

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 2, 2024

Mr. Tony Dearman
Director
Bureau of Indian Education
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Director Dearman:

The House Committee on Education and the Workforce and the House Committee on Natural Resources (the “Committees”) are conducting ongoing oversight into alleged misconduct involving the Haskell Indian Nations University (“HINU”) and the U.S. Department of the Interior’s (“DOI”) Bureau of Indian Education (“BIE”). As you are aware, allegations of misconduct at HINU were reported to officials at HINU, BIE, and DOI through numerous complaints, emails, and letters filed or sent by HINU students and current or former HINU employees.¹ The Committees are concerned both by BIE’s failure to respond and quickly address students’ concerns, especially those involving reports of sexual assault, as well as by claims that BIE omitted information from the very reports intended to address these concerns.

As a result, the Committees specifically seek documents and information related to the BIE report titled *Haskell Indian Nations University – Administrative Investigation Report: Allegation of Harassment, Bullying, Nepotism, Theft, Sexual Assault, Workplace Harassment/Intimidation/Bullying, Fraud, Waste and Abuse, and Drinking on Campus at Haskell Indian Nations University, located in Lawrence, Kansas* (“AIB Report”), which was submitted to the BIE Human Resources Officer (“HRO”) on November 7, 2022, but is dated January 13, 2023.² Information provided to the Committee on Natural Resources indicates that the *AIB Report* may have been altered between the time it was submitted and ultimately dated.

The Committees are also troubled by reports that the BIE repeatedly refused to produce the *AIB Report*, produced an entirely different report instead of the *AIB Report* in response to proper Freedom of Information Act requests, and eventually released the *AIB Report* only after being legally compelled to do so.³ The now publicly available but heavily redacted *AIB Report* describes serious assertions and findings of misconduct at HINU that ravaged HINU student and faculty welfare. Disturbingly, several cases of sexual assault were reportedly disregarded.⁴

¹ Bureau of Indian Education, *Haskell Indian Nations University – Administrative Investigation Report: Allegations of Harassment, Bullying, Nepotism, Theft, Sexual Assault, Workplace Harassment/Intimidation/Bullying, Fraud, Waste and Abuse, and Drinking on Campus at Haskell Indian Nations University, located in Lawrence, Kansas* (Jan. 13, 2023).

² *Id.*

³ Jeff Ruch et al., *Report on Abuse of Indian Students Finally Surfaces*, PUBLIC EMPLOYEES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY (Apr. 22, 2024), <https://peer.org/report-on-abuse-of-indian-students-finally-surfaces/>.

⁴ *Id.*

To assist the Committees with our investigation, please provide the following records, documents, communications, or information, in electronic format, as soon as possible, but no later than July 10, 2024 (instructions attached):

1. An unredacted copy of the *AIB Report* and all unredacted copies of the exhibits thereto as submitted to the BIE HRO on November 7, 2022.
2. Identify and explain any and all edits, amendments, deletions, additions, or other modifications to the *AIB Report* and all exhibits thereto between November 7, 2022, and January 12, 2023.
3. An unredacted copy of the January 13, 2023, *AIB Report* and all unredacted copies of the exhibits thereto.

Please contact Gabriella Pistone with the Committee on Education and the Workforce at (202) 225-4527 or Gabriella.Pistone@mail.house.gov, or Michelle Lane with the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee of the Committee on Natural Resources at (202) 225-2761 or michelle.lane@mail.house.gov, with any questions.

Under the Rules of the House of Representatives, Rule X, the Committee on Education and the Workforce has jurisdiction over “education or labor generally” and “shall review, study, and coordinate on a continuing basis laws, programs, and Government activities relating to domestic educational programs and institutions and programs of student assistance within the jurisdiction of other committees.”⁵ Under Rule X, the Committee on Natural Resources has “general oversight” of any matter relating to its jurisdiction, including all matters concerning the Department of the Interior and relations between the United States and Tribal organizations.⁶

Sincerely,



Virginia Foxx
Chairwoman
House Committee on Education and
the Workforce



Bruce Westerman
Chairman
House Committee on Natural Resources

⁵ R. of the H.R., 118th Cong. at 6-11 (Dec. 11, 2023).

⁶ *Id.*



Burgess Owens
Chairman
Subcommittee on Higher Education
and Workforce Development
Committee on Education and the Workforce



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
House Committee on Natural Resources

Attachment