

**Information Presented to the Joint House Committee
On Education and Appropriations by**

EXHIBIT 7
DATE 1/26/2005
HB 2

Joseph F. McDonald

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Dear Committee Chair and Committee Members,

I am Joe McDonald, President of Salish Kootenai College. A college that provides postsecondary educational programs on the Flathead Reservation. The college is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. Its credits are transferable to other accredited colleges and universities in Montana and in the Nation.

Upon completion of Associate Degree in Nursing, the graduates are eligible to sit for the national examination for registered nursing. Dental Technology students are eligible to sit for the national examination that certifies Dental Assistants. Our Associate of Arts graduates are eligible to transfer their credits to most colleges and universities in the United States.

Salish Kootenai College not only serves American Indian students, it also serves non-Indian students or non-beneficiary students. The number of non-beneficiary students attending each year varies from 215 to 275. I predict that we will have about 250 this academic year. Our students don't just come from the reservation, but come from throughout Montana and the northwest.

The expenditure budget for Salish Kootenai College is made up of the instructional cost for all of our educational programs with travel, supplies, and equipment added in. The cost of operating the library, the media center, and student services, building maintenance, the business offices, administration, and professional fees all make up the total expenditure budget. This year our expenditures are budgeted at \$7.5 million.

The income for this year's budget comes from tuition, fees, Tribal College Assistance Act reimbursement, indirect cost, auxiliary enterprises, and funds from our foundation. This year we received \$4300 for each full time equivalent American Indian Student from the Tribal College Assistance Act.

Each American Indian student provides \$4300 plus tuition and fees of \$3200. This is a total of \$7500 of income for each Indian student. The non-Indian students pay \$4000 in tuition and fees.

The cost to our general for each full time equivalent student is \$7500. The non-beneficiary student is paying \$3500 less than the actual cost per student. 220 non-Indian student times \$3500 results in a total loss of revenue of \$770,000.

It is difficult to make up the difference. We have been increasing tuition to lessen the burden. We have been able to find some federal grants that help pay for some of the instructional costs and some of the operational costs. We have had to ask for assistance from our foundation to pay for some of the costs. We have been able to fund raise to pay for our campus facilities, and we have utilized federal donable property to meet our transportation equipment costs as well as equipment for our Heavy Equipment Construction Training program. Our faculty and administrative salaries are low. We have a hard time attracting well-qualified faculty in some areas. We are only able to pay health insurance for the employee and haven't been able to include the family. We don't have broad student activity programs such as music, drama, and athletics.

As you know, we can't rely on federal grants to fill the gaps in budgeting. Federal grants are competitive and often become unavailable thus leaving the college in a financial bind.

At Salish Kootenai College we offer five baccalaureate programs and one 2+2 Elementary Education degree program with U of M Western. We don't have many students transfer to other colleges and universities for bachelor degrees. We have some students transfer to Montana State University for engineering degrees and they have all

done well. We have students transfer to the University of Montana for forestry, psychology, sociology, and business to name a few. Our transfers have all done well.

Governor Schweitzer has proposed \$2.9 million to go to the seven tribal colleges in Montana. He has proposed that \$2.5 million be divided equally among the colleges with 50% going to purchase equipment and 50% to be utilized in writing each respective tribe's history in an effort to help K-12 schools comply with their Indian Studies mandate. The \$2.9 million would adequately fund HB16 if it becomes law. I feel that the amount to be divided equally among the seven tribal colleges be reduced to \$1.4 million and \$1.5 million be used to implement funding for non-beneficiary students.

Each tribal college has a need to purchase equipment, especially computer equipment. Developing language and history curriculum for the K-12 schools by the tribal colleges is worthwhile and needed. The colleges need flexibility in how much should be spent on equipment and on how much is spent on tribal history and curriculum development. Each tribal college also needs assistance to help meet the cost of providing educational services to its non-Indian or non-beneficiary students. At Salish Kootenai College, this is a great financial burden.

We want to continue to make our educational programs available to non-beneficiary students. They provide our college with diversity where students learn from each other and learn to respect each other.

I know the Governor is concerned with each citizen of Montana having access to postsecondary education and I wholeheartedly agree. We need to be cognizant that access means more than just being able to attend a college. It also means that the college provided a good educational program, with well-qualified faculty, and appropriate learning resources such as classrooms, laboratories, library, counseling and student services. The total package is access.

In closing, I urge you to consider adequate funding for the non-beneficiary students that attend our tribal colleges. It is important to keep this option open for the citizens of Montana.