



September 2015

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Recommended Citation

Willmott, Kristen E.; Sands, Tara Leigh; Raucci, Melissa; and Waterman, Stephanie J. (2015) "Native American College Students: A Group Forgotten," *Journal of Critical Scholarship on Higher Education and Student Affairs*: Vol. 2 : Iss. 1 , Article 7.

Available at: <https://ecommons.luc.edu/jcshesa/vol2/iss1/7>

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Native American College Students: A Group Forgotten

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Abstract

Broadening McClellan's (2003) study through 2011, the authors utilize qualitative content analysis of over two thousand journal articles, professional association conference programs, and reflective memos, to detail the extent to which Native American college students remain a forgotten group within the literature. The authors' positionality and Indigenous feminist theory inform the study. The study concludes by exploring the benefits of expanded Native American college student research and the authors propose a research agenda that can guide higher education professionals to better serve the educational needs of this unique group.

Keywords

Native American, diversity, equity, research, journals

ISSN 2377-1305

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In the process of searching for literature on Native American college students, I felt deterred. At times, my quest felt like a continuous search for the same articles again and again—because that’s what we turned out. With a reference list of only a few pages, our group turned up the same articles, and then we’d chat and share, and feelings of what can only be termed *lit review malfunction* would bubble up and breed. (Researcher memo)

In the transcripts [of the study], students talk at length about other university agents [who] mentored them or supported them at some point in their college experiences. Where is the research on that? Why is no one writing about what really happens to these students as expressed in their own voices? (Researcher memo)

The four authors of this article include three non-Native researchers with the primary task of researching Native American college student experiences. Assigned a literature review and data analysis by our Native faculty member, a startling revelation began to sink in—there is an alarmingly small number of published research studies on Native American college students even as their enrollment increases (DeVoe, Darling-Churchill, & Snyder, 2008). We became angered, expecting more research to be available. Without our faculty member’s knowledge, we wrote memos regarding our experience. This article is a result of the Native faculty member’s discovery and her encouragement to record our struggle. We offer experiential research-based examples regarding the stumbling blocks we encountered; possible reasons for the lack of Native American college student research are provided. Finally, we propose a research agenda and detail the academic, institutional, and cultural benefits of expanded Native American college student research. First, we begin with our conceptual framework.

Conceptual Framework

We know from our expansive literature search that in the United States, Native American students are roughly 1% of the college-going population and have a poor graduation rate (Aud, Fox, & Kewal Ramani, 2010; DeVoe et al., 2008). We know engaging in research that is less report-centered and statistically based must center on an active conversation allowing for enhanced understanding of Native American students, families, culture, and communities (Rolo, 2009; Torres, Howard-Hamilton, & Cooper, 2003). As we embarked upon our journey to complete literature reviews and data analyses, we struggled to reconcile many experiences and decisions. Our role and responsibilities as non-Native researchers were frequent topics of discussion in our research meetings.

This article is centered on our own experiences researching this topic as much as it is about what we found. As Marshall and Batten (2003) maintain, “Collaboration and consensus, communication, and negotiating partnerships are necessary considerations for researchers entering cross-cultural situations” (p. 147). In 1988, Medicine called for research on Native American women; yet her call remains largely unanswered and is extraordinarily needed, indeed, both for Native American women and for men. At the November 2009 White House Tribal Nations Conference, President Obama acknowledged the marginalization of Native Americans and broken treaties and promises the federal government has made with Indigenous communities; he then vowed to increase tribal control over and improve Native American education (The White House, 2010). Obama confirmed, along with his appointment of several Native Americans to high-level positions in the administration, that his motivation is centered in “forging a new and better future together . . . so that you [Native Americans] can be full partners in America’s

economy, and so your children and grandchildren can have an equal shot at pursuing the American dream” (p. 1). Perhaps the lack of connection and governmental support for increased Native American research is why previous calls for action have been ignored. Was funding for research made available; were institutions of higher education tasked with working with communities regarding the “call for action;” were incentives put in place? If not, then the “official” stance is that this area of research or population is not worth knowing about. Further, we recognize that the concept of the “American dream” is problematic in the context of the Indigenous people of the Americas; however, that discussion is beyond the scope of this paper.

Our axiological approach assumed Native American college student research would be available—and that this was a “worthy” topic for us (Wilson, 2008), and we thought, for the academy. Our “shared values” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 31) find significance in this population, and indicate that for the research to be successful and accurate, research cannot be *on* Native Americans, it must be with Native Americans. Collaboration *with* tribal communities, connection with Native American elders and cultural leaders, informed consent, and invited research experiences are a must (Burk, 2007; Laughlin, 2001; Sparks, 2000).

An added conceptual frame of Indigenous feminism offered a deeper glimpse into our formation of assumptions on the research that we hoped to uncover. Indigenous feminists unpack intersections of gender, heteropatriarchy, sovereignty, and colonialism (Ross, 2009) and “seek to go beyond a ‘politics of inclusion’ to a politics in which Native feminisms reconceptualize feminist theory and Native studies” (Smith & Kauanui, 2008, p. 248). As we moved to unpack assumptions, what connected to our quest for literature was Indigenous feminism

and the notion of “the politics of inclusion,” which thus offered an added conceptual framework for our exploration.

Our ontological approach naturally assumed that because Native Americans attend college, there would be literature available. It felt natural to work on this topic given our supervising faculty member is a Native American. We assumed the literature would reflect the very diverse people under study. When our assumptions were challenged, we felt waves of emotion from anger and disappointment to frustration and emptiness. Through epistemological reflection (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2014), we had to reconstruct our assumptions. Our memos reflect our thoughts regarding the project but also the larger implications to the academy itself. Our positionality, as researchers, is discussed next.

Positionality

Other than our faculty member, we are outsiders, although each one of us has some, albeit limited, work experience with Native students. In research meetings and throughout memoing and data analysis processes, we discussed the importance of connecting with our role as researchers and in checking to ensure we approached our research in an ethical manner, being very aware that we are White women. We aimed to be inquisitive, open, reflective, and responsive researchers and to truthfully convey our experiences, concerns, and discoveries regarding existing Native American college student research. McClellan (2003), a non-Native researcher, wrote that he pursues research not only in an ethical manner at all times but also as “a matter of institutional requirement and personal commitment” (p. 97) based upon principles of mutual respect and benefit for others; we sought to do the same. As higher education researchers, we feel it is ethical that Native American college student experiences are topics of interest and research.

Excited to learn methods and methodologies and work with real data, we jumped into the project. We worked well together as a team; we felt comfortable sharing our feelings, successes, and article/proposal acceptances and rejections. For example, when one member of the team completed her dissertation, she handed dissertation examples and other materials to the rest of the group for their use. At the time, our supervising faculty member was the formal advisor to the first author only. Yet, she invited the other authors into the project, was supportive throughout, and encouraged the team to write for publication.

As White researchers from the dominant population at an elite institution, we easily could have imposed, unquestioned, the status quo and dominant discourse—the small *n* of Native students precludes large numbers of research studies and articles. But that was not an ethical approach for us. That the lack of articles is acceptable is a problem for the academy, not just for Native American college students, the people who work with them, and Native communities. As the first author wondered,

How many other research teams . . . have tried to research Native populations, but came up short in the lit review stage, and then switched topics or focus completely? How many research teams are experiencing this now? How many will in the future? THAT is what I'm trying to fix (Coauthor memo).

As White scholars, we have a degree of privilege, of assumed cultural capital (Johnson, 2006), to broach uncomfortable topics. We can challenge the academy without being labeled angry persons of color (Johnson, 2006), although we could be accused of going Native (Jones et al., 2014). We can advocate for this population without being accused of inherent bias (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Johnson, 2006). Although we share a similar social class, two of us with a rural background, and share a first-generation

status with the population under study, we cannot claim to know the Native experience.

Methodological Design and Qualitative Research

Although our literature search was not limited to college and postsecondary focused journals, because we are in the field of higher education, we have limited this discussion to the journals and conferences that directly address our discipline. Our analysis is, in part, an extension of McClellan's dissertation study that addressed, in part, "the social construction of Native Americans by new student affairs professionals in the Southwest" (2003, p. 14). In his examination of resources available to student affairs professionals, he provided a count of the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and National Association for Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) conference programs and journal articles from their associated journals—the *Journal of College Student Development* (JCSJ) and the *NASPA Journal*, renamed the *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice* (JSARP) in January 2010—that focused on Native Americans from 1991 through 2010. We extended the time period to 1991 through 2011, an even 20-year period, and included the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) conference programs; ASHE's associated journal, *The Journal of Higher Education*; and *The Review of Higher Education*; as well as the *NASPA Journal About Women in Higher Education*. These journals inform our discipline and are desirable publication venues for higher education/student affairs faculty. These journals are also represented in higher education and student affairs preparation program syllabi. This analysis focuses on our research memos regarding our literature search. A literature review on the content can be found elsewhere (Waterman, 2013).

Qualitative methodology was chosen be-

cause qualitative methods “seek to understand human and social behavior from the emic perspective” (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, & Sorensen, 2006, p. 449). A qualitative methodology is also appropriate because it assumes “knowledge is not objective truth but is produced intersubjectively” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 5). Qualitative research breaks away from critiques of traditional research that silences members of oppressed and marginalized groups and acknowledges that race, ethnicity, and class are needed to understand any lived experience (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Qualitative content document analysis (Ary et al., 2006) was paired with NVivo 9 qualitative data analysis software to create multiple levels of codes and formulate personal memos to share.

Memos were particularly useful in our study because we often typed memos directly into NVivo 9. We were able to record real-time analytic memos that could be coded with other previously collected data that the

research team had access to. The coding features and word-frequency capabilities within the NVivo 9 program enhanced our memoing processes, our ability to check in with one another, and our ability to keep track of, review, code, and analyze research meeting session notes from all of the authors. Next, we discuss our data sources and collection.

Academic Database Searches Utilizing Keywords Connected to Native Americans

Each of the authors conducted individual online academic database searches for research on Native American college students and collectively found most existing research fell within special focus journals geared specifically toward Native American populations such as the *Journal of American Indian Education*. We conducted database searches using a variety of keywords that we felt would yield the broadest results (see Table 1).

Table 1
Keywords in Academic Database Searches

College Admission	College Student Retention	Recruitment Student Affairs
Faculty Scholarship	Friend Transfer	Financial Aid Home
Culture	Support	Family
Athletics	Job Placement	Career
Success	Higher Education	Campus Climate

Keyword searches were conducted over the course of one year in order to gain a wider glimpse of the availability and ease of access to Native American college student research and other information about this population. Keywords were determined based upon previous literature detailing Native American college student populations as well as factors identified in our own postsecondary educational experiences. The results of the

keyword searches and our recorded feelings on the process of conducting these searches are relayed and reflected upon in personal memos and in research team session notes.

Professional Association Journals

Book reviews, best practice reports, editorials, and editor introduction summaries were not included in the analysis of the journals.

The aim was to examine the focus of the articles, datasets employed, and the frequency of articles. From January 1991 to December 2009, the *NASPA Journal* published 599 articles. Forty-seven articles have been published since the inaugural issue of the JSARP to 2011, for a total of 646 articles from NASPA's professional journal. None of the articles published in JSARP in its first two years of

existence have contained an article with the keywords employed in this study. *Research in Higher Education* (RHE) has published a total of 404 articles and the *Journal of Higher Education* (JHE) has published 585. As shown in Table 2, out of 2,683 articles published from 1991 through 2011, only 36 were identified with our search words.

Table 2

Total Number of Articles in Study Journals, Total Number of Articles Referencing "Native American," "American Indian," "Indigenous," "Tribe," or "Tribal"; 1991–2011 and Keywords Indicated in Table 1, and Percentage

	<i>Journal of College Student Development</i> (6 issues/ volume)	<i>NASPA Journal (renamed JSARP)</i> (4 issues/ volume)	<i>ASHE Review of Higher Education</i> (4 issues/ volume)	<i>Journal of Higher Education</i> (6 issues/ volume)	Total
Total number of articles published in 1991–2011	1,048	646	404	585	2,683
Articles with search terms	17	9	3	7	36
Percentage	1.6%	1.4%	0.74%	1.2%	1.3%

Table 3 lists the methods for the articles found by using the keywords and search terms in this study. Twenty-two of the articles employed quantitative methods while one article used a mixed method of quantitative and qualitative. Article titles for the NASPA, JSARP, RHE, JHE, and *NASPA Journal About Women in Higher Education* (NJAWHE) journals can be found in Appendices A through E.

Table 3
Methods of Articles Referencing Keywords of Present Study

Journal	Qual.	Quant.	Mixed Methods	Theory	Policy	Lit. Review	Total
JCSD	1	14*	1			1	17
NASPA (JSARP)	1	7		1			9
RHE	3						3
JHE	4	1			2		7
Total	9	22	1	1	2	1	36

*One article was a “Research in Brief” article.

Table 2 shows a small percentage of articles in all four journals that referenced our search terms. Instead, we were much more apt to find articles that referenced multiculturalism or other racial and ethnic groups; there were fewer explicit references to Native Americans. When so few articles were found, the last author enlisted the assistance of the subject librarian at our institution who was unable to find additional articles. The authors did, however, find two articles with the search terms in the relatively new NJAWHE. Between 2008 (NJAWHE’s launch) and 2011, the two articles that are Native focused are both written by Indigenous women. Two out of 40 (see Appendix E) is a much better ratio than the NASPA, JSARP, RHE, and JHE journals have with regard to Native-focused, published articles. The NJAWHE aims to deepen understanding of women in higher education. As such, this journal’s efforts align with our concep-

tual framework of Indigenous feminism; it uniquely aims to be inclusive of women, is restorative, and centered in inclusion.

Professional Association Conference Programs

We conducted multiple searches within national association conference hard copy programs and websites for ACPA, ASHE, and NASPA. Table 4 shows the number of conference program sessions and percentages. The percentage of Native-focused program sessions at these conferences collectively is less than 1%. Conference program titles can be found in Appendices F through H. The last author is familiar with researchers who often research Native American students and looked for those names in the programs in case titles and abstracts did not include our keywords.

Table 4
Number of ACPA, NASPA, and ASHE National Conference Program Sessions with Native American or American Indian in Title or Abstract, 1990–2011

	ACPA	NASPA	ACPA/NASPA Joint	ASHE	Total
All sessions	4,928	3,656	639	3,139	12,362
Native American	28	22	6	22	78
Percentage of total	68%	87%	63%	70%	63%

Personal Memos and Research Team Session Notes

As noted in our methods discussion, we produced personal memos and reflections about our experiences. Our findings on the research process are in the sections that follow.

Findings and Discussion

Three central themes emerged from our analysis: (a) research focusing specifically on Native American populations is lacking; (b) this lack impacts training and opportunities for higher education professionals to learn about Native American college students; and (c) research disseminated in these journals overlooks the Native American experience. Next, we expand upon each of these three themes, offering input derived from documents and personal memos recorded, exchanged, and analyzed. We then discuss our findings in relation to McClellan's (2003) study.

Research Is Lacking

As our findings revealed, only 1.6% of the articles published in the JCSJ from 1991 through 2011 mention our keywords in the article's title or abstract. In an analytical memo, one author reflects on the lack of published research:

There are so few articles that talk in any significant way about Native American student experiences. The articles that do mention Native American students seem to always be approaching the population from a deficit perspective. Additionally, the only articles that reference Native American students positively seem to be written by Native American authors. I thought I struck gold a couple of times, but all anyone wants to talk about is the impact of faculty members on students. I know there is something more.

ACPA and NASPA national conference sessions on Native Americans are also rare. Although ACPA and NASPA regularly have

conference sessions on areas such as multiculturalism and inclusion, specific references to Native Americans are rarely mentioned in conference session descriptions, overviews, or roundtables. Instead, as we reflected, Native Americans are often ignored as a cultural group given their small numbers. As one author wrote in a memo,

The number of sessions strictly on Native American students is always small and attended by [mainly] Native Americans. [Some of us in] ASHE have been trying to create a Native American committee, but the group is struggling due to potential push back as they "should" feel comfortable in the multicultural group. There is a need to understand that the history is very different and that they [Native Americans and researchers studying Native Americans] may not fit into the group. Plus, if you count the programs sponsored by the group, there are barely any focusing on this group. This year [2011] at NASPA, there was going to be a pre-conference but it ended up being canceled due to less than ten people registering for the event by a certain date.

Another author memo discusses the rarity of conference sessions on Native Americans:

I think the number of sessions on Native American students at many of the national conferences is negligible. I do think that sessions on Native American students and the sessions on multicultural issues, in general, are two very different things. Native American students are unique in their experiences in terms of their cultural, historical, political, and educational histories. I have attended two conferences and there have only been a handful of sessions whose primary focus was on Native Americans. Furthermore, sometimes these sessions, even though there are not many, are scheduled at the same time or given undesirable timeslots. It is as if these conferences are making some sort of conscious effort to continue the marginalization of this group.

Our frustration is especially evident in the last sentence. Native representation in 1% or less of the literature over a twenty-year period is not enough to accurately portray Native America. There are presently 566 federally recognized tribes, approximately 200 state-recognized tribes, and tribes without formal U.S. recognition (Shotton, Lowe, & Waterman, 2013). Native people are diverse with differences in language, culture, spirituality, social-economic status, and educational backgrounds. Although many similarities among tribes do exist, to think that 1% of the literature available can adequately inform our discipline about this population is not acceptable.

Lack of Training and Opportunities to Learn About Native American College Students

A second theme is the ramifications that a shortage of published research and conference programs has on student affairs practitioners and other higher education professionals. “With the rise of feminist research in the 1970s [and, in turn, feminist researchers] came a renewed commitment to social change and a new focus on changing systems rather than individuals,” but that commitment did not often come in the form of adequate diversity training and education (Mahlstedt, 1999, p. 112). Although our focus is mainly on student affairs professionals, lack of training in the form of conference sessions and information on Native college students has implications for all higher education professionals who work with Native college students (McClellan, 2003). Higher education employees include faculty, college recruiters, admissions and financial aid representatives, student services offices including the student identification card office, parking services, campus safety, and residential life, to name a few. As McClellan found, “Only three of the professionals interviewed [out of 31] identified concrete resources both

within and outside the university upon which they had drawn or might draw in working with Native American students” (p. 154). The lack of training, education, and access to literature and presentations not only impacts Native students but also has impact across all cultural, national, ethnic, and gender lines, as well as upon higher education researchers searching for Native resources and articles.

Because research on Native college students is limited and because student affairs professionals are not typically offered information or specific training on how to best recruit, retain, or support this population, negative implications of the lack of research and lack of accurate information can multiply (McClellan, 2003). As one author notes,

Student affairs professionals need to learn about how to assist and serve this population, just like we learn about other populations. There are different needs that are not addressed in traditional multicultural diversity trainings. From my own experience [working at a university] located near the Eastern Band of Cherokee reservation, there was a large number of Cherokee students on campus. However, at no point was training offered on how to work with these students. . . . The department never thought of inviting a tribal member to the campus to educate us.

The above addresses the lack of awareness for Native American college student needs, culture, and connection. She also shared the following about a group of Native American college students who approached her office for information and support:

Another experience [was] at the same institution during Native American heritage month. The group [we] recognized did not have a formal advisor, and I ended up volunteering to serve as their advisor. They wanted to have a film series, but Student Government and Campus Activities would not allocate them money to hold this series, for they

felt it would not be well attended. I ended up getting money for them through Campus Activities by explaining that there was this population, and we hold events for other groups that are not well attended . . . The students told me they did not feel welcome or supported by the office of Multicultural Affairs at the university; [they] felt it was for African American students only.

It is evident in the above that the Native students felt they were not supported. In this case, a non-Native student services staff member, one of our authors, took it upon herself to ensure the students were able to form a campus-sanctioned, and thus funded, group on campus.

Another author shared that when she was working at a former institution she was responsible for meeting with students on issues relating to admissions, scholarships, and loans. Over the course of this position, at no point did she receive training or information about how to work with students from underrepresented populations. She regularly administered a scholarship for underrepresented graduate students. Students received a substantial tuition scholarship and a monthly stipend, yet the stipulations on this award were unclear. Students were asked to self-identify whether they belonged to a certain list of underrepresented populations, one of which was Native American. Students were frequently self-identifying as part-Native American; word had spread that the university could not question a student's self-identified ethnic background. This author believed that students realized that once they self-identified as Native American, they would immediately receive a partial tuition and stipend scholarship. There were several separate cases in the course of an academic year in which she had serious questions about students falsely self-identifying as Native American strictly for financial gain at the university.

Ultimately, university counsel determined that we could not challenge these students. I still believe that the university gave out over \$100,000 in scholarships and stipends to students who were abusing the system at the expense of Native American students. At no point did I receive training or support about how to handle this situation and eventually, it fizzled away under the direction of the dean and my director. It wasn't handled well, and I was enormously uncomfortable with my position at that time. (Researcher memo)

The author above confirmed multicultural training was not offered to admissions or financial aid staff members, yet they were expected to regularly meet with students, even engaging in roles that resembled academic advisors and field concerns about admissions, financial aid, and scholarships. The author described that there was one person in her office who dealt with all underrepresented students; however, communication amongst staff members was infrequent, and protocol for meeting with underrepresented students about academics, admissions, financial aid, and loan eligibility was unexplained.

When a topic is nearly invisible from our foundational texts, our association conferences, and our journals, a group can easily be forgotten. Out of sight, out of mind—one can forget that this group deserves support and that resources, however limited, are available and can be unlocked.

Mainstream Academic Journals Overlook the Native American Experience

The lack of articles and conference presentations marginalizes the Native experience. Disappointment with this reality is voiced below in an author memo about writing a Native American NASPA conference proposal.

Every time I try to search for articles on

Native American student experiences, specifically their experiences with administrators, I come up with nothing. It is not only that I come up with nothing . . . the search does produce articles, but the articles that the search [produces] always look so promising, at least based on their title. I spend hours reading over each article just to discover that the study has pretty much nothing to do with what I am interested in. How can it be that no one has written an article talking about Native students' experiences with administrators or student affairs professionals in higher education?

Based on our search, we conclude that many studies on college-going populations explore racial differences. However, because Native Americans make up roughly 1% of the college-going population, many quantitative studies, including those performed by individual colleges and institutions, discount the Native American experience due to very low numbers that would skew statistics (DeVoe, Darling-Churchill, & Snyder, 2008; Shotton et al., 2013). In the quantitative studies on college students that we found, the Native American population category is often deemed statistically insignificant, which, from a methodological stance is correct; however, the methodology and favoritism toward quantitative research inherently marginalizes Native American data. The word insignificant, as applied to a people, is problematic.

Discussion

We expand our findings in this section to the academy. In July 2006, the American Council on Higher Education (ACE) released a report on college enrollment, the gender gap, and college student retention. *Inside Higher Ed*, a well-known online higher education news website, reviewed the ACE study and outlined the findings. At the bottom of its chart showing gender and ethnic backgrounds, a

disclaimer read "Note: The report states that the data for American Indians are not dependable" (Lederman, 2006, para. 4). Many comments were posted by *Inside Higher Ed* readers. One reader wrote:

It is the reporting of Native Americans that is statistically insignificant, not Native Americans as people. The reporting of statistics on Native Americans in this context would be irresponsible in comparison to other ethnic groups. The comparisons just aren't valid and, if the goal is to influence educational policy, would be misleading (Lederman, 2006, para. 3).

Another reader commented, "Once again, we Indians are 'not dependable.' Insignificant.' Slandered by the pen and statistics" (Lederman, 2006, para. 1). The example of leaving Native Americans out of statistics, as stated in the *Inside Higher Ed* article and the ACE report, is one example of many. The exchange between the readers of *Inside Higher Ed's* review of the ACE report reflects a broader implication to the academy at large. In parallel, one author reflected in her analytical memo how she was only able to find Native American college student research in tribal journals, not mainstream journals.

[In tribal journals there is] information about Native Americans at tribal colleges, Native Americans who do not succeed at or never apply to college, Native Americans who do not wish to leave the reservation, and Native Americans' experiences as part of a larger multicultural population—as though there is one collective category of underrepresented students. It would seem that Native American college students representing such a small population in the United States would be even more reason to include them in study statistics and regularly feature their experiences in mainstream journals; yet, this is just not the case.

Given the small number of publications and conference proceedings on Native American college students confirmed in Tables 2 through 4, we found that mainstream publications on Native American college students and Native Americans in general are, as McClellan (2003) stated, “sparse” (p. 176). Furthermore, the lack of publications is compounded by the fact that Native Americans as a population are often deemed statistically insignificant due to their small numbers and are thus excluded from many published peer-reviewed quantitative studies about college students. Native Americans are represented not as a population but as an unapologetic asterisk. Some articles in our search mentioned Native Americans only in their demographic descriptions but either did not relate their findings to race and ethnicity or stated the Native American n was too small for analysis. Hence, the journals’ predisposition toward quantitative studies suppressed the number of Native American articles.

Possible Reasons for a Lack of Interest

Researchers who are Native American and/or specialize on Native American college students and institutions are small in number, making for fewer possible articles submitted for peer review and fewer possibilities for conference presentations. That is not to say only Native American members can research this topic. Having few faculty members with expertise in Native American students means that there are fewer knowledgeable program and article reviewers.

Peer reviewers may believe there is not enough interest in the topic to warrant valuable conference session or journal space. Still, Native American students are in need of support just like any other college student, regardless of whether these students are perceived to be on campus or not. That few Native faculty are researching Native college

students is particularly important when we reflect on our article count. Few college students are Native American (1% as noted earlier), even fewer Native Americans become faculty (less than 1%, Shotton, Lowe, & Waterman, 2013), and still fewer research Native college students. A parallel argument runs in Smith and Kauanai’s (2008) observation that “few Native women have written on the topic of feminism” (p. 241) and “Native feminism is not simply analysis, but also mandates a commitment to a political practice of liberalism” (p. 248). Given our Indigenous feminist conceptual framework, we, too, feel the lack of Native college student studies necessitates a commitment to Native research.

We acknowledge the work occurring at tribal colleges and universities (TCU). TCUs are designed for Native students to embrace their heritage, culture, and community. Although TCUs serve as strong college pathways for Native students (Nee-Benham & Stein, 2003), it is important to recognize that Native American participation in predominantly White institutions (PWIs) has increased and exceeded tribal college attendance (DeVoe et al., 2008). With this growth in PWI attendance, there is a need to reach a broader audience. Publishing in non-Native higher education journals; having a presence in non-Native professional associations; increasing opportunity for non-Native professionals to learn and acknowledge this population on their campuses; and serving as more sentient advisors to their colleagues and to Native American students broadens the audience.

In Relation to McClellan (2003), Progress?

From 1991 through 2000, McClellan found 13 articles that discussed or focused on Native Americans out of 845 articles total in the *JCS* and the *NASPA Journal*. Of ACPA and NASPA national conferences,

only 34 sessions discussed or focused on Native Americans out of 6,080 total (or less than 0.6%). Although McClellan searched a 10-year period, publication and conference acceptances have remained relatively the same. We affirm McClellan's conclusion that "much is missing from the conversation about Native Americans" (p. 120).

Concerned about the socialization process of student affairs personnel, in addition to journal article and conference session counts, McClellan (2003) explored student affairs graduate program websites and brochures and conducted interviews with student affairs practitioners, students, and faculty. He concluded, "Taken as a whole, the data generated from the interviews indicate that Native Americans were barely represented in the three environments that make up the student affairs professional socialization process" (p. 177). When asked whether Native Americans were discussed in graduate programs, 25% said they were not (p. 129). Students could not recall discussing Native Americans, or that it was very limited, and many did not have any Native American colleagues. Our personal experiences in our own undergraduate, master's degree, and PhD programs (nine programs total) similarly reflected a lack of exposure to knowledge about learning with and teaching Native American college students. We aim to change the discourse and lack of literature that impacts training. Our decision to ensure we included the words "Native American college students" in our work's title is a very intentional decision. As Mahlstedt (1999) notes, we, as feminist researchers, must consider intersubjectivity, connectedness, and social location with regard to the "vexing problem of power" (p. 112). McClellan (2003) noted this "vexing" problem in his research and we, too, over a decade after his research was published, have noted too few Native American college student research articles, conference sessions, and educational materials.

Limitations

We have focused this article on the journals and conference program books specific to our discipline—higher education and student affairs. Pertinent research exists in other journals. We do not intend to discount tribal colleges, and we urge readers to explore their student support strategies and community-centeredness.

Recommendations for Student Affairs Professionals

One overarching emotion emerged as the research team progressed through the literature search, namely frustration. Although this may seem anecdotal, significance lies in this statement. Three PhD students dedicated one year to searching for scholarly works that could contribute to our understanding of the Native American college student experience and uncovered only a handful of articles pertinent to our search. Higher education professionals often working on limited resources, funding, staff support, and time are asked to provide adequate support for Native American students based on information that took our research team many months to uncover. These experiences highlight an imperative need for greater research that truly addresses the experiences of Native students in higher education. This study's results indicate that a research agenda specifically addressing Native American populations must be developed in an effort to better serve Native American students in their journey toward college degree completion. Higher education professionals, including faculty and administrative leaders, students, and families will be best served if this research agenda includes qualitative studies centered on topics such as Native American college student recruiting techniques, invited institutional/Indigenous community relationship building, precollege orientation programs, linking Native families and cultural leaders to institutional represen-

tatives, the importance of home, mentoring, transfer policies and practices, and career and professional development training sessions for Native students post-graduation.

Additionally, we urge researchers and practitioners to seek Native American scholarship and data in their own work. It is overwhelmingly Native people who make the few presentations and papers that exist happen. Thus, we recommend that journal boards, associations, tenured faculty, department chairs, and higher education policy researchers and leaders intentionally, actively, and consistently seek to include Indigenous people and perspectives. Attendance at Native American focused sessions at national conferences is also encouraged. Contact with Native American service organizations, Native community centers, Native studies programs, and communities will enhance scholarship and develop relationships to further enhance ethical practice.

Institutions of higher education have played a role in the exclusion of Native students and communities. Agendas of assimilation (Carney, 1999; Wright, 1988) that feed assumptions today and a preference for quantitative research marginalize Native students. Given our conceptual frame of Indigenous feminism, we feel the importance of change in Native American college student research availability. As Formsma (2011) posits, "Most, if not all, Indigenous feminists share the common goals of restoration. The goals of restoration can come in many forms, of language, culture . . . balance amongst the generations. That is also to say, restoration with the intention of moving forward" (p. 151). In this case, added Native American college student research is a form of restoration. Furthermore, if this call for research continues to go unanswered, we must consider the negative ramifications not only for Native Americans but also for all underrepresented populations and those seeking acceptance

and inclusion. These ramifications include issues regarding access to education, poverty, unemployment, crime, political unrest, and loss of cultural traditions and languages (Tippeconnic, 2000).

Conclusion

Findings from this inquiry indicate that scholarly research regarding the experiences of Native American students in higher education unfortunately remains sparse. As noted by McClellan (2003), "Student affairs professionals [have] almost no knowledge of Indigenous-based resources upon which to draw in working with Native students" (p. 16). With significant gaps in research, many higher education professionals continue to erroneously perceive Native cultural and family values as obstacles to retention (Guillory & Wolverton, 2008; Guillory, 2009; HeavyRunner & DeCelles, 2002). Furthermore, these same agents who are intended to function as networks of support on campus have few scholarly resources to guide their approach in working with Native students. Native students face a myriad of obstacles upon entering a higher education system where professionals often fail to recognize Native students as a unique cultural/ political group but also continue to implement inadequately informed campus programs. The ultimate goal of this article is to highlight the deficit in current research pertaining to this population and encourage researchers to focus on Native students as more than just a statistically insignificant portion of the college-going population. There is no doubt a gap in the literature exists; it is the collaboration between tribal communities and higher education agents touted in President Obama's 2009 address that can expand the knowledge of Native American student experiences resulting in a more culturally inclusive approach to Native college student success.

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Appendix A

List of Articles Referencing Native American, American Indian, Indigenous, Tribe, or Tribal in the

Journal of College Student Development, 1991–2011. (17 articles total out of 1,048)

- Brown, L. L., & Robinson Kurpius, S. E. (1997). Psychosocial factors influencing academic persistence of American Indian college students. *Journal of College Student Development*, 38, 3–12.
- Denzine, G. G., & Anderson, C. M. (1999). I can do it: Resident assistants' sense of self-efficacy. *Journal of College Student Development*, 40, 247–256.
- Jackson, A. P., Smith, S. A., & Hill, C. L. (2003). Academic persistence among Native American college students. *Journal of College Student Development*, 44(4), 548–565.
- Kenny, M. E., & Strykery, S. (1996). Social network characteristics and college adjustments among racially and ethnically diverse first-year students. *Journal of College Student Development*, 39, 75–86.
- Literte, P. E. (2010). Revising race: How biracial students are changing and challenging student services. *Journal of College Student Development*, 51(2), 115–134.
- Lundberg, C. A. (2007). Student involvement and institutional commitment to diversity as predictors of Native American student learning. *Journal of College Student Development*, 48(4), 405–416.
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- Scherer, K. (1997). College life on-line: Healthy and unhealthy Internet use. *Journal of College Student Development, 38*, 655–665.
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- Walker, D. A. (2004). An analysis of funding allocations to student services at tribal colleges and universities, 1991 to 1995: Years of leverage? *Journal of College Student Development, 45*(2), 221–230.

Appendix B

List of Articles Referencing Native American, American Indian, Indigenous, Tribe, or Tribal in *NASPA Journal*, Renamed the *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice** (9 articles total out of 646)

- Adams, S. (1995). The relationship between social contact and comfort with social interaction among student ethnic groups. *NASPA Journal*, 32, 251–261.
- Cibik, M., & Chambers, S. (1991). Similarities and differences among Native Americans, Hispanics, Blacks, and Anglos. *NASPA Journal*, 28, 129–139.
- Dodd, J. M., Garcia, F. M., Meccage, C., & Nelson, J. R. (1995). American Indian student retention. *NASPA Journal*, 33, 72–78.
- Guardia, J. R., & Evans, N. J. (2008). Student development in tribal colleges and universities. *NASPA Journal*, 45(2), 237–264.
- Johnson, V. (2003). Cultural group perceptions of racial climates in residence halls. *NASPA Journal*, 41(1), 114–134.
- Longwell-Grice, R., & Longwell-Grice, H. (2003). Chiefs, braves, and tomahawks: The use of American Indians as university mascots. *NASPA Journal*, 40(3), 1–12.
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*From its inaugural January 2010 issue through its December 2011 issue, NASPA's *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice* did not publish any articles containing our keywords.

Appendix C

List of Articles Referencing Native American, American Indian, Indigenous, Tribe, or Tribal in *The Review of Higher Education*. (1991–2011; 3 research articles total, out of 404 articles)

- Padilla, R. (1994). Using qualitative research to assess advising. *The Review of Higher Education*, 17(2), 143–159.
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- Wright, B. (1991). The untameable savage spirit: American Indians in colonial colleges. *The Review of Higher Education*. 14(4), 429–452.

Appendix D

List of Articles Referencing Native American, American Indian, Indigenous, Tribe, or Tribal in *The Journal of Higher Education*. (1991–2011; 7 articles total out of 585 articles)

- Connolly, M. R. (2000). What's in a name? *The Journal of Higher Education*, 71(5), 515–547.
- Guillory, R. M., & Wolverson, M. (2008). It's about family: Native American student persistence in higher education. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 79(1), 59–87.
- Rhoads, R. A. (1998). Student protest and multicultural reform: Making sense of campus unrest in the 1990s. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 69(6), 621–646.
- Simpson, J. C. (2001). Segregated by subject: Racial differences in the factors influencing academic major between European Americans, Asian Americans, and African, Hispanic, and Native Americans. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 72(1), 63–100.
- Tierney, W. G. (1992). An anthropological analysis of student participation in college. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 63, 603–618.
- Turner, C. S. V., Myers, S. L., & Creswell, J. W. (1999). Exploring underrepresentation: The case of faculty of color in the Midwest. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 70(1), 27–59.
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Appendix E

List of Articles Referencing Native American, American Indian, Tribe, or Tribal in the *NASPA Journal About Women in Higher Education (NJAWHE)* (Inaugural issue 2008) (2008–2011; 2 out of 40 total)

- Chávez, A. F. (2009). Leading in the borderlands: Negotiating ethnic patriarchy for the benefit of students. *NASPA Journal About Women in Higher Education*, 2(1), 41–67. doi:10.2202/1940-7890.1025
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Appendix F

List of ACPA National Conference Program Sessions Referencing Native American, American Indian, Indigenous, Tribe, or Tribal (1990–2011)

Year	Title
1990	CONNECT: A Multidimensional Cultural Diversification Initiative Promoting an Ethical Campus Environment. Issues for Native American Network Roundtable
1991	Community Building and the Hopi/Navajo Cultural Competence: Leadership Through Awareness, Knowledge, and Action. Culturally-Based Leadership Opportunities for Native American Students. Issues for Native American Network Roundtable. Leadership Crossroads: What’s Best for Serving Today’s Students of Color. Orientation Programming: Success for Native American College Students. Promoting Success and Leadership Through Multicultural Residential Programs.
1992	Issues for Native American Network Roundtable. Sharing Your Wisdom: Career Services and the ALANA Student. Social Contact and Comfort Level Among Student Ethnic Groups. Transitions and Transformations in Ethnic Student Communities: Native American Breakout Session.
1993	Issues for Native American Network Roundtable.
1994	Issues for Native American Network Roundtable. The Diversity Success Projects: A Successful Model Program for Retention.
1995	Issues for Native American Network Roundtable.
1996	Cultural Competence Revisited: Making Our Way in a World of Differences and Similarities.
1997	Bridging Understanding, Creating Change: Qualitative Study on Native Americans
1998	Akwe: Kon, the American Indian Program House at Cornell. Issues for Native American Network Roundtable.
1999	None.
2000	Graduate Student Papers. In Her Words: Lakota Women Relate Their Tribal College Experiences
2001	None.
2002	Completing Our Goal: Graduating Native American Student. Native American Retention Model Based on Lakota, Dakota and Nakota. Voices of American Indian Students: The Need for Inclusion. Closing Speaker: Sherman Alexie—Killing Indians: Myths, Lies, and Exaggerations
2003	Attracting and Retaining American Indian Students. Walking in Many Worlds: Diversity Within American Indian Students. Tribal Colleges: Native Wisdom in Student Affairs.
2004	Student Development & American Indian College Students: Important Considerations.
2005	Native American Collegiate Mascots and Student Development. Empowering the Asterisk: A Proposed Research Agenda on American Indians Psychosocial Dev. and American Indian College Students: Practical Implications. Native American Student Services: Setting the Bar. Unheard Voices: American Indian Male College Students Seek Connection.
2006	Pre-Conference: Native American College Student Development and Success in Higher Education.** Retaining American Indian College Students: Successful Programs and Practice.

2007*	<p>Full-Day Pre-Conference: Indigenous Peoples Summit: Shaping Indigenous Higher Education Through Successful Collaborations. Counterstories: Hearing the Native Voice in Higher Education. American Indian Greek Organizations: New Vehicle for Carrying On Old Traditions. Native Community Development: A Critical Component for Native American Students’ Dev.</p>
2008	<p>Elders, Muktuk, and Soapstone: Using Cultural Knowledge to Embrace Students. Native American College Student Development and Success in Higher Education. Cultural Fest: 40th Anniversary Celebrations: The Plainsmen, Native American Dance Troupe.</p>
2009	None.
2010	<p>Pre-Convention Workshop: Native American College Student Voices: Achieving Success in Higher Education. Supporting Native American Students: A Native American Network Facilitated Discussion. Native American Student Experience: Historical Context for the Future. NANIPKC, a Collaborative Model Between NAN-ACPA and IPKC-NASPA. Embracing Innovative Ideas and Searching for Revolutionary Results: Native Americans in ACPA. Featured Speaker—George Kennedy Serving Native American Students: Bringing Innovation to the Center Performance by the Gadaihongwas— Dancing Flower Dance Company.</p>
2011	<p>Pre-Convention Workshop: Native American Students’ Experiences: ACPA Leaders Collaborate to Learn More.</p>

*2007 was a joint conference of ACPA and NASPA.

**Session was not held due to travel problems.

Appendix G

List of NASPA National Conference Program Sessions Referencing Native American, American Indian, Indigenous, Tribe, or Tribal (1990–2011)

Year	Title
1990	Imagining ways to improve the retention of Native American students: A peer counseling model. Wilma Mankiller (featured speaker): “Living in two worlds: The special needs of Native American students.”
1991	None.
1992	Linkages: Accessing and developing networks of inclusiveness.
1993	None.
1994	Janine-Pease-Windy Boy (featured speaker): “Culture encounters in the first person” Network for educational equity and ethnic diversity—Who do we represent?
1995	Dialogue: A fresh way of building community. Grits, corn, beans, and rice: Strengthening intercultural communication.
1996	Gatekeeping in the academy: Counterproductive ALANA student services. Weaving common threads: Tradition, transition, and training for Native Americans.
1997	Bridging understanding, creating change: Qualitative study on Native Americans.
1998	None.
1999	None.
2000	Hoop dancing through the system: Retaining American Indian students in higher education in the new millennium. The American Indian higher education challenge.
2001	Native American perspectives of higher education for leaders.
2002	None.
2003	Beyond the pale: The constructed meaning of Native Americans by student affairs professionals in majority institutions of higher education.
2004	Haudenosaunee college experiences: First generation, transfer and stopout. Out of sight, out of mind: Native American students and student affairs.
2005	Getting Used: American Indian undergraduate student service use. Empowering the asterisk: A proposed research agenda on American Indian students.
2006	Summit on serving Native American students: From discussion to action. Getting used: American Indian undergraduate student use and non-use of student services. Unheard voices: American Indian male college students seek connection. American Indian students: From individual efforts to collective success. Native American college students: Recent research to inform practice. For new professionals and graduate students: Rethinking Native American collegiate mascots. American Indian students’ perception of racial climate, student support services, and ethnic fraud at Big XII universities.
2007*	Full-day preconference: Indigenous Peoples Summit: Shaping Indigenous higher education through successful collaborations. Counterstories: Hearing the Native voice in higher education. American Indian Greek Organizations: New vehicle for carrying on old traditions. Native community development: A critical component for Native American students’ development.
2008	Charting the Indigenous education research agenda: From research to publication. Pathway to the PhD: Experiences of high achieving American Indian women.
2009	Featured speaker on Presidential Panel “A view from the top: It’s not business as usual anymore.” Cassandra Manuelito-Kervliet, President of Antioch University Seattle. Closing featured speaker: Kaylynn Sullivan Two Trees. Successful partnerships for the advancement of Indigenous education.

	<p>Oklahoma Native American students in higher education: Bringing unity to our state. A collaborative education series beyond the university’s doors: Onondaga land rights action and our common future. Evolution of higher education for Native Americans in the U.S. Resiliency, the strength of lifelong learners: Native college students and graduates. Asian American and Native American Pacific Islanders-serving institutions legislation. American Indian student success: Strategies for empowering Indigenous students beyond the college classroom.</p>
2010	<p>Addressing the changing face of Native American students. Continuing the legacy of self-determination through a tribal learning community. Student affairs partnerships and collaborations to promote Indigenous student success. Race related stress, acculturation, and resilience of American Indian students.</p>
2011	<p>Family ties: A holistic approach to Native student success. Leaving a legacy: Developing future Native American leaders. Native American 101 for student affairs professionals. Faces and spaces: Combating Native American “transfer swirl.”</p>

*2007 was a joint conference of ACPA and NASPA.

Appendix H

List of ASHE National Conference Program Sessions Referencing Native American,
American Indian, Indigenous, Tribe, or Tribal (1990–2011)

YEAR	TITLE
1991	Assessing Tinto's model with American Indian and Alaskan Native data.
1992	None.
1993	None.
1994	None.
1995	None.
1996	None.
1997	Healing the spirit: Toward an understanding of Native American college experiences. What's in a name?: An historical look at Native American-related nicknames and symbols at three U.S. universities.
1998	American Indian and Alaska Native students and the student involvement model.
1999	America's First People: Factors affecting their persistence in higher education.
2000	Native American college student experiences: A qualitative assessment.
2001	Today's American Indian/Alaska Natives: Why they are the way they are family and its affect on institutional choice and post-freshman retention of Indian/Alaska Native students at a Bible college.
2002	Native college pathways in CA: College access for Am. Indian high school students.
2003	None.
2004	None.
2005	The college experience of twelve Haudenosaunee college graduates.
2006	Please don't scare the White people: American Indian students in the borderlands. Counterstories: Listening to the Native voice in higher education.
2007	100 generations of ancestral wisdom: Inspiring Native Hawaiian scholars, enchanting the world.
2008	Decolonizing Indigenous research in education.
2009	Navigating foreign territory: The experiences of Native women in the journey to the PhD. Playing chief and trial member with an iron arrow: Decolonizing a college's appropriation of American Indian identity.
2010	A pathway to Native college success: Reverse transfer among the Haudenosaunee. American Indian mentoring: Intersections between tribal critical theory and university services. Native American student participation in study abroad: An exploratory study. Symposium: Impactful people and spaces for Native American college student success. The road to persistence: Ways in which college administrators impacted pathways to Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) students' degree completion.
2011	The unapologetic asterisk: An exploration of existing Native American college student research. Maintaining hopes and dreams: Educational aspirations of Native American/Alaska Native postsecondary students. 400 years of challenges and opportunities: American Indian higher education institutions and programs. Fireside chat of tribal colleges and universities and Native-serving institutions.

Suggested Citation:

Willmott, K.E., Sands, T. L., Raucci, M., & Waterman, S. J. (2016). Native American college students: A group forgotten. *Journal of Critical Scholarship on Higher Education and Student Affairs*, 2(1), 79-104.