



## THE NAVAJO NATION

### *Proclamation*

#### **In Recognition and Celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Diné College (Formerly Navajo Community College)**

**WHEREAS**, the Navajo Nation Tribal Council established Navajo Community College in 1968 by Navajo Tribal Charter, the first American Indian tribe to establish and govern an institution of higher learning on an Indian reservation in the United States, which launched a tribal college movement that now includes 37 tribal colleges nationwide; and

**WHEREAS**, Navajo Community College began classes the spring semester of 1969 in Many Farms, Arizona in shared space with a Bureau of Indian Affairs high school until a permanent college could be built; and

**WHEREAS**, Congress passed in 1971, the "Navajo Community College Act" authorizing grants to the Navajo Tribe for construction, maintenance and operation of Navajo Community College and that it be designed and operated by the Navajo Tribe to ensure that qualified Navajo and other applicants have educational opportunities suited to their unique needs and interests; and

**WHEREAS**, the main campus of Navajo Community College, broke ground April 13, 1973 and is located in Tsaile, Arizona, which has expanded to include five additional sites across the Navajo Nation in Crownpoint and Shiprock, New Mexico and Chinle, Tuba City, and Window Rock, Arizona; and

**WHEREAS**, the Navajo Tribal Council, based on the recommendations of the Board of Regents of Navajo Community College, enacted in 1997 a name change from Navajo Community College to Diné College and an expansion of degrees offered to include baccalaureate, and at such time graduate and post-graduate degrees, when such degree programs are accredited; and

**WHEREAS**, Diné College now offers a variety of general and specialized careers through innovative Higher Learning Commission -accredited degree programs that include 20 Associate degrees, eight Bachelor degrees and eight certificate programs, and enrolls a total of 1500 students at its campuses across the Navajo Nation.

**WHEREAS**, since its creation, Navajo philosophy, language, history, arts and crafts, and traditional teachings have integrated into a liberal arts curriculum that has formed the foundation of Diné College and is carried out through the Navajo educational philosophy of Sa'ah Naagháíí Bik'eh Hózhóó that teaches Navajo students about their culture and life ways thereby preserving and perpetuating the Navajo belief system as well as providing one degree and two certificate programs in Navajo Studies; and

**WHEREAS**, Diné College is a leader in Indian education and over the last 50 years has educated thousands of students helping them achieve educational and economic opportunity, strengthened self-esteem and character, professionalism, while at the same time working with the Navajo Nation government in creating an educated Navajo citizenry, building capacity and a specialized workforce to achieve Navajo Nation economic self-sufficiency, future growth and opportunity; and

**WHEREAS**, Diné College throughout the year of 2018 will be hosting various programs, special events and outreach about its legacy and current degrees and all Navajo citizens and others who work with the Navajo Nation are encouraged to participate in these opportunities of learning and community-building; and

**NOW THEREFORE, I, RUSSELL BEGAYE**, President of the Navajo Nation, **I, LORENZO BATES**, Speaker of the Navajo Nation Council, and **I, THOMAS J. HOLGATE**, Chief Justice of the Navajo Nation Supreme Court, hereby proclaim the entire year of 2018 as a celebration of "The 50th Anniversary of Diné College (formerly Navajo Community College)" and urge all to commemorate the unique contributions of the first institution of higher learning on the Navajo Nation and Indian country nationally, and to remember those leaders who fought to see this dream become a reality.

**PROCLAIMED THIS 23<sup>rd</sup> DAY OF JANUARY, 2018**

Handwritten signature of Russell Begaye in black ink.

Russell Begaye, President of Navajo Nation

Handwritten signature of Lorenzo Bates in black ink.

LoRenzo Bates, Speaker of the 23rd Navajo Nation Council

Handwritten signature of Thomas J. Holgate in black ink.

Thomas J. Holgate, Acting Chief Justice of the Navajo Nation



# NEWS RELEASE

## Office of Public Relations

Diné College • Tsaile, AZ 86556 • (928) 724-6697  
bdotson@dinecollege.edu

**CONTACT:** Bernie Dotson

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jan. 19, 2017

### **NN Branches Sign Proclamation Recognizing Diné College's 50th Anniversary**

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** — The Navajo Nation Council declared 2018 as a celebration of "The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Diné College," at the Jan. 23 Winter Council Session.

A proclamation was signed by Nation Nation President Russell Begaye, Navajo Nation Speaker Lorenzo Bates, Diné College President Charles Roessel and Interim Chief Justice of the Navajo Nation Thomas J. Holgate.

Among those attending the signing were Greg Bigman, Theresa Hatathlie, Felisha Adams, Nelson BeGaye and Tommy Lewis of the Diné College Board of Regents.

"This is an acknowledgement of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Diné College," Bigman said. "Diné College, which was originally called Navajo Community College, was an experiment to other Native American tribes who started community colleges themselves."

The proclamation references the start of Diné College in 1968 as Navajo Community College. In 1971, reads the proclamation, the federal Navajo Community College Act authorized "grants to the tribe for the construction, maintenance and operation of Navajo Community College and that it be designed and operated by the Navajo tribe to ensure that qualified Navajo and other applicants have educational opportunities."

When the College was called Navajo Community College, classes were conducted in mobile homes in Many Farms, Ariz. The College later moved to Tsaile.

"Fifty years is quite an achievement," President Begaye said upon signing the proclamation. "We're really proud to have a College of our own. "We still hear the (Diné College) name all over the country, and it reminds us of our legacy and our commitment to move forward."

The timing of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary is significant, Roessel said. The College was founded on the centennial anniversary of the Treaty of 1868. While the Navajo Nation prepares to commemorate 150 years since its ancestors returned from Hwéeldi, Diné College is honoring its past and preparing for the future, he said.

"We established the first tribal college press and began working on a history of the treaty at 100 years," Roessel said. "One of the first books we published was about the Treaty of 1868."

The main campus of Diné College in Tsaile broke ground in April 1973 and there grew five additional campuses after that in Crownpoint, Chinle, Tuba City, Shiprock and Window Rock.