



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Health, Education, and Human Services Committee receives update report from Diné College

WINDOW ROCK – The Health, Education, and Human Services Committee met last Wednesday and received a report from Diné College president Dr. Maggie George, regarding the current status of academic programs and capital improvement projects.

Dr. George said the college is currently in the process of renewing its accreditation to offer two-year degree and certificate programs. Additionally, the college now offers a Bachelor of Arts degree in Tribal Government and Management, which was first implemented in Fall 2014. The college first received its accreditation in 1976.

According to Dr. George's written report, Diné College continues to offer a dual credit program, which allows high school students to earn college credits prior to graduation.

"Our dual credit program has been successful so far. There is a high dropout rate of high school Indian students and most don't continue onto college. We feel like the dual credit program gives them the opportunity to earn college credits and enroll in college classes after they graduate, and it would encourage them to continue their higher education with credits they have already earned," said Dr. George.

HEHSC vice chair Council Delegate Norman Begay (Alamo, Ramah, Tohajiilee) commended the college's academic program, however he raised a concern regarding the shortage of student housing and inquired how the college handles the issue.

Dr. George responded that student housing is a priority, as well as family and faculty housing. She said it is important in recruiting not only students to the college, but faculty members as well.

She added that the college is currently developing a Capital Improvement and Investment Plan, which would include renovation of older buildings and the construction of a student services building and faculty offices. The college secured a \$500,000 grant through the New Mexico General Obligation Bond for the planning and design of a math and science building, according to Dr. George's written report.

HEHSC member Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty (Beclabito, Cove, Gadi'í'áhi/To'Koi, Red Valley, Tooh Haltsooi, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Tsé a'náoz't'í) said the committee would support Diné College and its endeavors to make higher education accessible to Navajo students.

"I feel like I am a product of Diné College, I've taken courses, and I have worked there. I feel like the courses and experience I've gained has led me to where I'm at now, as the only councilwoman on Council," said Delegate Crotty.

HEHSC members voted 5-0 to accept the report.

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