

**Meeting Minutes – Indiana Native American Indian Affairs Commission (INAIAC)
Employment Subcommittee**

Thursday, April 14, 2016

The Employment Subcommittee meeting was called to order at 10:35 a.m.

Commissioners Present: Cameron Clark

Commissioners Not Present: Nathan Underwood and Erin Oliver

Staff Present: Kerry Steiner

Agenda Item: Approve 7/30/15 Meeting Minutes:

We were unable to approve the minutes of the meeting due to not having a quorum.

Agenda Item: Vocational Training Scholarships

Based upon previous meeting discussions, Kerry Steiner asked if there was any input on the idea of combining the Education and Employment Subcommittees. Cameron Clark stated he's given it some thought and feels the core mission of the two are so different and that he sees this Subcommittee as gathering information regarding the employment needs of minorities. Kerry Steiner agreed there would be pros and cons to combining the two.

Cameron Clark asked about the Honda and Cummins connections and Kerry Steiner responded she has reached out to both companies by email and phone and has not received a response. A member of the public asked about the INAIAC getting involved with job fairs and someone else mentioned there are two coming up in the near future. Kerry Steiner stated she was aware of them and had already posted flyers on the social media page.

Kerry Steiner then asked if there was any thoughts about the Employment Subcommittee creating scholarships for those who want to attend vocational training as opposed to a degree, which would be covered under the Education Subcommittee's scholarship program. Cameron Clark suggested maybe we reach out to the Education Subcommittee and see if they want to create vocational scholarships, adding that many of the vocational training schools have their own funding sources available to students, such as Cummins and other large corporations.

Kerry Steiner said perhaps the vocational piece could be modeled after the education scholarship program whereby the American Indian Center of Indiana (AICI) screens the applications and sends them to us. Cameron Clark agreed it was a good idea and wondered what the AICI is seeing – do people want to be an airplane mechanic versus going to college? Do they know what they want or does the AICI help them figure that out?

Doug Poe, executive director of the AICI responded by saying that Ivy Tech is the feeder college now that they're accredited and that yes, there is tuition assistance but many students end up owing the school a lot of money or they enter a program where the credits don't transfer to another school

Cameron Clark stated he's not sure what the Commission and this Subcommittee can do other than to create a separate or enhancement of the Educational Subcommittee's scholarship program; the money offered by the Educational Subcommittee would not cut too deeply into what the students owe.

Doug Poe said that as a workforce center it's all rolled into one and that he tries to talk the students into attending Ivy Tech even though it's another year of school so the credits will count if they later transfer. For example, students who attend the Chef's Academy (tuition runs about \$38,000 per year) are grateful for the \$1,500 they receive from the AICI because over the course of three years it adds up. Regarding job fairs at large industry companies, i.e., Honda and Cummins, the AICI doesn't have a large number of students looking for work in places like that and most don't want to make the drive to attend their vocational training, they are looking for jobs in their local area. He added that he has received calls from statewide agencies looking for minorities to fill positions.

A member of the public offered that Cummins has undergone a worldwide reorganization and they're mainly focused on internal issues right now and that perhaps the person who had been contacted but did not respond was no longer with the company. Doug Poe mentioned that we may want to look working with Ivy Tech as both Cummins and Honda both tap into Ivy Tech since it's accredited, and that maybe this topic of conversation would fall under the Education Subcommittee. He added that approximately 25-30 the AICI participants have gone to Ivy Tech for degrees rather than vocational training.

Cameron Clark added that if employers tend to work with Ivy Tech then perhaps the role of this Subcommittee and/or Commission is more of a resource and referral. If someone comes to the INAIAC with aspiration then we direct that student to their local Ivy Tech and the AICI. He then directed a question to Doug Poe asking if we should be funneling Native Americans to the AICI or is there something they don't provide that we might be able to fill.

Doug Poe responded by saying the AICI partners with the Boner Center, for example, on their job club, helps participants who come in off the street with resume-writing, interview skills, etc. The AICI also has access to computers to help them find a job. The next level is people who know what they want and the AICI encourages them to attend Ivy Tech but that they usually want to get working immediately. The last tier of people are those who want a degree.

Kerry Steiner asked Doug Poe what he sees as a gap and he said knowing about companies outside of central Indiana that are hiring. Cameron Clark asked if there was a sizeable population in other geographical areas to match people to job openings in their area. Doug Poe responded that most of the calls he receives are for education services, not for jobs; he gets very few calls for employment services. When asked if he's tried to connect with the WorkOne centers, Doug Poe responded that he's tried over the course of eight years to establish a relationship with them but that only Vigo County has responded. Since he does not get calls for employment he has not put any additional effort into the WorkOnes. He added that Vigo County is the only one that has acknowledged there are Native Americans in their community and that those who have a tribal ID card but whose driver license implies they are White could be losing out on job opportunities. He said he encourage Native people to disclose they are Native American because employers have to meet a minority hiring quota.

Kerry Steiner asked if it would be beneficial to partner with the Commission's representative from the Department of Workforce Development to connect with the counties where Native people live and Doug Poe indicated he's tried that in the past but no county other than Vigo has ever been responsive.

Cameron Clark stated that as he listens to this conversation he struggles with the direction of this Subcommittee, other than creating lists. Doug Poe said that with respect to the gaps, maybe the AICI could get more involved with the WorkOne centers around the state and see if things have changed, and he added that more of the AICI participants have gotten jobs in the last six months than in the last few years combined. The AICI uses forms similar to what the WorkOne center uses where a participant logs their job search efforts and if they do that and later get the job, then the AICI will assist them with things like steel-toed boots, tools, scrubs, bus passes, etc., so they can start the job right away. He added that he's gone over budget this year on that line item. Kerry Steiner asked if this was a gap the INAIAC could possibly help fill and he responded that this year there was an unusually high number of requests and they came from three categories of people: those who lost their job due to downsizing and just want a job (such as forklift operator or welding); people who want programs like they see on TV (Certified Nursing Assistant); and, those who want a college degree. Doug Poe stated that as he sees it, there is a clear line between the degreed programs and the certificate/vocational programs.

Cameron Clark stated this was good takeaway information and helps provide some insight on where this Subcommittee may want to go.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.