



# NEWS RELEASE

## Office of Public Relations

Diné College • Tsaile, AZ 86556 • (928) 724-6698  
[bdotson@dinecollege.edu](mailto:bdotson@dinecollege.edu)

**CONTACT:** Bernie Dotson

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 28, 2017

#### **MOU Aimed At Graduate Level Special Education Degree**

*Diné College, WNMU, ONNSFA to ink master's degree agreement July 31st*

**TSAILE, Ariz.** — Diné College, Western New Mexico University and the Office of the Navajo Nation Scholarship & Financial Assistance announced a major collaboration July 27.

The initiative is the result of a Memorandum of Understanding between the two institutions and the tribe. The goal is to improve student access to special education at the graduate level utilizing a broad umbrella of institutional resources.

The concept of partnership schools, while relatively new to Diné College, is a grass-roots approach to bringing together the college, WNMU and the community for advanced education, Dr. Geraldine Garrity of Diné College, said.

A formal signing of the agreement is set for July 31 at 1 p.m. in the State Room of the President's Office of the Navajo Nation in Window Rock.

"This is an opportunity for both institutions and the tribe to work together to meet the special education needs of the Navajo Nation," Garrity, who serves as Interim Provost and Education Chair and Faculty Chair for the Center for Diné Teacher Education at Diné College, said. "Dr. Roberta Marquez (Assistant Professor of Special Education at WNMU), Ms. Rose Graham (Director at ONNSFA), and I, are very excited at establishing and implementing this graduate program for Navajo teacher candidates."

Garrity stated the MOU targets students already enrolled at either college, including interested students from outside colleges and universities. Upon

graduation, students receive a Master of Arts in Teaching degree with an emphasis in special education.

As far as when the new graduate degree program kicks in, Garrity said everything is in place for a Fall 2017 beginning. Students will be taking graduate program classes online through WNMU, Garrity noted. Garrity said prospective students are admitted to the program through WNMU and from there advising protocol will take place, following course registration.

Diné College was established in 1968 as the first tribally-controlled community college in the United States. The college maintains six satellite campuses around the Navajo Nation and awards associate and bachelor degrees in a variety of disciplines.

Western New Mexico University's main campus is in Silver City. The school was created in 1893 and offers associate, bachelor and master's degrees, with campuses in Lordsburg, Deming and Gallup.