



ROAD TO ACCREDITATION ACCREDITATION NEWSLETTER

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REFLECTIONS FROM THE ROAD

SIPI's "Road to Accreditation" newsletter continues to inform our readers on the process and our progress towards accreditation. Issue two highlights SIPI's institutional mission within the context of the Criterion One of the HLC and our work to align programs and services to achieve institutional effectiveness. SIPI's April graduation ceremony allowed us to further reflect on the extent to which we attain our mission. Our institutional commitment towards student success is seen through the voices of our graduating students. Below is the SIPI President's message to the 2012 SIPI Graduates which also targets our campus and external stakeholders.

To the Class of 2012:

On behalf of SIPI's Board of Regents, the faculty, staff and administration, it is my privilege to congratulate the 2012 SIPI graduates. We celebrate your academic achievements and we recognize those who have supported you...family, friends, instructors, staff and loved ones.

Many of you are the first in your families to graduate from an institution of higher learning. Your accomplishments today have the ability to inspire others to do the same. I am proud of you.

The heart of SIPI stems from the dreams of its founders to help train American Indians and Alaskan Natives for jobs; today, SIPI continues to provide career technical training and transfer degree programs to all 565 federally recognized tribes. SIPI has a successful history of serving the educational needs of American Indian and Alaskan Native students through comprehensive programs of education, extension education and public service. We are committed to continue our history of being of service to Indian people and nations.

With a clearly defined mission, as a result of SIPI's 2009 – 2013 strategic planning process, the College has outlined an academically effective school system distinguished by its vision, goals, and values that guide administrators, faculty, staff, and students in the direction of a successful teaching and learning environment. As SIPI seeks initial accreditation through the Higher Learning Commission, the College's mission guides its operations and commitment to the tribes SIPI serves.

SIPI's mission statement says it well – the College dedicates itself to "preparing Native American students to be productive life-long learners as tribal members in an ever-changing global environment." Graduation is truly an affirmation that SIPI is accomplishing its mission. As you leave SIPI, I hope that you plan to continue your higher education and enter a four year university to complete a bachelor's degree or perhaps you will enter the workforce. Whatever you determine your path to be, remember the power of your dreams as well as your ability to affirm and reaffirm those dreams. Remember also to capitalize on your strengths and maintain high ethical values as you continue to pursue excellence!

Ahe'hee doo Nizhonigo Naninaa' doo' (Thank you and May you walk in beauty).

Dr. Sherry Allison (Dine')
President

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **Accreditation is "mission driven."** To be accredited, institutions must fulfill accreditation standards, but they do so in the light of their mission. We start our accreditation self-study by examining whether our mission is clear, publicly articulated, and guides our daily operations. Page 3 of this newsletter summarizes key questions
- **Our primary purpose is to educate tribal members, in this issue we celebrate the dedication, talent, and success of a few of our 2012 graduate.**

SIPI'S COMMITMENT TOWARDS STUDENT SUCCESS



Lorissa Garcia, Pueblo of Acoma, PTK, AS-Business Administration: "Success is a Journey, Not a Destination." "Student success comes in many forms and can be defined in many ways. For me, student success is completing a class with a passing grade. Success is being a role model for my children and others in my community, especially other moms. Success is my commitment and dedication to "walking the walk" and not just "talking the talk" about the importance of a college education for mothers, for women, for all Native people." Ms. Garcia was one of 60 scholars nationally selected this year to receive a prestigious merit based Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship.

Audrey Gachupin, Pueblo of Jemez-Zia, AAS-Hospitality Services Management, AS-Business Administration, PTK: "I was interested in the hospitality field and school was something I always wanted to do and to get my degree. I entered the dual degree program and was awarded tribal scholarships and the Embrey scholarship from the American Indian College Fund. The scholarships opened many doors, and I told my family, if I get the Embrey, I will pursue my bachelors, and right now, I am attending NMSU in Hotel, Restaurant & Tourism Management. My goals are to attend the Graduate Horizon Program at Harvard and consider Purdue University for a master's program. I am thankful I chose SIPI because SIPI provides a good quality education. I am also thankful to be a recipient of the New Mexico Academic Achievement Award. Being a mother of three children, I believe it is up to each individual to determine what you want. I am truly thankful for the resources SIPI provided to me."



Brandon P. Ray, Navajo Nation, SIPI Valedictorian, 4.0 GPA, AA Liberal Arts: "I was a high school dropout. I decided to come to SIPI because of the low cost. Being at SIPI changed my life, and after two weeks, I realized it was not going to be hard to get my life back on track. At SIPI, I received the American Indian College Fund scholarship. I knew I wanted to do good and it was important for me, my family, and my future. After being at SIPI, it has made me realize I wanted to do more and that is why I got the internship at Kirkland AFB. I will be doing micro-black box transponder research for the summer, and afterwards, I will attend the University of New Mexico in the fall 2012."

Shaleen Chavarria, Santa Clara Pueblo, AAS-Natural Resources Management : "During my 2nd trimester, the SIPI Counselors helped me find employment through the Workforce Recruitment Program while taking Natural Resource classes. I started as a GS-1 and now I am a GS-3. In our Natural Resources program we learned hands-on and field-work. Angie and Jeannie, two instructors, created various partnerships with tribal, state, and federal agencies. This allowed me to attend conferences like AISES in Minnesota, the Ecological Conference in Washington DC, and I got the opportunity to present at the Native American Fish & Wildlife and the National Tribal GIS Conferences. I got to network with a lot of people and these are people I will be working with in the future. I think I am leaving SIPI very prepared. I will be transferring to UNM as a junior and will minor in tribal leadership because I want to be sure I am helping my tribe make the right decisions. I am also thankful to the SIPI financial aid office, they have been a big help. I'm kind of sad about leaving SIPI but I am happy at the same time about my educational journey."



Janae' Marcelina Chosa, Pueblo of Jemez, AAS Degree-Vision Care Technology: "I am the first grandchild of six to graduate in my family. So it's hard and you have to set the goal high for the younger generation. At SIPI, it's pretty neat, like you see Native students graduate from the different programs offered here. Everyone comes from different cultures. We can learn the different backgrounds of all the different Natives and it is brought into one place and that is what makes SIPI unique. There are no two people exactly the same. Everyone here is different. I think that when students come into the program (Vision Care Technology), they bring with them knowledge and, when we are together, the knowledge comes together like a puzzle. It's like we all have a piece in everything that we learn...you never know one day I may be the doctor I want to be and you will be my patient."

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SIPI'S MISSION STATEMENT

In 1971, SIPI was established by Congress as a vocational technical institute. In 1993, SIPI became accredited as a community college and in 1994 SIPI became a land-grant institution. In 1991, the SIPI Board of Regents developed an expanded 20-year mission and direction for the institution which called for the college to develop advanced technical instruction, achieve community college accreditation, and offer university transfer degrees (SIPI Strategic Plan, 2009-2013). In April 2009, the SIPI Board of Regents contracted with the Voorhees Group L.L.C., to assist in the strategic planning, in the facilitation of an environmental scan. The Voorhees Group L.L.C., gathered internal and external data through a number of sessions with students, faculty, staff and community stakeholders. The sessions were held in the summer 2009 to assist in the development of SIPI's mission and vision statements and recommended strategic goals. In July 2009, the Voorhees Group, L.L.C., conducted strategic planning workshops with the SIPI Board of Regents and SIPI administration that provided the background for SIPI's strategic plan and its new mission and vision statements. In October 2009, SIPI's current mission, vision, goals, and values statements were finalized and adopted by SIPI's Board of Regents, faculty, staff, administrators and SIPI's Student Senate.

—By Cecelia Cometsevah

ALIGNING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES WITH SIPI'S MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of institutional effectiveness is to ensure that programs and services are aligned with the SIPI mission. The process requires academic, student support and administrative units to define their own mission statements, which align with the SIPI mission statement. From these departmental mission statements, measurable sets of outcomes and objectives are defined, and departments use data to: 1) track their performance with respect to each outcome/objective, and 2) develop improvement plans and related budget requests. Ultimately, this fosters an environment of data-driven decision-making throughout the institution, where the data and decisions support the overall mission of SIPI.

To see how this works, consider the mission statement of SIPI:

Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute is a National Indian Community College that prepares Native American students to be productive life-long learners as tribal members in an ever-changing global environment. As a land grant institution, SIPI partners with tribes, employers, and other organizations with a stake in Indian education. An enduring commitment to student success is the hallmark of SIPI's operations.

Now, consider the mission statement from one of SIPI's administrative departments, the Office of Institutional Research, Effectiveness and Planning:

The SIPI Office of Institutional Research, Effectiveness and Planning strives to support student success by improving the quality and efficiency of information services to support fact-based decision making, external reporting, and the assessment of student outcomes and institutional effectiveness. The office seeks to encourage a data-driven environment by offering data collection, analysis and reporting to staff, faculty, committees, the Board of Regents and students.

The purpose of a mission statement is for an office to define "who we are." By identifying its contribution to student success (identified in the SIPI mission statement as a "hallmark of SIPI's operations"), the Office of Institutional Research, Effectiveness and Planning defines elements of its mission. This serves as the basis for departmental self-evaluation and continuous improvement. As part of the assessment process at SIPI, all departments are defining their missions (in a manner that ties each department to SIPI's mission).

—By Edward Hummingbird, Director of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness

HLC CRITERION 1: MISSION

In February 2012, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) adopted new Criteria for Accreditation, Assumed Practices, and Obligations of Affiliation.

The first criterion focuses on Mission and in conducting the self-study we have to determine the extent to which: "The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations." Furthermore, this criterion includes a number of core components that SIPI must evaluate itself against: 1. A. The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operation, 1. B. The mission is articulated publicly., 1. C. The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society., 1. D. The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

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SIPI located in Albuquerque, NM was established by a consortium of tribes including the All-Indian Pueblo Council (19 New Mexico tribes), the Navajo Nation, the Jicarilla Apache Nation, the Mescalero Apache Tribe, the Southern Ute Tribes and other southwestern tribes. On September 16, 1971, SIPI officially opened its doors for classes. Today, the College as a federally-operated institution offers advanced technical education and university transfer degrees to students who are members of federally recognized tribes.



Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute

A NATIONAL INDIAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE THAT PREPARES NATIVE AMERICAN STUDENTS TO BE PRODUCTIVE LIFE-LONG LEARNERS, AS TRIBAL MEMBERS, IN AN EVER-CHANGING GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT.

SIPI'S MULTICULTURALISM AND UNIQUE DIVERSITY

The Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute is a federally chartered postsecondary institution. SIPI was founded on the principles of equity and access to high-quality culturally-relevant educational opportunities for American Indian/Alaska Native students and their communities (SIPI Self-Study, 2009). Our mission's aim is to not only help our students become successful life-long learners, but we also value and respect diversity through our college structure and within the individuals and communities that are served. SIPI is unique and serves 565 federally recognized tribes and can have over 159 tribes represented in its student body during an academic year. SIPI is one of thirty-seven tribal colleges/universities nationwide. SIPI along with its sister college, Haskell Indian Nations, is operated by the Bureau of Indian Education.

SIPI as an institution addresses its role within a multicultural society informed by its value statement of "relevance." Through relevance, SIPI strives to deliver cultural, social, and economic relevant information, educational programming and services. This body of programming and services encourage student life-long learning through many external partnerships, student practicums, and internships. Some of our student internships include the STEM programs, Early Childhood Education, and Vision Care Technology. By offering such educational services and training among our student body, SIPI is able to help and address the economic and global trends that impact and affect our tribal communities. Partnering with tribes, employers and other organizations allows SIPI to continue to carry forward its stake in Indian Education.

Each year SIPI looks forward to serving our tribal students in areas of academic programs, student support, scholarship, creative works, economic development, and our institutional commitment to the public good. Our commitment towards student success is the hallmark of SIPI's operation.

—By Cecelia Cometsevah