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Native American retention: factors, programs and practices contributing to the completion of a four-year degree by Native American students in higher education

Interdisciplinary Studies

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This study examines the factors that contribute to the completion of a four-year degree among Native American students at a mid-size university in the Southwestern United States. In the United States Native American retention in higher education is at a low. Programs and practices have been implemented among universities to improve retention rates, but nonetheless retention rates are still minimal. Research in the field indicates that the factors contributing to Native American retention include familial support, support from faculty and staff, institutional commitment, and connections to homeland and culture. However, the research does not seem to show factors in relation to specific institutions. This qualitative study will focus on the experiences of six to twenty Native American students. These students will be interviewed to determine the factors that they regard as motives why Native Americans at this specific institution do or do not complete a four-year degree. Along with qualitative research this research will also be a program review in which the researcher will look at the University of Northern Colorado, Fort Lewis College, the University of Colorado at Boulder, the University of Colorado at Denver, Colorado State University, Duke University, and Baylor University. These programs will be evaluated through each individual program's website. Based on the program reviews and the responses from the students we will conduct thematic analysis to find trends.