




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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MAR 19 2020

MEMORANDUM

To: SIPI Staff, Students and Regents
From: Dr. Sherry Allison, President 
Subject: COVID-19: Change in plans at SIPI

We are in the midst of dealing the pandemic health crisis caused by the spread of COVID-19. On March 17, 2020, a campus wide broadcast was held sharing information on the operations of SIPI. Since that time a few major changes have occurred which will impact our plans moving forward.

At this time, we are moving forward with transitioning all courses to on-line formats. On-line courses are scheduled to commence on March 30, 2020. We are doing all we can to ensure that students have the IT equipment needed, we are in process of loaning laptops and issuing hotspots to students, with the priority being those students who have petitioned to graduate in Spring 2020. Please contact Jolene Aguilar in the Academic Support Center (ASC) (505)346-2360 / Jolene.Aguilar@bie.edu.

On March 18, 2020, we received notification that all staff are to be transitioned immediately to telework or administrative leave. Our plan to continue operations of SIPI must therefore be amended. Because the virus is spreading so quickly, there is an attempt to contain the spread by minimizing contact and promoting self-isolation.

The changes are:

Residential halls: Students are being asked to return home. Both dorms will be closed on March 23, 2020, with the exception of a few rooms to accommodate those students who have absolutely no where to go; we anticipate this number to be very low. No outside visitors will be allowed. To make arrangements, students must work with Mr. Randy Larry, Director of Housing (505) 346-2327.

Transportation: We are committed to seeing that every student has the means to return home safely. Upon a student's request, travel accommodations will be made via airline, bus, train, shuttle to central locations and allocation of gas cards. This must be done in an expeditious manner. Students must contact Mr. Randy Larry to make arrangements. We predict that as the situation with the virus worsens, travel will become more restrictive and problematic for students to return home.

Closed campus: Commencing March 23, 2020, we will have a closed campus with restricted access closed. Only those individuals with legitimate business on campus, e.g.,... dental emergencies, essential SIPI employees, etc.. will be allowed on campus. Campus Security will monitor the front entrance.

Student support services: The campus will be closed for business; however, student support services will be offered via email, ZOOM, and Brightspace, Students may contact:

Math Lab: Dr. Eva Rivera-Lebron (Eva.Riveralebron@bie.edu)

Writing Lab: Maude "Luri" Owens (Maude.Owens@bie.edu)

Tutoring: JoAnn Willie (Joann.Willie@bie.edu)

Pantry: Jolene Aguilar (Jolene.Aguilar@bie.edu)

Admissions/Financial Aid: Gloria Mariano (Gloria.Mariano@bie.edu)

Counseling: Dr. Cecelia Cometsevah: Cecelia.Cometsevah@bie.edu)

Library: Jolene Manus (Jolene.Manus@bie.edu)

Brightspace: Michael Samudio (Michael.samudio@bie.edu)

Spring 2020 Graduates: Duane Reeder (Duane.Reeder@bie.edu)

Student Laptop/Hotspot needs: Jolene Aguilar (Jolene.Aguilar@bie.edu)

Student IT: Donovan Barney (Donovan.Barney@bie.edu or (505)382-4662

These decisions are sad and disappointing for us all, but were necessary given the spread of COVID-19 and with your health and safety being our highest priority. We must all work together to ensure the safety of our students and ourselves while ensuring the success of our students. Thank you and best regards.