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UC to pay full tuition for Native American students from federally recognized tribes

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Many Native American students will receive free tuition at the University of California starting in the fall semester.

In a letter sent to UC chancellors, President Michael V. Drake said that tuition will be covered for all California residents from federally recognized Native American, American Indian and Alaska Native tribes through existing state and university financial aid programs. Scholarships for residents from the state's non-federally recognized tribes may be available through other organizations.

"The University of California is committed to recognizing and acknowledging historical wrongs endured by Native Americans," Drake wrote. "I am proud of the efforts the University has made to support the Native American community, including the creation of the UC Native American Opportunity Plan, and appreciate our conversations to date on all the ways in which we can better support Native American students."

The UC President's Native American Advisory Council, composed of California tribal leaders, faculty, and experts, provided feedback on the plan.



Starting in the fall, the University of California will pay tuition for Native American students at its 10 campuses, including UCLA, above. (Genaro Molina / Los Angeles Times)

[Tuition at UC](#) is roughly \$13,100 for California residents.

About 1.6% of Californians identify as Native American or Alaska Native, according to the U.S. census.

UC estimates that there are 500 undergraduate students and 160 graduate students who are California residents and members of federally recognized tribes.

In order to verify those eligible for the program, which has no anticipated end date, UC will ask new and continuing students to submit "tribal enrollment documentation" from their federally

recognized tribe or the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Documentation could include certification of tribal enrollment on tribal letterhead; an enrollment or membership card that contains the tribal seal or official signature of a tribal leader; a certificate of Degree of Indian Blood if it includes tribal enrollment information; or a tribal identification card with an enrollment number.

Eligible students will also be able to submit tribal contact information, such as an address, phone number or email.

“I am hopeful that this new program will benefit our students and continue to position the University of California as the institution of choice for Native American students,” Drake wrote.

There are more than 100 federally recognized tribes in California. There are also dozens of non-federally recognized tribes. [The Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria](#) announced Wednesday that it would provide UC a \$2.5-million scholarship fund to cover tuition and mandatory fees for non-federally recognized California Native American UC students and to provide additional support for those from federally recognized tribes.

“In the spirit of our ancestors we are driven to take care of our environment and our people. Inclusivity is our responsibility and we’re pleased to extend scholarships to California Native Americans from non-federally recognized tribes,” FIGR Tribal Chairman Greg Sarris said in a statement.

In 2021, UC Berkeley [removed the name](#) of a former professor from one of its buildings because the namesake was an anthropologist whose work included the “immoral and unethical” collection of Native American remains.

<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2022-04-27/uc-financial-aid-to-pay-for-native-american-student-tuition>