

The INTER-TRIBAL COUNCIL of the FIVE CIVILIZED TRIBES

A Resolution Supporting the Call on Congress to Promptly Pass the “Haskell Indian Nations University Improvement Act” that Ensures Haskell’s Autonomy and Capacity to Provide a High-Quality, Culturally Grounded, Education for Native Students

Resolution No. 26-04



Chuck Hoskin Jr.
Principal Chief



Bill Anoatubby
Governor



Gary Batton
Chief



David W. Hill
Principal Chief



Sena Yesslith
Chief

WHEREAS, the Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes (ITC) is an organization that unites the tribal governments of the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek) and Seminole Nation, representing approximately 877,000 Indian people throughout the United States; and

WHEREAS, Haskell Indian Nations University (Haskell), established in 1884, has evolved from an industrial training school to a fully accredited university serving Native students from more than 140 Tribal Nations with tuition-free post-secondary education; and

WHEREAS, Haskell remains a culturally significant institution governed by the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), serving an entirely Native American student body and playing a vital role in preserving Tribal heritage while fostering generations of Native leadership and scholarship; and

WHEREAS, Haskell contributes Tribal economic development, higher education, and workforce readiness by graduating students in fields that directly benefit Indian Country and strengthen Tribal communities; and

WHEREAS, decades of federal mismanagement, infrastructure neglect, and systemic underfunding have impeded Haskell’s ability to operate effectively and meet the evolving academic, operational, and student support needs of its campus community; and

WHEREAS, the United States has a legal trust and treaty responsibility to support Tribal education, including an obligation to ensure Native students have access to high-quality, culturally relevant higher education institutions that are adequately resourced and responsibly governed; and

WHEREAS, the proposed “Haskell Indian Nations University Improvement Act” would charter Haskell as an independent institution governed by Board of Trustees nominated by Tribal representatives, ending BIE oversight while maintaining federal support; and

WHEREAS, the Inter-Tribal Council supports the principle of Tribal self-determination in higher education and agrees that greater autonomy and Tribal-centered governance are essential to Haskell’s long-term success; and

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WHEREAS, any transition of governance authority must be undertaken in a deliberate and well-resourced manner that includes an appropriate timeline, a clearly defined transition plan, and federal support for core operational functions such as human resources, finance, and legal administration, in order to protect institutional continuity and student success; and

WHEREAS, Haskell's campus infrastructure has suffered from extensive deferred maintenance over many years, with current estimates exceeding \$100 million, and addressing these deficiencies is critical to the university's safety, accreditation, and long-term viability; and

WHEREAS, transferring governance responsibility without simultaneously addressing longstanding infrastructure needs would place an undue burden on a newly chartered governing body and undermine the goals of stability and accountability that the legislation seeks to achieve; and

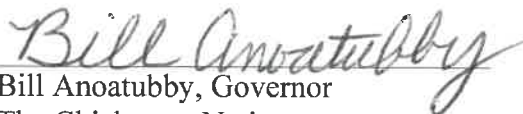
NOW THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT, the Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes supports the passage of the "Haskell Indian Nations University Improvement Act" and calls on Congress to ensure Haskell's autonomy while also providing a clear, responsible pathway for transition and long-term institutional stability.


BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes urges Congress and the Administration to uphold the federal trust responsibility by fully funding Haskell Indian Nations University, including addressing significant deferred maintenance and infrastructure needs, and by supporting a thoughtful, phased transition to Tribal governance that equips the institution for success.


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CERTIFICATION

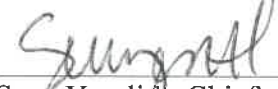
The foregoing resolution was adopted by the Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes meeting in Catoosa, Oklahoma on this 9th day of January, 2026, by a vote of 24 for 0 against and 0 abstentions.


Bill Anoatubby, Governor
The Chickasaw Nation


David W. Hill, Principal Chief
Muscogee (Creek) Nation


Gary Batton, Chief
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma


Chuck Hoskin Jr., Principal Chief
Cherokee Nation


Sena Yessli, Chief
Seminole Nation of Oklahoma