



ROAD TO ACCREDITATION ACCREDITATION NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2012

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT THROUGH ASSESSMENT

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The accreditation process that SIPI is moving forward with is critical and involves embedding the value of continuous improvement in all work that we do. The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Criteria for Accreditation: Guiding Value Four, advises that ‘continuous improvement is the alternative to stagnation and is an attribute of a strong institution.’ SIPI academic and non-academic departments are in various cycles of the assessment process. On the whole, we are not just preparing for a visit from a Higher Learning Commission Team for Accreditation. We are readjusting our mindsets about the work we do so that we constantly strive to improve for the benefit of SIPI students and stakeholders. Our intention is to prepare students so that they will enter the workforce or continue their journey in higher education, well equipped. We want our students to be successful here and abroad since our proficiencies as educators are direct indicators of their success.

I have been with SIPI for one year as the librarian. Although I am relatively new to SIPI, I am not new to the assessment process or accreditation in higher academics. Library assessment is unique because we are positioned to assess our work with both academic and non-academic goals. One of our non-academic performance objectives is to ‘increase circulation totals of the library.’ We are looking at circulation statistics as our measurement tool. When carefully evaluated, circulation statistics are indicators of yearly comparison totals. Also, the circulation management system can report on items and subject matter most selected for check out. With this information we can tailor collection development in our budget decisions.

Assessment determines whether students, as a group, have attained learning outcomes. On a similar note, our non-academic performance objectives are also assessed and determine improvement needs tied directly to budgeting decisions in our work processes. In our efforts toward pursuing accreditation, we must intrinsically include all HLC Guiding Values. “Assessment applies not only to student learning and educational outcomes but to an institution’s approach to improvement of institutional effectiveness.” Although quite a challenge, continuous improvement in institutional practice impacts students and is a necessity for SIPI.

Jolene Manus, SIPI Librarian & Criterion Four Co-chair

SIPI ENTERS STANDARD PATHWAY IN 2014 TO MAINTAIN ACCREDITATION

Accreditation is the primary means colleges use to publically assure quality of education for students and engage in continuous improvement. This was accomplished through the self-study and peer review; however, this process is being updated by the HLC. Once SIPI gains initial accreditation, the college will be placed in the HLC Standard Pathway to maintain accreditation. Colleges in the Standard Pathway go through two comprehensive evaluations during a ten-year cycle—one in Year 4 and one in Year 10. Each of these comprehensive evaluations includes an Assurance Review (argument that we meet the accreditation criteria linked to evidence file submitted on-line), a review of Federal Compliance, and an on-site visit. In addition to these comprehensive visits, institutions will submit interim reports (audits, budgets, handbooks, rosters, etc.) annually.

Val Montoya, SIPI Vice President of Academics



Dawin Cajero was the featured student speaker at the 150th Anniversary Celebration for the Morrill Land-grant Act in Washington, D.C.

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Reflection on the 2012 Annual Higher Learning Commission Conference

ACCREDITATION STEERING COMMITTEE ATTENDS HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION CONFERENCE MARCH 31—APRIL 3, 2012

Higher Learning Commission Conference: Reflections on SIPI Accreditation

Reflections from the HLC Conference Attendees:

Dr. Sherry Allison, President of SIPI

My objectives for the 2012 HLC Annual Conference were to strengthen involvement with college Presidents including tribal colleges and universities, enhance my knowledge about the changes made (with new criteria), and interact with HLC personnel. I attended several sessions but also had the opportunity to speak with Dr. Sylvia Manning, President, NCA-HLC, Dr. Andrew Lootens-White, HLC Liaison, and several other college presidents. All of these experiences and interactions were encouraging; this leaves me confident that we are on the right path as we prepare for initial accreditation. Although we have made tremendous progress, we must continue our efforts with assessment and program reviews; we need to not only complete the process but ensure buy-in and use of data. Accreditation is a process that evaluates quality, provides a road map for improvement, assures the public of quality and is required for colleges to receive federal funds for student financial aid and program grants—accreditation is crucial!

Monte Monteith, Acting Vice President of College Operations

The main concept that I came back with was, “You are not alone.” When I attended the various sessions, it was comforting to discuss IT issues or funding dilemmas in one session; then I would go to another and talk about security and federal regulations. The most interesting part is that the other participants understand what we are going through and may have suggestions for us. You learn a great deal about what others are doing and realize that our problems are not unique. In many ways, we are all going through this together and we have other resources we can tap into.

Cathy Abeita, Education Program Specialist

Attending the HLC Annual Meeting gave me the opportunity to revisit the basics of what the self-study process is all about. Accreditation is a status granted to an educational institution that has met or exceeded specific standards of quality. SIPI is seeking initial accreditation by the HLC of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA), which is one of six regional institutional accreditors in the United States. The HLC accredits degree-granting post secondary education institutions in the North Central region. The benefits of accreditation include: Public assurance that SIPI meets or exceeds specific standards of quality; makes SIPI eligible to participate in Title IV student financial aid programs; and provides SIPI with self and peer review encouragement to improve. In addition, institutions rely on accreditation in their decisions to recognize transfer credit.

Christopher M. Harrington, Department Chair for Business Technologies and Liberal Arts

My impression after attending the HLC 2012 Conference was how far ahead SIPI is compared to many of the other institutions in regards to assessment. I know that our entire faculty, including adjuncts, is included in assessment and other processes from curriculum development to annual and 5 year program reviews. All here at SIPI are engaged in the process. This should bode well for our 2013 accreditation visit.

Gloria Mariano, Department Chair for Academic Support, Adult & Developmental Education

I gained a much better understanding of the process and journey SIPI has been working on over the past two years in the accreditation process. I look at this process as a puzzle and the conference helped me to fit more of the pieces together to make a whole picture. One important item that I heard constantly was communication and participation within the organization. Many presenters stressed the idea of teamwork and community in their institutions. I feel our leadership has also modeled in our institution; everyone is important.

Barbara James, Program Support Assistant

There were three themes that stuck with me: “It’s all about the data, the campus needs to understand the criteria so it becomes embedded in their processes;” and “establish a common language about what assessment is.” I now recognize the importance of keeping a sustainable and flexible resource room, of maintaining the required materials for the room, of using technology to organize and track self-study evidence of developing a plan to connect evidence to the HLC Criteria, and of displaying the evidence that supports the self-study. I gained new insight to create a resource room that is organized in a manner that best promotes our mission.

The HLC Conference is substantial with an extensive list of workshops pertaining to; Accreditation, Federal Compliance, Data Driven Decision Making, Shared Governance, the Self-Study Process, Course Evaluations, Student Retention and more. The SIPI delegates gained insight, knowledge and ideas to support the synergy necessary for progress.



The Higher Learning Commission Conference for Accreditation had more than 4,000 attendees.

ACCREDITATION CALENDAR

- August 1, 2012 Campus wide meeting
- August 8, 2012 Accreditation Sub-committee Meetings
- August 16 & 17, 2012 ALL STAFF Colloquium
- August 22, 2012 Accreditation Subcommittee Meeting

August 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Continuous data collection & analysis
- September 4, 2012 First day of Fall Trimester
- October 22-26, 2012 Mid-terms
- October, Request for HLC Visit in 2013 *Visit has been requested, fees need to be submitted
- November 1, 2012 Second Draft of Self-Study DUE
- December 5, 2012 Campus Wide Meeting
- February 1, 2012 Final Draft of Self-Study DUE

SIPI certificate and degree programs ensure a breadth of knowledge and promote intellectual inquiry through the General Education requirements, “this component of the curriculum prepares students to live in and contribute to a dynamic, complex, and multicultural world as productive life-long learners and tribal members, in an ever changing global environment” (p. 25, 2011-2013 SIPI Catalog). The four General Education Competencies are: Communication, Interpersonal/ Teamwork Skills, Cultural Legacy, and Critical Thinking.

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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.

STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

News Release : June 28, 2012

Office of the Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs

“Laverdure Lauds SIPI Student Darwin Cajero as Featured Speaker at 150th Anniversary Celebration for the Morrill Land-grant Act”

WASHINGTON, D.C.— Acting Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs Donald E. “Del” Laverdure lauded Darwin Cajero, a student at the Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI) in Albuquerque, NM, who was a featured speaker at the sesquicentennial celebration of the Morrill Land-grant Act of 1862, on Tuesday, June 26, 2012, at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center.

“I am pleased to see SIPI and Mr. Cajero in the spotlight with the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) and nearly 600 public university leaders and others from government, philanthropy and business to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Morrill Land-grant Act,” said Laverdure. “To be considered for this honor Mr. Cajero went through an extensive competitive selection process. His story is a testimony to all Native students who are actively making a difference seeking higher education and devoting their knowledge to their respective communities in Indian Country.”

Cajero is serving as the American Indian Higher Education Consortium, Tribal College and Universities (TCU) representative. “The scientific knowledge that I’ve gained has given me a wider view of our natural resources on the reservation,” said Cajero. “With education and experience I can help the tribe to address the areas of wildlife management, water quality, green energy and land use. I am grateful for my experiences and use them as a basis to mentor individuals from Jemez and students on campus-I don’t mind sharing what I have learned.”

Written by Nedra Darling

SIPI is proud of Darwin Cajero and would like to congratulate him for a job well done!

The Morrill Land-grant Act was written by Senator Justin Smith Morrill of Vermont and signed into law on July 2, 1862, by President Abraham Lincoln. The legislation provided grants of federal lands to the states for the establishment of public universities and led to the democratization of higher education. The American Indian Higher Education Consortium, a national association of tribal colleges and universities, also is celebrating the federal land-grant status of its 33 member institutions.



Darwin Cajero (Jemez Pueblo) is studying for an Associate’s degree in Natural Resources and a Certificate in Geospatial Information Technology. Darwin is pictured here with his family.