4 million individual American Indians and Alaska Natives from the federally recognized tribes.