RESPONDING AND ADAPTING TO COVID-19
117th Congress – 2nd Session (March 2022)

Through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) and American Rescue Plan (ARP), Sisseton Wahpeton College received urgently needed funding to immediately transition to online learning platforms, modify campuses for health and safety concerns, and address the digital divide challenges in Indian Country. Our students received emergency grants, laptops, tuition assistance, and internet stipends to help them stay enrolled in courses. As we continue to support students during this difficult time and develop a plan to “return to normal,” TCUs need your continued support to address ongoing and increasing needs.

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

Through the Education Stabilization Fund received ($438,390) for “Student” aid that was meant to distribute directly to students in need without the funds being affected by tuition, fees, or other college costs, SWC has distributed in excess of $357,000 directly to students for emergency purposes.
- From Spring 2020 to Fall 2021, SWC Distributed $209,506 in student emergency aid that went directly to the student.
- Spring 2022, students received just over $148,000 in emergency aid.

STUDENT HIGHLIGHT
During the pandemic, Jerald Red Buffalo, tribal member of the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate was able to hold down a full-time job at Dakota Pride Treatment Center as an addiction counselor trainee, volunteer and co-founder Piya Canku (Healing Road), and assist his companion in raising their family. Jerald, the SWC American Indian College Fund student of the year managed being a full-time employee, student, and parent during the COVID19 Pandemic while earning a 4.0 GPA! Mr. Red Buffalo is now enrolled in the Bachelor of Science degree program in Behavioral Science with an emphasis in Addiction Studies.

COST OF ATTENDANCE RELIEF SCHOLARSHIP
- CARES Act funds are used at SWC to support the COARS.
- Students making satisfactory academic progress and who are Title IV eligible qualify for a COARS award that greatly increases the student’s chances of success.
BROADBAND AND IT CHALLENGES

The pandemic hit SWC IT services the hardest in remote access services. Not only were more students accessing class content from home, but instructors and staff needed remote access to their work computers, servers, and files. SWC implemented several projects in response.

- Purchase of a new firewall that allows multiple private IP addresses to be mapped to a single public IP address. This allows a virtually unlimited number of remote access clients to connect, where the old firewall was limited to a one-to-one mapping (about 20 clients).
- The IT department started securing the remote access computers and servers by changing the default remote access port to a non-standard port, making it tougher for port scanners to see that there were ports open to remote into (hacker deterrent).
- In classrooms where Zoom class meetings were to occur, switches were upgraded to 10 Gigabit backbone switches, with 1 Gigabit connections to the classroom clients.
- Large touch panel displays were installed in classrooms for Zoom sessions.
- Laptop and desktop computers were provided for students who didn’t have a computer to access Zoom classroom meetings remotely.
- A new blade server was purchased and installed to support higher demand on the eLearning system.
- With more clients having remote access, security has been evaluated and adjusted: Standard ports for remote access have been changed; administrator accounts have been renamed and/or disabled (to defend against brute force attacks); and network accounts have limited access, and administrative actions are allowed by local accounts per each server, rather than a single network admin account.

DOI – Bureau of Indian Education
CONSTRUCTION, MAINTENANCE, REHABILITATION

Sisseton Wahpeton College was founded in 1978. The main campus was gifted to the college so the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate would have a place for higher education in its rural community. Over the 40 years since the college opened, newer buildings have been erected through grant opportunities that have since become non-existent. The recent allocation of funds from DOI – Bureau of Indian Education has been a great assistance to SWC for the future development of a much-needed $6M Student Center. The 10,000 S.F. addition to the college campus will include a commons area, admissions office suite, café, a small student athletic center and an outside classroom.