Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

Media Contact: Nedra Darling, OPA-IA Phone: 202-219-4152
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Washington, D.C. – Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs Larry Echo Hawk today announced he has named Dr. Sherry R. Allison, who is currently the acting president of the Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute located in Albuquerque, N.M., as SIPI President. Dr. Allison, who is an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation of Arizona, New Mexico and Utah, had been serving as acting president since January 5, 2009. The appointment is effective December 6, 2009.

"I am pleased that Dr. Sherry Allison has accepted the post of president of the Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute on a permanent basis," said Echo Hawk. "Her extensive background in the field of American Indian education and her commitment to excellence has inspired my confidence that she is the right leader to take SIPI into its fourth decade."

"Serving as interim SIPI president has been a labor of love," said Allison. "I am very excited, humbled and honored to accept this appointment. The entire SIPI community, including the employees, students and Board of Regents, has been incredibly supportive. By continuing to work together, I am very optimistic about SIPI's future."

Allison arrived at SIPI with over 25 years' experience in the field of Indian education. Prior to becoming acting SIPI president, she had served 10 years with the Office of Indian Education Programs, now the Bureau of Indian Education, in the Interior Department where she worked in programs dealing with residential treatment and education services to students in juvenile detention centers, professional development and special education. She served details on the Navajo Nation reservation as the Education Line Officer for the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Northern Navajo Agency in Shiprock, N.M. (June-October 2004) and the Fort Defiance Agency in Fort Defiance, Ariz. (October 2005-May 2006). From February to August 2007, she served as acting chief for the BIE's performance and accountability division in Albuquerque.

Allison's professional experience as an educator includes various assignments at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque from October 1997 to October 2001, including serving as Assistant Professor (LAT) and Senior Research Scientist at the UNM-Health Sciences Center/Center for Development and Disability and as an Assistant Professor (Adjunct) with UNM's Native American Studies Program. From August 1994 to April 1996, she served as a Research Associate with the University of Arizona School of Medicine's Native American Research and Training Center in Tucson.

Allison also has served on numerous national and state boards and task forces on education matters including service as board member and then president (1999-2000) of the National Indian Education Association and as chairperson of the New Mexico Advisory Panel for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2000).

Allison has been nominated for and is the recipient of numerous honors for her work including: Honorary Commander (for community service), Kirtland Air Force Base (1999); induction into the Council for Exceptional Children Hall of Fame, New Mexico Chapter, Division of Linguistically Diverse Exceptional Learners (1999); YWCA Woman on the Move nominee, Albuquerque (1998); University of

Oklahoma Faculty Leadership Institute Fellowship recipient (1997); U.S. Department of Education Patricia Roberts Harris Academic Fellowship recipient – doctoral program (1992-1994); National Native American Honor Society (1993-1994); Who's Who in American Colleges: Recognition for Scholastic Achievement (1994) and the National Bojack Humanitarian Award, Flagstaff, Ariz. (1991).

Allison, who is from Shiprock, holds a Bachelor of Social Work from New Mexico State University (1980), a Master of Arts in Education from Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff (1984) and a Doctorate of Education-Educational Leadership from NAU (1994).

Allison and her husband have three children and three grandchildren. The couple, whose children are grown, reside in Albuquerque.

The Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute is a National Indian Community College funded through the Bureau of Indian Education in the Department of the Interior. SIPI was established in 1971 at the request of the 19 Pueblos of New Mexico and other federally recognized tribes 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 564 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. SIPI's fall 2009 enrollment is 657 students from over 150 tribes.