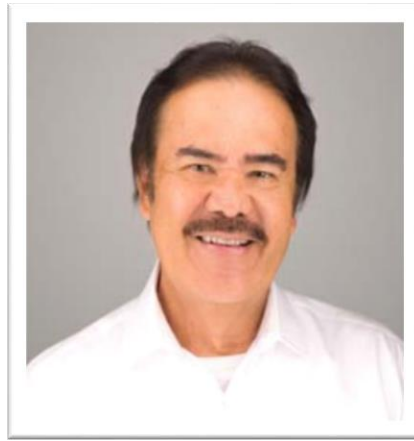


Final Announcement from Dr. Martin Miguel Ahumada



Founding President of San Carlos Apache College to Retire on June 30, 2024

Having served as the Founding President of San Carlos Apache College for the past seven years, I am hereby announcing my plans to retire from my leadership position effective June 30, 2024, to spend more time with my family and to do some long overdue traveling and writing. Over the past seven years, I have been blessed with the tremendous honor and special privilege of serving as the President of America's youngest tribal institution of higher learning dedicated to forging a brighter future for the very talented and brave Apache People. To our College's many loyal stakeholders, friends, and supporters—and especially its exceptionally talented faculty, staff, students, and Regents—I want to express to them my eternal gratitude for extending to me this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Indeed, *my cup runneth over* with genuine gratitude at this defining moment in my career.

I have been reflecting proudly and fondly on the College's historic journey and many remarkable achievements over the past seven years of its existence. And I am filled with wonder that the College has come such a long way since it opened its doors in the Fall of 2017 with only 52 students. It is now enrolling 383 students and is on track to increase its enrollment by 10 percent or more each year. We really have done so much and so well with very little, and we remain steadfast in our commitment to continue transforming our institution into a world-class model for innovation and student success.

I want to applaud the leaders of our San Carlos Apache Tribe who envisioned and launched *San Carlos Apache College* as one of their greatest hopes for addressing effectively the longstanding challenges associated with high rates of unemployment and low per-capita income; low rates of educational attainment; extreme poverty among families; and high rates of alcoholism, substance abuse, isolation, suicide, and other forms of trauma. I happen to know first-hand that these leaders wisely envisioned the College as an unmatched catalyst to

forge a brighter future for the Apache People by empowering them through education and a renewed spirit of entrepreneurship, self-reliance, and the determination to succeed in transforming their own lives and community. What a truly beautiful and powerful vision!

I want to take this opportunity to thank and praise our Divine Creator who bestows on us the hope, love, goodness, and wisdom to do amazing things and to serve others unselfishly. God gave me some very special gifts to embark successfully on my journey of building our College. These included immediately convincing the best possible founding Provost in the TCU landscape--and a superb founding Head of our Business Department—to join me in the journey! Truth be told, I stole both of them from Dine College in the Navajo Nation where they had been pioneers! And I offer no apologies for having done that! All is fair in love and war. At the very same time, I won the lottery when the one-and-only Kathy Kitcheyan joined our College as the founding head of its Apache Language and Culture Department! Talk about stacking the cards so as to ensure an exciting and successful maiden voyage for San Carlos Apache College!

In just its second year of operation, several very talented and dedicated individuals joined the SCAC family and spearheaded the very hard and important work of recruitment, admissions, registration, IT, and workforce development—plus the founding of a joint college-community library and the launching of a new (life-changing) College Credit Pathway! Soon afterwards, the College was blessed with other professionals who established high quality Associate Degree and Certificate program in key fields, including Liberal Arts, Life Sciences, Business, Social Work, and Substance Abuse/Addiction Studies. And we have more programs today!

As the President of the College, I have enjoyed wonderful relationships with the seven members of our College's current Board of Regents, all of whom have served in their governance roles with sincere commitment, intelligence, and integrity. Thank you Regents! And, of course, I can never say enough about the passionate and unwavering support our College has received from Chairman Terry Rambler and the other members of our outstanding Council! I have been ennobled by the respect, kindness, and support they have consistently extended to me over the past seven years. Thank you Council members!

Under my stewardship, San Carlos Apache College has consistently strived to be that very rare but special place where all students and employees can forge themselves into individuals who are driven and defined by a higher purpose for themselves, their community, and the world—and who appreciate the priceless fruit of hard work, respect and concern for others, teamwork, self-improvement and personal growth, and the generous investment in the future of Apache youth and their families. Our College will therefore always be truly distinctive!

Looking into the future, I am excited about the transformative role San Carlos Apache College will continue to play in helping to forge a highly skilled and well-educated workforce for our community, and in promoting the overall well-being and holistic health—emotional, cultural, physical, mental, and spiritual—of the Apache People. It is abundantly clear to me

that the College will always be one of the most promising vehicles to help address these and other *nation-building* priorities of our tribe. This is the unique mission of a tribal college!

The timing is truly *ideal* for me to retire this June 2024; I am just months shy of my 70th birthday and in the final lap of a career spanning over 40 years in higher education administration, teaching, research, and policymaking—at the international, national, state, and institutional levels. I am honored and humbled to be able to say that *I have run the good race and fought the good fight*, and it is now time for a new President who can build upon all the dedicated efforts my wonderful staff and I have been making to acquire independent accreditation, financial self-sufficiency, and an entirely new campus for the College. The youth and families of the great Apache Nation deserve no less!”

Martin M. Chumada