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Albuquerque, N.M. -- Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI) will undergo a comprehensive evaluation visit October 7-9, 2013 by a team representing The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. The public is being invited to submit comments on the school until September 9, 2013. SIPI is currently in "candidacy" status and is a candidate for initial accreditation by the Commission.

The Higher Learning Commission is one of six accrediting agencies in the United States that provide institutional accreditation on a regional basis. Accreditation is the primary means for assuring accountability; it certifies institutional quality and protects the institution's academic freedom. Institutional accreditation evaluates an entire institution and accredits it as a whole. Accreditation is voluntary. The Commission is recognized by the U.S Department of Education.

For the past three and half years, SIPI has been engaged in a process of self-study, addressing the Commissions requirements and criteria for accreditation. The evaluation team will review SIPI's ability to meet the Commission's Criteria for Accreditation. The team will make a recommendation to the Commission; following a review process, the Commission itself will take the final action.

Comments should be sent to:

Third Party Comment on Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute

The Higher Learning Commission

230 South LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500

Chicago, Ill. 60604-1411

The public may also submit comments on the Commission's website at http://www.aihec.org/

Comments must address substantive matters related to the quality of SIPI or its academic programs. Comments must be in writing. **Written, signed comments must be received by September 9, 2013.**