

# THE HISTORY OF SITTING BULL COLLEGE

Sitting Bull College began as Standing Rock Community College (SRCC) on September 21, 1973. On that date, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Council granted a charter to SRCC to operate as a post-secondary educational institution with the authority to grant degrees at the Associate level. Recognizing the need for an institution of higher education which would provide opportunities for people in the immediate area, several movers and shakers on the Standing Rock reservation began the process of establishing one of the nation's first tribal colleges.

At the time the charter was granted, different colleges from around the state were offering a number of courses on the reservation. However, there was no coordination of effort and tribal leaders felt that it would be best to go through one institution. Bismarck Junior College (BJC) was designated to be that institution. As ties with BJC strengthened, discussions were begun to determine whether the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe should join other tribes which were in the process of forming their own colleges. A grant to BJC from the Higher Education Act provided money for Standing Rock Community College to begin offering courses. Standing Rock Community College opened its doors officially in July of 1973. The first offices and classrooms were in the Douglas Skye Memorial Retirement Complex in Fort Yates. There were three full-time people on staff.

The process of seeking accreditation was initiated in 1975. Candidate Status for accreditation was granted to Standing Rock Community College in 1978 after a thorough evaluation by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Higher Education. This status meant that the college was recognized as providing service and that it would be ready for full accreditation within six years. Every two years during this six-year period, evaluators returned to the college to document progress. SRCC was visited in the spring of 1980 and again in the spring of 1982. Both times, the teams recommended Candidate Status. The college received full accreditation in 1984. To mark this achievement and recognize their continued growth, the college officially changed their name to Standing Rock College (SRC). The college later received continued accreditation in 1987, 1991, 1996, and ten years in 2004 with approval to begin offering Bachelor of Science programs in Business Administration and Elementary Education. In 2007 SBC received approval to add a Bachelor of Science program in Environmental Science and in 2008 approval was received to add Bachelor of Science programs in Early Childhood Education, Secondary Science Education, and General Studies. In 2014, SBC received an additional ten years of accreditation and has been selected to enter into the new accreditation open pathway. In addition, SBC has been approved to offer a Master's degree in Environmental Science, a Master's of Education in Curriculum and Instruction, and also a Bachelor of Arts in Native American Studies. In the spring of 2018, SBC was approved to offer a Bachelor of Social Work degree. In the fall of 2019, SBC was approved to offer a Master's degree in Business Administration. In the fall of 2021, SBC was approved to offer a Bachelor's in Criminal Justice.

On March 6, 1996, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Council voted to officially amend the charter, changing the college's name to Sitting Bull College (SBC). The objectives were not altered, and the college continues to operate as the charter specifies. Currently, there are over 70 full-time faculty, administrative and support staff. The original enrollment of 90 students has grown to approximately 300 each semester. Masters,

bachelors, associate, and certificate level career and technical education programs are currently being offered.

While the accreditation activities ensure that Sitting Bull College meets the standards of the higher education agencies, the fact that SBC is tribally controlled means it must also provide services to the Native American community. Advisory boards made up of community members provide input that is relied upon for program continuation and changes. The College Board of Trustees is elected from the eight districts. At the state and national levels, the college is a member of the North Dakota Association of Tribal Colleges and the American Indian Higher Education Consortium.

## Campus Facilities

In 1998, with the purchase of 160 acres of land, building the new campus began. To date, the college has raised \$25 million of an ambitious \$40 million campaign to construct our current Fort Yates campus on land overlooking the Missouri River, home to native people for thousands of years. In addition, Sitting Bull College has sites in McLaughlin, SD and Mobridge, ND.

The master plan for the Fort Yates campus has been developed in phases. The water, sewer, roads, and lights have been completed for Phase I. The first building completed on the new campus in 2000 was the cultural center with a classroom that has been used for painting, stain glass, and pottery. The center is also used as a meeting facility. The College also completed eighteen low-income student-housing units on the new campus. Construction of the first academic building the science and technology center began in the fall of 2004 with completion in December 2005. Classes began in this 23,000 square foot state-of-the-art facility in January 2006. In March 2006, the college opened its 16,000 square foot family support center which houses the education programs and also contains a safe, modern daycare facility that can accommodate 75 children. On April 2, 2007, the college opened a new 5,100 square foot transit center on the new campus. Sitting Bull College founded the Standing Rock Public Transportation program in 1989 and since then has funded and managed the program. The new facility houses the Standing Rock Public Transportation (SRPT) program, including five offices, a waiting area for customers, two mechanic bays and one wash bay for transportation vehicles. In July 2008, a 16,500 square foot entrepreneurial center was built. It houses the President's office, business administration, criminal justice, and horsemanship programs, along with the Tribal Business Information Center and six business incubator spaces to assist with business start-ups. Construction was completed on July 1, 2009 for a 13,000 square foot student center which houses a 6,000 square foot library and a 7,000 square foot area for student services and developmental education. Included in the student services area is a classroom, computer lab, GED/tutoring lab, a student lounge, and offices for student support staff. In April 2010 construction was completed on a 3,000 square foot facility financial center that houses the college's business offices. Construction was completed in the fall of 2010 for a 14,000 square foot trades center which houses the college's current building trades program, along with the electrical, welding, energy technology, and CDL programs. In the fall of 2012, construction was completed for 5,000 square foot efficiency apartments that will house 12 female and 12 male students. Fall of 2014, construction was completed on a 3,000 square foot Vocational Rehabilitation office complex. Spring 2022, construction was completed on a 5,000 square foot Research facility.

The college continues to seek funds for dorms, cafeteria, and wellness center.