



## 23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### MEDIA CONTACTS

Jared Touchin (928) 221-9253  
Jolene Holgate (928) 380-4174  
Crystalayne Curley (928) 286-7918  
nmb.communications@gmail.com

### Navajo Nation Council congratulates Navajo scholarship recipients from San Juan College

**FARMINGTON N.M.** – On behalf of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Navajo Nation Council, Speaker LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse'Daa'Kaan, Upper Fruitland) congratulated 22 Navajo students who will soon graduate with degrees from San Juan College's Trades and Technology, Energy, Engineering, Geology and Chemistry programs, during a reception held on the college's campus in Farmington on Tuesday. Each of the 22 students received scholarships, ranging from \$300 to \$2,000, through the PNM-Navajo Nation Workforce Training Initiative.

The initiative was established in 2013 through a partnership between PNM and the Navajo Nation along with San Juan College and Navajo Technical University. PNM contributed \$1 million, distributed \$200,000 annually over five years, to assist Navajo students who are enrolled in certain fields of study that relate to energy production.

The program is designed to ensure that New Mexico and the Four Corners area have the trained workforce needed for existing and emerging jobs, and that members of the Navajo Nation are well trained to fill these positions.

Speaker Bates along with San Juan College president Dr. Toni Hopper Pendergrass, PNM senior vice president of public policy Ron Darnell, San Juan College Native American Center director Byron Tsabetsaye spoke at the reception and commended the students and their families for their determination and persistence.



**PHOTO: Speaker LoRenzo Bates with PNM Navajo Nation Workforce Training Initiative students at San Juan College in Farmington, N.M. on April 24, 2018.**

“As Speaker of the Navajo Nation Council, I want you to know that we are proud of you and that we support your educational endeavors. We encourage you to continue pursuing higher

education and your professional aspirations,” stated Speaker Bates. “To the parents, we are very grateful to you for supporting your children as we join you in congratulating them.”

Since the program’s inception, PNM has provided 305 scholarships to San Juan College students. As a result, 114 have earned associate degrees and 70 have completed certificates. PNM announced that it would continue its commitment to the initiative beyond the planned five-year program schedule.

“We are grateful to PNM for their generosity in providing students with funding that will help them achieve their educational and career goals,” said Dr. Pendergrass. “These scholarships not only serve as an investment in students’ education, but it also serves as an investment in their lives and the lives of their families.”

San Juan College student Michael Benally also spoke about his experience and the benefits that he has received through the scholarship program.

“The scholarship has had a huge impact and motivation on me, because it let me know I have support and that I can prove the people who told me I couldn’t do this were wrong,” said Benally. “My hope is that I can now encourage my son and show him the way; that there is hope and something better for him out there.”

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