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Educational Attainment of Myaamia Tribal College Students

One major issue of concern within higher education is student success. Historically, college graduation rates have not been optimal for Native American students. Although, Native American students graduate from tribal colleges at fairly high rates, this rate is not the same result at predominantly white colleges¹. Research suggests that academic success for under-represented college students is tied to many factors such as validating cultural identity, offering support and student adjustment². This notion led the Myaamia Center (MC) assessment team to consider, what factors impact educational attainment for Myaamia college students at Miami University? Some literature suggests that the degree, to which Native American students gain a sense of self-knowledge, connection, and cultural support, dictates the degree to which these students can meet collegiate demands and thrive³. The MC assessment team examined identity formation, social adjustment, tribal and institutional connections and graduation rates for Miami tribe students at Miami University (MU) between 1991 and 2020⁴. Graduation rates are presented in this report. All Myaamia students matriculating after 2003 were enrolled each semester in a required 1-credit hour culture revitalization class (“heritage class”). These courses focused on ecological perspectives, language and culture, and contemporary tribal issues. Students prior to 2003 did not take the course.

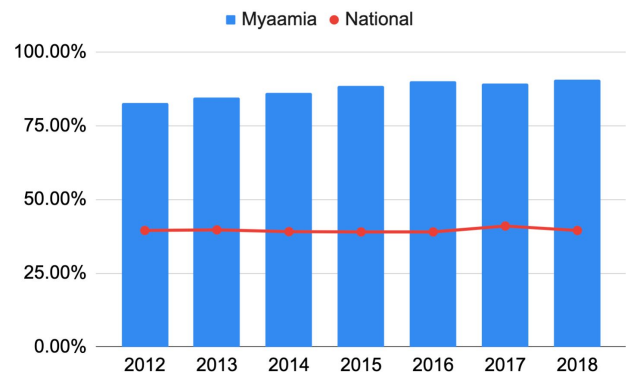
Educational Attainment Outcomes: Graduation Rates

The average 6-year graduation rate for sMyaamia students who graduated prior to 2003 (did not attend Heritage Award Program) was 56%. Presented here is a chart that compares the annual 6-year graduation rate of undergraduate Myaamia students graduating in the last 7 years with the national Native American graduation rates as reported by the National Center for Education Statistics. While this may be an imperfect comparison (inability to control the national sample and graduation calculation approach) it is the best measure at our disposal. The data show a higher academic attainment rate of Myaamia students after the culture revitalization courses began in 2003. Compared to cohorts prior to the Myaamia heritage courses, attainment rates today are exponentially larger.

A logistical regression controlling for ACT and heritage/non-heritage courses as the predictor was significant reliably distinguishing between those who graduated and those who didn’t ($\chi^2 = 11.30, p < .01, df = 2$). Nagelkerke’s R^2 of .194 indicates a moderate relationship between prediction and grouping. Prediction success overall was 80.5% (100% for those that graduated and 0% for those who did not). The Wald criterion demonstrated that only completion of the heritage course predicted whether or not students graduated ($p = .001$). ACT scores, however, did not predict whether or not students graduated⁵.

Overall, the data suggest the potential impact of cultural revitalization, cultural knowledge, tribal connection and support on the educational attainment for this sample.

Educational Attainment: Comparison of 6-year Graduation Rates of Native American College Students (4-Year colleges) with Myaamia Students



Note: Native American College Student graduation data comes from Table 326.10 Figure 23.1 Indicator 21 and 23 (U.S. Department of Education-NCES, 2017) https://nces.ed.gov/programs/raceindicators/indicator_red.asp Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups. 2016 and 2017. NCES. Indicator 21.

End Notes

- ¹ Larimore, J.A. & McClellan, G.S., 2005. Native American student retention in U.S. Postsecondary Education. In M.J. Tippeconnic-Fox, G.S. McClellan & S.C. Lowe (Eds.) *New Directions for Student Services: Serving Native American Students*. 109, 17-32. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- ² Pascarella, E.T. & Terenzini, P.T., 2005. *How college affects students: a third decade of research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass
- ³ Huffman, T. 2008. Factors associated with the personal assessment of college among American Indian students at a rural university. *The Rural Educator*. Spring. 18- 29.
- ⁴ Mosley-Howard, G.S. Baldwin, D., Ironstrack, G., Rousmaniere, K., Burke, B. 2016. Niila Myaamia (I Am Miami) Identity and Retention of Miami Tribe College Students. *Journal of College Student Retention*. 17, 4, 437-461.
- ⁵ Strass, H., Mosley-Howard, G.S., Baldwin, D., Ironstrack, G., Rousmaniere, K., Schroer, J. 2019. Cultural revitalization as a restorative process to combat racial and cultural trauma and promote living well. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*. (advance on-line publication) <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/cdp0000250>