

# The Way I See It

by Dr. Dean Chavers, Native American Scholarship Fund

What's Wrong With Our Counselors  
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Since I am in the middle of processing scholarship applications for the 2001-2002 school year, there is something negative, heavy, and disturbing on my mind. It is the worthlessness of our school counselors.

One of the students I processed the other day had a grade point average of 3.9, and had excellent scores on the ACT. She finished high school this year at a good (not excellent) high school on a reservation. She wants to be a medical doctor. But she had applied to only two other scholarships besides ours (Catching the Dream).

A student of that caliber, with her goals, should have been shown how to find 25 or more scholarships. She should have walked out of high school with \$20,000 per year or more in scholarship funds. That she did not is a black mark on her counselor.

Another student told me the other day that she went all the way through high school and never talked to a counselor. I hear this frequently. This kind of comment makes me ask: What do counselors do all day that they have no time to talk to a student?

I know counselors don't stay long in Indian schools. If we visit Boomsquat High School on the Wannabe Reservation this year, and set up a good program to help their students get into the top colleges and win scholarships, the program will be gone the next year. Why?

Because the counselor we worked with this year will not be there next year. One student told us in his application that his high school had six math teachers in his four years there. (His small high school has only one math teacher.) Counselors turn over almost as rapidly, if not more rapidly. Counselors, stay still long enough for us to find you.

One of my favorite Indian high schools, one that I worked with for seven straight years, still has no scholarship directories. I went there last Fall to recruit students for our scholarships.

Imagine my surprise when I went to the library to check on the scholarship directories- after telling the seniors that they need to identify and apply for ALL the scholarships they could find. Especially since I have been trying to get the librarian there, one of my good friends, to buy a set of scholarship directories for over a dozen years.

When I asked her why she hadn't done so, she never gave me an answer. One of the reasons is that none of the four counselors (this is a large high school) has asked her to buy them.

Without scholarship directories being available in the library, students in that high school have to drive 180 miles one way to use the directories in the nearest college library. They should not have to do that. Most students will not or can not go to these lengths to find scholarship.

In all the years (over 15) that I have been dealing with this school, I know of only one student who has driven the 180 miles, I had to practically beg her to do it, as well as threaten her, and pay her mileage. She finally did, and has been working as an RN for the past nine years.

We need to remove this barrier, folks, and the leaders in the movement to get scholarship directories in all our Indian high school libraries should come from the counselors. You parents are not off the hook, however. You can and should check to see if your high school has these directories, and if they do not, put a request in writing for the librarian to buy them.

There is so much free scholarship money out there- over \$8 billion a year- that I hate to see Indian students getting almost none of it. Let's get our kids ready for college, people. There is no other alternative.

Seventy percent (70%) of the U.S. is now going to college. But we are only sending 17% of Indian students on to college. The gap is huge. I blame counselors for most of the gap. Parents and principals come in for the rest of the blame.

Not helping students with college applications and scholarship applications is not the main sin of counselors, however. There are two sins that are much more serious.

The first sin is telling Indian students not to attend college. I hate it every time a student or parent tell me about a counselor telling a student that. That is bad and wrong advice.

Counselors give it for a variety of reasons. They think Indian students are too dumb to make it in college. (In fact, Indian students are the smartest students in the world). They think Indian students will not work hard enough to succeed in college. (In fact Indian students will work like dogs if they are motivated to help their people.)

The second sin is acting in a racist and discriminatory manner to Indian students. In a mixed school environment, counselors, teachers, and principals too often favor the blond blue eyed Anglo student and have a constant frown on their face when they see an Indian student.

Counselors, you need to stop that racist behavior. I'm telling you right now, this is America. We all want to be part of the American dream. But when you treat us with ways that are condescending, racist, discriminatory, nasty, and hateful, you are denying us the American dream.

Parents, you need to intervene. The next counselor that does something like this to your child, get in her face and confront the problem. You have a right and an obligation to demand that your child gets an excellent education.

Another sin that counselors do is putting Indian students into bonehead classes. One of the applications I am processing now is for a student who lived in a large city for several years. Then she and her family moved back to their reservation during her first year of high school.

She was promptly placed into bonehead classes. Instead of being placed in Algebra, she was placed in typing. Instead of being placed in science, she was placed into migrant classes as well, and they would not let her have any textbooks. She dropped out before her ninth grade was over. And all this happened just a few short years ago, so don't go telling me this is a thing of the past. This young woman is only 22 years old.

The real sin is that she had to finish her high school through a GED program a couple of years later. The counselor who did her horrible placement directly caused her to drop out. Luckily for her, she is now a top student about to finish college with honors.

Counselors need to stop acting rudely to Indian students. Another student wrote in his essay that he hated to go to school, where the principal and the counselors would be looking at the Indian students with their arms crossed and a scowl on their faces.

Mr. Principal and Miss Counselor, if you are outright racists, get out of Indian Country and don't come back until you have become civilized. You will be civilized when you treat all students the same without racial animosity and discrimination. You will be civilized when you recognize the genius of the Native intellect.

You will be civilized when you recognize the value of Native culture, tradition, language, and religions. You will be civilized when you insist that all Native students have the right to be taught in their Native language.

Most of all, counselors, help Indian students get ready for college. I did a survey last year of all 740 Indian high schools in the U.S. and found that only 17% of Indian students are going to college. That is the same percentage Dr. Alexander Astin found 20 years ago. We have not gotten any better at sending Indian students to college in 20 years!

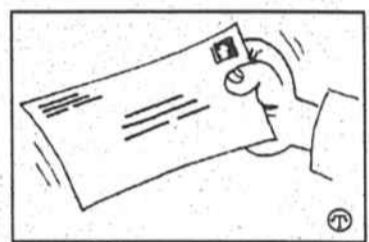
But the U.S. has gone from 40% to 70% in the same time period. In ten years 80% of U.S. high school students will be going to college after graduation. Are you counselors going to doom Indian students to poverty and perdition forever by your racist and negligent inactions?

Let's get with the programs, folks. Our Indian students deserve something more than being thrown on the garbage heap of life by your incompetent ways.

## FREE THINGS TO SEND FOR

(NAPS)—A Jetted Shower, part of the Monitor 1800 Series from Delta Faucet Company, is a new category of shower product with two jet modules that produce a cone-shaped spray and can be adjusted to any angle to accommodate different heights in the household. The spray from each of the jets can also be adjusted independently from the showerhead using a separate on/off/volume control. For more information about the Monitor 1800 Series Jetted Shower, visit Delta's Web site at [www.deltafaucet.com](http://www.deltafaucet.com) or call Delta at (800) 345-DELTA (3358).

According to a report from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Disability, Aging and Long-Term



Care Policy, continuing care retirement communities have also been found to reduce the risk of disease and disability, and improve the health and functioning of their residents. For more information about independent and assisted living options for seniors, contact American Retirement Corporation, which operates more than 65 communities nationwide, at (615) 221-2264.

NAPS—Scotts Give Back to Grow Awards honor local heroes who have reached out to their communities through gardening. In 2000, the awards recognized outstanding gardeners from 14 cities. Nomination forms are available at [www.scotts.com](http://www.scotts.com) or by calling 1-800-551-5971.

Wood composite such as Timber Tech, are made from a combination of wood and polymers, look like wood, and stand up to harsh conditions over time with little required maintenance. Less work means more life for deck owners who'll have even more time to enjoy their deck rather than laboring over it. For more information about building a unique and beautiful deck or choosing low-maintenance decking materials, contact Timber Tech Limited at 1-800-307-7780 or visit the Web site at [www.TimberTech.com](http://www.TimberTech.com).

If your phone bill is from a company you didn't know you used, it could be a wake-up call that you've been slammed. Slamming means that your phone service has been switched to another



company without your authorization. If this happens, AT&T recommends its customers call its slamming resolution center at 1-800-538-5345. Or call your local public utilities commission or the Federal Communications Commission at 1-800-876-7060.

For the elderly who have to deal with the harsh realities of life, Volunteers of America is there to help. We work in communities across the country helping seniors lead safer, healthier, and productive lives. With programs that provide home health care, transportation, assisted living and affordable housing. We are there to offer support and compassion to enrich the lives of the elderly.

Find out how you can help. Call 1.800.899.0089 or visit us at [www.volunteersofamerica.org](http://www.volunteersofamerica.org).

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Consider this: Our surgeons, trained at some of the most prestigious institutions in the nation, have performed over 3,000 open-heart surgeries.



## you use your head, you won't one else work on your heart.



And this: In the most recent rankings, we were named one of the 100 Top Hospitals in America for heart care. The main criteria for achieving this distinguished designation: Positive outcomes.

And this: HealthGrades, an independent organization that rates the performance of medical facilities across the nation, recently awarded our coronary bypass surgery services five stars, their highest ranking.

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