



THE UNIVERSITY  
*of* NORTH CAROLINA  
*at* CHAPEL HILL

*American Indian Students at Carolina: Stories  
of Enrollment, Retention & Graduation*

Created by the  
UNC American Indian Center

# Issue

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- Carolina is struggling to recruit, enroll, retain and graduate American Indian students
- The AIC spends a great deal of time coordinating efforts around recruitment, enrollment, retention and graduation
- When the AIC is not involved in these efforts, communities want to know “why”



# Observations

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- The University operates from a multicultural/race based model which does not recognize tribal sovereignty and often marginalizes Native populations on campus
- Over the last decade, Carolina has experienced a decrease in American Indian student enrollment as well as poor retention and graduation rates of AI undergraduate students
- The University is quickly losing ground as the premiere institution for American Indian higher education



# Context

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- There are over 566 federally recognized tribes and over 200 state recognized tribes in the United States.
- North Carolina has the largest American Indian population east of the Mississippi River. There are over 122,000 American Indians living in the state.
- There are eight tribal nations residing in North Carolina. All eight tribal nations have a government to government relationship with either the state of North Carolina and/or the federal government of the United States of America.
- Of these tribal nations, the majority exist in Tier 1 counties which are the most distressed counties in the state.



# Context, continued

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- Since 2009, the state has experienced an increase in American Indian 4-year high school graduation rates and a decrease in American Indian high school dropout rates.
- In 2012, American Indians high school students were the only subgroup that experienced both an increase in the number of students taking the SAT and mean SAT scores.
- In 2012, there were 1,716 American Indian undergraduate students and 360 graduate students in the UNC System.
- Currently, there are 87 American Indian undergraduate students and 39 graduate students at Carolina.



# Definitions

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- Since in 2010, the UNC System has followed federal guidelines for racial and ethnic self identification.
- Students who identify as American Indian may elect to identify as American Indian alone or American Indian plus some other race or ethnicity.
- American Indian student data collected since 2010 reflects only those students who self-identified as American Indian alone.
- All students who selected American Indian plus some other race or ethnicity are reported in a larger category by the University for individuals who identify as “two or more races”.



# Definitions, continued

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- According to the U.S. Census, the American Indian alone population experienced an increase of 18 percent from 2000 to 2010, growing faster than the total U.S. population, which increased by 9.7 percent during the same time period.
- The data in this presentation concentrates on those students and applicants who identify as American Indian alone.
- The American Indian alone students are those who most likely culturally identify as being American Indian and may require additional resources and support services from the University.
- In addition, these are often the students that are most difficult to reach and recruit to Carolina.



# AI undergraduate student enrollment in UNC system

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- Overall AI student enrollment in the UNC system is declining faster than any other race or ethnicity.

## Fall 2012 UNC Minority Enrollment (annual change in parentheses)

- Total African American Headcount
  - 46,723 (-1.2%)
- Total American Indian Headcount
  - 2,076 (-2.5%)
- Total Asian Headcount
  - 7,458 (+4.0%)
- Total Hispanic Headcount
  - 9,658 (+6.4%)

Source: The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill General Administration at <https://www.northcarolina.edu/reports/index.php?page=download&id=1571&inline=1>



## AI undergraduate student enrollment at Carolina

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- AI undergraduate student enrollment at Carolina is falling below other UNC institutions of similar size.

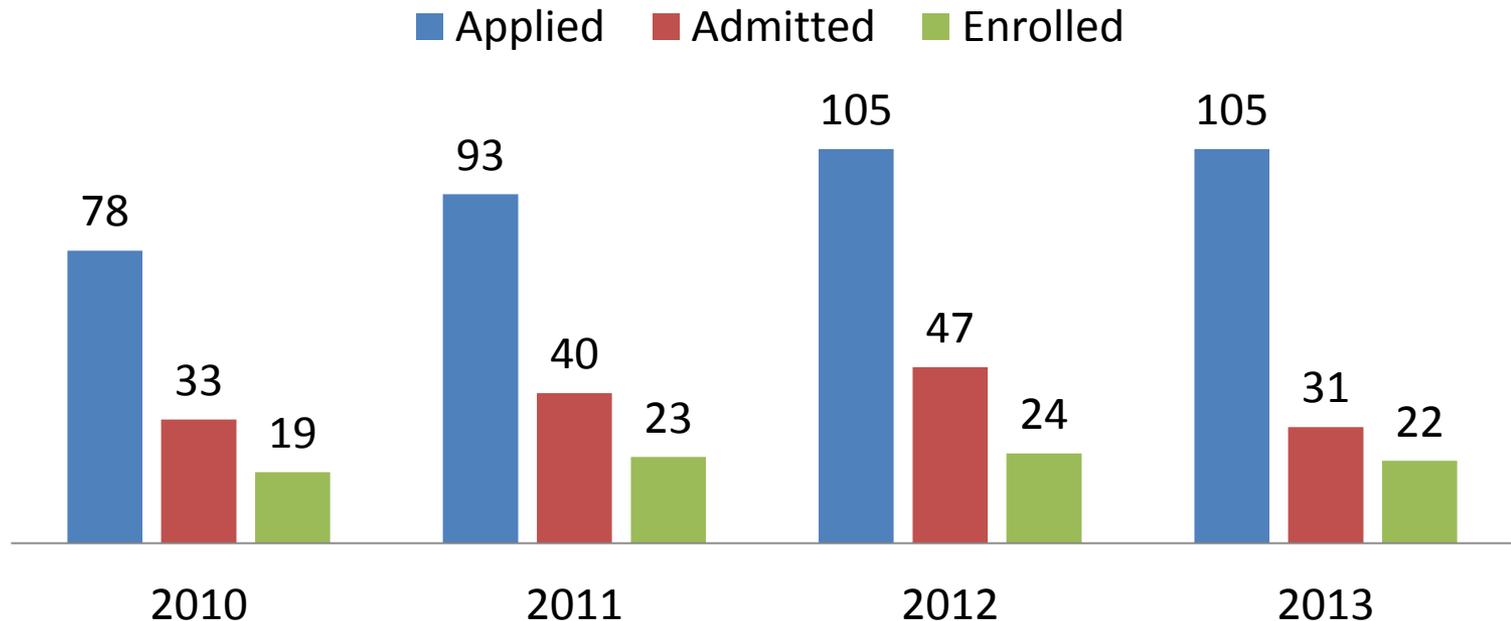
Institution	2010	2012
UNC Chapel Hill	120	104
East Carolina University	124	110
North Carolina State University	122	117
University of North Carolina Charlotte	115	105
University of North Carolina Pembroke	999	879

Source: The University of North Carolina at <http://www.northcarolina.edu/about/facts.htm>



# Carolina First Year AI Applied-Admitted-Enrolled

- While the number of applications for AI only students are increasing, the percentage admitted has declined from 42% in 2010 to 30% in 2013.



# AI student enrollment at Carolina

- While the University has experienced an overall 25 year growth in undergraduate enrollment of 18.79 percent, AI student enrollment has experienced a decline.

	2010		2011		2012		2013	
	Native students	All students						
Undergraduate students	<b>120</b>	18,579	<b>111</b>	18,430	<b>104</b>	18,503	<b>87</b>	18,370
Graduate students	<b>57</b>	10,811	<b>56</b>	10,707	<b>45</b>	10,775	<b>39</b>	10,757
Total students	<b>177</b>	29,390	<b>167</b>	29,137	<b>149</b>	29,278	<b>126</b>	29,127

Source: Office of Institutional Research at <http://oira.unc.edu/facts-and-figures/student-data/enrollment-and-student-characteristics/historical-enrollment-by-education-level/>



# AI student enrollment by degree type

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- The decline is across all degree types at the University.

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Undergraduate	135	147	120	111	104
Masters	29	25	24	26	21
Doctorate	18	19	16	13	11
First Professional	36	30	17	17	13
Total	218	221	177	167	149

UNC General Administration, Advanced Analytics <http://www.northcarolina.edu/ira/ir/analytics.htm>



# AI student enrollment at Carolina

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- At the current rate, the AI undergraduate student population at Carolina will be nearly nonexistent in 8-9 years.



# Undergraduate retention rates at Carolina

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- Overall, undergraduate retention rates for all Carolina students are high with a 4<sup>th</sup> fall retention rate consistently over 90 percent since 2008.
- AI student retention rates are significantly trailing the overall student body population with 4<sup>th</sup> year fall retention between 74 percent to 85 percent since 2008.

Source: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Office of Institutional Research at [http://www.unc.edu/oira/public/retentionandgraduation/retention\\_and\\_graduation\\_data.php](http://www.unc.edu/oira/public/retentionandgraduation/retention_and_graduation_data.php)



# Carolina Undergraduate retention rates by cohort year

- On average, Carolina fails to retain 2-3 undergraduate AI students per year leaving American Indian students at Carolina with one of the lowest retention rates of any other race or ethnicity on campus.

	2008		2009		2010		2011	
	All students	Native students						
2 <sup>nd</sup> Fall	95.7%	<b>87.5%</b>	96.6%	<b>93.9%</b>	97.2%	<b>89.5%</b>	97.3%	<b>100%</b>
3 <sup>rd</sup> Fall	93.7%	<b>78.1%</b>	93.7%	<b>93.9%</b>	94.1%	<b>89.5%</b>	94.3%	<b>91.7%</b>
4 <sup>th</sup> Fall	90.7%	<b>75%</b>	90.5%	<b>84.8%</b>	90.9%	<b>73.7%</b>	--	--

Source: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Office of Institutional Research at [http://www.unc.edu/oira/public/retentionandgraduation/retention\\_and\\_graduation\\_data.php](http://www.unc.edu/oira/public/retentionandgraduation/retention_and_graduation_data.php)



# Graduation rates at UNC CH by cohort

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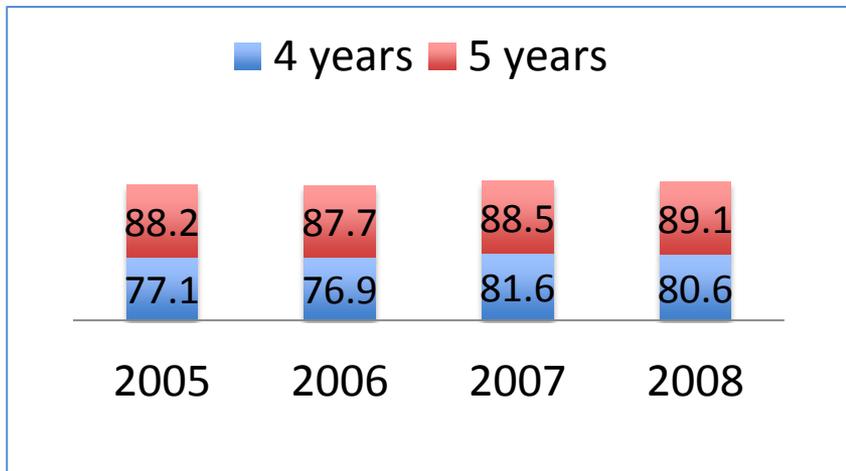
- Since the class of 2005, the percentage of Carolina students who graduate in 4 years is over 77 percent while the 5 year graduate rate is well above 80 percent.
- In contrast, since 2005, the graduation rates for AI students at Carolina range between 50 percent and 75 percent with five year rates falling significantly behind the overall Carolina student body.



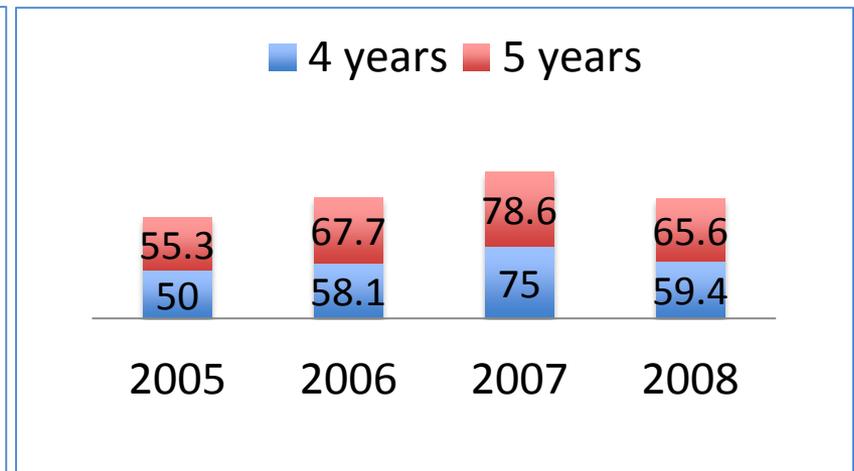
# Graduation rates at UNC CH by cohort

- Historically, AI undergraduate students have among the lowest 4 and 5 year graduation rates at Carolina.

All students



Native students

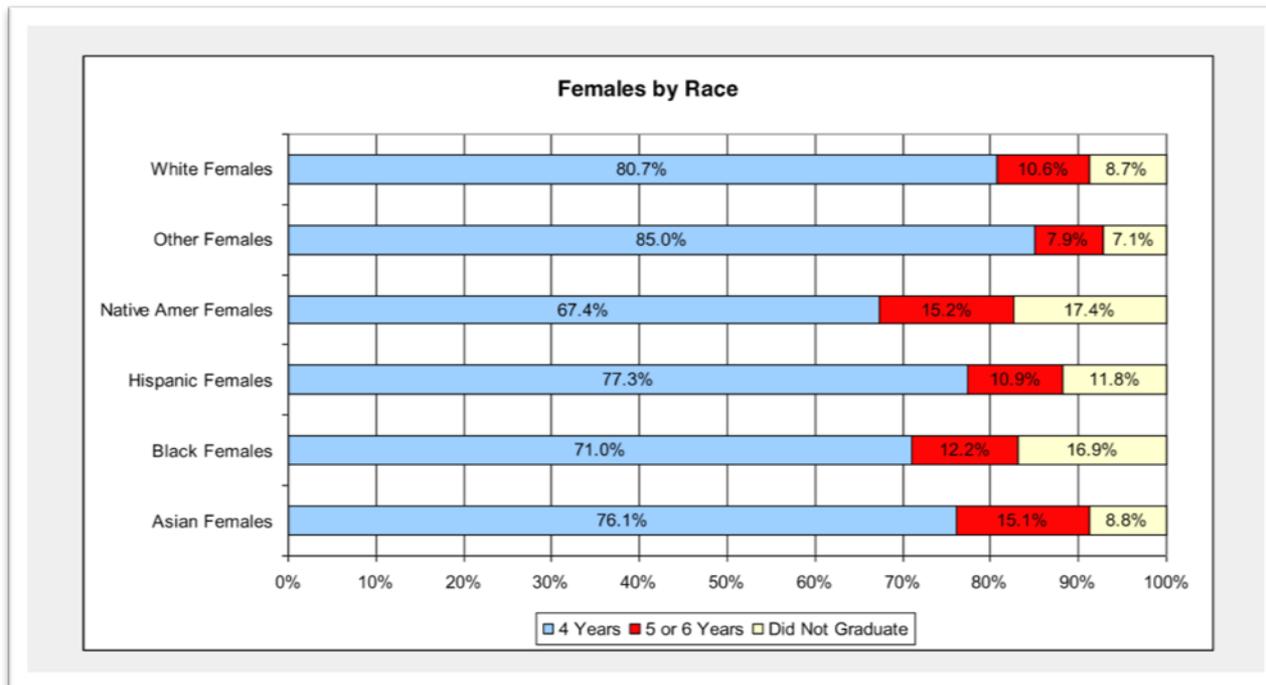


Source: UNC Chapel Hill Office of Institutional Research at [http://www.unc.edu/oira/public/retentionandgraduation/retention\\_and\\_graduation\\_data.php](http://www.unc.edu/oira/public/retentionandgraduation/retention_and_graduation_data.php)



# 2002/2003 Female Cohort Graduation Rates by Ethnicity at Carolina

- American Indian female students have the lowest 4 year graduation rate the highest did not graduate rate of any other races and ethnicities.



Source: <http://oira.unc.edu/files/2013/04/retention-study-2010-2011.pdf>



# Conclusions

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- Overall AI student enrollment in the UNC system is declining faster than any other race or ethnicity.
- AI undergraduate student enrollment at Carolina is falling below other UNC institutions of similar size.
- While the University has experienced an overall 25 year growth in undergraduate enrollment of 18.79 percent, AI student enrollment has experienced a decline.
- On average, Carolina fails to retain 2-3 undergraduate AI students per year leaving American Indian students at Carolina with one of the lowest retention rates of any other race or ethnicity. This is a poor return on investment for the state and a poor return on Indianness for tribal nations.



# Conclusion Continued

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- Historically, AI undergraduate students have among the lowest 4 and 5 year graduation rates at Carolina. Again, this is a poor rate of return for all involved. AI female students have the lowest 4 year graduation rate and the highest did not graduate rate of any other race or ethnicity. This group in particular needs support, intervention and programing.
- At the current rate, the AI undergraduate student population at Carolina will be nearly nonexistent in 8-9 years.
- Given this backdrop, it is essential for Carolina to try some new things with respect to engaging American Indian students.



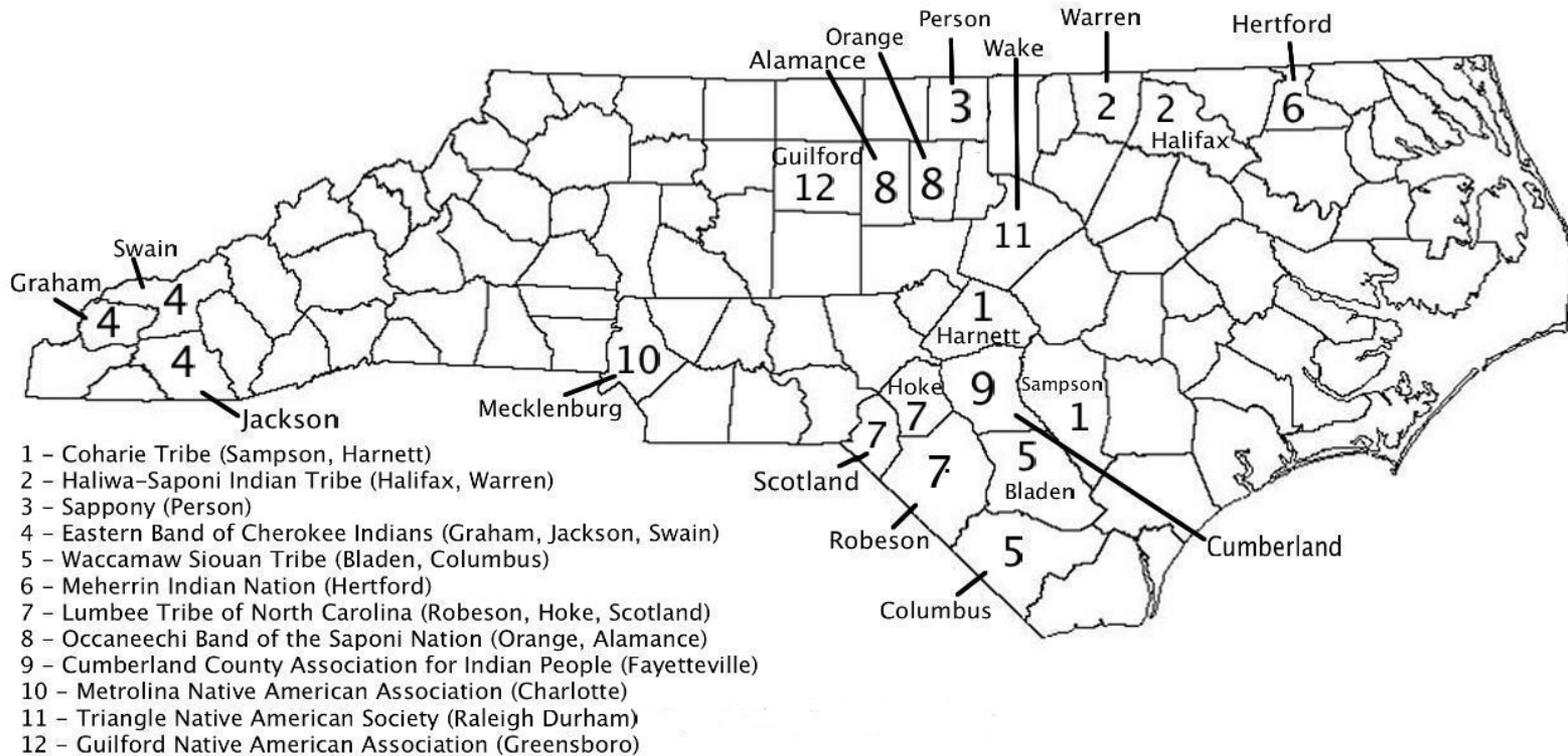
# Opportunities to Model the Way

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- Engage tribes as sovereigns rather than a race of people
- Increase the AICs role in consulting with the Office of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs, The Graduate School, the Office of Undergraduate Admissions, and The Office of Scholarships & Student Aid
- Recruit tribal nations to send their students to Carolina rather than recruiting solely on an individual or familial basis
- Enter into MOAs with NC Tribes, United South Eastern Tribes, and other tribal nations regarding recruitment of AI students and engagement and/or research with tribal nations



# North Carolina Tribes and Urban Indian Organizations

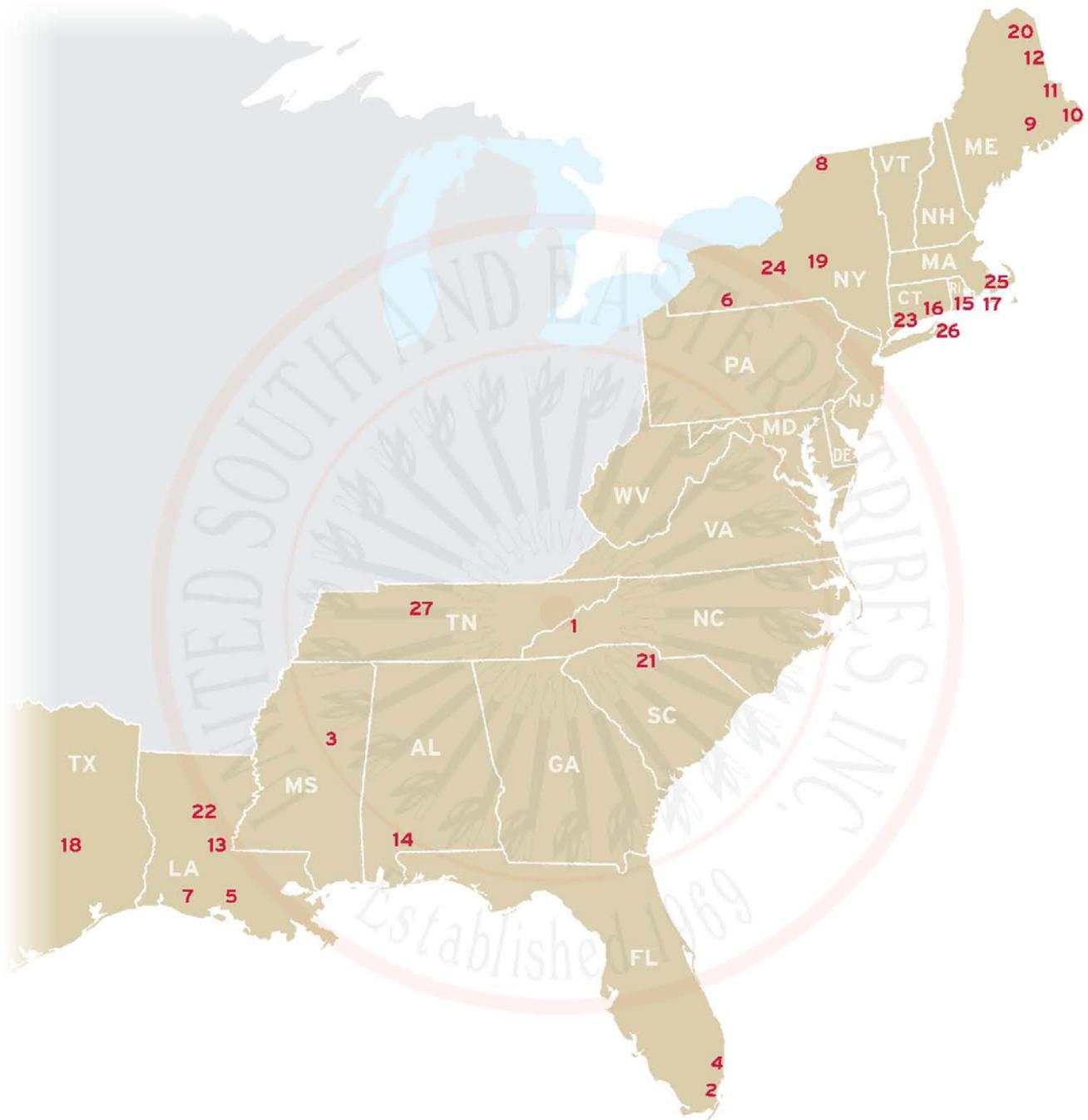


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 CENTER

The UNC American Indian Center endorses this educational resource, which has been developed in partnership with the 8 state recognized tribes and urban Indian organizations of North Carolina. For additional educational resources, visit: [www.americanindiancenter.unc.edu](http://www.americanindiancenter.unc.edu)



**THE UNIVERSITY**  
 of **NORTH CAROLINA**  
 at **CHAPEL HILL**



- 1 **Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians**  
Cherokee, North Carolina
- 2 **Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida**  
Miami, Florida
- 3 **Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians**  
Choctaw, Mississippi
- 4 **Seminole Tribe of Florida**  
Hollywood, Florida
- 5 **Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana**  
Charenton, Louisiana
- 6 **Seneca Nation of Indians**  
Salamanca, New York
- 7 **Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana**  
Elton, Louisiana
- 8 **St. Regis Mohawk Tribe**  
Hogansburg, New York
- 9 **Penobscot Indian Nation**  
Indian Island, Maine
- 10 **Passamaquoddy Tribe-Pleasant Point**  
Perry, Maine
- 11 **Passamaquoddy Tribe-Indian Township**  
Princeton, Maine
- 12 **Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians**  
Littleton, Maine
- 13 **Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana**  
Marksville, Louisiana
- 14 **Poarch Band of Creek Indians**  
Atmore, Alabama
- 15 **Narragansett Indian Tribe**  
Charlestown, Rhode Island
- 16 **Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation**  
Mashantucket, Connecticut
- 17 **Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah)**  
Aquinnah, Massachusetts
- 18 **Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas**  
Livingston, Texas
- 19 **Oneida Indian Nation**  
Verona, New York
- 20 **Aroostook Band of Micmacs**  
Presque Isle, Maine
- 21 **Catawba Indian Nation**  
Rock Hill, South Carolina
- 22 **Jena Band of Choctaw Indians**  
Jena, Louisiana
- 23 **The Mohegan Tribe**  
Uncasville, Connecticut
- 24 **Cayuga Nation**  
Seneca Falls, New York
- 25 **Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe**  
Mashpee, Massachusetts
- 26 **Shinnecock Indian Nation**  
Southampton, New York
- 27 **USET**  
Nashville, Tennessee

# Opportunities to Model the Way

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- Offer new student orientation to AI students that addresses cultural inconsistencies, paradigm shifts, leadership, and welcomes students and represented Nations to campus
- Adopt culturally relevant model for AI student recruitment and retention, such as the Sacred Hoop model or the Family Education Model
- Contact AI applicants who (1) have been accepted to Carolina to persuade them to attend or (2) have not completed their application to encourage them to do so
- Offer a NC Tribal Nations tour to University administrators every 4 years



# Opportunities to Model the Way

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- Explore other models of support and engagement and offered by other institutions such as the University of Arizona, Arizona State University, Northern Arizona University, Dartmouth College, The Montana State University, University of New Mexico, Washington State University, and The University of Oregon
- Offer cultural awareness training to UNC admissions officers and review teams across campus

