

C. Davis-Castro. Information Needs of Users of the American Indian Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. A Master's Paper for the M.S. in L.S degree. April, 2014. 63 pages. Advisor: Denise Anthony

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's (UNC) American Indian Center (AIC) serves the campus community, the Native peoples of the state, and the southeastern region of the United States. The purpose of this study was to better understand users' information needs using primarily qualitative methods. A survey was used to understand how users interact with the college culture center. Data about user information needs was collected via questionnaire using the online survey tool Qualtrics.

This study will be of practical use to the AIC staff in helping them to understand users' information needs, including which needs are being met and which are not. This study gathered evidence of the value that the AIC adds to UNC and adds to the sparse literature regarding university culture centers.

Headings:

Libraries & Indians

Cultural maintenance

Information-seeking behavior

Universities & colleges

INFORMATION NEEDS OF USERS OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN CENTER AT
THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

by
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Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Background | 2 |
| Purpose & Problems | 3 |
| Research Questions | 3 |
| Literature Review..... | 4 |
| 1.1 Southeastern Native Groups and Historic Power Relations..... | 4 |
| 1.2 Cultural Identity and Heritage..... | 5 |
| 1.3 Higher Education for People of Color..... | 7 |
| 1.4 College Cultural Centers | 8 |
| 1.5 Networks | 10 |
| Research Design and Methods..... | 13 |
| Data Collection Methods | 15 |
| Findings..... | 17 |
| Discussion..... | 29 |
| 1.6 User Information Interactions | 29 |
| 1.7 AIC as Professional Resource | 32 |
| 1.8 AIC as Emotional Support | 35 |
| 1.9 AIC as a Native Space..... | 37 |
| Limitations | 38 |
| Summary | 39 |
| Appendix 1: Literature Review Search Process..... | 40 |
| Appendix 2: Project Timeline..... | 41 |
| Appendix 3: Raw Questionnaire Data | 42 |
| Appendix 4: Cross-Tabulations | 56 |
| References..... | 57 |

Background

In 1999, UNC Provost Dick Richardson and Jacki Resnick, director of UNC's Proposal Development Initiative, convened an "exploratory group" of faculty and staff which "sought to amplify the Indian voice on campus by consistently lobbying for programs and initiatives that benefit the Indian community and Indian studies" (American Indian Center "A Brief History," n.d.). As a result, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's (UNC) American Indian Center (AIC) was created in 2006. The AIC is described as the "front door to American Indian communities across the state and the nation" (American Indian Center "Who We Are," n.d.). The researcher was an undergraduate Native American Studies minor when the AIC opened its doors and in 2008 was the first person to do an internship. Her interest in its continued growth and development led to the idea of the AIC as a target for this research.

The AIC's mission is to "bridge the richness of North Carolina's American Indian cultures with the strengths of Carolina's research, education and teaching" which is made concrete through three goals:

1. Leadership in American Indian scholarship and research
2. Engagement with and service to North Carolina's First People
3. Enrichment of campus diversity and dialogue

(American Indian Center "Mission and Goals," n.d.)

These wide-ranging goals include a variety of potential users including faculty, undergraduate and graduate students, as well as Native peoples from North Carolina and beyond. The relevant literature was extremely limited and no studies were found specifically on the information aspects of college culture centers, making it an area ripe for research.

Purpose & Problems

The purpose of this study was to better understand the information ecosystem of the AIC. This study employed qualitative methods using a questionnaire. The results may impact outreach strategies of the AIC. In Patton's (2006) study of a Black culture center, she wrote that evaluation was necessary to show the importance of the center's continued existence; anecdotal evidence was inadequate in tough economic times (p. 641). The goal of this study is to provide data that will help the AIC improve its services, to provide the evaluation necessary to demonstrate its importance, and add to the scant research on college cultural centers.

Research Questions

Broadly, this study examined if the American Indian Center had established itself as a useful and relevant information node for its users. Specifically

1. Who are the users of the AIC?
2. What are their information needs and preferences?
3. Why do they seek out information via the AIC?
4. How satisfied are they with the information received?

Literature Review

In order to fully understand the information needs of users of the AIC, it was necessary to examine research in diverse fields to understand systemic power relations, relevant cultural and historical factors of Native peoples, typical experiences of higher education for people of color, culture centers within the university context, and information networks. The following references draw from American Indian studies, cultural studies, heritage studies, public administration, sociology, information science, and network theory. Appendix one outlines the literature review search process.

1.1 Southeastern Native Groups and Historic Power Relations

Like indigenous peoples throughout the Americas, the power of self-determination of southeastern American tribes has been undermined in the centuries following contact with European settlers and their descendants. Many eastern Native groups never had treaties with the federal government but were decimated by wars and often removed to reservations administered by states (Cramer 2005). Some groups in the American South escaped removal by virtue of their isolation or assimilation into the non-Native culture (Cramer 2005). Southern groups also faced the challenge of antebellum race laws that obscured Native identity, generally classifying nonwhites as free people of color (Miller 2004). Additionally, dozens of tribes were terminated in the 1950s-1960s, whereby the United States federal government dissolved tribal governments, the lands they held, and other treaty agreements (Cramer 2005). American Indian groups continue to struggle for recognition and autonomy to this day (Miller 2004; Cramer 2005).

Although Native groups in the Southeast “were the most disrupted,” North Carolina has the largest Indian population east of the Mississippi (Quinn 1988, p. 147; American

Indian Center “A Brief History,” n.d.). Despite claims of waning racism in the United States, there is “stunning evidence of the virulence of current anti-Indian sentiment” (Cramer 2005, p. 57). There can be no research conducted with American Indians without this grasp of history and unequal power.

Pewewardy (2000) suggests that decolonization involves a struggle to create a tribal community. He writes that “many Eurocentric systems are set up to detach us from our communities—from our sense of tribal community. Part of humanization is to build community. Building community opposes domination and injustice” (Pewewardy 2000, p. 12). The AIC strives to build a “public” or a campus networking space that can change the status quo (Ikegami 2000). Ikegami (2000) writes that “publics are sites for social change” and “cultural innovation and vitality often come from publics located on the periphery of society rather than from publics closer to the centers of power” (p. 1003; p. 1010). The AIC, though a newer and less politically powerful campus entity, is a centralizing point for Natives’ voices and scholarship at UNC.

1.2 Cultural Identity and Heritage

The AIC is a college culture center so a brief discussion of culture is warranted.

Sociologist Paul DiMaggio explains that culture works through three forms:

First, we have information, distributed across persons ... Second, we have mental structures, especially schematic representations of complex social phenomena, which shape the way we attend to, interpret, remember, and respond emotionally to the information we encounter and possess ... finally, we have culture as symbol systems external to the person, including the content of talk, elements of the constructed environment, media messages, and meanings embedded in observable activity pattern. (DiMaggio 1997, pp. 273-274)

Thus, culture is sustained by a complex interplay between information, the thoughts and actions of individuals, and institutions. As “publics” are “sites of cultural production and

identity formation,” the AIC may play an active role in how users understand Native culture and identity (Ikegami 2000, p. 992).

Elements of culture make their way into heritage, a term that is difficult to define. Tunbridge (1996) acknowledges six meanings for heritage that include collective memory, physical artifacts, cultural and artistic productivity from the past or present, elements from nature, commercial activity, and a political euphemism for ethnic or racial exclusivism. The interpretation of heritage inevitably means there is a message and perhaps Native users seek information from the AIC because its message resonates with them (Tunbridge 1996). Previously misused heritage, destroyed heritage, and the heritage of atrocity are all possible motivations for seeking information via the AIC rather than through the larger university system or other mainstream institutions if users perceive them to represent the dominant or colonial culture (Tunbridge 1996).

The AIC does not curate artifacts but intangible cultural heritage requires no less care. Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage requires support so that “Amerindian people will not be objectified ... and will not be translated into meaningless commodities where its true values and meanings are lost” (Corsane 2012, p. 211). The AIC’s responsible curation of the “true values” of the intangible cultural heritage of American Indians may help establish trust and credibility with its users.

There are specific practices that can honor the heritage of Native nations. HeavyRunner and Marshall (2003) identified cultural factors in 1993 that were “essential to preventing alcohol and drug abuse in Indian families and communities: tribal identity, spirituality, family strengths, elders, ceremonial rituals, oral traditions, and support

networks” (p. 16). The AIC is culturally relevant because staff employ these same practices especially in support of Native college students.

Indigenous cultures, languages, and heritages are threatened globally and “it has been predicted that the world will lose one-third of its remaining languages by the end of the twenty-first century” (Marrie 2009, p. 169). This creates a special urgency to support indigenous expressions of cultural identity and college culture centers are well-positioned to offer such support.

1.3 Higher Education for People of Color

Higher education can change one’s life but completing a degree is challenging for many students in the United States. Mayhew, Ford, and Hubbard (1990) described a student’s out of classroom experience as “the most potent educational force affecting student development” (p. 96). At UNC, the attrition rates for Native undergraduates from 2004-2007 was 28%, the highest of any ethnic group and four times higher than White and Asian undergraduates (UNC Diversity and Multicultural Affairs 2013). It is not necessary for the AIC to offer classes in order to touch students’ lives.

Ladson-Billings advocates for cultural centers because even in the 21st century United States, many campuses remain “difficult places for students of color to negotiate” (Patton 2010, xii). Patton (2006) found that “many Black students persist at college largely due to the social networks they build on campus” (p. 629). Drywater-Whitekiller’s interviews with Native college students found that components of their tribal identity like spirituality, family support, elders, ceremonial rituals, and oral tradition became “coping mechanisms of cultural resilience” (Drywater-Whitekiller 2010, p. 6). Strategies for persisting in college included giving back, prayer, and family support

(Drywater-Whitekiller 2010). As students of color are less likely to use mainstream university services and student organizations to deal with feelings and concerns, they turn to cultural centers for support and comfort (Patton 2010). The AIC likely provides just such a support system for Native students at UNC.

1.4 College Cultural Centers

In her thesis, Hebert (2002) recounts a Native tradition:

The impact of the ancestors will be felt for seven generations. We have reached the Seventh Generation of Native American people since the first contact with European culture ... Libraries in all settings ... are playing a large role in this reemergence of Native culture. (p. 25)

The author argues that college culture centers can play a similar role in supporting the reemergence of Native culture.

The AIC, positioned between UNC and Native communities and scholars, might be categorized as a “boundary organization,” which can serve as an institutional catalyst (Morse 2010). Schneider (2009) writes that,

Boundary organizations offer sites for collaboration, the formation of new relationships, the infusion of research and scientific information into policy, and the exercise of innovative leadership. They have the potential for creating new ways of knowing the problem. (p. 61)

The AIC staff demonstrates leadership by collaborating with student groups and Native organizations in North Carolina, which may be an important feature for users.

If the AIC can be characterized as a boundary organization, then what it creates might be called “heritage production.” Tunbridge (1996) presents a three-stage model of heritage production: selection of historic resources, assembly (interpretation and packaging of historic resources), and targeting of heritage products. The AIC is engaged in the second part of the model, the assembly of cultural resources because although it

does not actively produce research, it disseminates information related to academic research and tribal events. This information or “heritage product” has an audience, principally the First Peoples of North Carolina and the campus community. It is this function of packaging information that may attract users.

In her interviews with users of a Black campus culture center (BCC), Patton (2006) highlighted several themes. Black students described “a climate of covert racism, separatism, and apathy” in the general campus community (Patton 2006, p. 634). At the BCC, however, students felt at home, could ask “stupid questions,” had a sense of ownership and history, and felt it was especially critical for first year students (Patton 2006, pp. 637-638). The BCC was “viewed as the place for all peoples of the African Diaspora” and in this sense was multiethnic and inclusive (Patton 2006, p. 639). Similarly, the AIC welcomes students from tribes around the country as well as non-Native scholars and allies.

Patton’s (2006) other key findings related to the BCC staff. The staff members of the BCC were “extremely influential in how students perceive the BCC” and the location, size, and available resources of the BCC influenced student perceptions (Patton 2006, p. 639). The BCC also provided a sense of historical and personal identity for Black students, which one staff member, who had been there since its inception, particularly reinforced. She would share the story of how the BCC was established at each year’s orientation, keeping alive the memory of the alumni role in the Civil Rights Movement through a form of counter-storytelling (Patton 2006, p. 641). Undoubtedly, the staff and resources of the AIC influence users’ perceptions of the AIC though it remains to be seen if it reinforces a similar sense of history.

While college culture centers are not defined in Patton's (2010) work, many are noted for their activism. Ladson-Billings describes the BCC of her graduate school as a "place of refuge and a place of service" (Patton 2010, xi). Patton describes Black students who resisted discrimination and isolation in predominantly White colleges and formed "coalitions and identified spaces where they could continue resistance" (2010, xiii). It is this activism that makes college cultural centers distinct from a research center or a student union. The AIC is a flexible space that supports research and socializing, hosts lectures, provides study space, and a place for student organizations to meet. Many of these activities are political or involve advocacy.

As significant as the role of college cultural centers might be, they are minimally represented in the literature. After noticing the dearth during her dissertation research, Patton (2010) published a larger work, which is the only known monograph on college cultural centers. Patton (2010) says there is still a need to "examine the landscape of culture centers in higher education...very little is known about these facilities, which leaves room for erroneous assumptions and criticisms about their value in the absence of substantial evidence" (p. xiv). This constitutes an area ripe for research.

1.5 Networks

One of the recommendations in the *Pathways to Excellence Report* by the US Commission on Libraries (1992) is to encourage stronger participation by Indian tribes in information networks (p. 8). While this is a broad recommendation, the AIC can contribute to this goal. By examining user information needs, this research study looked at how users participated in the information network created by the AIC.

Borgatti and Halgin's (2011) comparison of different authors' network theory research represented an initial approach for examining information flow among users of the AIC. A network is defined as a "set of actors or nodes along with a set of ties ... [that] interconnect through shared end points to form paths" (Borgatti and Halgin 2011, p. 1169). A network lacks natural boundaries; it is the research question and explanatory theory which determine the network and the scope to be studied (Borgatti and Halgin 2011). This study focused on the AIC network or the direct nodes between individuals and the Center. More specifically, a "state-type network" is one that displays continuity over time and whose ties can be measured by strength, intensity, and duration (Borgatti and Halgin 2011, p. 1170). These three dimensions suggested indicators for evaluating AIC user responses.

Borgatti and Halgin (2011) also discuss Granovetter's strength of weak ties theory. This theory describes a bridging tie as a potential source for novel information because it creates a link to a node that does not overlap with any other links (Borgatti and Halgin 2011). The AIC functions as a bridging tie for many of its users, connecting users that would not normally or as easily be connected due to dispersion. Further "communities with many strong ties have pockets of strong local cohesion but weak global cohesion, whereas communities with many weak ties have weak local cohesion but strong global cohesion" (Borgatti & Halgin 2011, p. 1171). The AIC may strengthen local cohesion especially for campus users. Structure and position within a network is important as the network tie "serves as a bond that aligns and coordinates action, enabling groups of nodes to act as a single node, often with greater capabilities" (Borgatti & Halgin 2011, p. 1174). This is an advantage for a culture center as it creates a new

central node that can leverage the group's power. Also, if there is "a marked tendency to be homophilous with respect to race, and one race has a clear numerical majority, we can expect that members of the majority race will be more central" (Borgatti & Halgin 2011, p. 1177). A second advantage for culture centers on mostly White college campuses is being able to offer peripheral groups strategic connections to a larger network.

Ikegami (2000), a professor of history and sociology, describes a "public" as an "actual-physical and/or imagined-virtual space—in which the actions of switching-connecting and decoupling of networks takes place" (p. 997). "The web of culture and the web of social networks" are connected because "social structural constraints influence cultural production primarily through structuring publics and influencing the interrelationship of publics" (Ikegami 2000, p. 994). DiMaggio (1997) adds that "networks are crucial environments for the activation of schemata, logics, and frames" which are tied to culture (p. 283). The AIC can be viewed as a "public" where cultural and social networks converge. The nature of this "public" was the focus of this study.

This is not to say that Native peoples lack networks. Gnau (2011) conducted her thesis research on the information seeking behaviors of the Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation in North Carolina. She found that "all subject participants identified talking to other tribal members as an information-seeking behavior and ... three out of four, identified interpersonal channels as their first choice when presented with a tribal information-seeking event" (Gnau 2011, p. 29). The AIC staff understands this user preference and builds interpersonal relationships so as to facilitate information seeking.

In another thesis, Lee (1999) looked at the academic information needs of Native Canadian college students. She concluded that there was "a lack of resource or research

development concerning Indigenous issues and a lack of services recognizing the Indigenous values of ‘being in relationship’ and reciprocity” (Lee 1999, p. 1). Lee (1999) explains the value of reciprocity:

In the Indigenous world view, reciprocity in relationships is often expected. Values of generosity and sharing are inherent in reciprocity ... developing reciprocal relationships is paramount to one’s own well-being ... also implied in reciprocity is the notion that there is a preference for interpersonal interaction rather than interaction with automation or other inanimate entities. (p. 5)

The premium on reciprocity is part of what makes the physical presence of the AIC and staff important for American Indian users.

Studying the users of the AIC requires an understanding of various user groups like indigenous people, students and scholars of American Indian studies, and community members, none of which are mutually exclusive categories. A firm background in systemic power relations, the history of Native peoples, the role of culture centers in higher education for people of color, and information networks informed this study.

Research Design and Methods

The research employed a qualitative and exploratory design in seeking to evaluate the information needs of users of the AIC, who are primarily American Indian. This special population informed the selected research method, a questionnaire with qualitative and quantitative questions.

In his research, Clifford (1999) describes a museum as a “contact zone” where the center is “a point of gathering, the periphery an area of discovery” (p. 438). While not a museum, the AIC website’s use of words like “bridge” and “front door” to describe its work invoke the idea of contact zone between two cultures or worldviews. By extension,

this research represented an area of discovery where a qualitative research design permitted the exploration of the little-studied institution of college cultural centers in a natural campus setting.

The data collection methods were selected based on previous research with indigenous communities. The researcher's ethical approach took into account power dynamics that might affect data collection methods, such as being an outsider. Hierarchical power relations "affect the social impact of the discourse produced," which is why the director of the AIC reviewed the language used in the questionnaire prior to distribution (Ikegami 2000, p. 1009). A questionnaire allowed for a broad survey of users' information needs without the author being physically present, which might have affected responses because she is not American Indian. A brief, anonymous questionnaire was more likely to solicit responses from various users like students, faculty, alumni, and people unaffiliated with the university. Anonymity was assured because no uniquely identifying information was collected. Fourteen questions were quantitative in nature. Four were qualitative questions, which addressed Lee's (1995) concern that "indigenous people are interested in self-determination; we want to tell our own stories using our own voices, and to find our own solutions to our problems" (p. 5). Patton (2006) seconds this notion, citing an earlier work where "Ladson-Billings (1998) suggested that storytelling is a method of naming one's reality and giving voice to minority cultural viewpoints" in order to "gather information on how these students constructed meaning of the culture center on campus in their own terms" (p. 630; p. 633). Although not a means for extended storytelling, the free response questions gave participants space to talk about

their information needs “on their own terms,” which brought some networks to the surface and allowed them to “name the reality” of their interactions with the AIC.

Rich data was produced about AIC users by combining qualitative and quantitative questions. The results can be used to inform future initiatives and provide evidence of how the Center adds value to on-campus and off-campus communities.

Data Collection Methods

The study instrument was a questionnaire administered via Qualtrics, available online and as a paper version. The questionnaire was live for three weeks with an email reminder sent at the end of the second week. The full project timeline can be found in appendix two.

Drywater-Whitekiller (2010) used criterion-based sampling to interview Native American college students. This study also relied on criterion-based sampling as the director of the AIC helped the researcher contact campus leaders in order to disseminate the questionnaire. Target groups included student organizations like the Carolina Indian Circle (undergraduate) and the First Nations Graduate Circle. Non-students were to be included by distributing the questionnaire to the American Indian Studies faculty via the curriculum chair and by attending the February 2014 meetings of the UNC Native Alumni Group and the community-based North Carolina Native Asset Coalition. The expectation was to collect at least 50 completed questionnaires.

Research by Smith (2006) and Drywater-Whitekiller (2010) informed the content of the questionnaire, which appears in appendix 2. Drywater-Whitekiller’s (2010) questions focused on the “students’ direct, lived experience (person-centered)” and

“alluded to the communities and cultures from which they come ... (community-centered)” (p. 5). Similarly, the questionnaire for this study was person-centered and community-centered. Smith (2006) explores the identity and memory work users undertook while visiting three British industrial era social history museums that suggested questions for users of the AIC. She conducted surveys that addressed the education level of the participants, what it meant to have such a museum in modern England, and did the place speak to their personal identity (Smith 2006, p. 208-229). For this study it was relevant to note if users are university students, university faculty or staff for the questionnaire because they probably constitute the majority of users and participants. To understand users’ motivations for seeking information, the questionnaire asked what the AIC means to them and if it spoke to their personal identity.

An inclusive view of “information” was necessary to study users of the AIC as Clifford (1999) discovered during an experience at the Portland Museum of Art. Tlingit elders were invited to discuss tribal objects in the collection; instead of sharing facts about the objects’ history and creation the meeting became an occasion “for the telling of stories and the singing of songs” (Clifford 1999, p. 435). Research with the Native community required an awareness that information might be sought orally by AIC users and there were questionnaire answer options for accessing information via word of mouth or in person in addition to written forms of communication.

Because this study required interaction with human subjects, UNC Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval and informed consent on the part of each participant was secured.

Findings

The survey was administered for three weeks, from February 1 to February 21. On Monday, February 3, the researcher received an email about a problem with question 4. Respondents could select all of the choices in the matrix rather than one answer per row. To edit the survey, the researcher had to "unlock" the survey and Qualtrics issued a warning that this could skew the results. At 1:00 pm, the researcher downloaded the raw data from question 4 that constituted the 16 responses that had already been submitted. The researcher "unlocked" the survey, switched the axes for the answer options and locked the survey. The edit was finished by 1:15 pm, for a total of 15 minutes that the survey was down while being altered. The survey reminder was sent to leaders of UNC student organizations on February 15 instead of February 14.

There were 55 surveys submitted and 44 completed. As the only required question was the first (soliciting user consent), not every respondent answered every question so the total number of answers varies. The survey link was sent to the AIC listserv with 1007 email addresses, the NC Native Leadership Institute listserv, with 34 addresses, and was posted on the AIC Facebook page, with 2,561 "likes." Forty hard copies were printed for the February 8 UNC American Indian Alumni Meeting and four responses returned. Therefore, a total of 3642 people had access to the survey link or a hard copy. Fifty-five survey responses with 44 completed out of 3642 constitutes an approximate response rate between 1.21-1.53%.

Only one student organization leader responded to the introductory email that offered to share the survey link. The NC Native Asset Coalition Meeting, scheduled for February 11, was canceled and this might have decreased the response rate from

community members not affiliated with campus. However, among all enrolled students there were 484 who reported to be American Indian and Alaska Native in whole or in part at UNC for the fall of 2013 (UNC Office of Institutional Research and Assessment 2013). Sixteen survey respondents described themselves as UNC students who were American Indian in whole or in part, which represents about 3.3% of the total American Indian student population. The total number of permanent full-time employees at UNC who identified as American Indian/Alaska Native for the fall of 2013 was reported to be 51 people (UNC Office of Institutional Research and Assessment 2014). In this survey, four individuals called themselves American Indian faculty or staff, which represents 7.8% of American Indian employees on campus.

The findings are discussed sequentially. Appendix three has the raw data as downloaded from Qualtrics.

Question 1:

Everyone agreed to the survey conditions.

Question 2:

Thirty-four out of 46 respondents, or 74%, preferred email communication. Five respondents (11%) each preferred word of mouth and the AIC website. For the option “other,” one person wrote in “Facebook” and another “social media.” No one chose the printed materials option.

Question 3:

In response to “what does the AIC mean to me?” 8 out of 35 used the expression “home away from home” and 3 others used the word “home.” The majority of the respondents

who used the word “home” were students and alumni, but one was a faculty or staff member and another was a community member.

Question 4:

Due to the problem cited earlier with this question and the subsequent edit in Qualtrics, data collection was compromised. Originally a question with five columns and three rows, it was converted into a question with three columns and five rows when the axes were flipped. The data that had already been collected from respondents was not accurately translated into the new table, including some errors that could not be corrected. Thus, although there were 46 responses total, only 28 responses are reported below. Because there was no category for “never,” some categories were left blank so some categories had less than 28 responses.

| <i>My interactions with AIC happen about this often for each type of communication:</i> | In person | Printed materials | Online | Total |
|---|------------------|--------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| Once a year | 2 | 4 | 1 | 7 |
| Once a semester/ Twice a year | 5 | 9 | 3 | 17 |
| Once a month | 10 | 6 | 12 | 28 |
| Once a week | 3 | 4 | 6 | 13 |
| More than once a week | 5 | 3 | 6 | 14 |
| Total | 25 | 26 | 28 | |

The frequency totals forms a rough bell curve where most people interact with the AIC once a month no matter the type of communication. The type of communication ascends in a linear fashion from “in person” to “printed materials” to “online” but with only slightly different totals. These patterns may have been different if the complete data had been available for analysis.

Question 5:

The most common description of AIC staff was “friendly,” as 10 out of 26 respondents used this word and nine used the word “knowledgeable.” Five people used “support” or “supportive” and four people used the word “caring.” “Committed,” “passionate,” and “family” each came up three times while “dedicated,” “awesome,” and “advocate” twice. The only negative words were “busy” and “overworked,” which each came up once. A word cloud, which generates an image of text with font size based on word frequency, was created via www.wordle.com. The responses to this question generated this image:



Question 6:

Thirty-seven out of 44 or 84% always felt comfortable asking the AIC staff for information they cannot find or do not understand. Six people said they usually felt comfortable and one said “sometimes” but no one responded “rarely” or “never.”

Question 7:

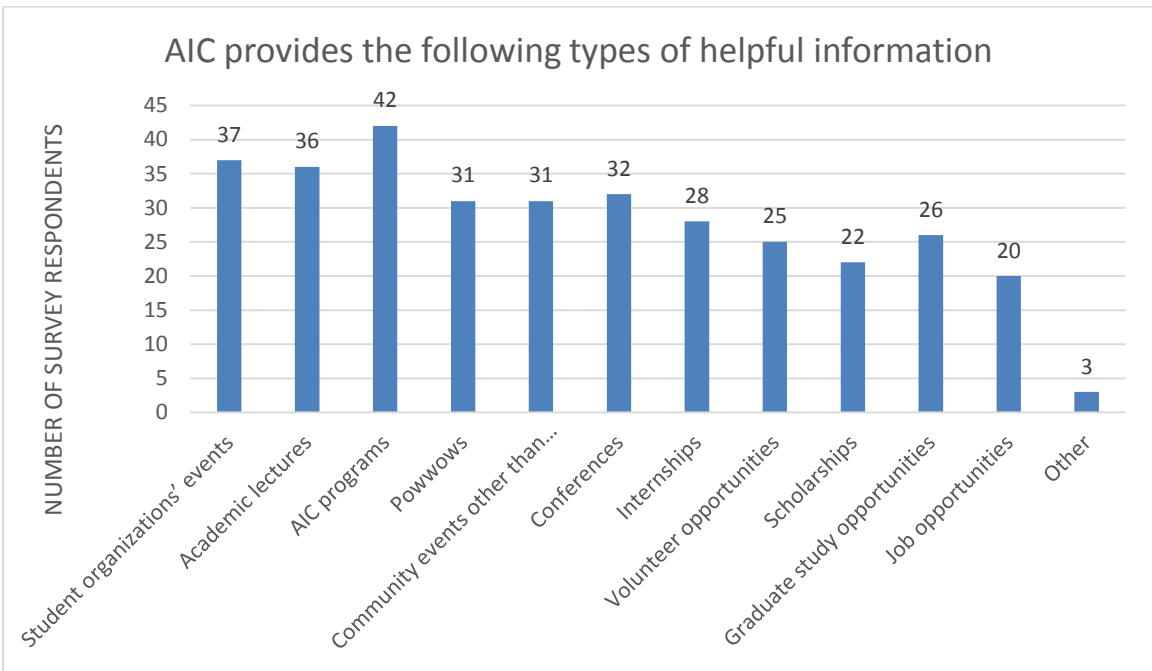
Thirty-four out of 43 or 79% said the AIC is always responsive when needed. Eight said “usually” and one said “rarely;” no one chose “sometimes” or “never.”

Question 8:

One hundred percent of the respondents knew other people who use the AIC.

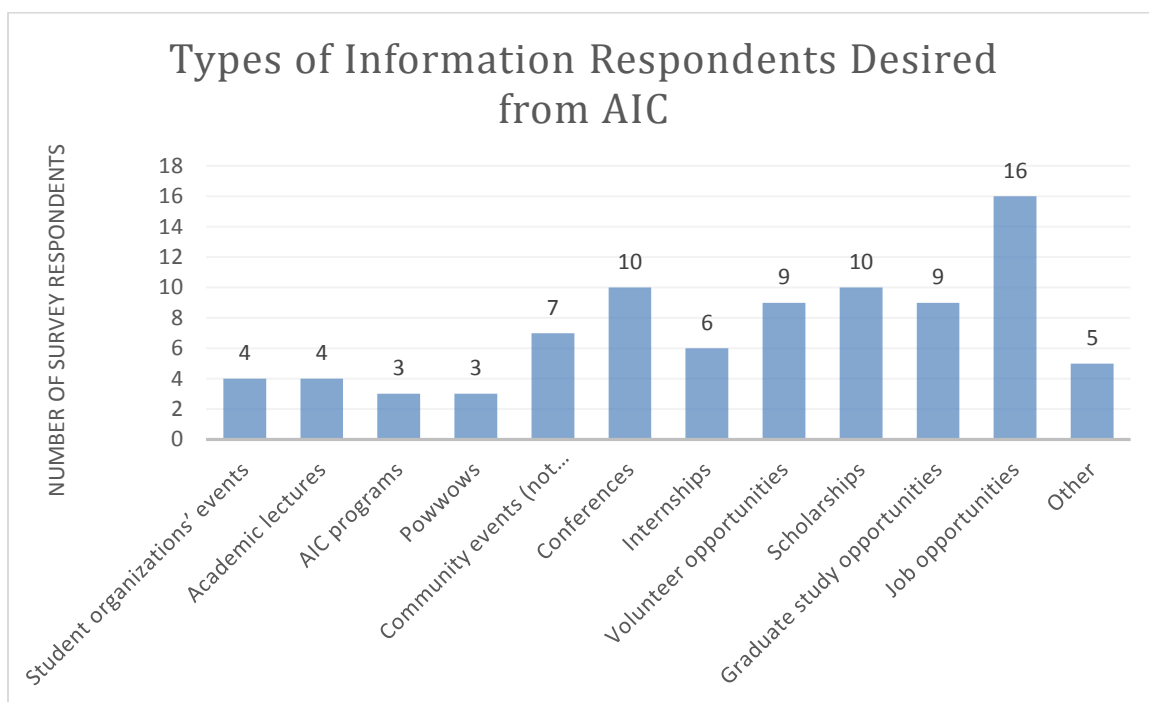
Question 9:

Between 20-42 respondents affirmed that the AIC provides each one of the information types listed, including academic lectures, AIC programs, powwows, community events other than powwows, conferences, internships, volunteer opportunities, scholarships, graduate study opportunities, and job opportunities. People added types of information in the “other” category: social outings, leadership development, economic initiatives, and support for social and academic integration. The following graph shows the full results.



Question 10:

Respondents reported that they would like the AIC to share more information related to job opportunities (16 out 29 or 55%), scholarships (10 out of 29 or 34%), and conferences (also 10 out of 29) followed by volunteer (9 out of 29 or 31%) and graduate study opportunities (also 9 out 29). Types of information in the “other” category included cross tribal collaboration and a liaison for community needs. The full results can be seen in the following graph.

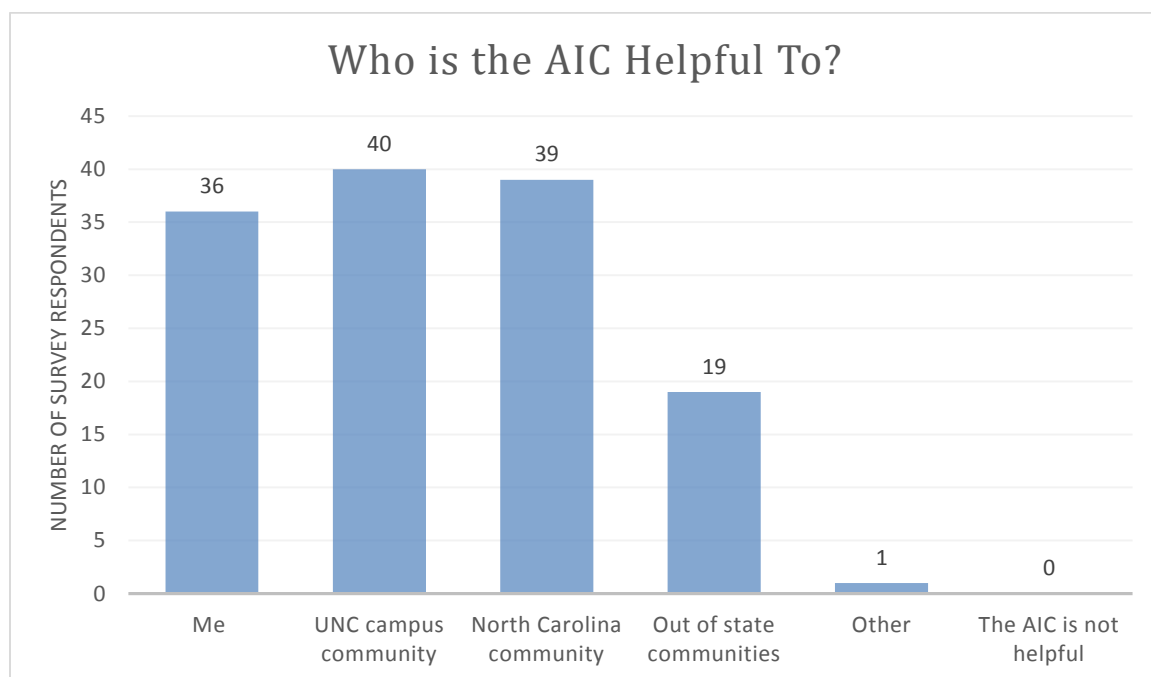


Question 11

Seventeen out of 42 or 40% of respondents also get information about tribal events and American Indian and Indigenous Studies (AIIS) from the UNC AIIS faculty or webpage. Student organizations are an information source for seven (17%) of respondents and five people (12%) listed the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs. Four respondents mentioned tribal government and four wrote in the “other” category: Facebook, NAISA (Native American and Indigenous Studies Association), NAP (perhaps the Native Americans in Philanthropy), and the North Carolina Museum of History. Three people use the UNC Office of Diversity & Multicultural Affairs. One person used the UNC Student Union and one person wrote the name of an individual faculty member as a source of information. No one selected another UNC office or the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Question 12

Respondents checked all of the communities that they thought the AIC helped. Of the 42 who answered this question, 40 (95%) and 39 (93%) said the AIC was helpful to the UNC campus community and the North Carolina community, respectively. Thirty-six individuals or 86% said the AIC was helpful to them personally and 19 people or 45% said it was helpful for out of state communities. One person wrote in “anybody and everybody.” No one answered that the AIC was not helpful.



Question 13

Three people said that information from the AIC is different from other campus institutions because it is “personal.” Users repeatedly stated that the information was tailored to the American Indian community and students, rather than the general student population or even minority students. The discussion section looks more in depth at the plurality of answers.

Question 14

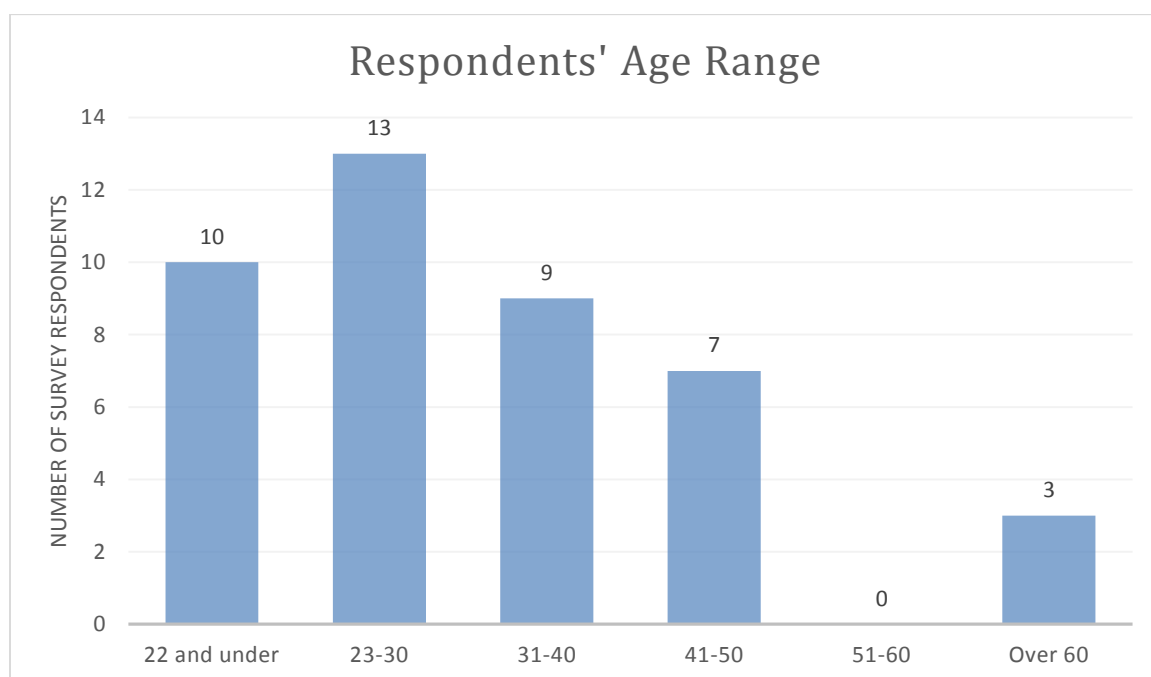
The information from the AIC is different from other American Indian institutions because it is “personal” according to three respondents (two of whom used this word for question 13). Responses reiterated the AIC’s focus on academic and student support. There were different opinions as to whether the AIC was North Carolina-focused or if it also served out-of-state communities and is further explored in the discussion section.

Question 15

Women made up the majority of the respondents (32 out of a total of 43 including one person who preferred not to say).

Question 16

Respondents’ age ranges:

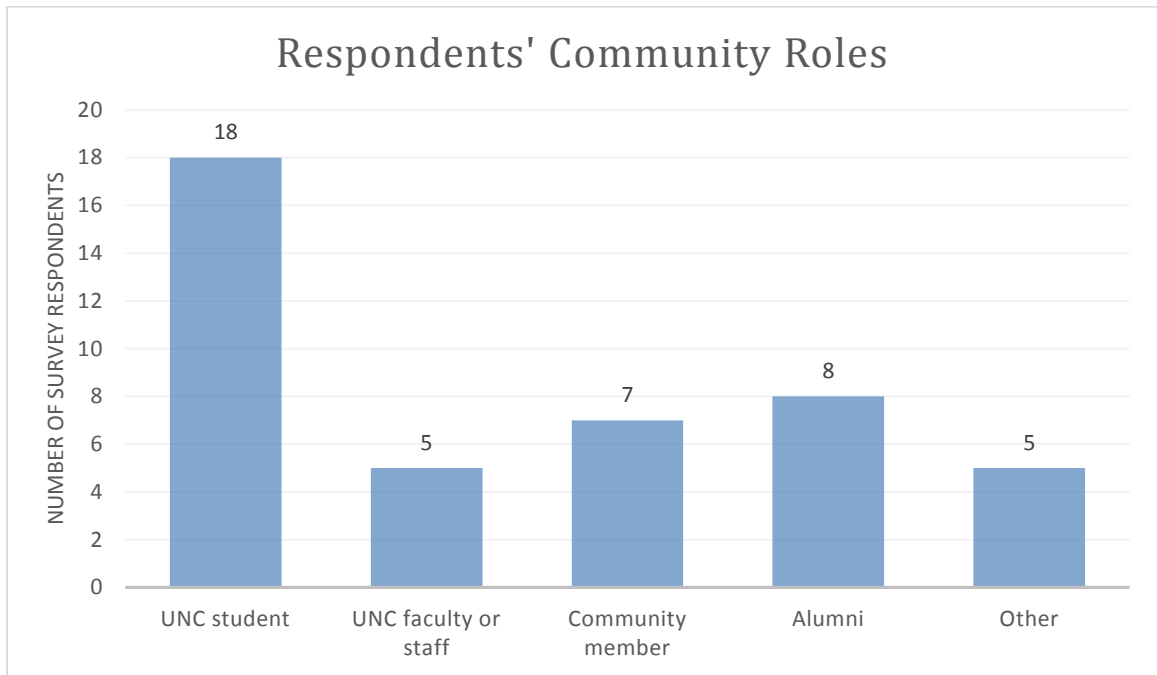


More revealing are the cross-tabulations of age and gender; women outnumbered men in every age group except over 60 years of age. Over half the respondents were under 30 years old.

| <i>Cross-Tabulation of Survey Respondents' Age and Gender</i> | | My gender | | | | Total |
|---|---------------------|------------------|---------------|--------------|------------------------------|--------------|
| | | Male | Female | Other | Prefer not to say | |
| My age | 22 and under | 1 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| | 23-30 | 2 | 10 | 0 | 1 | 13 |
| | 31-40 | 3 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| | 41-50 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| | 51-60 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Over 60 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| | Total | 10 | 31 | 0 | 1 | 42 |

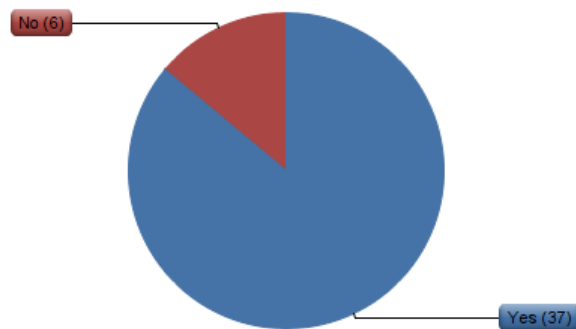
Question 17

The respondents were asked to categorize themselves into various community roles such as UNC student, UNC faculty or staff, community member, or other. Eight of the 13 “others” were alumni so the graph below separates them into their own category, although it was not a survey option. Additional responses to “other” were “Advisory Board Member” (probably a member of one of two AIC advisory boards) another “NC Native Leadership” (a training program offered by the AIC), “UNC student and staff,” and “UNCG student” (presumably from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro).



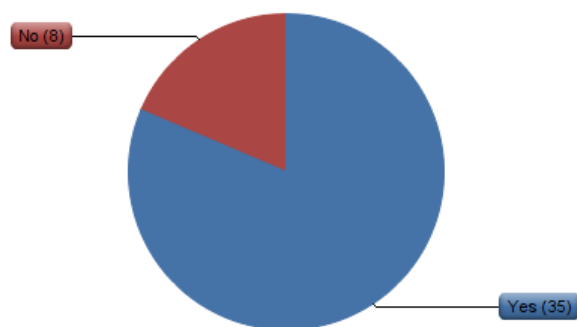
Question 18

Eighty-six percent of the respondents affirmed that they identify in whole or in part as American Indian or Alaska Native.



Question 19

Eighty-one percent of the respondents affirmed that their studies or work concerns issues related to American Indian communities:



Cross-tabulation of questions 18 and 19 found that most American Indian respondents' work or study issues related to their communities. Of the non-American Indians, only one studies or works in an area related to American Indian communities.

| <i>Cross-tabulation of Respondents' Identity and Work/Study Focus</i> | | I identify, in whole or in part, as American Indian or Alaska Native. | | |
|---|--------------|--|-----------|--------------|
| | | Yes | No | Total |
| My studies or work concerns issues related to American Indian communities. | Yes | 30 | 5 | 35 |
| | No | 7 | 1 | 8 |
| | Total | 37 | 6 | 43 |

A cross-tabulation with of all of the demographic data, (questions 15-19 as shown in appendix four) and highlighted two data in particular. Of the 10 respondents aged 22 and younger, nine identified in whole or in part as American Indian though all were studying or working in areas that related to the American Indian community. Eighteen people categorized themselves as UNC students and while half were under 22 years of age, the other half were distributed across every other age group (except ages 51-60, of which there were none in this survey).

Question 20

Thirty out of 42 respondents indicated their interest in participating in a focus group if it was less than an hour long and was scheduled at a convenient time and place. This component is not part of this master's paper but it will be addressed later this year.

Discussion

Survey respondents were overwhelmingly positive in their feedback about the AIC staff and services. For the purposes of this analysis, responses were grouped into four categories: user information interactions, AIC as professional resource, AIC as emotional support, and AIC as Native space. In reality, these threads are intertwined throughout the survey responses, especially the last three.

1.6 User Information Interactions

User information interactions range from information types and format preferences to what additional information types they would like to see, where they got their information other than the AIC, and who they believed the AIC serves.

Users' overwhelming preference was for AIC information to be shared in a digital format. Almost three-fourths of the respondents preferred email communication. Clifford (1999) and Lee (1999) found orality to be an important cultural component but when it comes to information about events or other opportunities through the AIC, users preferred written communication.

Respondents recognized that the AIC distributes all of types of information mentioned by the survey and then some. Each of the types of information presented as a survey option was chosen by at least 20, or almost half, of the respondents. This indicated

that all of the information types were communicated although perhaps at different frequencies. Other types of information that respondents found at the AIC that were not listed as survey options included: leadership development, economic initiatives, and support for social and academic integration. Survey responses attested to a plethora of information types that the AIC provided its users.

When asked what the AIC could do better, information related to job opportunities, scholarships, and conferences ranked highest followed by volunteer and graduate study opportunities. This indicated a level of interest in career-related information whether extracurricular or post-graduation. Some types of information in the “other” category included cross-tribal collaboration and a liaison for community needs. While the breadth or depth of interest could not be measured, these two information types highlighted a desire to expand the AIC network or strengthen its ties to the community beyond campus.

There might exist some overlapping information between what the AIC provides and what other institutions provide. Respondents also get information from the UNC Office of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs, the UNC AIIS faculty or webpage, and student organizations, which are likely to communicate university-focused information. Five people (12%) listed the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs, which represents American Indian issues in the executive branch of North Carolina state government with representatives from the American Indian community, the General Assembly, and five agencies. A few respondents mentioned a tribal government, which might have more local news, the North Carolina Museum of History, which serves the state, and organizations like NAP (Native Americans in Philanthropy) and NAISA

(Native Americans and Indigenous Studies Association) that have a national focus. No respondent chose the Bureau of Indian Affairs but with only one federally recognized nation in North Carolina, it is less relevant for the other seven state recognized tribes.

The only inconsistency was not about the information from the AIC but information about the Center itself, particularly its scope of service. There was some disagreement about the AIC's target audience as evidenced by responses to questions 13 and 14.

"Native specific"

"Specifically provide information as it pertains to UNC"

"AIC is much more suited for AI [American Indian] student needs than others"

"It's aimed at students, not just Native Americans"

"Relevant specifically to American Indians in academia"

"Immediately relevant to American Indian student & faculty needs and concerns"

"Geared toward connecting with the Carolina community at large, not just American Indian peoples"

"The AIC exists to bridge the University to tribal communities"

"Info from the AIC is very NC specific"

"It is not tribally specific nor is it solely focused on North Carolina Native American people only, given that there are other tribes represented among the residents of North Carolina and students at the UNC system schools"

Scope of service was measured in question 12 as respondents had to decide who the AIC served and check all of the applicable communities. Of the 42 who answered this question, 40 (95%) and 39 (93%) said the AIC was helpful to the UNC campus

community and the North Carolina community, respectively. Nineteen individuals or 45% said it was helpful for out of state communities. One person wrote in “anybody and everybody.” There was greater consensus about serving the campus and North Carolina communities but almost half believed the AIC served communities out of state, too.

The UNC American Indian Center distinguishes itself by operating in a particular intersection (as evidenced by the name) but respondents did not always agree who the AIC served. The multi-faceted and sometimes conflicting responses to questions 12, 13 and 14 represented the plurality of user experiences, which echoed the three primary goals of the Center. The website lists these as

- Leadership in American Indian Scholarship and Research.
- Engagement with and Service to Native Populations ... [serving] the First People of North Carolina as well as the First people of the south and the east.
- Enrichment of Campus Diversity and Dialogue.

(American Indian Center “Mission and Goals,” n.d.)

These distinct goals are flexible and inclusive, adapting to individuals as they take on different roles in life such as students, alumni, staff, and community members. Such broad goals and target audiences can be a source of viability for the Center over time.

1.7 AIC as Professional Resource

Some of the praise of the AIC revolved around its valuable resources for users, including the professional staff, the space for information exchange, creating ties, and building networks.

Patton (2006) found that staff were “extremely influential” in affecting how students perceived a university Black culture center (BCC) and the same was found with regard to the AIC. The staff were repeatedly described as “knowledgeable,” “committed,” “passionate,” “dedicated,” and “advocate.” These words demonstrate respect for the time and talent the AIC staff share with users. Questions six and seven found that 37 out of 44 (84%) always feel comfortable asking AIC staff for information they cannot find or about information they do not understand and 34 of 43 (79%) say the AIC is always responsive when needed. No one chose “never” for either question. The only negative words used to describe the AIC staff were “busy” and “overworked.” This sentiment was reinforced by another respondent when comparing the AIC to other campus institutions who wrote that staff “don't always get recognition or resources [that] they need like some other departments.” Despite the resource limitations, respondents demonstrated that they felt comfortable seeking information at the AIC and staff were responsive, which creates a virtuous cycle where behavior one reinforces the other.

Another valuable aspect of the AIC was its space for information sharing. One respondent said the AIC was a “physical space for gathering with other American Indian students and working on issues and events that are important for the native community and the campus community at large. Also the place where I can access Randi or Amy and get help or resources for projects.” Another respondent concurred: “it provides a place and space for Indian students and Indian topics/issues to be centered and discussed.” All respondents knew other people who use the AIC, which speaks to Granovetter’s network ties and suggests strong local cohesion (Borgatti and Halgin 2011). Beyond the

information that the AIC pushes out to its users, it is also a place where information is exchanged and social ties are created.

A natural outcome of a meeting place where bonds are formed, the AIC is a hub for building networks. A survey respondent said “the AIC provides a space and a network for connecting Indigenous students and allies. It really seems to serve as the hub, along with [AIIS] (and they seem to overlap) that connects people from various departments who form the AIS/AIC community.” Looking outside of campus, someone else wrote that “the AIC is increasingly focused and is the only place that [really has] the capability to build meaningful connections and partnerships with [I]ndian communities in North Carolina.” According to these respondents, the AIC fits Ikegami’s (2000) definition of a “public” as a space where “the switching-connecting and decoupling of networks takes place” (p. 997). The AIC’s work also echoed the recommendation from the *Pathways to Excellence Report* that Indian tribes participate more in information networks.

Borgatti and Halgin (2011) write that networks serve to coordinate action, “enabling groups of nodes to act as a single node, often with greater capabilities” (p. 1174). Three respondents gave evidence of action coordinated through the AIC network. The first wrote “I do not attend UNC, but the AIC has helped me better understand how to lead my Native people through the Native Leadership Institute.” The second wrote “I also appreciate the role that the AIC staff plays as advocate for UNC's American Indian student community, a largely underrepresented group,” and the third described the Center as “a leader in thought leadership and change among Native American communities across [North Carolina].” While the state’s Native communities may be small and

distributed, the AIC network leverages information exchange to build ties and converts these into action focused on advocacy and leadership.

1.8 AIC as Emotional Support

Authors HeavyRunner and Marshall (2003) and Patton (2006) describe the importance of support networks for minority students in college at predominantly White institutions. Patton (2010) writes that students of color are less likely to use mainstream university services and student organizations to deal with feelings and concerns, instead turning to cultural centers for support and comfort. The survey responses confirm these earlier findings, as AIC users discussed emotional support more than information interactions or professional resources.

The AIC staff are the backbone of the emotional support cited by respondents. A few respondents used the word “personal” to describe how their information interactions with AIC staff were different from other campus institutions. The AIC staff were frequently described in glowing terms like “friendly,” “supportive,” “caring,” “awesome,” even “family” and “home,” which indicated an emotional connection. These descriptions primarily came from students and alumni, people who lived the experience of being part of a very small minority on UNC’s campus.

Patton’s (2006) research with Black college students found that they experienced “a climate of covert racism, separatism, and apathy” in the general campus community (p. 634). There were traces of these sentiments in comments like “[the AIC] is a place where I can interact with people who encounter similar social, academic, and professional struggles related to being American Indian” or where “I can truly be me and ... not always on guard” or “I was able to talk about everything I was going [through] and all

that centered my life when I wasn't able to talk about any of that in my classes.” These expressions illustrated just how necessary the AIC was for providing emotional support.

Patton (2006) found that the BCC was where many Black students felt at home in an inclusive environment (p. 637). This study’s survey responses echoed her findings in the frequent use of the word “home” to describe a welcoming AIC. For example

“A 'safe haven' for AI students at UNC.”

“It is my home away from home and the place where I feel most comfortable and accepted on the UNC campus. It is consistently a comfortable, safe and welcoming environment.”

“The AIC is a home away from home--a place where I can be myself.”

“It serves as a home away from home. I know that stopping by there I will see some of my closest friends. I enjoy the comfortable atmosphere that the American Indian Center offers.”

“A tremendous asset to [N]ative students who are navigating the boundaries and interactions among diverse cultures.”

“I feel blessed to work here.”

“People and programs at the center got me and my background and embraced me. The center for me was a home and support system that I had to have to finish graduate school.”

Borgatti and Halgin’s (2001) “state-type network” has ties that can be measured by strength, intensity, and duration (p. 1170). User responses show strong and intense ties to the AIC. Duration was not directly addressed by the survey but eight alumni took the survey, suggesting that individual ties to the AIC can endure after graduation.

1.9 AIC as a Native Space

The defining quality of the AIC is its service to American Indians, whether they are on campus, in North Carolina, or elsewhere. Users conveyed the importance of a Native space with Native values that served Native interests.

In Patton's (2010) foreward, Ladson-Billings describes her graduate school BCC as "a place of service" (xi). The AIC is different from other campus institutions according to survey respondents because it serves them. One person wrote that "other campus institutions often overlook the American Indian population because we are such a small portion of the overall demographic." Another user expressed an appreciation for having information tailored to one group as "the AIC provides culturally specific information, whereas spaces like the Union or [Office of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs] provide information about an array of different cultures and communities." These users appreciated the AIC's niche in serving them.

Patton (2006) discussed the importance of one staff member who told the story of how the BCC was founded by alumni who were active in the Civil Rights Movement (p. 641). Students related to this staff member who shared their background and this might be an important way for users to connect with the AIC staff, too. One respondent wrote: "The people providing the information and resources of the American Indian Center are Native people who are relatable individuals." For this respondent, ethnic background and personality were both important staff characteristics.

Lee's (1995) thesis describes the indigenous value of reciprocity (p. 1), which came up in one survey response describing the AIC. The respondent enthusiastically said that "the AIC is one-of-a-kind in providing support that is available for everyone,

regardless of tribal affiliation, institution affiliation, or educational status. I think it is a best-practice because it is truly embodying our tribal beliefs of reciprocity!” Lee (1995) also states that “indigenous people are interested in self-determination; we want to tell our own stories using our own voices” (p. 5). When asked how information from the AIC is different from other Native institutions, one respondent gave a list of adjectives including “bravery” and “self-determination” and another described the Center as “a recognized, official voice for Native Americans by Native Americans at UNC-CH.” Positive survey feedback was due in part to the perception that the AIC staff honor Native values. In Corsane’s (2012) words, intangible cultural heritage includes “true values,” which the AIC responsibly curates (p. 211).

Drywater-Whitekiller’s (2010) interviews with Native college students found various “coping mechanisms of cultural resilience” (p. 6). Paralleling this sentiment, one respondent praised the AIC’s “advocacy, development, and support for initiatives to further create opportunities to encourage our resiliency as Native people.” The work of strengthening Native individuals and communities sums up the Center’s role as a professional resource and an emotional support system operating within a Native framework, which was reflected in the user information interactions.

Limitations

A case study is necessarily defined and limited by a narrow scope. This study surveyed just one university culture center thereby reducing its generalizability, which is a threat to reliability. Most respondents were women and students but as the numbers and characteristics of the full user population are unknown, it is unclear whether the survey

respondents constitute a representative sample. The sample may reflect self-selecting respondents who have an especially high opinion of the AIC. Another threat to validity comes in the form of potential bias on the part of the researcher who is an undergraduate alumna and current graduate student of UNC and former intern of the AIC. The researcher minimized bias by selecting a data collection method that did not require her to be present, which might have unduly influenced the results. She also secured reviewers for the questionnaire, both at the question formulation and online beta testing stages.

Summary

The AIC, though it has been open only seven years, is an active culture center that serves the UNC community, Native peoples, and American Indian scholars. By surveying diverse users, this study aimed to better understand the information needs of AIC users. AIC users desired some additional types of information but the overall response affirmed that the American Indian Center has established itself as a useful and relevant information node for its users. Survey respondents praised the Center's successful work in upholding Native values while acting as a professional resource and an emotional support system. This study will be of practical use to the AIC staff in sustaining and improving information delivery as well providing evidence as to the value that the AIC adds to UNC. Additionally, this study contributes to the sparse literature regarding university culture centers.

Appendix 1: Literature Review Search Process

All literature review searches began with the UNC Library Systems main catalog, which searches across campus analog and digital collections accessible via various databases. The first search terms were “campus cultural center” and “college cultural center,” where the latter proved more fruitful. Having found Patton (2010), the bibliography was used to find earlier work by the same author, Patton (2009).

Other search terms were “Native American cultural centers,” substituting the first two words for “American Indian,” “Indian,” and “indigenous” by turn. This led to cultural studies, ethnic studies, and heritage studies articles. A Google search for "Information Needs and Services of Native Americans" garnered the Lee and Hebert theses and a bibliography that listed the *United States National Commission on Libraries Pathways to Excellence Report*. References from previous research by the author on federal recognition of southeastern tribes were used in this literature review.

The syllabus from the “Leadership in Public Administration” class at the School of Government led to the Morse (2010) and Schneider (2009) articles.

A conversation with a classmate prompted a search for network theories as they relate to the information function of the AIC. A search for “network theory” turned up Borgatti and Halgin’s “On Network Theory;” a search for “network theory AND culture” led to Ikegami’s “A Sociological Theory of Publics: Identity and Culture as Emergent Properties in Networks” and DiMaggio’s “Culture and Cognition.”

Appendix 2: Project Timeline

| <i>Month</i> | <i>Task</i> |
|---------------|---|
| December 2013 | <p>Send proposed study to AIC Director for final revision of questionnaire</p> <p>Submit proposed study for IRB approval—successfully approved as exempt</p> |
| January 2014 | First meeting with adviser |
| February 2014 | <p>Open online questionnaire February 1</p> <p>Attend Carolina Indian Circle and First Nations Graduate Circle meetings (dates to be determined)</p> <p>Attend UNC American Indian Alumni meeting on February 8</p> <p>Attend NC Native Asset Coalition Community Forest Stewardship Workshop on February 11</p> <p>Send email reminder about questionnaire February 14</p> <p>Close questionnaire February 21</p> <p>Begin analysis of questionnaire</p> |
| March 2014 | Submit first draft of master's paper March 7 |
| April 2014 | <p>Refine codes and analysis</p> <p>Write another draft of master's paper</p> <p>Submit master's paper and work log to SILS office April 7</p> |

Appendix 3: Raw Questionnaire Data

1. Participant's Agreement: I have read the information provided above. I have asked all the questions I have at this time. I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

| # | Answer | Response | % |
|---|--------|----------|------|
| 1 | Yes | 55 | 100% |
| 2 | No | 0 | 0% |
| | Total | 55 | 100% |

| Statistic | Value |
|--------------------|-------|
| Min Value | 1 |
| Max Value | 1 |
| Mean | 1.00 |
| Variance | 0.00 |
| Standard Deviation | 0.00 |
| Total Responses | 55 |

2. I like to get information about what is going on at the UNC American Indian Center (AIC) by

| # | Answer | Response | % |
|---|---------------|----------|------|
| 1 | Word of mouth | 5 | 11% |
| 2 | Print | 0 | 0% |
| 3 | Email | 34 | 74% |
| 4 | AIC website | 5 | 11% |
| 5 | Other | 2 | 4% |
| | Total | 46 | 100% |

| Other |
|--------------|
| Facebook |
| Social media |

| Statistic | Value |
|--------------------|-------|
| Min Value | 1 |
| Max Value | 5 |
| Mean | 2.98 |
| Variance | 0.73 |
| Standard Deviation | 0.86 |
| Total Responses | 46 |

3. What the AIC means to me:

Text Response

The AIC is a staple for me on the UNC campus. It is my home away from home and the place where I feel most comfortable and accepted on the UNC campus. It is consistently a comfortable, safe and welcoming environment.

Staying connected to things on campus, and seeing them contribute to the greater NC Native community

The AIC is a second home to me. It is a place that I can on campus where I feel understood, and accepted wholly. Being from a predominately Native American community, it is important for me to be able to be in a place that can offer a similar experience.

The AIC is a home away from home--a place where I can be myself. It is a place where I can interact with people who encounter similar social, academic, and professional struggles related to being American Indian. I also appreciate the role that the AIC staff plays as advocate for UNC's American Indian student community, a largely underrepresented group.

It serves as a home away from home. I know that stopping by there I will see some of my closest friends. I enjoy the comfortable atmosphere that the American Indian Center offers. I can truly be me and be accepted and not always on guard.

A vital link between American Indian communities and higher education

A campus-wide resource for all students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends of Carolina to assist in building relationships with the NC American Indian community.

A good place to host events & support for the development of community among American Indian students & faculty

A support system, a Home away from home, and a place I feel like I belong.

AIC is a organization that serves NC American Indian people in terms of leadership, community and provides diversity to the UNC-CH campus.

I am currently participating in the first "NC Native Leadership Institute." I did not know much about what AIC did but am learning through the Institute.

A 'safe haven' for AI students at UNC - a home away from home; a leader in thought leadership and change among Native American communities across NC; a facilitator of conversations between the American Indian community at UNC and faculty.

A tremendous asset to native students who are navigating the boundaries and interactions among diverse cultures.

A home, a family, a place to seek refuge and be with friends and people I care about

I do not attend UNC, but the AIC has helped me better understand how to lead my Native people through the Native Leadership Institute. I would have not been given this opportunity if not for the AIC. Also, the staff are so kind and helpful!

My structure, my support

It's a great place to socialize with other students of Native American ancestry and current tribal membership.

a recognized, official voice for Native Americans by Native Americans at UNC-CH

The AIC is a place I can be with like minded people and Native Students

| |
|---|
| Advocacy, service, support for all AI students at UNC and North Carolina Tribes and Associations. |
| Physical space for gathering with other american indian students and working on issues and events that are important for the native community and the campus community at large. Also the place where I can access Randi or Amy and get help or resources for projects. |
| A place to go to get away from negetivity and be surrounded by people who care about me. |
| A center on campus that provides a community where students (Indigenous students, allies, and those whose research includes American Indian communities) can connect and get to know each other. It also provides a link between campus and Carolina Native communities. |
| The AIC is a place of learning and engagement between on- and off-campus constituencies about the study of issues that concern American Indians. |
| It was an important place and home for me as a graduate student. I was able to talk about everything I was going to and all that centered my life when I wasn't able to talk about any of that in my classes. People and programs at the center got me and my background and embraced me. The center for me was a home and support system that I had to have to finish graduate school. |
| The AIC is my home away from home. A place where I can go and hang out and be myself. |
| The AIC is more than an internship to me. It has become one of the best parts of my day and I look forward each day to working with the staff there as well as interacting with students. The AIC sometimes feels more like a home away from home than anything else. I feel blessed to work here. |
| Serve as a resource for identifying, working with and making NC Natives aware of important issues |
| A place for the Native American students/faculty/staff at UNC-CH, UNC system and the Native American people of North Carolina to have advocacy, development, and support for initiatives to further create opportunities to encourage our resiliency as Native people. |
| a sense of community, a great resource |
| Keeping our culture alive. |
| Engaging and empowering Native students at UNC and tribal communities in NC |
| AIC means connection to my UNC Native Community! |
| Sense of community; home away from home place that brings awareness to greater campus |
| A place for American Indian students to gather and find a home away from home. A place that "connects the dots" between natives and non-natives, students and professors, students and their home communities. A place that facilitates learning about and contributing to UNC's diverse student body. |

| Statistic | Value |
|-----------------|-------|
| Total Responses | 35 |

4. My interactions with AIC happen about this often for each type of communication:

The revised table is included in the findings section of this paper.

| # | Question | Once a year | Once a semester/twice a year | Once a month | Once a week | More than once a week | Total Responses | Mean |
|---|-------------------|-------------|------------------------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------------|-----------------|------|
| 1 | In person | 5 | 10 | 11 | 3 | 5 | 34 | 2.79 |
| 2 | Printed materials | 13 | 11 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 37 | 2.27 |
| 3 | Online | 4 | 6 | 19 | 6 | 6 | 41 | 3.10 |

| Statistic | In person | Printed materials | Online |
|--------------------|-----------|-------------------|--------|
| Min Value | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Max Value | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Mean | 2.79 | 2.27 | 3.10 |
| Variance | 1.56 | 1.65 | 1.29 |
| Standard Deviation | 1.25 | 1.28 | 1.14 |
| Total Responses | 34 | 37 | 41 |

5. Use three words to describe the AIC staff.

| Text Response |
|---|
| Family, Welcoming, Fantastic |
| friendly, knowledgeable, committed |
| Caring, Helpful, Passionate |
| Supportive, cheerful, qualified |
| Friendly, Supportive, Helpful |
| partner advocates community |
| Friendly, busy, responsible |
| Friendly, Reliable, Family |
| Respectful, Understanding, Empowering |
| Efficient, Caring, Professional |
| Leaders, Knowledgeable, Fabulous |
| Loving, awesome, dedicated |
| Helpful Passionate Accepting |
| loyal friendly dedicated |
| Friendly, courteous, respectful. |
| WONDERFUL, supportive, overworked |
| Home, Productive, Help |
| friendly, collaborative, narrowly-focused |
| Caring, Indian-centered, family |
| Passionate, Awesome, Driven |
| friendly, resourceful and honorable |
| community, resourceful, friendly |

| |
|------------------------------------|
| student- and community-advocates |
| Supportive, committed, informative |
| friendly, support, knowledgeable |
| caring, professional, committed |

| Statistic | Value |
|-----------------|-------|
| Total Responses | 26 |

6. I feel comfortable asking AIC staff for information I can't find or don't understand.

| # | Answer | Response | % |
|---|-----------|----------|------|
| 1 | Always | 37 | 84% |
| 2 | Usually | 6 | 14% |
| 3 | Sometimes | 1 | 2% |
| 4 | Rarely | 0 | 0% |
| 5 | Never | 0 | 0% |
| | Total | 44 | 100% |

| Statistic | Value |
|--------------------|-------|
| Min Value | 1 |
| Max Value | 3 |
| Mean | 1.18 |
| Variance | 0.20 |
| Standard Deviation | 0.45 |
| Total Responses | 44 |

7. The AIC staff is responsive when I need them.

| # | Answer | Response | % |
|---|-----------|----------|------|
| 1 | Always | 34 | 79% |
| 2 | Usually | 8 | 19% |
| 3 | Sometimes | 0 | 0% |
| 4 | Rarely | 1 | 2% |
| 5 | Never | 0 | 0% |
| | Total | 43 | 100% |

| Statistic | Value |
|--------------------|-------|
| Min Value | 1 |
| Max Value | 4 |
| Mean | 1.26 |
| Variance | 0.34 |
| Standard Deviation | 0.58 |
| Total Responses | 43 |

8. I know other people who use the AIC.

| # | Answer | Response | % |
|---|--------|----------|------|
| 1 | Yes | 44 | 100% |

| | | | | |
|---|-------|--|----|------|
| 2 | No | | 0 | 0% |
| | Total | | 44 | 100% |

| Statistic | Value |
|--------------------|-------|
| Min Value | 1 |
| Max Value | 1 |
| Mean | 1.00 |
| Variance | 0.00 |
| Standard Deviation | 0.00 |
| Total Responses | 44 |

9. The AIC provides the following types of helpful information (check all that apply):

| # | Answer | Response | % |
|----|-------------------------------------|----------|-----|
| 1 | Student organizations' events | 37 | 86% |
| 2 | Academic lectures | 36 | 84% |
| 3 | AIC programs | 42 | 98% |
| 4 | Powwows | 31 | 72% |
| 5 | Community events other than powwows | 31 | 72% |
| 6 | Conferences | 32 | 74% |
| 7 | Internships | 28 | 65% |
| 8 | Volunteer opportunities | 25 | 58% |
| 9 | Scholarships | 22 | 51% |
| 10 | Graduate study opportunities | 26 | 60% |
| 11 | Job opportunities | 20 | 47% |
| 12 | Other | 3 | 7% |

Other

social outings

Space for student organization meetings, etc.

Leadership development, economic initiatives, and support for social and academic integration.

| Statistic | Value |
|-----------|-------|
| Min Value | 1 |
| Max Value | 12 |

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| Total Responses | 43 |
|-----------------|----|

10. The AIC could do a better job of providing the following types of information (check all that apply):








| # | Answer | Response | % |
|----|-------------------------------------|----------|-----|
| 1 | Student organizations' events | 4 | 14% |
| 2 | Academic lectures | 4 | 14% |
| 3 | AIC programs | 3 | 10% |
| 4 | Powwows | 3 | 10% |
| 5 | Community events other than powwows | 7 | 24% |
| 6 | Conferences | 10 | 34% |
| 7 | Internships | 6 | 21% |
| 8 | Volunteer opportunities | 9 | 31% |
| 9 | Scholarships | 10 | 34% |
| 10 | Graduate study opportunities | 9 | 31% |
| 11 | Job opportunities | 16 | 55% |
| 12 | Other | 5 | 17% |

| Other |
|--|
| American Indian Studies |
| N/A |
| Cross tribal collaborations |
| liason for community needs linked with various program offerings on campus |
| student and community features |

| Statistic | Value |
|-----------------|-------|
| Min Value | 1 |
| Max Value | 12 |
| Total Responses | 29 |

11. I also get information about tribal events, American Indian and Indigenous Studies, etc. from the following sources (check all that apply):



| # | Answer | Response | % |
|---|-------------------|----------|----|
| 1 | UNC Student Union | 1 | 2% |




| | | | | |
|----|---|---|----|------|
| 2 | UNC student organizations |  | 7 | 17% |
| 3 | UNC Office of Diversity & Multicultural Affairs |  | 3 | 7% |
| 4 | UNC American Indian Studies faculty or webpage |  | 17 | 40% |
| 5 | Another UNC office | | 0 | 0% |
| 6 | Tribal governments |  | 4 | 10% |
| 7 | NC Commission of Indian Affairs |  | 5 | 12% |
| 8 | Bureau of Indian Affairs | | 0 | 0% |
| 9 | Another organization |  | 4 | 10% |
| 10 | Another individual |  | 1 | 2% |
| | Total | | 42 | 100% |

| Another UNC office | Another organization | Another individual |
|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| | NAP | Danny Bell |
| | Facebook | |
| | NAISA | |
| | NC Museum of History | |

| Statistic | Value |
|--------------------|-------|
| Min Value | 1 |
| Max Value | 10 |
| Mean | 4.69 |
| Variance | 5.29 |
| Standard Deviation | 2.30 |
| Total Responses | 42 |

12. The AIC is helpful to (check all that apply)

| # | Answer | Response | % |
|---|----------------------|--|-----------|
| 1 | Me |  | 36 86% |
| 2 | UNC campus community |  | 40 95% |

| | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--|----|-----|
| 3 | North Carolina community |  | 39 | 93% |
| 4 | Out of state communities |  | 19 | 45% |
| 5 | Other |  | 1 | 2% |
| 6 | The AIC is not helpful | | 0 | 0% |

Other

Anybody and everybody

| Statistic | Value |
|-----------------|-------|
| Min Value | 1 |
| Max Value | 5 |
| Total Responses | 42 |

13. Ways that I think information from the AIC is different from at is available from other campus institutions (the Union, Office of Diversity & Multicultural Affairs, etc.)

Text Response

The information is specific to American Indian students but beneficial to all students interested. The only other source of specific information regarding American Indian students can be received from the Carolina Indian Circle, Alpha Pi Omega Sorority, Inc and rarely the American Indian Studies Department.

Provides a Native community for students, helps to connect tribes and tribal organizations to campus.

The AIC is more informed of things involving the American Indian community, making it a more reliable place for information.

Information the AIC provides focuses primarily on the American Indian communities, those located on and off campus. Other campus institutions often overlook the American Indian population because we are such a small portion of the overall demographic.

The people providing the information and resources of the American Indian Center are Native people who are relatable individuals.

Send information on ongoing campus events with American Indian cultural components

Immediately relevant to American Indian student & faculty needs and concerns.

They are relateable to the American Indian students and provide information directly to the students.

More invloved in the actual opinions of the AI students on campus.

Don't know.

n/a

no opinion here

They care about American Indian students and communities. They provide real support and are accessible without being judgmental or not letting us students be ourselves as whole people.

| |
|---|
| More personal |
| It is personal, I know that they actually want to send the information to ME, I'm not just a person on a listserv. |
| The information from the AIC is aimed at Native American students, not just minority students. |
| a true focus on AI issues. |
| Information is given in a more personal manner |
| More appropriate for AI students and AI communities in NC |
| there is really no where else on campus that is as focused on american indian students. the AIC fills the gap between academic events featuring native scholars or scholars of AI anthropology, archaeology, romance languages, history, art etc. and student affinity groups like the CIC or FNGC. Student groups receive tremendous support from the AIC. Also, the AIC is increasingly focused and is the only place that really had the capability to build meaningful connections and partnerships with indian communities in North Carolina |
| It is specific to tribes and not the just general to all native populations. It knows the struggles of native people and how to best serve them. |
| The AIC provides connections to the Native communities outside of campus. The AIC provides a space and a network for connecting Indigenous students and allies. It really seems to serve as the hub, along with AIS (and they seem to overlap) that connects people from various departments who form the AIS/AIC community. |
| it is more research focused and concerns Indian tribes and communities |
| It provides a place and space for Indian students and Indian topics/issues to be centered and discussed. |
| Specific to native communities |
| The AIC provides culturally specific information, whereas spaces like the Union or DMA provide information about an array of different cultures and communities. The AIC expresses and acts on very specific motivations, which include bridging the strengths of Carolina with the richness of NC's tribal communities and bettering the campus climate for Native students. |
| More close knit, communal and informal setting. |
| It is culturally relevant and presented in appropriate ways for our community. |
| It is easily available. |
| Native specific |
| Specific to Natives and student community needs |
| -More of community/family feel -safe place for students -Don't always get recognition or resources they need like some other departments |
| Addresses issues that deal specifically with the American Indian experience |

| Statistic | Value |
|-----------------|-------|
| Total Responses | 33 |

14. Ways that I think information from the AIC is different from what is available at other American Indian institutions (tribal governments, NC Commission of Indian Affairs, etc.)

Text Response

| |
|--|
| The information they provide is geared towards students. |
| Do alot of work with all tribes, connect UNC students, faculty, alumni. |
| The information available from the AIC is more geared towards American Indian happenings around American Indian communities in the state and things on campus. |
| The AICs focus is on what they can provide to UNC's American Indian students-- how they can support and advocate for students and provide a healthy academic environment in which students can excel. |
| The information is different than that of American Indian Institutions because it focuses on education and career opportunities. It also serves as a support system for American Indian issues as well as other issues. |
| Specifically provide information as it pertains to UNC. |
| Relevant specifically to American Indians in academia. |
| The American Indian Center is accessible to students in a way that the other institutions are not. |
| Information is more relevant and updated. |
| Don't know. |
| more thorough and more frequent |
| Accountability, bravery, self-determination, honesty, dedication and follow through, good hearts |
| More personal |
| I'm not just a person on a listserv |
| It's aimed at students, not just Native Americans. |
| much more affiliated with UNC system trends |
| Information is given in a more personal manner |
| AIC is much more suited for AI student needs than others. |
| more academic focused, and more geared toward connecting with the Carolina community at large, not just american indian peoples |
| The office has native staff and engage with each tribe personally. |
| It provides a nice overlap of academic and community interests. It feels like it is also specifically geared to providing students with support and community. It is the first place I turn to with questions or to connect with other students in the AIS/AIC community. The directors seem to be the most responsive to questions, always know what is going on, and always have good advice. |
| it is more UNC-focused |
| Specific to UNC |
| The AIC exists to bridge the University to tribal communities, whereas other organizations are less focused on higher education. |
| Concise and easily understood. Timely too |
| It is not tribally specific nor is it solely focused on North Carolina Native American people only, given that there are other tribes represented among the residents of north carolina and students at the UNC system schools. The AIC is one-of-a-kind in providing support that is available for everyone, regardless of tribal affiliation, institution affiliation, or educational status. I think it is a best-practice because it is truly embodying our tribal beliefs of reciprocity! |
| student and research opportunities |

| Student-focused, community-focused, action-oriented | |
|---|-------|
| Info from the AIC is very NC specific | |
| Focuses on issues of the student population | |
| Statistic | Value |
| Total Responses | 30 |

15. My gender

| # | Answer | Response | % |
|---|-------------------|----------|------|
| 1 | Male | 10 | 23% |
| 2 | Female | 32 | 74% |
| 3 | Other | 0 | 0% |
| 4 | Prefer not to say | 1 | 2% |
| | Total | 43 | 100% |





| Statistic | Value |
|--------------------|-------|
| Min Value | 1 |
| Max Value | 4 |
| Mean | 1.81 |
| Variance | 0.30 |
| Standard Deviation | 0.55 |
| Total Responses | 43 |

16. My age

| # | Answer | Response | % |
|---|--------------|----------|------|
| 1 | 22 and under | 10 | 24% |
| 2 | 23-30 | 13 | 31% |
| 3 | 31-40 | 9 | 21% |
| 4 | 41-50 | 7 | 17% |
| 5 | 51-60 | 0 | 0% |
| 6 | Over 60 | 3 | 7% |
| | Total | 42 | 100% |

| Statistic | Value |
|--------------------|-------|
| Min Value | 1 |
| Max Value | 6 |
| Mean | 2.60 |
| Variance | 1.95 |
| Standard Deviation | 1.40 |
| Total Responses | 42 |

17. I am a



| # | Answer | | Response | % |
|---|----------------------|---|----------|------|
| 1 | UNC student |  | 18 | 42% |
| 2 | UNC faculty or staff |  | 5 | 12% |
| 3 | Community member |  | 7 | 16% |
| 4 | Other |  | 13 | 30% |
| | Total | | 43 | 100% |

Other

Alumna
 NC Native Leadership
 UNC Alumni
 Alumnae
 unc alumnus
 Advisory Board Member
 Graduate from UNC
 UNC student and staff
 UNCG Student
 UNC alumni
 UNC alumni
 UNC alumnae

| Statistic | Value |
|--------------------|-------|
| Min Value | 1 |
| Max Value | 4 |
| Mean | 2.35 |
| Variance | 1.71 |
| Standard Deviation | 1.31 |
| Total Responses | 43 |

18. I identify, in whole or in part, as American Indian or Alaska Native.

| # | Answer | | Response | % |
|---|--------|---|----------|------|
| 1 | Yes |  | 37 | 86% |
| 2 | No |  | 6 | 14% |
| | Total | | 43 | 100% |

| Statistic | Value |
|--------------------|-------|
| Min Value | 1 |
| Max Value | 2 |
| Mean | 1.14 |
| Variance | 0.12 |
| Standard Deviation | 0.35 |

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| Total Responses | 43 |
|-----------------|----|

19. My studies or work concerns issues related to American Indian communities.

| # | Answer | | Response | % |
|---|--------|--|----------|------|
| 1 | Yes | | 35 | 81% |
| 2 | No | | 8 | 19% |
| | Total | | 43 | 100% |

| Statistic | Value |
|--------------------|-------|
| Min Value | 1 |
| Max Value | 2 |
| Mean | 1.19 |
| Variance | 0.16 |
| Standard Deviation | 0.39 |
| Total Responses | 43 |

20. I am interested in participating in a focus group to talk about the role of the AIC if a) it lasts 1 hour or less and b) can accommodate my schedule.

| # | Answer | | Response | % |
|---|------------------------|--|----------|------|
| 1 | Yes (include email) | | 30 | 71% |
| 2 | No | | 12 | 29% |
| | Total | | 42 | 100% |

Appendix 4: Cross-Tabulations

| <i>Cross-tabulation of Respondents Answers to All Demographic Survey Questions</i> | | My gender | | | | | My age | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------|--------|-------|-------------------|--------|--------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------|--------|
| | | Male | Female | Other | Prefer not to say | Total | 22 and under | 23-30 | 31-40 | 41-50 | 51-60 | Over 60 | Total |
| I am a | UNC student | 3 | 14 | 0 | 1 | 18 | 9 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 17 |
| | UNC faculty or staff | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| | Community member | 4 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 7 |
| | Other (alumni) | 2 (1) | 11 (7) | 0 | 0 | 13 (8) | 0 | 4 (3) | 6 (4) | 1 (1) | 0 | 2 | 13 (8) |
| | Total | 10 | 32 | 0 | 1 | 43 | 10 | 13 | 9 | 7 | 0 | 3 | 42 |
| I identify, in whole | Yes | 8 | 28 | 0 | 1 | 37 | 9 | 13 | 7 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 36 |
| | No | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| | Total | 10 | 32 | 0 | 1 | 43 | 10 | 13 | 9 | 7 | 0 | 3 | 42 |
| My studies or work | Yes | 7 | 27 | 0 | 1 | 35 | 10 | 11 | 7 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 34 |
| | No | 3 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 8 |
| | Total | 10 | 32 | 0 | 1 | 43 | 10 | 13 | 9 | 7 | 0 | 3 | 42 |

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