

Press Release: President of Revered Tribal College Outed as Pretendian

Subject: Dr. Erica Moore

Title: President, Sinte Gleska University

False Indigenous Identity Claimed: “taino”

Determination: Zero American Indian ancestry

December 8, 2025

In the south-central region of South Dakota lies the Rosebud Sioux Reservation—homeland of the Sicangu Lakota Oyate, known as the Burnt Thigh people—one of the seven bands that together form the Oceti Sakowin, the Great Sioux Nation. It is here that Sinte Gleska University was founded in 1971, named for Chief Spotted Tail (Sinte Gleska), and established as one of the first Tribal Colleges in the United States. SGU was created to reclaim sovereignty, restore Lakota knowledge systems, and heal the generational trauma inflicted by colonization.

For more than five decades, SGU has offered more than degrees. It has provided cultural grounding, community stability, and healing for Sicangu youth and families who continue to carry the historical impacts of boarding schools, land loss, and federal assimilation policies. Its mission remains vital and deeply tied to the spirit and survival of the Sicangu Lakota people.

That is why the events of the past year have caused such deep concern across the community.

Across Indian Country, the rise of non-Indigenous individuals falsely claiming Native American identity—often called “Pretendians”—is understood as a direct threat to cultural safety and the integrity of Indigenous institutions. These situations are far from harmless. They often cause division, confusion, emotional harm, and disruption to programs and community trust. In communities already healing from generations of trauma, the damage can be profound.

Yet despite these known harms, SGU leadership allowed someone falsely claiming Indigenous identity to take the University’s highest office.

In November 2024, the SGU Board of Regents installed Dr. Erica Moore as President of the University. Moore is a non-Indigenous woman from New Jersey. When Lakota staff and community members asked reasonable questions about her identity claims, they reported being met with silencing, intimidation, and—in several cases—termination.

These concerns led community members to seek help from the Tribal Alliance Against Frauds (TAAF), an organization experienced in exposing false Indigenous identity claims. TAAF’s professional genealogists conducted an exhaustive review of Moore’s ancestry, examining multiple generations across 12+ categories of historical and genealogical records. Their findings were clear: Moore has no Native American or Indigenous ancestry. Her documented heritage is entirely European, including a paternal line traced through colonial and Puerto Rican records, as well as other American records, with no evidence of Tribal descent or affiliation.

Moore claims a Taino identity, but this movement is widely understood by scholars and Indigenous governance experts as a modern, non-Indigenous identity group with no documented pre-1980 tribal governance, community continuity, or political structure. No Taino organization is recognized as a Tribe by the U.S. government, any U.S. state, or any Independent government.

in the Caribbean. Despite this, her identity narrative appears to have been accepted without meaningful scrutiny. For evidence-based documentation regarding taino, visit:
<https://www.tainoleaderships summit.com/thearchive>.

This situation raises important questions for the Sicangu Lakota community:

- How was SGU's highest leadership chosen without deeper understanding of Indigenous identity claims?
- Why were concerns from Lakota staff, students, and community members reportedly dismissed or punished?
- How did this situation escalate to the point where outside experts were needed?
- What does this mean for the future of SGU's mission to protect and uplift Lakota knowledge and culture?

According to reports TAAF received, Moore and her allies created a climate of fear within the University. TAAF has called for her immediate resignation, a public apology to the Oceti Sakowin, and repayment of all resources gained through identity misrepresentation.

Community members stress that this issue goes far beyond a single individual. It is about protecting the heart of SGU—its purpose, its cultural integrity, and its sacred responsibility to Sicangu Lakota students who rely on the University as a place of truth, safety, and cultural pride.

For a Nation still healing from the long shadow of colonization, false Indigenous identity is not a small matter. It continues patterns of extraction, exploitation, and misrepresentation that the Sicangu Lakota people have resisted for generations.

The future of SGU, and the wellbeing of the community it serves, depend on addressing this moment with honesty, courage, and protection for the Oyate.

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