



# A FOUNDATION FOR GROWTH

Overcoming the intimidation of returning to school, Sandra Dietz now helps others throughout the state

Story and Photo by  
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**S**andra Dietz credits her education at WITC for providing her with the foundation and skills that helped her to advance in her career and become the person she is today. Dietz, who earned degrees in food service and supervisory management from WITC, is currently the realty officer for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in Ashland, serving tribal members throughout the state.

“My degree in food service gave me the opportunity to travel around the country, which really gave me the stepping stones I needed to become the strong, independent woman I am today,” Dietz says of the degree she earned in 1989.

After enjoying a career in the food industry, Dietz returned home to Ashland where she found an entry level position at the BIA.

“When I started at the BIA, I started at the lowest level,” Dietz recalls. “As I worked my way up over the course of 10 years, I realized I needed to further my education.”

That led Dietz back to WITC and the supervisory management program. Not only was she able to apply previously earned credits to her new program, Dietz

appreciated the flexibility of the course. And the evening classes allowed her to work full time while completing her degree.

“It was a commitment,” Dietz says of the supervisory management program. “Although taking night classes took longer, it was well worth it.”

Many of the supervisory management courses are taught via distance learning, such as interactive television. It allows an instructor at any one of WITC’s campuses to teach a course broadcast to any campus or outreach location. At first, Dietz found the system slightly intimidating, but discovered that it was one of the aspects of the program that she enjoyed the most.

“It was exciting to see students from other campuses and interact with them,” Dietz recalls. “Plus, I was able to attend classes at New Richmond when my work took me to Minneapolis. That was a definite plus. I never had to miss class, even when I was out of Ashland. That added element made it more personal for me.”

Dietz graduated in December 2011 and was able to apply her education to her career immediately.

“I supervise a staff of five, and I work with

individuals throughout the state,” she says. “I’ve taken a lot of the team building and leadership skills and incorporated that here with my staff. And my schooling allowed me to appreciate the diverse groups I work with.”

Dietz continues her relationship with the college as a member of the advisory committee, where she helps to shape and update the supervisory management program to continue to meet the needs of employers and professionals in the field.

Regarding the ideal student, she says, “I believe they’re looking for individuals who have taken the time and made the commitment to pursue a degree. That demonstrates drive, desire and the ability to stick with it. As a supervisor, I’m looking for those same qualities, too.”

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