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CHARTING A COURSE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

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SIPI'S JOURNEY FROM 2009-2013

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As a result of a comprehensive evaluation visit by a team from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) on December 7-9, 2009, the HLC Board “voted to withdraw accreditation from SIPI but also to grant candidate for accreditation status to SIPI. In taking this action, the Board determined that, although SIPI no longer meets the Criteria for Accreditation, the College retains its presumption of meeting the Eligibility Requirements. Additionally, the Board found that the plan put forward by SIPI demonstrates a pattern of evidence that indicates SIPI is likely to meet the Criteria for Accreditation within the maximum four-year period allowed by HLC policy for candidacy. Finally, the Board noted the high degree of commitment demonstrated by SIPI representatives to the historic mission of the College and to students as well as to improving operations and noted the credible plans put forward by SIPI with the support of the Bureau of Indian Education for remediation of the College’s significant issues.”

A comprehensive evaluation visit to determine if SIPI continued to meet candidacy requirements and to document satisfactory progress on the issues identified in the 2009 comprehensive visit was scheduled by the HLC for 2011.

During the intervening months, the campus mobilized and invested in a process to evaluate and build stronger systems that advanced academic quality. The College used the self-study process as an opportunity to educate stakeholders and to build the momentum for change. Faculty and staff who had the requisite knowledge, leadership abilities and prior experience with accreditation were selected to serve as Criterion Sub-Committee Co-Chairs of the Accreditation Steering Committee. The Accreditation Steering Committee delineated roles and responsibilities of members, developed an accreditation calendar, and discussed a plan to collect and organize evidence and/or documentation.

On August 31, 2010 the SIPI President assigned nearly all faculty and staff to serve on an accreditation subcommittee. This ensured widespread involvement and allowed all employees to actively participate. The diversity of each committee further ensured that collaboration across campus occurred, and allowed members to share strengths, successes, and challenges across divisions as they completed drafts of their criterion chapters. The President also held public forums with students, faculty, and staff to provide routine updates on the self-study process to facilitate continued engagement. This process resulted in 91% (77/85 employees) of all faculty and staff engaged in the self-study process through their membership on a criterion committee.

The 2011 self-study addressed the quality standards and requirements based on four pivotal documents: the July 2, 2010 final decision letter issued by the HLC withdrawing accreditation, the HLC Eligibility Requirements, the HLC Minimum Expectations within the Criteria for Accreditation, and the HLC Handbook. The self-study was organized in response to the five HLC criteria and core components.

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(SIPI's Journey from 2009—2013, Cont. from Page 1)

As a result of campus-wide dedication and participation in this rigorous process, the 2011 HLC evaluation team determined that all Eligibility Requirements were met. With regards to Fulfillment of the Criteria the team determined: each Criterion One Core Components were met; each Criterion Two Core Components were met; Criterion Three, Core Component 3.a was not met; Core Component 3.b was met but additional commentary was shared from the team; Core Component 3.c was met; Core Component 3.d was met but additional commentary was shared from the team; Criterion Four, Core Component 4.a was met but additional commentary was shared from the team; Core Component 4.b was met; Core Component 4.c was met; Core Component 4.d was met; Criterion Five, Core Component 5.a was met; Core Component 5.b was met but additional commentary was shared from the team; Core Component 5.c was met; and, Core Component 5.d was met.

The 2011 evaluation team recommended SIPI's next comprehensive visit to be within the 2012-2013 academic year based on the following rationale:

“The required comprehensive visit was hosted in March, 2011 with major areas of concern from the comprehensive visit of December 9, 2009, attended to by SIPI. Within a short time-frame, SIPI achieved satisfactory progress in strategic planning, assessment of student learning, program review, expansion of a budgeting model decentralizing cost centers to provide greater accountability, and attention to facility needs to include preventive and deferred maintenance with priority for expenditure of funds. SIPI's response to findings of the last comprehensive visit demonstrates commitment to fulfilling the Criteria for Accreditation and SIPI has shown every indication of possessing the ability to create a culture of assessment and post-secondary education. In order to give the institution sufficient time to realize these clearly delineated improvement processes through the collection and analysis of data and strategic planning action strategies, the team is recommending two cycles of data collection allowing SIPI to showcase their accomplishments and good work for the next accreditation visit.”

SIPI's faculty, staff, and administrators have been engaged over the past two years in continuous improvement and re-examining its systems and processes; and in research, evaluation, and writing to complete the self-study report for the 2013 visit. The following accreditation goals developed by the SIPI Leadership Team, were reaffirmed for the college's commitment to continuous improvement:

- 1.To strengthen the extent to which SIPI is fulfilling its mission and progressing toward its vision through a shared governance structure and the effective involvement of the board, administration, faculty, staff and students.
- 2.To strengthen the extent to which SIPI effectively utilizes resources and implements planning processes to ensure mission attainment, quality education, and responsiveness to future challenges and opportunities.
- 3.To strengthen the extent to which SIPI progresses in building internal structures and processes that utilizes actionable data to ensure effective teaching and learning.
- 4.To continue developing and leveraging learning opportunities for faculty, administration, staff and students that ensure a strong knowledge base leading to the delivery of a quality education.
- 5.To continue enhancing the strengths and benefits of education and services to constituencies.

Criterion sub-committee members researched data, built evidence files, and drafted chapters to ensure institutional effectiveness is met relative to each criteria. A team of writers, comprised of SIPI staff members, finalized the criterion chapters. Their primary focus was to ensure that what has been written is factual and that the chapter specifically addresses the criterion and core components. The writing team members met with sub-committee members to review recommended changes with the members and to get input about these changes.

A team of consultants-evaluators from the HLC will conduct a site visit for initial accreditation for SIPI October 7-9, 2013. In preparation for the comprehensive site visit, SIPI has completed a self-study that demonstrates how the College satisfies the criteria for accreditation. When the HLC evaluation team arrives in October, SIPI, as a result of its self-study process, must demonstrate that the college satisfies fully all the Eligibility Requirements, all Assumed Practices within the Criteria, and all the Criteria for Accreditation.

CRITERION ONE: MISSION



SIPI's mission statement is as follows, "SIPI 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."

In October 2009, SIPI's mission, vision, goals and values statements were finalized and adopted by the Board of Regents, faculty, staff, administration, and the student senate.

The Student Life Committee promotes Native American culture on campus through a variety of activities, designed to emphasize the cultural purpose of SIPI. In 2012, this Committee sponsored a powwow, a Native American art exhibit, an annual campus blessing, and other cultural activities.

Student success is promoted through processes for measuring student outcomes and using outcome data for continuous improvement. SIPI administration has developed processes for using student outcomes data in planning and budgeting. Empirical targets for key student success measures include completion, transfer, retention, and persistence rates.

CRITERION TWO: INTEGRITY: ETHICAL & RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT

SIPI is dedicated to a culture of ethical ideals and responsible behavior as the college carries out its mission. Policies and procedures are developed and set forth to ensure standard operating procedures, consistency, and integrity in all aspects of college operations including; financial, academic, personnel and auxiliary functions.

SIPI's 11-member Board of Regents, created through cooperation by the BIE and federally-recognized tribes, has been designated by the BIE as SIPI's governing board. (25 C.F.R. 32.4(g) (1) & (2)). The Boards' purpose is to advise the President in matters of governance and planning for the college.

SIPI's Library is dedicated to advancing the quality of student learning by providing access to resources, collaborating on information literacy instruction, and administering related academic information services to support the college's curricula.

SIPI's Intellectual Property policy encourages faculty, staff, and students to publish and copyright, invent and patent or trademark materials of their own creation.

Policies relating to academic standards and integrity are in the Student Handbook and the Faculty Handbook.

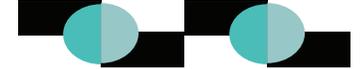
SIPI offers the Associate of

CRITERION THREE: TEACHING & LEARNING: QUALITY, RESOURCES, & SUPPORT

Arts (AA), the Associate of Science (AS), the Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degrees and certificates. The purpose of the AA and AS degrees are to prepare students for transfer to a baccalaureate institution. The purpose of the AAS degree is prepare students for entry-level employment following graduation. The purpose of the certificate is to prepare students for entry-level employment following graduation, or to provide work-related training for students already employed in a related field.

The general education core competencies are: Communication: Students will be able to effectively communicate ideas to others in correct ways; Interpersonal Skills/Teamwork: Students will demonstrate individual and interpersonal skills to work with others professionally on a community and global level; Cultural Legacy: Students will demonstrate knowledge of Native American history, cultures and traditions while recognizing the cultures and traditions of others on a national and global level; Critical Thinking: Students will be able to analyze, synthesize, and interpret verbal information and quantitative data by using critical thinking skills.

CRITERION FOUR: TEACHING & LEARNING: EVALUATION & IMPROVEMENT



The primary purpose of the academic program review is to strengthen the overall quality of education at SIPI through a process of periodic examination of the alignment with institutional mission, resources, quality, efficiency, and sustainability of each academic program. This examination is intended to evaluate program strengths and challenges, and the ability to respond to future challenges and opportunities. This is done with the ultimate aim of determining future priorities, shaping program development, and enhancing program quality.

SIPI implemented the program review system in 2010. As of the 2012-13 academic year, all academic programs except two have undergone program review. These initial experiences with program review have presented successes as well as challenges for faculty and leadership.

SIPI maintains and exercises authority over expectations for student learning. Institutional expectations for student learning are communicated through the general education core competencies, which were developed and approved by the Curriculum Committee. Program-level expectations for student learning are communicated through faculty-developed assessment plans for each academic program. Course-level expectations for student learning are communicated through course syllabi.

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SIPI is located in the heart of Indian Country, in the center of New Mexico's high-tech corridor. The College 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 a university transfer degree 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.

CRITERION FIVE: RESOURCES, PLANNING, & INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS—DID YOU KNOW?

SIPI's instructional expenditure per FTE (full-time equivalency) student for FY 2011-12 was \$6,292, which places the institution in approximately the top 85% of community colleges nationally, according to the National Community College Benchmark Project.

SIPI's professional development expenditure per FTE employee for FY2011-12 was \$465, which places the institution in the top 70% of community colleges nationally, according to the National Community College Benchmark Project.

The funding for SIPI's campus facilities and infrastructure are

based on a formula generated through the use of the BIA/BIE FMIS. FMIS is a client-server electronic system that serves as the life-cycle management tool for the Bureau. All BIE facilities and their attributes are stored in the system. Once the items are listed on the FMIS inventory, they generate operational and maintenance funds for the College beginning October 1st of the following fiscal year.

One of SIPI's greatest accomplishments over the past few years has been the development of a culture of evidence, which feeds into institutional planning and budgeting. Since

the 2009 HLC site visit, SIPI has established and implemented formal programs for academic and non-academic assessment and program review, and is now incorporating those processes into its broader planning and budgeting.

The purpose of assessment is to achieve continuous improvement. The purpose of program review is to achieve sustainability of necessary programs. Together, these processes ensure institutional vitality.

“SIPI has worked hard and continues to work to operationalize its assessment processes. These processes are designed to achieve continuous improvement that will contribute to the success of the students who attend and graduate from SIPI. Continuous improvement is our belief that no matter how well we do things, we can and will do better!”

Dr. Sherry Allison