



## Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute Priorities for the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress (February 2025)

Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) provide rigorous postsecondary education and research opportunities for American Indians and Alaska Natives (AIANs) and other rural community residents. TCUs offer higher education that is uniquely Tribal, founded on Native languages, culture, and philosophy with strong student support systems and community engagement. Through these educational opportunities, research, and industry partnerships for high-demand careers, TCUs are laying the foundation for sustainable economic development within Tribal Nations and beyond. Together, we build *Strong Sovereign Nations through Excellence in TRIBAL higher education*, empowering individuals and strengthening communities.

### Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute: AT A GLANCE

- Enrollment Trends (Spring 2024/Fall 2024): Spring 2024 enrollment was 200 (down 23% from previous spring), Fall 2024 enrollment was 215 (down 14% from previous Fall)
- Affordable Tuition: SIPI charges no tuition
- Student to Faculty Ratio: 7:1
- Part-time/Full-time: 48 Part-time, 168 Full-time
- Persistence Rate: 43%
- Highest Level of Degree/Program Available: Associate Degree
- TRIO Program: No



**Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI)** provides student support services critical to student persistence, retention, and completion.

- **Securing Families:** Under the W.K. Kellogg Foundation Grant, SIPI offers the Securing Families program to provide services to students with families. Classes and workshops are held on various topics such as financial literacy, class bonding, community resources students can utilize, traditional foods, and mental & behavioral health.
- **ACCESS Program:** The SIPI ACCESS program connects academic and non-academic services to support working families and first-generation and low-income students. The ACCESS program provides the SIPI Pantry (food, clothing, and school supplies), offers local resources, gathers food and emergency aid information, and partners with local businesses.
- **Emergency Aid Assistance:** SIPI partners with its Board of Regents office to administer emergency aid to students through Project Success. The emergency aid program provides one-time financial assistance to students facing unexpected financial emergencies. By helping students with financial assistance, they can remain enrolled, persist, and concentrate on their educational goals while at SIPI.
- **Coaching Program:** SIPI's tutoring program includes three educational technicians who provide tutoring for students, along with 9-10 peer tutors each trimester. It covers all subjects and offers both supplemental and embedded tutoring in the classroom.
- **Mental Health:** SIPI provides telehealth through the BIE Behavioral Health and Wellness program. SIPI collaborates with First Nations Community Health Source to have a clinician on campus once a week. Additionally, SIPI partners with the Albuquerque Indian Health Service to address students' mental, dental, and medical needs.
- **Bernalillo County Sheriff's Department:** SIPI has a formal MOU with Bernalillo County Sheriff's Office (BSCO) to address fire and life safety, including active shooter and crisis situations that arise on our campus.



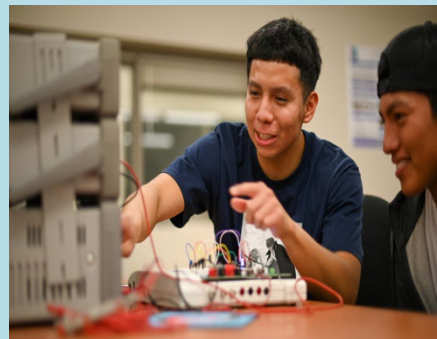


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### Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute: Strengthening Our Workforce

TCUs prepare professionals in high-demand fields, including agriculture and natural resources management, health, information technology, and building trades. By teaching the job skills most in demand within our communities, TCUs are laying a strong foundation for Tribal and regional economic growth.

- **Early Childhood Education:** SIPI's Early Childhood Education Program offers students access to knowledge, skills, and professionalism in early childhood education, as well as family and community development by empowering them to secure employment in their communities after graduation or to pursue their bachelor's degree. Early Childhood students can also receive training in bilingual and immersion educational pathways.
- **Culinary Arts Program:** The Culinary Arts Program is currently updating its curriculum to better align with industry needs and requirements. Sous Chef David Williams, a SIPI Alumnus, is working at Los Poblanos, earning 2 Michelin stars.
- **Establishing New Programs:** In January 2024, SIPI received a new grant to support FEMA's Tribal Nations Readiness and Resilience Training program. SIPI will assist in developing training programs and will likely host several sessions at SIPI. Additionally, SIPI is in the process of establishing an internship with the US Forest Service that will create a Pathway to employment.
- **Community Outreach:** Tribal Geographic Information Support Conference: Advanced Technological Education (ATE) collaborated with SIPI's Extension office to sponsor the conference. The conference focused on Geographic Information Support (GIS) and Geographic Information Technology (GIT) projects, as well as the needs in Indian Country. Additionally, the conference explored potential pathways for funding and support for individuals wishing to create GIS work in Indian Country.
- **STEM Outreach PAMER Program:** The SIPI STEM Outreach PAMER Grant (NTU) program offers internship opportunities for students to gain hands-on experience in testing and evaluation across various roles. Interns received extensive training in operating 3-dimensional (3D) makers, mastering laser etching, and 3D resin technology, and exploring the Internet of Things (IoT), robotics, software development, manufacturing & engineering methodologies, augmented reality (AR), video editing, and renewable energy. Beyond the foundational training, interns are entrusted with diverse responsibilities, evolving from shadowing roles to leading intern positions with greater accountability. Expanding responsibilities allows students to apply their knowledge in meaningful ways. This has transcended the projects completed by the interns by incorporating practical learning, skill enhancement, and achieving measurable outcomes.





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### Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute: Driving Economic Development

TCUs act as a catalyst for economic growth locally and regionally by enhancing educational opportunities, research, and leadership skills for Tribal and other rural students. SIPI recently completed an Economic Impact Study for fiscal year (FY) 2022-2023, conducted through Lightcast, which demonstrated its economic impact on the state of New Mexico.

*Key highlights include:*

- **22%** of SIPI students originate from out of state, which generated new dollars and opportunities for New Mexico.
- The average SIPI associate degree graduate earns **\$9,000 more** than a person with a high school diploma or equivalent.

SIPI's Business Administration program offers enhanced educational opportunities through internships. One example is the Tribal College Research Grant Program internship, which enables students to learn about collecting and analyzing data, as well as studying Indigenous research methodology. Many interns in this program have progressed to other data-related jobs, including one intern who was hired at SIPI after earning their bachelor's degree from the University of New Mexico.

### Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute: Building Our Futures

TCUs are resilient, resourceful, and proud to lead the nation in many areas, including preparing an American Indian and Alaska Native workforce of engineers, nurses, land managers, technicians, and teachers. Always looking to the future, TCUs are focused on building new partnerships, advancing educational excellence, and creating economic opportunities for Tribal and regional communities.

- **Allied Health:** Local Tribes have indicated a shortage of allied health professionals in the area. Therefore, SIPI is in the process of developing an Allied Health program, which will include programs such as phlebotomy and medical records.
- **Film and Multimedia:** SIPI has explored the creation of courses related to Film and Multimedia production, considering its location in the Southwest and access to studios and experts in the field.
- **Community Support:** The SIPI Student Government is empowered to create and design engaging programs for SIPI students. The aim is to provide activities that encourage participation and enhance social skills within the SIPI campus community. Students can share their opinions and concerns, enabling them to bring about meaningful change on campus. This initiative seeks to help SIPI students feel connected to a college community, ensuring their voices are heard and allowing positive changes to flourish over time.

