

NEWS RELEASE

Office of Public Relations

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

CONTACT: Bernie Dotson

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 11, 2018

Diné College Graduates 190 Students; 31 Earn Bachelor's Degrees

TSAILE, Ariz. — More than 700 family members and friends packed the main library grounds May 11 for the 50th anniversary graduating class at Diné College — which consisted of a record number of bachelor degree recipients.

Among that group were six students earning bachelor's of science degrees in biology and eight other students earning bachelor's of arts degrees in psychology. Both programs were instituted over the past year at Diné College.

"All of you here have done individual things that make you special," Diné College President Monty Roessel said. "Thanks for the hard work that you have put into this."

This year's commencement consisted of an alumni induction ceremony in which college officials said about a dozen people left contact information to become part of a database. The College is in the midst of bringing back its alumni affairs office after years of inactivity.

There were 190 students that graduated, which included six certificates, dozens of associate of arts and science degrees, nine bachelor's in elementary education graduates, eight bachelor's of arts degrees in business administration, among the biology and psychology numbers. Sara Kien, Ph.D., and the psychology departmental head, received the College's esteemed Faculty of the Year award.

"There is a whole family that is here to help," business administration graduate Felisha Adams of Iyanbito, N.M., said. Adams is the outgoing student representative to the Associated Students of Diné College and has been accepted to law school at the University of New Mexico. "Family, faith and future are the reasons why we study here," Adams said to fellow graduates.

To commemorate the 50th anniversary of Diné College, there are a gala and a golf fundraising tournament planned later in the year.

Diné College is the first tribally-controlled higher learning institution in the U.S. There are currently 36 tribally-controlled colleges and universities across the country.

In addition to family and friends of current graduates, several past presidents and leaders from other tribal colleges attended the graduation, among them Martin Ahumada, who presided at Diné College from 2015-2017.

“I am proud of my time at Diné College. I learned a lot and I’m ready to go to the next level,” Diedra Benally of Window Rock said. Benally, a past general education diploma recipient, graduated with an associate of arts degree in early childhood education. “For me, graduating is a very important thing.”