



News Release

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Sitting Bull College Hires New President

FORT YATES, ND – After four months of advertising the Sitting Bull College board of trustees hires Laurel Vermillion as president, effective May 1, 2006. As interim president for the past four months, Vermillion now takes over as the top administrator at Sitting Bull College, filling a vacancy left by Ron His Horse is Thunder in October 2005.

“Its exciting because I feel the board of trustees has recognized that one of their own is fully capable of taking over the organization,” Vermillion said. “I’ve lived my whole life here on the Standing Rock Reservation and I know the people.”

Vermillion exemplifies the critical role tribal colleges’ play among many Reservation communities. She started her academic career as a student in 1973 at Sitting Bull College, then called Standing Rock Community College. From there, Vermillion matriculated to the University of North Dakota and completed her Bachelor of Science degree in 1980 and her Master’s of Education in Administration degree in 1992.

In 1995, Vermillion joined the Sitting Bull College family of administrators, where she held the vice president of academics position for four years. In 1999, she made a lateral move and accepted the position of vice president of operations and served in this capacity while pursuing her doctorate degree in Teaching and Learning-Higher Education.

In August 2005, Vermillion completed her doctorate degree and continued to lead the college’s operations until hired as president.

According to President-elect Vermillion, no major changes in operation or staff are forecasted, but rather she is looking forward to a smooth and uneventful transition to her new role.

In stressing that point, Vermillion said, “the biggest change will be my relocation from my current office (vice president’s office) to the vacated president’s office, which is directly across the lobby.”

Although the college is guided by several institutional goals, at the top of Vermillion’s list is student retention.

She also said, “SBC needs to be more attentive in working with children from the elementary schools, re-evaluating current Sitting Bull College businesses and working more with community based programs like Horizons.”

Horizons is a community development program funded by the Northwest Area Foundation and is currently being administered through Sitting Bull College.

Vermillion believes Sitting Bull College can be the role model to many pilot programs serving the impoverished Native Americans living on and off the Reservations, across the U.S.

“This role modeling includes developing partnerships with other tribal colleges,” Vermillion said.

Sitting Bull College is currently in the middle of a \$40 million fund raising campaign for a new campus and touts a student enrollment of a little over 300 students (spring 2006).

The college operations is currently spread across two campuses (new & old) and employees three professional administrators (including the president), 23 full-time faculty, 10 part-time faculty and 45 staff members.

The board of trustees at Sitting Bull College is very excited to have completed the search and even more excited about their selection to fill the president’s position.

“Although the candidate pool was strong, its Dr. Vermillion’s education and past work experience at Sitting Bull College that will lead us into the future and continue to help us grow,” said Robert Gipp, Chairman of the Sitting Bull College board of trustees.