



## 23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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### Navajo Technical University and San Juan College graduates recognized by the Navajo Nation Council



**PHOTO:** Speaker LoRenzo Bates with 2016 graduates of San Juan College in Farmington, New Mexico on April 27, 2016.

**FARMINGTON, N.M.** – Speaker LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse’Daa’Kaan, Upper Fruitland) and Council Delegate Tom Chee (Shiprock) congratulated and honored 174 Navajo graduates and scholarship recipients of the PNM Navajo Nation Workforce Training Initiative at Navajo Technical University in Crownpoint and San Juan College in Farmington, on Wednesday.

The PNM Navajo Nation Workforce Training Initiative was created in 2013 through a partnership between the Navajo Nation and PNM to develop and administer the scholarship program made possible through a \$1 million contribution from PNM over a five-year period. Since 2013, the program has disbursed \$200,000 annually to Navajo student scholarship recipients.

“All of the students present with us today symbolize a bright hope for our future,” said Speaker Bates. “We wish them well as they move forward on their career paths that are surely to benefit the Navajo Nation and New Mexico.”

In the current academic year, 114 Navajo students were awarded scholarships, 32 Navajo students will complete certificates, 23 will graduate with associate degrees, and five will complete their bachelor’s degree.

The program is designed to ensure that New Mexico and the Four Corners region continue to have the necessary workforce for existing and emerging jobs, and that members of the Navajo Nation are well trained to fill the positions. The PNM Navajo Nation Workforce Training Initiative is in the third year of a five-year commitment.

“Your achievements not only benefit your people and the state, but it also means a better quality of life for you and your loved ones. The skills you learn here and in your career will build a better future and livelihood for you and your families and that’s the most important part,” Speaker Bates stated.

According to information provided by PNM, 371 scholarships have been awarded to Navajo students through the program, 81 have completed certificates, 55 have completed associate degrees and 10 have completed bachelor degrees.

Navajo Technical University President Dr. Elmer Guy, San Juan College President Dr. Toni Hopper Pendergrass, and PNM Senior Vice President of Public Policy Ron Darnell joined Delegate Chee and Speaker Bates, as the students were honored and recognized for their accomplishments with a Pendleton scarf embroidered with their school’s name and a PNM logo.

“Education opens doors and improves the lives of families. It can lift individuals into rewarding careers, which benefits communities and helps make the world a better place,” said Darnell. “Helping lay the foundation for a stronger New Mexico and Navajo Nation economy is important to us at PNM.”

The students thanked the Navajo Nation and PNM for their continued support, including Gerald R. Henry, who will graduate from Navajo Technical University in May with a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering – the first student to complete the degree program at NTU. Henry, who served in the military before enrolling at NTU, said he will pursue a master’s degree upon his graduation.

For more information regarding the PNM Navajo Nation Workforce Training Initiative, please visit: <https://www.pnm.com/navajo>.

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