

**SPIRIT LAKE TRIBE  
RESOLUTION NO. A05-25-177**



**RESOLUTION TO EXEMPT HASKELL INDIAN NATIONS UNIVERSITY AND  
SOUTHWESTERN INDIAN POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE FROM ANY REDUCTION IN  
WORKFORCE OR FEDERAL HIRING FREEZE**

**WHEREAS**, the Spirit Lake Tribe, formerly known as the Devils Lake Sioux Tribe, is a federally recognized Indian Tribe governed by a constitution dated April 14, 1944, approved by the Acting Commissioner, Bureau of Indian Affairs on February 14, 1946, and as subsequently amended on January 10, 1958, May 5, 1960, July 14, 1961, July 17, 1969; May 3, 1974; April 16, 1976; May 4, 1981; November 21, 1991; and August 19, 1996; and

**WHEREAS**, the Constitution of the Spirit Lake Tribe generally authorizes and empowers the Spirit Lake Tribal Council to engage in activities on behalf of and in the interest of the welfare and benefit of the Tribe and of the enrolled members thereof, and

**WHEREAS**, the Spirit Lake Tribal Council (hereinafter the Tribal Council) is the governing body of the Tribe and is empowered to administer the economic resources and financial affairs of the Tribe; and

**WHEREAS**, Tribal Nations are and always have been inherently sovereign governments that have political, government-to-government relationships with the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, many treaties have provided Tribal Nations with guaranteed rights to Tribal self-government, protection, safety, education, and economic development; and

**WHEREAS**, the United States' obligation to Tribal Nations is based on their political status as Indians – a status that is unique to Indians and enshrined in the U.S. Constitution; and

**WHEREAS**, the relationship between Tribal Nations and the U.S. government has been defined in statute and case law as a political relationship that further distinguishes Indian programs from federally funded programs and policies for the general public; and

**WHEREAS**, the United States fulfills its legal trust and treaty obligations through both the direct delivery of Tribal programs and services provided by federal agencies and through the provision of federal staff and dollars to Tribal Nations; and

**WHEREAS**, essential educational services to Tribal Nations are offered through two federally operated institutions of higher education (Haskell Indian Nations University and Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute) through the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) of the Department of the Interior; and

**WHEREAS**, Haskell Indian Nations University (HINU), located in Lawrence, KS, has been in continuing existence since its creation in 1884 as a boarding school (Indian Industrial Training School) focused on agricultural education for grades one (1) through five (5) and in 1970 grew to become Haskell Indian Junior College and in 1990 became HINU; and

**SPIRIT LAKE TRIBE  
RESOLUTION NO. A05-25-177**



**WHEREAS**, HINU serves 1052 students from 146 Tribal Nations and offers two (2) certificate programs, ten (10) associate programs, four (4) bachelor's programs, and almost 180 Full-time Equivalent (FTE) staff to provide essential services; and

**WHEREAS**, Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI), located in Albuquerque, NM, was established in 1971 by the federal government in response to the need for education and training opportunities for American Indian and Alaska Native students; and

**WHEREAS**, SIPI serves 323 students from 40 Tribal Nations and, as a vocational training center, focuses on science, technology, and mathematics (STEM) education, along with other vocational and technical programs through 13 associate programs, seven (7) certificate programs, and almost 100 FTE staff to provide essential services; and

**WHEREAS**, HINU and SIPI are accredited through the Higher Learning Commission and are a part of the Land-Grant family as of 1994 through the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act; and

**WHEREAS**, as federal institutions, all staff at HINU and SIPI are federal employees whose functions are in service of fulfilling the trust and treaty obligations to Indian Country; and

**WHEREAS**, the White House has stated that reducing the federal workforce is an Administration priority, and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has now put in place a memorandum of a hiring freeze and ordered most Federal agencies to lay off probationary employees immediately; and

**WHEREAS**, we understand that, pursuant to the hiring freeze memorandum of January 20, 2025, and Executive Order (EO) 14210, Implementing the President's "Department of Government Efficiency" Workforce Optimization Initiative, more than 27 percent of HINU and 24 percent of SIPI's workforce may be reduced, representing vital instructors, school safety personnel, and key leadership positions that could harm the institutions' accreditation status; and

**WHEREAS**, institutions will have to cancel classes, reduce student enrollment, and limit student support activities and services (tutoring, free meals, advising, etc.) to accommodate the loss of employees and restrictions from hiring staff to safely provide services to students enrolled; and

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Spirit Lake Tribe formally supports the exemption of HINU and SIPI in the implementation of the White House memorandum and EO 14210 directing the termination of probationary and hiring freeze of Federal employees; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge OPM, alongside every Agency Head and Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) team lead, to ensure that employees whose functions are in service of fulfilling the trust and treaty obligations to Indian Country are exempted from this and further comprehensive actions towards workforce or federal funding reductions; and

**SPIRIT LAKE TRIBE  
RESOLUTION NO. A05-25-177**



**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, we call upon OPM and the Department of the Interior to issue a blanket exemption from any workforce reductions for all employees of the two (2) federally funded institutions of higher education and the BIE, and all other Tribal offices throughout all Federal agencies, as well as other Federal employees whose role is to deliver services or funding to Tribal programs; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that OPM, Office of Management and Budget, and respective Departments and Agencies immediately conduct Tribal Consultation to understand the critical services provided to Indian Country and the grave impact these staffing changes will have; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that this resolution shall be the policy of the Spirit Lake Tribe until it is withdrawn or modified by a subsequent resolution.

**CERTIFICATION**

I, the undersigned as Secretary-Treasurer of the Tribal Council, do hereby certify that the Tribal Council is composed of six (6) members of whom five (5) were present, constituting a quorum for a Special Meeting duly called and convened on this 20<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2025 and approved this resolution by an affirmative vote of three (3) in favor, none (0) opposed, none (0) abstaining, and one (1) absent (Koooper Longie, Woodlake District Representative). The Secretary-Treasurer does not vote and the Chairman votes only in case of a tie.

Handwritten signature of Charmayne Bohanon in black ink.

**Charmayne Bohanon  
Secretary Treasurer**



Handwritten signature of Lonna J. Street in blue ink.

**Lonna J. Street  
Tribal Chairwoman**