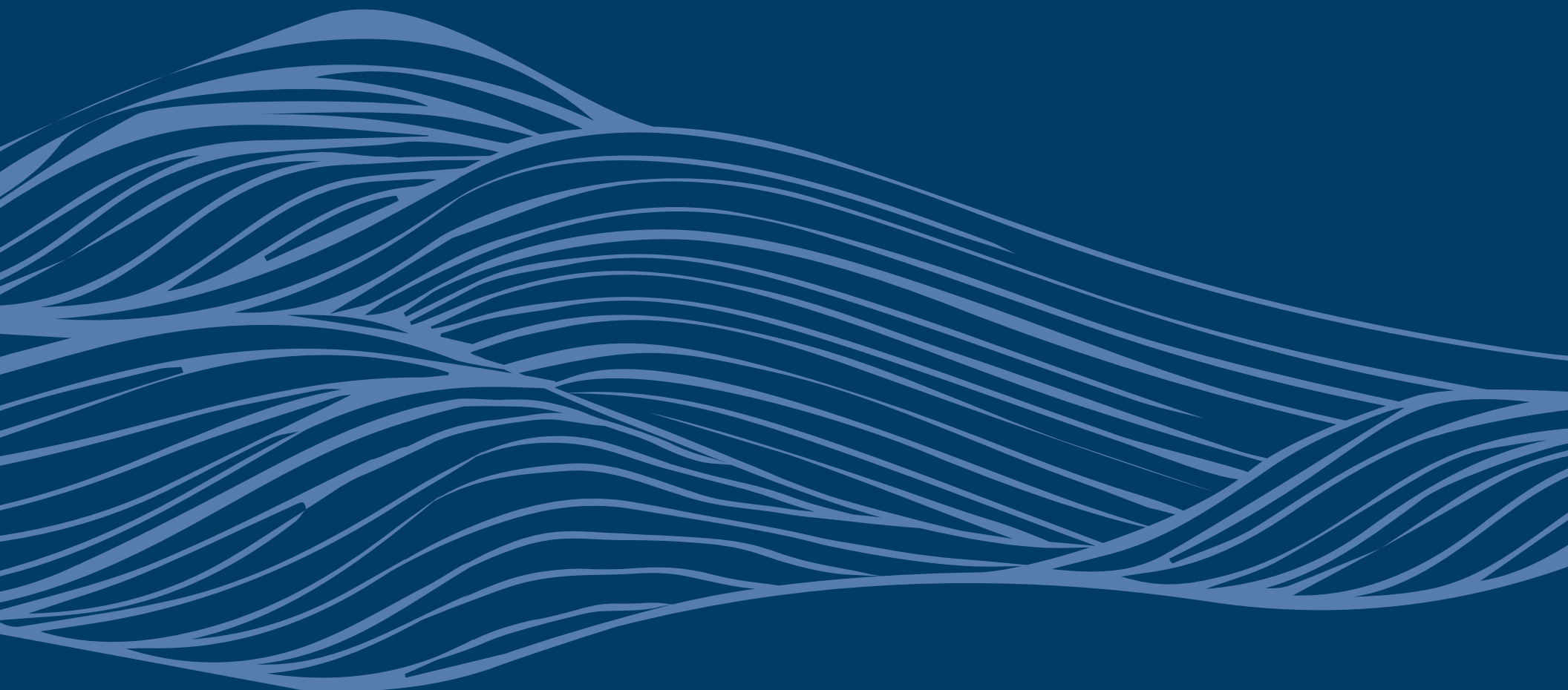


The background of the slide features a dynamic, abstract pattern of flowing, wavy lines in shades of blue and red. The lines are layered and curved, creating a sense of movement and depth. The colors transition from a deep red on the left to a dark blue on the right, with lighter blue highlights where the lines intersect.

NATIVE AMERICAN

Retention Initiative


Strategic Plan



acknowledgements

First and foremost, we would like to honor and acknowledge the Wintun people on whose traditional lands the University of California, Davis (UC Davis) is located. We would also like to honor the spirit of the Tecumseh Center, which served as the meeting place for the Native American community for many years and held a place for our art, our dialogue and our vision to create a new space for the next generation and those who will follow.

Historically, the conversation around education and Native communities has been limited or nonexistent.



1800

In 1819, Congress passed the Indian Civilization Act, which set the foundation for the development of the mission schools system.

In 1879, the federal government's Indian Office developed and expanded a system of boarding schools for Indians, beginning with the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania. Many of the school's goals were to civilize Native Americans through a process of cultural assimilation, "Kill the Indian in him, and save the man." (*Kill the Indian, Save the Man* by Ward Churchill, 2004).

1900

In 1934, the Indian Reorganization Act was passed and granted Native Americans certain rights. Congress then passed the Johnson O'Malley (JOM) Act of 1934, which authorized the secretary of the Interior to enter into contracts with states and territories to pay for the education of Indian students.

In the 1970s, two major legislative acts were passed—the Indian Education Act of 1972 and the Indian Self Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975—both of which were intended to address the inequities of the educational system, K-16, for Native Americans.

In 1986, the first tribal college, Navajo Community College, was founded. This was in response to the low number of Native American students matriculating into college.

2000

The Native American Languages Act of 1990 and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 are examples of recent legislation trying to address the inadequacies regarding the educational needs of Native American students. In spite of this, the number of our students attaining higher education has been dismal.

Bryan Brayboy stated that "of 100 Alaskan or Native Americans who start ninth grade, 48 will graduate from high school, 20 will go on to postsecondary education, and only one will finish a bachelor's degree within six years of starting. One in 2,500 Natives earns a master's degree, and one in 7,000 earns a Ph.D." (*Kaila White; The Republic; azcentral.com; Group of Pueblo Indians earn Ph.D.s together at ASU commencement; updated May 19, 2015; <https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/tempe/2015/05/12/pueblo-indians-earn-phds-together-asu-commencement/27156429/>*).



overview of native american and public education

In California, the numbers of Native American students matriculating into the University of California (UC) reflects the national picture.

In the 2016–17 academic year, 2,302 American Indian/Alaskan Native students graduated from a California high school. Of those graduates, 717 met the UC/CSU college requirements, and 217 enrolled in the University of California. In comparison to the statewide data of 2016–17, 408,124 students graduated from high school, and 203,349 students met the UC/CSU college requirements. Native American students are 0.5 percent of the total population of high school students and 0.3 percent of the total population who meet the UC/CSU college requirements. Although the number is statistically low, it represents 100 percent of eligible students.

In 2017–18, 2,203 American Indian/Alaskan Native students graduated from a California high school. Of those graduates, 708 met the UC/CSU college requirements, and 294 enrolled in the University of California. In comparison to the statewide data of 2017–18, 418,205 students graduated from high school, and 208,769 students met the UC/CSU college requirement. Native American students are 0.5 percent of the total population of high school students and 0.3 percent of the total population who meet the UC/CSU college requirements.

The University of California has recognized some of these issues and has created limited programming to address them. Each campus provides some level of support for the recruitment and retention of Native American students. For example, in 1971 the University of California American Indian Counselor and Recruiters Association (AICRA) was developed. With representation from each school in the University of California system, this association worked collaboratively to develop programming to address outreach, admission and retention issues for students. Throughout the years, the association has worked to create programming supporting those three areas to the best of their ability, despite limited funding and capacity constraints. Currently, AICRA partners with the California State University system and California Community College system to address regional issues, working in partnership and collaboration on various higher education issues. The association meets twice yearly and understands that our effort must include a multifaceted strategy in addressing the matriculation and graduation of our Native students.

The University of California, Davis has experienced historical activism, working with and for students, staff and faculty to create space for Native American students on campus in response to their complex needs. The Tecumseh Center, established by Jack D. Forbes in 1969–70, was created to assist in the academic success of Native American students. As time passed, the Native American Studies Department, which is now located in Hart Hall, became the center, or home, for both academic and student affairs issues for Native students. Through the years, however, the Native American student retention and graduation rates consistently declined due to inconsistent support. In response, students, faculty and staff have for years attempted to develop programs and proposals to address these issues. An example of this took place in the 1990s, when students, staff and faculty consistently put forth plans to sustain the annual Pow Wow, a social gathering intended to provide the campus and local community a space to learn about, engage with and celebrate the traditions and cultures of Indigenous peoples, and bring visibility to the vibrancy of Native American music, dance and arts. Another example is Professor Martha Macri's proposal for Native American Cultural Sustainability, which pooled together multiple disciplines for Native people. In 2015, a group of students, staff, faculty and alumni developed the Native American Initiative proposal, which began to focus on retention services. These consistent efforts to secure comprehensive programming led to the initial formulation of the Native American Retention Initiative. In April 2017, the Native American Academic Student Success Center opened and has become "the home, the Native Nest for students on campus."



challenges

Many of our Native American students are from first-generation and low college-going communities and face challenges and barriers to the completion of higher education. In California, the status of Native peoples is complex and diverse. Many of our students and families are from low socio-economic tribal communities, which are often plagued with high crime and drug rates and have few resources to support educational success. Conversely, there are also Native American communities that are economically prosperous with an upward trend in the college-going rate. Despite this economic growth, some in the community may still struggle with the same issues of being first-generation students, such as college navigation, lack of positive role models, disconnection to the campus and overall student identity development. Many of our students feel isolated and disconnected from the campus. They face financial constraints, and they feel challenged due to their lack of academic preparation for higher education.

These challenges are not only personal. Institutions of higher education lack understanding of Native communities as well as the historical context of Native students' educational experiences. Many of our students are living with intergenerational historical trauma from the boarding school experiences that their grandparents went through. The negative imagery and inaccuracies of Native American history have also influenced a negative perception toward education. Beyond this, institutions also lack the understanding of an Indigenous knowledge system, a network of relationships governing a universal interdependency which promotes peaceful coexistence among all elements of creation, and its impact on a student.



This framework fosters community cultural wealth, rooted in the lives and experiences of both the individual and community and “the importance of relationality, respect and reciprocity; as well as recognition of the importance of place/space and land,” (*Brayboy, et al pg.16*). This relationship and way of thinking contradicts higher education’s value of individuality and its definition of success. Additionally, students do not see Native American role models in staff, faculty and graduate students. For the Native American community, it is essential to have role models that not only look like them but that they can relate to and be mentored by. This creation of a network provides connection and engagement for the student, allowing a “family-like” model to care for the student both personally and academically.

Lack of recognition and validation by the institution also creates a challenge for Native American students. Due to the low number of Native Americans at the university, the pool of students, faculty and staff are statistically insignificant. The Native community itself is statistically insignificant as part of the overall campus data and is combined into the “other” category. Therefore, the data is not incorporated into the narrative on the campus. On top of this, the political status of our Native Nations adds another layer to the complexity of these challenges. Currently, there are 562 Native American sovereign nations in the U.S., 109 federally recognized Indian tribes in California and 78 entities petitioning for state recognition. Each one has its own government, culture, language and world view. The complexity and diversity of our Native American students is broad; a one-template solution cannot address the individual needs of every student. Native American peoples are political groups with multiple identities. However, institutions treat them as if they are all one: Native Americans. Native American people’s membership in a tribe is based on specific Indian ancestry requirements, not racial/ethnic classification. Hence, identity is a political status rather than ethnicity or race. This complexity is even greater because many Native Americans do not hold one single ethnicity. Many students are put into an ethnic/racial category based on how they look and are identified inaccurately. Therefore, the data is not always correct and does not accurately account for multiracial identities. To accurately account for all Native American students, we need to evaluate them based on multiple identity categories to truly reflect this population.

There are multiple challenges our Native American students face in higher education. The net result is that the institution cannot provide the depth of services required to realistically support all of our Native students.



native american retention initiative (NARI)

In response to these challenges, UC Davis has taken a leadership role within the UC system to establish three ethnic specific retention initiatives supporting African American, Chicana/Latinx and Native American students. The goal of these retention initiatives is to provide programs and space to assist with the retention and graduation of underrepresented minorities at UC Davis. In 2014, the university hired the first director of the African American Retention Initiative and opened the Center for African Diaspora Student Success. UC Davis then hired the director for the Chicana/Latinx Retention Initiative in the fall of 2015. In April of 2016, the director of the Native American Retention Initiative was hired to develop the retention initiative as well as the Native American Academic Student Success Center (NAASSC). In September 2016, the initiative obtained space at the University House. Limited programming was available in the fall of 2016, which began to take into account the best practices for retention and graduation of Native American students. On April 10, 2017, the grand opening of NAASSC was held at the University House, and in the fall of 2017, the first cohort of students began to use the space.

Vision and Framework: The goal of all three initiatives is to accurately account for all under-represented student populations (i.e., number per college, per discipline, by gender, etc.), quarterly and yearly; and in doing so, also maintain a “pulse” on these communities with specific reference to enrollment (via collaboration with Undergraduate Admissions) attrition, retention and graduation (via collaboration with Undergraduate Education). This practice, alongside up-to-date research on strategies and best practices for retaining underrepresented students, places the directors of these retention initiatives, Student Affairs and UC Davis as a whole in a position to make 1) data-driven, 2) research-based decisions on behalf of the student communities that we serve.

The NARI framework is developed out of Watson Swail's Geometric Model of Student Persistence and Achievement (2004) which takes into account cognitive, social and intuitional factors to address the holistic and individual needs of a student's growth and development. This model is one of the frameworks that assist in delving into the retention services of Native students. This framework coupled with the Association of American Colleges & Universities' High Impact UC practices (Kuh 2008) or HIP, which promotes active student engagement and deep integrative learning to develop high touch programs that will increase the rate of student retention and engagement.

**UC Davis has
taken a leadership
role within the
UC system**

These practices consist of: First-year Seminars and Experiences, Common Intellectual experiences, Learning Communities, Writing Intensive courses, Collaborative Assignments and Projects, Undergraduate Research, Diversity/Global Learning, Portfolios, Service Learning, Community Based Learning, Internships, Capstone Courses and projects.

These higher education best practices for retention coupled with the ethnic specific work from individuals like Bryan Brayboy, Heather J. Shotton, Shelly C. Lowe and Stephanie J. Waterman, are the theoretical foundation for NARI, which will:

- Provide an academic support environment with tutors, mentors, labs, computers and a quiet study area
- Provide Native and tribal role models for students from community leaders and tribal councils
- Provide a home environment for the students by ensuring the center can assist with nurturing the student emotionally, spiritually and nutritionally
- Provide an environment that engenders the development of group, family and cooperation among the student cohort
- Provide a culturally sufficient system of acknowledgment for success, accomplishment and graduation

Higher education is vital for tribal nations to effectively build sustainable economies, preserve Native languages and cultural traditions and advance in digital technology. Education is the great equalizer, and although AI/AN's area is a fraction of the general population, our political and cultural futures depend on an educated workforce: both tribal and nontribal." (*Proudfit and Gregor, pg. 1*)

"NARI is a collaborative effort, which is a multifaceted academic success program focused on increasing the retention, persistence and graduation rates of Native American students in a culturally appropriate way. NARI's theme is "Building connection and strengthening community" and programming is focused on academic success and resilience through building a strong connection to students. NARI will do this through a holistic approach to student success. Following this approach will create a community that not only survives but thrives at UC Davis.





Success for the students will be measured by:

- Creating a space for students to explore identity and develop a sense of belonging for our Native American students
- Creating cultural legitimacy
- Promoting academic resiliency for our students
- Fostering students' transition to higher education and beyond

NARI will:

- Connect culture to purpose and the students' educational goals
- Expose students to healthy risks, challenging their sphere of experience
- Share our vulnerability and teach leadership skills
- Promote community engagement in a cultural context
- See students learn and feel their personal growth
- Work with community and tribal leaders to establish a healthy environment for our community
- Teach students to work together physically and intellectually
- Expose our students to a trusting, caring university environment
- Share and celebrate their new learning experiences

To address the initiative, we will undertake a three-pronged approach:

- Outreach and recruitment
- Holistic retention
- Fostering transition for life after college



outreach and recruitment

For outreach and recruitment, NARI will partner with Undergraduate Admissions (UA). These efforts will provide a seamless pathway for Native students, families and communities to matriculate at UC Davis. NARI will focus on participation with spring yield events such as Decision UC Davis and the Native American Fly UP Experience for both freshmen and transfer admits. Programs will be intentional and developed exclusively for the needs of both freshmen and transfer students. This partnering will create an early support initiative that can provide an immediate connection to academic support resources as well as supportive staff and faculty on campus, establishing a seamless handoff process and connection between Undergraduate Admissions and retention services, i.e., NARI. In our work with UA, we will connect with local tribes and Indian education programs to assist with the development of Native pathways into higher education.

retention

For retention, NARI will focus on creating a space for students to explore student identity and intersectionality and to create a sense of belonging. To do this, we will practice place-based learning. With that in mind, we have opened the Native American Academic Student Success Center (NAASSC), commonly called the Native Nest. The center is “a home away from home;” a place to call their own. The center provides a safe and brave space to study and hang out. It provides workshops and activities and is a hub for our Native students, families and communities. It is one of three spaces for our Native students to connect. The other two spaces are Native American Studies in Hart Hall and the Student Community Center, which houses the Cross Cultural Center and the student-led American Indian Recruitment and Retention program. The center has become the core of the community. It connects students to UC Davis resources, which enhance their academic success and allow them to learn about culturally relevant activities and create a support network with other students who identify as Native American.

NARI will address the development of “Native Scholars” through a holistic approach. Programming will create cultural legitimacy or empowerment through our tribal presentation series. Students will take on the role of both the teacher and the student. They will have the opportunity to present their tribal knowledge and teach others. This allows students to learn about other tribes as well as the diversity among our tribal nations. The center will also house a mental health and wellness component, which includes the Community Action Network (CAN) counselor who will provide comprehensive wellness services for the community. The CAN counselor will be part of a case management team to assist students in their academic success.

Transition to college will also be an important aspect of this work. NARI will partner with the Native American Living-Learning community, located in Segundo Hall in the Campo building, to engage and academically support new students. NARI will provide a welcome and orientation for new Native American students to UC Davis. Freshmen and their families are invited to a “welcome home” event as they move into the dorms. Freshman and transfer students are also encouraged to participate in all welcomes and orientations. A First-Year Aggie Connection for both freshmen and transfer students will be offered to assist with the transition to a successful academic college experience.





Staying connected with students through long-term programming is essential. Therefore, NARI will also provide a leadership seminar for Native American student leaders and communities that focuses on cultural legitimacy and empowerment. Workshops will create a space for meaningful dialogue on identity and intersectionality and will focus on not only surviving at the university but thriving. A “Native 2 Native” program will be provided to create peer-to-peer mentorship, and Alumni will be utilized to build long-term mentorship programs creating career connections and life skills learning opportunities.

NARI will work toward promoting academic resiliency for our students by creating an early warning system. This system is a collaboration with Undergraduate Education and four college advising directors to refer and outreach to students to ensure service use and academic support. This system will allow for the development of a case management system that will provide individualized academic plans that meet the needs of these students. Each class will have a cohort to monitor their academic success that will connect and engage these students. Cohorts will develop academic portfolios, which may include academic success strategies, research and internship opportunities, along with strategies addressing steps after college. The center will provide academic advisors; a full-time academic advisor will provide general academic advising, and the Native American studies advisor will provide specific NAS advising, along with college and career advisors. A partnership with the Academic Assistance and Tutoring Centers will provide access to tutoring and academic support services in the center itself.

Partnerships are essential to the success of this work. NARI will partner with Native American studies and other academic units to create meaningful engagement opportunities with Native faculty and allies. Faculty will partner with the center to provide classes and office hours for students. NARI will work toward intentional and structured collaboration and communication with Undergraduate Education. It will also collaborate with the Academic Assistance and Tutoring Centers and Office of Educational Opportunity and Enrichment Services’ units (tutoring, EOP, FYAC, etc.) surrounding data-driven strategies to inform what students we see and student services needed.

The process of retention does not stop when students graduate. It develops into fostering life after college. NARI will work with Native American alumni, faculty and current graduates to provide mentorship, career connections and help students to network and feel institutionally invested in pursuing life after UC Davis. Partnerships with the Internship and Career Center, Pre-graduate advising and a senior advisory board will facilitate the development of these opportunities.

appendix

Our Community

In 2016–17, UC Davis enrolled 255 Native students out of 29,379 total enrollment, which is 0.7 percent of the total population of enrolled students.

These students were in the following majors:

Total self-identified students	255
College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences	72
College of Biological Sciences	41
College of Engineering	28
College of Letters and Science	114

In 2017–18, UC Davis enrolled 231 Native students out of 30,066 total enrollment, which is 0.6 percent of the total population of enrolled students.

These students were in the following majors:

Total self-identified students	231
College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences	69
College of Biological Sciences	29
College of Engineering	20
College of Letters and Science	113

In 2017–18, NARI took into account the complexity of Native American identity and recognized the multiple identities, along with understanding the complexity of tribal affiliation, and began to account for the true number of self-identified Native American students.

Total self-identified students	612
College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences	168
College of Biological Sciences	96
College of Engineering	55
College of Letters and Science	293

Of the 612 students who self-identified with multiple identities

African American and American Indian	73
American Indian (only)	231
Latino/a and American Indian	53

Gender

Female	382
Male	230

Other factors

First generation	363
Low income	205
EOP	218

Academic Standing

In fall 2017 we had 53 students on AP/SD

African American and American Indian	10
American Indian (only)	18
Latino/a and American Indian	25

In winter quarter we had 78 students on AP/SD

African American and American Indian	18
American Indian (only)	32
Latino/a and American Indian	28

In spring quarter we had 65 students on AP/SD

African American and American Indian	11
American Indian (only)	20
Latino/a and American Indian	34

Graduation rate*

Four-year Graduation Rate			
Student Population	2009 Cohort	2010 Cohort	2011 Cohort
All UC Davis students	58%	55%	58%
Native American	42%	50%	40%
Six-year Graduation Rate			
Student Population	2009 Cohort	2010 Cohort	2011 Cohort
All UC Davis students	85%	85%	85%
Native American	75%	50%	60%

*These students are affiliated with 54 tribal communities.



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