



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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MEDIA CONTACTS

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

Council supports funding for student housing project for Navajo students at the University of New Mexico

WINDOW ROCK – Prior to adjourning on Friday, the Navajo Nation Council unanimously supported Legislation No. 0475-17, approving nearly \$1.5 million in supplemental funding from the Navajo Nation’s Unreserved, Undesignated Fund Balance to provide dormitory space for Navajo students on the University of New Mexico campus in Albuquerque, N.M.

According to the legislation, the funding would be allocated to the Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President, to execute a contract with UNM to acquire an existing dormitory facility known as the Lobo Rainforest Building to house 118 Navajo students. It further states that the residence hall would reflect cultural and historical values of the Navajo Nation.

Legislation sponsor Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty (Beclabito, Cove, Gadi’í’áhi/To’Koi, Red Valley, Tooh Haltsooi, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Tsé ałnáoz’t’í’í), said she worked with the Office of the President and Vice President on the initiative. She added that the acquisition would help ease the financial burden of securing residency and increase retention rates for Navajo students who are pursuing higher education at UNM.

According to the housing agreement with UNM, the Navajo student housing would be a pilot project beginning in Jan. 2018 and ending in July 2021, totaling approximately three years and seven months. The residence hall would be fully furnished, and include a full kitchen with a dishwasher, washer, and dryer.

The bill was also considered by the Naabik’íyáti’ Committee on Thursday, where Delegate Crotty was joined by OPVP legal counsel Karis Begaye, who stated that the OPVP is also looking to invest in dormitory space at other universities and colleges including Arizona State University, Northern Arizona University, and others.

On Friday, Council members approved Legislation No. 0475-17 by a vote of 16-0. President Russell Begaye will have ten calendar days to consider the funding once the resolution is sent to the Office of the President and Vice President.

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