Dr. Nader Vadiee of the Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute is New Mexico's 2009 Professor of the Year

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WASHINGTON – Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs Larry Echo Hawk today announced that a Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) college professor from the Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI) in Albuquerque, N.M., was named New Mexico Professor of the Year for 2009. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) selected Dr. Nader Vadiee from more than 300 top professors in the United States.

"I want to congratulate Dr. Vadiee on his tremendous achievement. Education is a priority issue that we seek to support and uphold," Echo Hawk said. "I am pleased to see that a professor at one of our colleges has achieved such a prestigious honor. It provides a tangible demonstration of the positive role models our youth and students throughout Indian Country need."

"I am extremely pleased at the recognition of Dr. Nadar Vadiee this prestigious award bestows," said acting SIPI President Dr. Sherry R. Allison. "Dr. Vadiee is an effective and skilled educator who really cares for our students and works from the heart. Not only does he bring honor to himself and his profession, but to the entire SIPI community. SIPI is very fortunate to have him as part of its team." Dr. Vadiee has established state-of-the-art learning facilities and curricula at SIPI to educate future engineers who can then compete in the 21st century global workforce. He has begun working with high school students through an engineering career pathway at Bernalillo High School (BHS) where fifty percent of the student body is American Indian and Alaska Native. Dr. Vadiee creates project-based learning opportunities in which BHS high school students work with SIPI community college students and graduate engineering students from the University of New Mexico (UNM) and New Mexico Tech. These student teams interact with industry representatives as they implement their projects, such as designing wind turbines, electric bicycle charging stations or robotic kits for statewide competitions. Students leave SIPI highly motivated and armed with the academic and practical skills to successfully transfer to four-year institutions to complete their bachelor's degrees.

CASE and the Carnegie Foundation have been partners in offering the U.S. Professors of the Year awards program since 1981. TIAA-CREF, one of America's leading financial services organizations and higher education's premier retirement system, became the principal sponsor for the awards ceremony in 2000. Additional support for the program is received from a number of higher education associations, including Phi Beta Kappa which sponsors an evening congressional reception.

This year, there are 38 state winners. CASE assembled two preliminary panels of judges to select finalists, and the Carnegie Foundation convened the third and final panel which selected four national winners. Together they selected state winners from the top entries that resulted from the judging process. Dr. Vadiee was selected from faculty members nominated by colleges and universities throughout the country. There will be an awards luncheon at the Willard Intercontinental hotel and an

evening reception at the Folger Shakespeare Library Exhibition Hall in Washington, D.C., on November 19, 2009.

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching was founded in 1905 by Andrew Carnegie "to do all things necessary to encourage, uphold and dignify the profession of teaching." The foundation is the only advanced-study center for teachers in the world and the third-oldest foundation in the nation. Its nonprofit research activities are conducted by a small group of distinguished scholars.

The Council for Advancement and Support of Education is the largest international association of education institutions, serving nearly 3,400 universities, colleges, schools and related organizations in 59 countries. CASE is the leading resource for professional development, information and standards in the fields of educational fundraising, communications, marketing and alumni relations.

The Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs oversees the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), which operates one of two federal school systems (the other is under the Department of Defense). The BIE funds 183 elementary and secondary day and boarding schools located on 64 federal Indian reservations in 23 states serving approximately 42,000 American Indian and Alaska Native students. The Bureau also services American Indian and Alaska Native post secondary students through higher education scholarships and support funding to 26 tribal colleges and universities, two technical colleges including the United Tribes Technical College (UTTC), and it directly operates two institutions: SIPI and Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kan.

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