




Office of the President  
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## United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF INDIAN EDUCATION  
Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute  
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Date: June 25, 2020  
To: SIPI Staff, Students, Regents and Partners  
From: Dr. Sherry Allison, President   
Subject: 2020 Fall trimester

I trust each of you are staying safe and healthy as we continue our fight against COVID-19. The purpose of this memorandum is to share with you the plans for the Fall 2020 trimester. First, I want to emphasize that the safety and well-being of our entire campus community is of the highest priority for the SIPI administration and Board of Regents; secondly, our decision is based on facts and data.

On March 13, 2020, President Trump declared the coronavirus pandemic a national emergency; since that date, the operations of SIPI changed dramatically, and we have always ensured that our students had the opportunity to complete Spring 2020 classes and continue the Summer trimester without interruption. To keep our students and staff safe from exposure to COVID-19, we transitioned all classes and support services to an online platform. At the start of the Spring 2020, 70 classes were offered online utilizing Brightspace/Zoom, by the end of March the remaining 155 classes successfully transitioned to online delivery. For the Summer 2020 trimester, we continued online delivery with 171 online courses.

We are moving forward with plans for the Fall 2020 trimester as follows:

- **Course format:** Classes will continue to be delivered online.
- **Hands-on classes:** We are exploring options for experiential classes, e.g. virtual, placement in local businesses as an alternate, condensed delivery, 15 weeks condensed to fewer weeks. We are also still waiting to hear how specialized accreditation bodies expect colleges to address these courses (e.g., the Commission of Opticianry Accreditation and the State of New Mexico Early Childhood Education Taskforce). When plans are finalized, information will be provided.
- **Student Fees:** There will be no charge to attend SIPI for the Fall 2020 trimester. SIPI does not charge tuition and all student fees will be waived.
- **Laptops/hotspots:** A laptop and/or hotspot will be provided to new/readmit students needing these items for online classes. Students will be informed of the process and information will be placed on the SIPI website.

- **Residential halls:** Both residential halls will continue to be closed. However, depending on the program of study, a limited number of hybrid classes may be offered with a possible residential component. Students enrolled in these programs will be contacted.
- **Closed campus:** Due to health and safety concerns, the SIPI campus remains closed until further notice. The majority of employees are on telework status with the exception of a minimal number of essential employees, e.g. IT, Facilities and Security, who remain on campus to ensure critical functions are addressed. Only those individuals with legitimate business are allowed on campus and SIPI Security will continue to monitor the front entrance.
- **Student support services:** All student support services, including tutoring and academic coaching, has transitioned to an online format. Students may contact Dr. Cecelia Cometsevah at [Cecelia.Cometsevah@bie.edu](mailto:Cecelia.Cometsevah@bie.edu).
- **Financial Aid:** In adherence to all regulations, students will continue to receive services without interruption. The U.S. Department of Education and the Veterans Administration has allowed SIPI the use of online services through December 2020. Contact Melynda Mitchell at [Melynda.Mitchell@bie.edu](mailto:Melynda.Mitchell@bie.edu).
- **2020 Fall Trimester Admission and Registration:**
  - **Admission for New and Readmit Students only:** Application deadline is August 7, 2020, with no extensions.
  - **Registration for Continuing Students only:** Continuing student are those students who attended SIPI during the Spring 2020 and/or Summer 2020 trimesters and plan to return for Fall 2020. These students:
    - do not need to reapply for admission into SIPI; and
    - must register for classes with their advisors.

The last day to register for classes is August 31, 2020, no extensions. Please contact Rhonda Platero ([Rhonda.Platero@bie.edu](mailto:Rhonda.Platero@bie.edu)), (505) 382-4287, for more information.
- **HiSet/High School Equivalency Offerings (Limited Enrollment):** Contact Jim Synder at [Jim.Synder@bie.edu](mailto:Jim.Synder@bie.edu).
- **Important Dates:** For your reference, attached is the 2020-2021 Academic Calendar.

Although the campus is closed, the Indian Health Service dental clinic located on the SIPI campus continues to provide dental services. Our staff will continue to telework and when public health conditions improve, staff will begin transitioning back to campus in phases.

I wish you the very best and I pray you and your love ones are kept safe and out of harm's way. If you have any questions, I may be reached by email at [Sherry.Allison@bie.edu](mailto:Sherry.Allison@bie.edu). Please refer to the SIPI website, [www.sipi.edu](http://www.sipi.edu), for additional information, or visit our official Facebook page. Your continued commitment and support of our students and the SIPI community is appreciated. Thank you.

Attachment: 2020-21 Academic Calendar