



Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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WASHINGTON – Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs Kevin K. Washburn today announced that Wendi Cole, a member of the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe in South Dakota and student at [Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute](#), has been named a 2013 New Century Scholar and selected for the All-USA Community College Academic Team.

“I want to congratulate Wendi Cole on her impressive accomplishment and the Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute for having a student receive such prestigious honors,” Washburn said. “I am proud to see our students making such an academic impact.”

The New Century Scholars Program is sponsored by The Coca-Cola Foundation, Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation, Phi Theta Kappa, and the American Association of Community Colleges. The 50 winners of the 2013 New Century Scholars competition include students from schools in the United States, Canada and the Federated States of Micronesia. The students received a total of \$100,000 in scholarships. The awards were announced on April 23.

Cole was among those selected out of more than 1,800 applicants from 800 community colleges nationwide. Nominees were judged on grades, leadership, activities and how they extend their intellectual talents beyond the classroom. She was the top scorer and only recipient to be named a New Century Scholar from the State of New Mexico. Cole was awarded a \$2,000 scholarship and a special medallion.

Cole also was one of 20 students named to the All-USA Community College Academic Team. The team is sponsored by Follett Higher Education Group and presented by USA TODAY and Phi Theta Kappa. The New Century Scholars program and the All-USA Community College Academic Team share a common application and together recognize outstanding community college students. Cole was featured in the April 23rd edition of USA TODAY.

New Century Scholars are the highest scoring students in each state, plus one student from Canada and one additional student chosen from among one of the remaining seven sovereign nations where Phi Theta Kappa is represented.

Cole is in her second year at Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI) in Albuquerque, N.M., pursuing a double-major in pre-engineering and computer-aided drafting. After completing her associate's and bachelor's degrees, her goal is to obtain a master's degree in engineering. She has served as president of the American Indian Science and Engineering Society's SIPI chapter and worked on community education projects involving renewable energy. She also serves as a student representative for the SIPI Pre-Engineering Advisory Committee, as a peer mentor for engineering majors, and as a tutor in math and science.

In addition to her college career, Cole is also the mother of a child with autism, which inspired her choice to study the fields of science and technology. They have worked together in doing their own research on autism.

The Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) is responsible for ensuring the implementation of federal education laws, including the No Child Left Behind Act, in 183 BIE-funded elementary and secondary schools and residential programs on 64 reservations in 23 states. The system serves about 40,000 American Indian and Alaska Native students and employs more than 5,000 teachers, administrators and support personnel. The BIE also provides resources and technical assistance to 124 tribally administered BIE-funded schools, 27 tribal colleges and universities and two technical colleges. It also directly oversees two post-secondary institutions: SIPI and the Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kan.

SIPI is a National Indian Community College established in 1971 at the request of the 19 Pueblos of New Mexico and other federally recognized tribes in the United States to help train American Indians and Alaska Natives for employment. It is advised by a national, tribally appointed Board of Regents. SIPI provides career technical training and transfer degree programs to students from the nation's 566 federally recognized tribes. It offers competitive job training programs; granting of Associate of Applied Science, Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees; and opportunities to transfer into four-year degree programs.

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