



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF INDIAN EDUCATION
Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute
P.O. Box 10146 • Albuquerque, NM 87184
9169 Coors Blvd., NW • Albuquerque, NM 87120

Office of the President
(505) 922-4087

April 1, 2020

Dear Education Stakeholders:

I hope this letter finds you well and doing all you can to keep yourself, loved ones and your community safe and healthy. As we fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, let me assure you the safety and well-being of our campus community is our highest priority. Many of your students attend the Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI), which is located in Albuquerque, New Mexico and is operated by the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE). Due to the pandemic, SIPI and BIE leadership decided to adjust the operations of the college and the manner in which SIPI staff deliver academic programs to ensure the continued support of services to students.

The following are updates made to ensure the safety and well-being of students and the campus community:

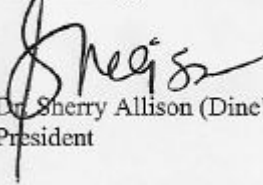
- (1) SIPI is adhering to the March 24 "stay at home" order issued by the Governor of New Mexico;
- (2) A transition from face-to-face classes to 100% online coursework commenced on March 30, 2020. Our goal is to ensure students have the opportunity to complete this trimester, which ends on April 24. To support students in this, we provided laptops and/or a Wi-Fi hotspot to students who requested them. Students who petitioned to graduate in 2020 were given priority of these items to ensure completion of necessary coursework;
- (3) All student support services, including tutoring and academic coaching, transitioned to our online portal using Brightspace (the SIPI learning management system) and Zoom to ensure coordination with staff and the integrity of our academic programs;
- (4) Residential halls were closed March 23 as students vacated the premises. Prior to departure, SIPI staff ensured students had a safe place to go. Students who required transportation assistance were provided gas cards, airfare, bus fare, or shuttle service for traveling purposes. Students were also provided snacks/drinks for their travel. For those students traveling a long distance, SIPI provided gift cards for meals;
- (5) Due to health and safety concerns, the SIPI campus is closed for onsite business until further notice. Most employees are on telework status. However, a minimal number of employees (IT, Facilities and Security) remain on campus to ensure essential functions are addressed. Only those individuals with legitimate business are allowed on campus;
- (6) The Indian Health Service (IHS) dental clinic located on the SIPI campus remains open for emergencies; and

- (7) SIPI cancelled the 2020 Commencement Program as a result of COVID-19 related safety concerns. When a level of normalcy is restored, SIPI will honor, acknowledge and celebrate our 2020 graduates.

I am extremely proud of our staff who worked diligently and expeditiously to ensure all transitions were successfully completed and students were taken care of. Ensuring the safety of our students and community, the continuation of classes, and the safe return home of our students were our highest priorities. While these times and changes are difficult, there is a positive in that the changes we have implemented in response to COVID-19 will not only help SIPI provide enhanced support for digital learning in the years to come, it will also increase access for non-traditional students that may not be located on campus.

Should you have any questions, I may be reached by email at Sherry.Allison@bie.edu. Thank you very much for your continued commitment and support of our students and the SIPI community.

Respectfully,



Dr. Sherry Allison (Dine')
President