

EXHIBIT 5
DATE 1-10-05
HB 16

Testimony of

Representative Margaret Campbell

To the Education Committee

Good Afternoon Madam Chairman and Education Committee members and guests.

I want to thank Representative Ripley for introducing HB 16 on behalf of the State/Tribal Relations Committee. I have worked with the tribal colleges for 23 years, as a President, Vice President and Academic Dean and during those years we have provided educational access for non-Indian people who reside on or near our reservation communities. Tribal Colleges are defined as public, 2 and 4-year institutions and through open door policies have educated many non-Indian students. These students share the same geographical isolation that the other tribal college students do. As the tribal colleges have grown and become fully accredited institutions, they have used their resources to develop quality educational programs; and quality vocational programs. On the Fort Peck Community College campus, Hazardous Materials is a popular vocational program for our area non-Indian farmers and ranchers, who work with hazardous materials in the operation of their farms. Many agriculturally based families are enrolling in Microsoft certified coursework to be able to operate their farms and ranches using computer technology. These students are not able to leave to attend coursework away from home—for them the tribal college is their option.

In addition to my tribal college job—I serve as an evaluator for Northwest Accreditation-Commission on Colleges and I feel that it is important to remind the Committee that Tribal Colleges are accredited by the same regional accreditation agency that accredits the University of Montana, MSU-Bozeman, MSU-Billings, etc. Northwest Commission on Colleges is charged with the responsibility of determining whether each institution is following the mandate of their mission statement; and ensuring that all of the accreditation standards have been met, including detailed and involved effectiveness measurement, in the form of institutional assessment. HB16, as proposed by Representative Ripley, is a good bill that can be even better. To that end I am offering an amendment to HB 16 that basically.....removes language that refers to credit transferability to “another Montana college or university” The reason for my amendment is twofold: 1. The language would preclude payment to tribal colleges for non-Indian students who enroll in vocational courses, which, incidentally are much more expensive to offer than general education courses, and 2) it is not appropriate to expect tribal colleges to “provide documentation to the Board of Regents on the curriculum to ensure that the content and quality of courses offered by the tribal community college are consistent with the standards adopted by the system”----because as institutions of higher education we do not police each other in terms of content and quality—that is the role of the regional accreditation agency. Since the mid-80’s the tribal

colleges in the State of Montana have all been involved in transfer agreements within the Montana University System. For those two reasons I am offering an amendment to HB 16.