

Summary: Investigation of Misconduct and Mismanagement at Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute

Report Date: November 2, 2018

Report Number: 16-0807

The OIG investigated allegations of misconduct and mismanagement at Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI), a community college in Albuquerque, NM, operated and overseen by the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE). The complainant alleged that a SIPI manager engaged in sexual misconduct and harassment, and violated Federal travel regulations and U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) policy. The complainant also alleged that other SIPI managers and employees retaliated against her for filing complaints about the SIPI manager, failed to address employee complaints, failed to complete performance appraisals, engaged in improper hiring practices, circumvented the acquisition process, and misused a Government purchase card.

We found that the SIPI manager had a sexual relationship with a SIPI student, but neither the college nor the BIE have a policy prohibiting sexual relationships between faculty and students. In addition, several of the manager's colleagues and direct reports described the manager's behavior in the workplace as confrontational, abrasive, and argumentative. We did not substantiate the allegations that the SIPI manager violated Federal travel regulations or DOI policy.

We also found that SIPI managers did not complete performance appraisals for all employees and that the appraisal process at SIPI allowed managers to determine ratings-based cash awards for themselves. We did not substantiate the remaining allegations, including retaliation against the complainant.

This is a summary of an investigative report we issued to the BIE and Bureau of Indian Affairs Directors.

