



Hybrid Diné College Strategic Design Town Hall Meeting in Washington, DC		
Thursday, May 19, 2022	Navajo Nation Washington Office	11:30 AM to 1:30 PM
<b>Delivery Medium Details:</b> Zoom meeting and in-person		
<b>Zoom Details:</b>		Meeting ID: 959 6717 6162 Passcode: 011761

<b>Attendees (In-person)</b>	Winifred Jumbo, Dr. Roessel, Francetta Begaye, Faith Roessel, Matt Slater, Marlena Forster, Jack Jackson, Lawrence Shorty, Orson John, Elayne Silversmith, Naomie Droll, Nora Droll, Ani Auld, Patrese Atine, Kaileigh Burnside, Desani Almaraz, Tonya Alvaraz, Lori Lee, Mary Fortu, and Jackson Brossy.
<b>Attendees (Virtual)</b>	Lashawna Tso, Dr. Geraldine Garrity, Bo Lewis, Marie Nez, Andrea Christelle, Cami Cowboy, LeManuel Bitsoi, Joy Thompson, Nicholas Begaye, Nikki Cowboy, RK and Reeverson Descheny.

Agenda Item		Person Responsible	Description
1.	Invocation	Elayne Silversmith	Prayer was offered.
2.	Welcome	Lashawna Tso, Director of NNWO	Welcomed attendees to Strategic Design Meeting.
3.	Introduction of Purpose, Intent, and Details of Strategic Design	Winifred Jumbo, Director of Dual Credit Enrollment Management	Presentation was shared with community outlining purpose, intent, processes, timeline, internal and external stakeholder committee's information, and website details for the strategic design.
4.	Introduction of Strategic Themes	Dr. Charles Roessel, College President	Presentation was shared with community of Washington outlining the 6 Strategic Themes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality Growth</li> <li>• Accessibility</li> <li>• Campus Health and Wellness</li> <li>• Holistic Integration</li> <li>• Culture/Environment</li> <li>• Facilities</li> </ul>

6.	Purpose and Guidelines of Community Feedback	Winifred Jumbo, Director of Dual Credit Enrollment Management	The purpose of the community feedback was explained to audience.
7.	Community Feedback Conversation	All.	Diné College leaders listened to community feedback.

Person	Comments
Tonya Alvarez, DHHS-IHS	I lived in Virginia for 8 years. My oldest daughter is starting to look at master's programs with various tribal colleges. She wants to stay with tribal colleges but she is having a hard time finding master's programs in Education. I recommend Diné College to assist and provide with information such as helping students complete the Financial Aid (FAFSA) application or how to seek scholarships. I have to constantly push my daughters to look for scholarships in their fields of study but they find nothing. Another aspect as a parent is experiencing your child leaving to college. How do we let go and trust them while they are on their own? That was the tough part and I cried. My children are the small percentage of the Native Americans in their school. She thinks the cultural of not having anyone else who is Native American was hard for her children. I appreciate this town hall meeting. I try to take my children to all Native American events to identify with other Native students in the D.C. area.
LeManuel Bitsoi,	I live in the Boston metro area. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is Diné College focused only on the Washington metro area or other parts of the country, as well?</li> <li>• How can Diné College partner with other institutions around the country?</li> <li>• Is there a pipeline for graduate school opportunities that students may not necessary have access to at Diné College or other tribal colleges?</li> <li>• Is partnering with other institutions part of the strategic plan and design?</li> </ul>
Ani Auld	I lived in the D.C. area for 10 years. My concern is my family not being immersed in their Navajo culture. We do a lot with the Navajo and Native populations, in general. I try to run a lot of organizations to bring us together. There is a lot of camaraderie and ké which happens within our communities. We stay here because there are a lot of accommodations that exist here. In terms of children who are neurodivergent, I would like Diné College to expand how to teach and integrate them. Diné College can be a leader in that respect because I feel that's missing across Indian Country. There is a language

	immersion program at Diné College every summer, I would like my children and myself to participate in the opportunity. I tell my children Navajo stories every evening. I would love the capability to hear the stories from someone else. They want to learn about other tribes and not just Navajos. I'm interested in silversmith, weaving and language courses. I would like Diné College to help my children reach their potential. We need to stay integrated in the Navajo culture.
Lawrence Shorty, USDA	I am here today representing the United States Department of Agriculture. I run the Tribal College Program where we look at the schools as land grant institutions. Is there a need for scholarships? A member from American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) wants to look at ways to distribute and make more scholarships available to students. We've been asking for feedback to improve the process. The type of scholarships we offer are focused in agriculture and natural resources. We had agencies looking for Information Technology, Public Administration, and Engineers students. It would be great to collaborate with Diné College to identify the best fit students perhaps in a cohort that USDA can recruit as future employees. We need to find ways to do that and we are willing to partner with Diné College to help make that happen.
Jackson Brossy, Small Business Administration	I've lived in Washington, D.C. for 16 years. This is the first time we had an opportunity like this to share some thoughts about Diné College. I think what the Diné people have at Diné College is really special and important. If we are able to connect some of the resources Diné College has with the Diné people who live in Washington, D.C., that would be great. We have at least a thousand Navajo people who live here, whether they grew up on the Navajo reservation or were born here. I think connecting them with the resources at Diné College using the technology would be very beneficial. My two recommendations are to use a platform like Zoom to set up two different Navajo language courses for Navajo people who live out here. I think it would be great to have one course in Navajo language designed for kids. Kids have a different way of learning than adults. The other piece is to create a Navajo language course for adults that is more conversational and practical with reading and writing. If I can help, I'll be happy to do so.
Jack Jackson Jr., Department of Labor	I currently reside in Washington, D.C. working with the Department of Labor. I was appointed as a tribal liaison and I am learning a lot about the Department of Labor. I work with a lot of different organizations and agencies. Department of Labor is a vital agency with the amount of federal funds available to our tribal nations under the CARES Act and Infrastructure Act. All of these funds will help further develop our tribal communities. The Department of Labor is looking at how to prepare our work force for jobs. The Employment and Training Administration is looking at equity as the cornerstone on what they are doing in their outreach to tribal communities. They have apprenticeship programs. Federal funds can be used for those types of efforts like training centers. We want to ensure we have

	<p>our work force ready to go. I would like to work with Diné College on this matter. It's great to have this type of collaboration and discussion. We have a lot of Native talent here in Washington D.C., so I look forward to having further discussions. I once worked with the Navajo Nation Washington Office and my father was part of the creation of the original Navajo Community College.</p>
Nicole Cowboy, Student	<p>I'm an off Rez who lives in the D.C. metro area. One of the biggest struggles I face is having an absent parent who is Navajo, I don't have a primary source to learn about my Navajo heritage. I have tried my best to engage with my Navajo culture. My mother knows a fair amount of my Navajo culture and language, but over the years she has lost a part of it. One of the biggest things I face is not knowing an extensive amount of my culture and language. Often times when I'm speaking with people, they recognize that I'm Native. Then when they start asking questions, they find out I'm not fully educated in the ways of my people and they stop considering me Navajo, because I don't have the full knowledge of my culture. I tried multiple times to find different ways to integrate myself. Diné College had a course a couple of years ago, inviting people to come learn about Diné culture and to learn how to speak Navajo. The problem is those seminars and meetings were far away and I do not have the transportation and they were during school days, as well. I would like to explore more dual enrollment options that were mentioned earlier. I would have loved to take Navajo language online during high school. We have a language requirement in my county. My sister and I have been back to the Rez and spoken to politicians, but nothing beat first hand learning from the Navajo people and culture. I would to see a webinar once a month focusing on basic things like Navajo phrases and sentences: how to introduce yourself in Navajo.</p>
Elayne Silversmith, Smithsonian (NMAI)	<p>I'm been a Librarian for the National Museum for Americans Indians for 10 years. I remember the time NCC had a publishing press, there were a number of great books on Navajo history. One of my cherished books in my collection is Navajo Stories from the Long Walk period. I would like Diné College to consider publishing again. We have so many talented and knowledgeable Navajo writers from all disciplines. It is tough in the major publishing field but there are eBooks now. Diné College can look at electronic formats for greater accessibility. I want to address the concerns of our young people about Navajo language. They say language is the heart of our culture. I grew up in a home primary speaking English and listening to my Navajo relatives. They would teach me to speak Navajo and I would teach them English. In thinking about all of what Diné College wants to do, I noticed language keeps coming up. The value of our Navajo language lies within our children and collectively we need to come up with a solution to preserve it. When I look at Navajo philosophy, we're in the glittering world. Earlier, I prayed that we should be mindful to take care of our mother earth. The holy people know you when you speak the Navajo language and that is really important. When we go to the Navajo tribal offices, we're not</p>

	<p>treated respectfully. We need to teach our Navajo language in respect of being a good Navajo human being. These are some of the important things I wanted to bring up for creating Navajo language accessibility and publishing.</p>
<p>Orson John, Community Member of D.C.</p>	<p>I am here in behalf of myself representing a Diné living here in the Washington, D.C. metro area. The Strategic Design themes presented are truly encouraging to see because the future is very promising. I want to echo the plan forward. As a Diné I see a need for access to Navajo language curriculum. I don't know when I will get the calling to go back to the Navajo Rez but I know one day I will. When that time comes I would rather prepare myself now if there are opportunities made available through Diné College, which will benefit my family and I. My day job is an engineer at NASA. The most important thing we have at our agency is our outreach initiative, the opportunity to interface with students. I am truly impressed because there is talent at Diné College, which we can capitalize and highlight on. Our agency is always looking to bring students to work and contribute to our organization. One thing I would like to recommend and see in the future is a centralized location of agencies, so we can interface with Diné College. That centralized location can provide opportunities for student involvement with various agencies. I look to resources such as Zoom and recordings of various presentations for accessibility through the College's website. Those electronic recordings can help us in the Washington, D.C. area. My last comment is Washington loves the month of November because it's Native American Heritage month. One of the things we lack are resources, so we are looking to Diné College for curriculum on Navajo culture. I would love to see Diné College show case what they are doing for their students, what is being taught, and highlight the culture, so agencies can have access to provide presentations for Native American Heritage month. Our colleagues here in the area can learn about the Navajo people. Those would be the recommendations I would like to see incorporated, because I know the D.C. area loves Native American Heritage month.</p>
<p>Patrese Atine, AIHEC</p>	<p>I have a comment of support. I have lived in the Washington, D.C. area for 12 years. In our support of tribal colleges, we look to Diné College as our leader. All of the ideas are forward thinking and one day they will lead the future of tribal colleges. We have 35 accredited tribal colleges who are designed their paths forward. At AIHEC, we want to support goals of tribal colleges. This can be technical; the Higher Education Act hasn't been reauthorized since 2008 and many TCUs have changed since 2008. Please don't let that be a barrier for your ideas. Tribal colleges have opportunities to put recommendations into these new laws. So, don't let anything deteriorate what is needed. Tribal colleges have built a very special space.</p>
<p>Faith Roessel, Collaborative for</p>	<p>I want to mention 3 things important to me. First, as a parent, then my work, and as a student. First, as a parent I'm so excited to see our sons engaged in their Navajo identity and culture away from home.</p>

Harmony, Empowerment and Innovation, Inc.	<p>It's been hard being off the reservation because you are trying to get access for things that you can teach your children. Navajo culture and language have always been important to our parents. I am in favor of any opportunity to connect ourselves virtually and in-person. My parents would have a culture camp in Lukachukai mountain because we would have this thirst for knowledge. I think experiential learning for children is so important. If we look at the opportunities through technology, that's where the College can look into their own education programs to prepare teachers. How can we utilize the technology out there but there is nothing like being on your home land? We can have summer and winter camps for storytelling. The concept of Navajos representing Navajos is very important because we know first-hand of the issues, problems, and challenges we face. We are the best ones to figure out our problems and create solutions. We have the largest influx of federal funding in Indian Country in general. How can we utilize that in education? There are policy makers with intellect at our table today, which we need to be proud of. We need to love each other as Navajos, if we're going to move ourselves forward. The petty politics that happen on the outside should not guide our direction. My final comment is I'm a Diné College student. Changes have been made to improve processes. I had to enroll in an Associate of Arts Program and I am taking a Navajo language course. I have seen the pit falls of Zoom. The instructors and students were comfortable with in-person learning, but there is a whole other learning curve to bring your skills set as a teacher into a Zoom classroom. It's hard as a student and having the technology to connect into class doesn't mean you set up the best learning. I would encourage training teachers and students. The publishing press was important and it should be brought back to Diné College. I would like to challenge Diné College to create a Navajo language text book. The hardest thing about learning the language is there are no resources used in the classroom. How do we learn and how do we teach? Lastly, we should continue as a community to keep going, get together and to be together. With the strength of each other, we can be stronger in what we do as parents, policy makers, and leaders because communities build and nurture us.</p>
Matthew Slater, Cleary, Gottlieb, Steen & Hamilton	<p>There are a couple of things that come to mind as our experience of being parents of a college student who was sent home because of COVID-19 and spent 18 months learning online. In our case it caused us to think of the future of higher education as a content provider. Colleges and universities are not necessarily geographically focused as it once was before with an actual campus. It's terrific that Diné College is thinking about the future as opposed to going back to how it was in the past. There are needs for understanding Navajo culture, language and history that exist outside the reservation and other institutions are not capable of providing those specific resources. One thing Diné College might consider is collaborating with other colleges and universities, whether it's state, tribal or private to provide some of educational content uniquely situated to the College, perhaps it can be a source of</p>



	<p>funding. It would be great if ASU (Washington, D.C.) could partner with Diné College and provide facilities where people could come together and learn together in the Washington, D.C. area. I was glad to hear about the accreditation from Arizona regarding dual credit for high school students. If other states can be brought into this circle to give children in this area the opportunity to learn their language as part of their high school curriculum. I don't know what the mechanics involved but you heard there is a need for that.</p>
Elizabeth Cowboy	<p>I am the proud mother of two Navajo girls. I want to thank Diné College for hosting this town hall meeting. One of the challenges I have encountered as a mother of two Navajo girls is to seek guidance about my daughters' Navajo heritage. The absent parent is Navajo. We are continually striving, but if there was a way to have access to dual credit or online courses for high school students to engage in language, history and culture, that would be helpful. How can we teach the larger communities about Navajo heritage and respect? One my daughter's history teacher was not aware of Nicole's Navajo heritage and she started talking about all the negative stuff associated to Navajos. She told Nicole's classmates that Navajos were all impoverished, addicted to drugs, and had dental problems. Her daughter was 11 years old at the time and stood up in front of all of her peers and announced her teacher was lying and she did not have any cavities. Not all Navajos are poor and Nicole's heritage should not be dismissed and misrepresented. We met with the Principal of the grade school and hosted a Native American Heritage Day. My daughters dressed up and presented about native foods. They presented about their Navajo culture and our government. I want to thank Diné College and I hope the institution gets involved in community education and outreach.</p>

### Survey Feedback

(All comments were submitted anonymously)

**What recommendations do you have to improve Diné College? (Academics, Student Affairs, etc.)**

"Virtual courses on conversational Diné k'ehjí for both kids and adults would be great!"

"Online Navajo language program/club. Courses or a program to prepare students to take the Navajo Bar Exam."

"Language courses. Agency level partnership opportunities with Diné College Career Offices, places where agencies could present opportunities to students. Once a semester connect Navajo professionals in various fields to talk about what they do. Give back to Nation's Capitol initiative."

"I would say to put improvements on the artistic field and business/money management. I would say when it comes to art, not only it shows being nice. It's more than that it tells our stories, culture, and history. The last one not only expands communities but builds a stronger knowledge of what we are doing. I hope that makes sense."

"More virtual engagement with Smithsonian or NMAI Programs, internships and fellowships."

"Work with federal partners to support scholarships to help identify and nurture students for federal employment and training."

"Opportunities for job training and partnership with federal agencies."

"Neurodivergent teaching/outreach/etc. Language immersion, silversmithing, weaving and language courses."

"Offer (virtual) Master's degrees. Scholarships for students off-res. in IT. Assisting or providing students info. in completing FAFSA application and applying for scholarships. Where they can search or find scholarships."

"Scholarships."

"Have a virtual and hand textbook on Navajo language and history and culture."

"Dual credit for high school students outside of Arizona."