



**ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2019-2020**



# BY THE N

**1,369**

Fall 2020 Enrollment

**64**

Full-Time Faculty

**157**

19-20 Degrees Conferred

**43**

Bachelor's Degree Conferred

**21**

Ph.D. Faculty

**56%**

American Indian Faculty

**6**

Diné College Campuses

Accreditation:  HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

# NUMBERS

**8**

Certificate Programs

**16**

Associate's Degree Programs

**10**

Bachelor's Degree Programs

**100**

Chief Manuelito Scholars  
AY19-20

**4,019**

Alumni

**152**

Alumni Staff

**218**

Full-Time Staff

## FY 2020 ANNUAL REPORT STAFF CREDITS:

Marketing and Communications: George Joe (Director), Bernie Dotson (Public Relations), Scott Tom (Graphic Design & Digital Media Specialist), Jazzmine Martinez (Marketing Assistant), L.A. Williams (Radio), Office of Institutional Planning and Research: Malcolm Bob (Senior Data Systems Analyst), and all the departments and programs that provided information and edits.

Front Cover Art Work: Diné College Graphic Design Student Troy Tso. Photos: Ray Landry  
Special Thanks to Prof. Matthew Bollinger's Graphic Design Class

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## MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

**Greg Bigman**

Diné College Board of Regents President

The year 2020 brought a lot of challenges to Diné College, but it also created an opportunity for us to build upon last year.

For starters, the college was in good financial position as evidenced by an 8% increase in revenue, a 3% reduction in liabilities, and a 6.5% growth in the college's net position. As a result, the college was able to invest in assets that support higher education.

Diné College invested into its capital assets — most prominently, the historical landmark and tallest building on the Navajo Nation — the Ned Hatathli Center. The Ned Hatathli Center investment paved the way for new types of learning in a modern lecture hall and future potential revenue as a training center or a host location for small conferences with a large lecture hall and adjacent rooms that are digitally connected.

The investment into our infrastructure also paved the way for new opportunities that would have been realized, had it not been for the coronavirus

(Covid-19) impact. The investments into the college's Information Technology Department support improved accessibility to higher education.

The IT investment, with the improved access to distance education, ties into the mission of Diné College, and the roots of Navajo tradition, language and values. Accessibility to higher education means strengthening the sovereignty of the Navajo Nation, enriching our people with a stronger sense of identity and equipping the Navajo Nation with a workforce for the future.

The Diné College Board of Regents is proud of the financial stewardship and accomplishments toward our mission of a quality post-secondary student learning environment and the accompanying development to ensure the well-being of the Diné people.

We are sincerely thankful for all of our donors, grants providers and people for being a part of this mission.

## BOARD OF REGENTS

**Greg Bigman - President**  
Northern Agency

**Theresa Hatathlie - Vice President**  
Western Agency

**Vacant - Treasurer**

**Sharon Todacheenie - Secretary**  
Fort Defiance Agency

**Daniel Tso - Member**  
NN Health, Education & Human Services

**Johnson Dennison - Member**  
Central Agency

**Anderson Hoskie - Member**  
Eastern Agency

**Letanya Thinn - A.S.D.C.**  
2019-20 Student Representative





## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

**Charles “Monty” Roessel, Ed.D.**

Diné College President



To say that last year was unprecedented is an understatement. Diné College found itself in the middle of a global pandemic — the novel coronavirus or Covid-19. Our students, faculty and staff were forced to radically change the way they attended classes, taught their classes and did their work. It was not easy and it continues to be a challenge, but we have persevered and overcome the worst of a pandemic. It is a testament to the resilience and tenacity of our Diné College family. It is especially evident that we nearly maintained our enrollment numbers from this same time frame last year.

This pandemic was about more than just surviving. It was about recommitting to our goal as the Nation’s college. It was about keeping promises to loved ones. It was about finding hope in a very desperate situation. Ultimately, this past year showed the courage of our family and our love for our people.

We will never forget what we endured. Almost all of us suffered heartbreak during this time and yet, each of us is stronger for it. As we continue on this path together, let’s lean on each other when we need help. Let’s remember that we are not alone and that our voices, challenges and dreams matter not just to ourselves, but to everyone.

Diné College is committed to adapting to meet the new possibilities of our shared future. We are here to build new programs, offer new scholarships and develop new opportunities for our Navajo Nation. Everyone who is associated with Diné College is stronger and wiser because of what we have gone through. Let’s put this knowledge together and rebuild our college to meet the biggest educational challenge confronting the Navajo Nation.

Sincerely,  
Charles Monty Roessel, Ed.D.  
President of Diné College

“The year was a challenge and it continues to be a challenge. But we have persevered and we will all succeed – together.”



# ABOUT DINÉ COLLEGE



**1,369**

- Fall 2020 Student Enrollment
- Largest Age Group 18-21 (409 students)

**19** • Bachelor's Degree Interest:  
BA in Psychology  
Graduates - Spring 2020

**30** • Associate's Degree Interest:  
AS in Health Occupation  
Graduates - Spring 2020

Diné College was founded in 1968 and is the first tribal college in the country. Diné College is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission as a four-year granting institution. Located on the Navajo Nation and predominately serving Navajo students (92%), the college is a four-year institution and offers 10 bachelor's degrees, 16 associate's degrees, and 8 certificates. The college's annual budget for fiscal year 2020 was \$23,049,121 with 218 full-time employees located across four instructional sites and one branch in Arizona (Tsaile, Tuba City, Chinle, Window Rock) and two in New Mexico (Shiprock, Crownpoint). The school participates in athletic competition in rodeo, archery and cross-country. The school is governed by an eight-member Board of Regents.

## Mission Statement

Rooted in Diné language and culture, our mission is to advance quality post-secondary student learning and development to ensure the well-being of the Diné people.

## Vision Statement

Our vision is to continuously improve our programs and services to make Diné College the exemplary higher education institution for the Diné people.



### • Degrees Awarded:

**708** Degrees awarded over four years.

**157** Graduated for Academic Year 2018-19

**13:1** Student-Faculty Ratio

**82%** Single Students

### • Gateway Success Rate:

**68%** passing | College MTH 110

**71%** passing | College ENG 101

### • Retention Rate:

**67%** Term-to-Term

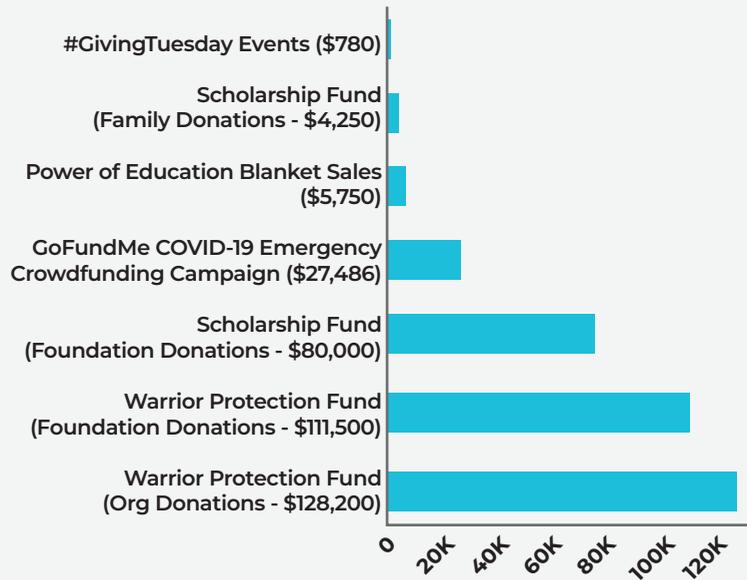
**44%** Year-to-Year

### • Student Clubs:

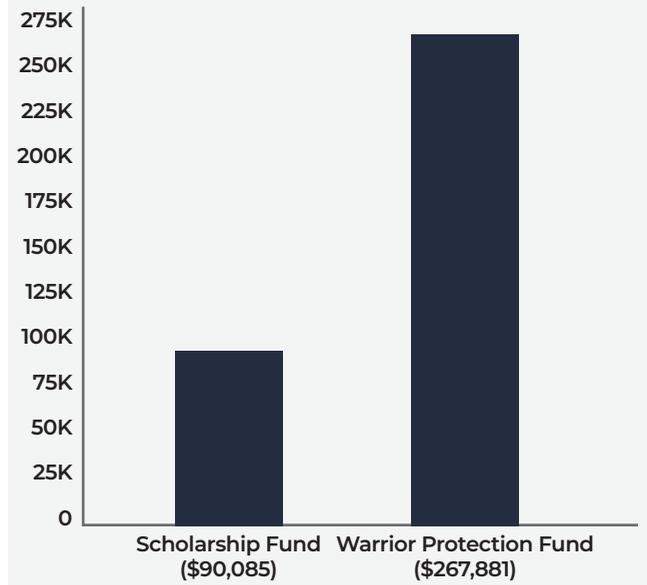
- Anime Club
- A.I.S.E.S.
- Animal Care
- A.B.N.D.C. (NAC)
- Hand Game
- Green Club
- Archery
- Basketball
- Rodeo
- A.I.B.L.

# FUNDRAISING

2019-20 FUNDRAISING OUTCOMES



2019-20 TOTAL FUNDS RAISED: \$357,966



## College Raises \$357,966

There were 270 individual donors, non-profit organizations and foundations who supported Diné College's fundraising initiatives this past fiscal year. The college raised more than a quarter of a million dollars for student scholarships and emergency support amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

One of the new fundraising initiatives was the college's first annual Warrior Day of Giving netting 655 generous donations. Gifts helped sustain the college's ongoing commitment to its educational mission. Over the past two years, Diné College raised closed to \$1 million to support experiential learning opportunities broadened by self-motivated academic programs and Diné philosophical perspectives. A total of \$357,966 was raised during FY 2020. Additionally, financial aid disbursed \$233,760 in student scholarships.

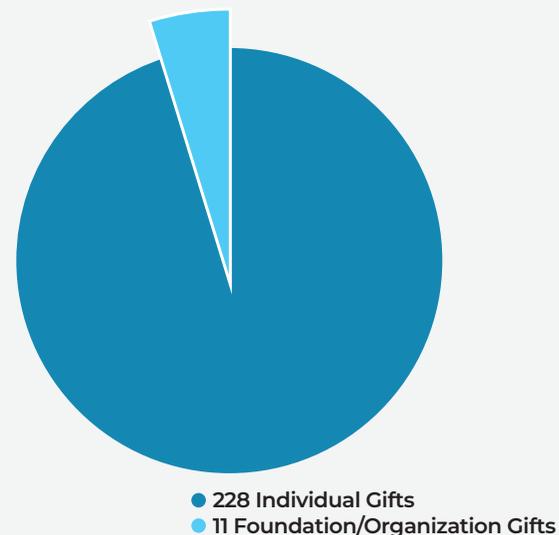
Fundraising dollars provided much needed technological and academic support to over 1,500 students. Emergency aid funded utility assistance, housing rental costs, transportation repairs, child care stipends, groceries, food boxes and firewood.

A recent study conducted by the American Indian College Fund and the Gallup Poll, showed that most graduates of tribal colleges stay within their communities. American Indian students continue to utilize their knowledge and training to help meet the needs of their communities and tribe. The

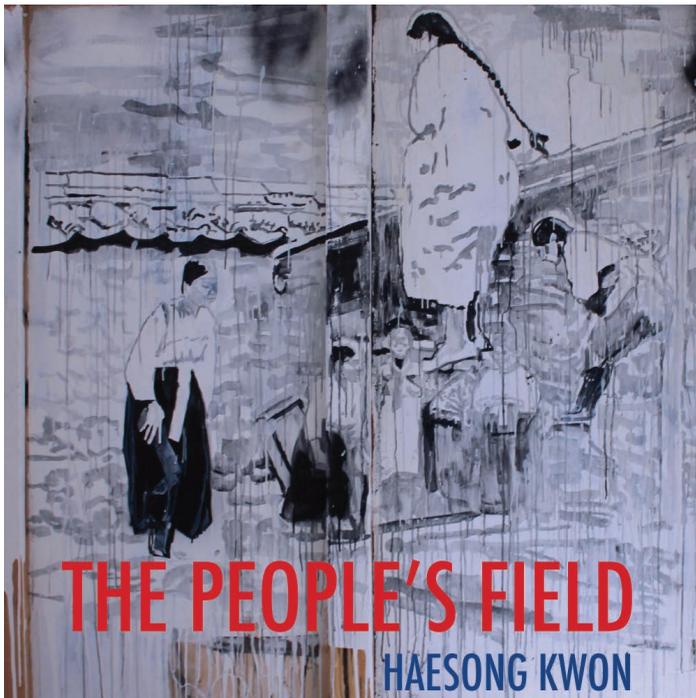
study reported that alumni of tribal colleges and universities are nearly two times more likely than their peers nationally to thrive in all indices of well-being. Seventy-four percent report being primarily employed in areas related to American Indian communities or tribal lands, and many work directly with their tribes.

Since 1968, graduates of Diné College have earned more than \$3 billion for the Navajo Nation and surrounding states. For every dollar invested in a tribal college there is a five-dollar return.

2019-20 DONATIONS



# 2019 - 2020 MILESTONES



## October 2019

- Haesong Kwon, Ph.D., a member of Diné College's English faculty, published *The People's Field*. With the focus on the Japanese occupation, the Korean Conflict and its aftermath, *The People's Field* (Southeast Missouri State University Press) reflects on the sounds, ideas, and histories of the Korean peninsula.
- The Board of Regents elected Greg Bigman to serve a fifth term as board president.
- Diné College hosted the 50th annual Miss Diné College Pageant and crowned a new Miss Diné College and recognized past Miss Diné College titleholders.

## November 2019

- A Bachelor's of Arts degree in multi-cultural education will be offered beginning in Spring 2020 at the college's Shiprock campus.
- Dr. Tommy Lewis, the superintendent of the Diné Department of Education (DODE) and a former president of the college from 1992 to 2000, stepped down from the college's Board of Regents.
- Diné College will offer a bachelor's degree in agricultural science. The four-year degree program started in January and focus on animal, plant and general science. The matter has been well-received by the Navajo Nation's agricultural enterprise.

Benita Litson, Diné College Land Grant Office Director, said LGO's role in the new degree offering is to help guide the Navajo Nation's next generation of farmers and ranchers improve upon the Navajo agricultural way of life.

## December 2019

- The college debuted solar-powered recycling bins and trash compactors, which collect everything from aluminum cans, plastic bottles, and rubbish. The bins are manufactured by Massachusetts-based Big Belly Solar and are placed at each of the college's six campuses — the first solar-powered bins on the Navajo Nation. Diné College's Green Club oversees the recycling efforts.
- Career Navajo educator LaFrenda Frank, a former instructor of English and advanced reading at Diné College, passes away Dec. 2 in Albuquerque.
- The American Indigenous Business Leaders Club collected dozens of coats, scarves, and other articles of clothing in the group's first annual coat drive.
- A Bachelor's of Arts degree in multi-cultural education was approved for Spring 2020 at the college's Shiprock campus. It's the first time ever the college is offering the multi-cultural degree program.
- Several legal scholars from prominent law institutions across the country met at Diné College to lay out plans for a law school. The Law School Convening Diné College, a two-day symposium, was held at the college to go over everything from the college's original



mission, law school accreditation, core student courses and specializations, judicial advocates, law school naming suggestions and traditional Navajo law.

### January 2020

- Diné College graduates a large number of students with associate degrees, according to a survey done by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics and published in the Dec. 12, 2019, edition of *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education*, a national magazine. The magazine ranked Diné College No. 5 with respect to associate degrees conferred to Native Americans in all disciplines. Diné College was the highest ranked tribal college in the survey.
- Maira Soto, Ph.D., an assistant scientific investigator from the University of Arizona, visited Diné College as part of URBRAIN (Undergraduate Readying for Burgeoning Research for American Indian Neuroscientists) — a \$1.3 million collaboration with the University of Arizona. The focus of the project is to create a pipeline of scholars to go from Diné College to neuroscience programs at top-tier research universities around the U.S. The grant's aim is to engage selected Diné College scholars and increase the number of Native Americans in graduate schools and research careers.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is the funding source. The partnership is featured in an Associated Press article and Boyd and Diné College Provost Geraldine Garrity are featured on the National Public Radio program, *Here and Now*.

### February 2020

- The Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), which operates under the U.S. Department Of Justice, awarded Diné College a grant in the amount of \$299,912 to reduce domestic and dating violence, sexual assault and stalking on campus. The OVW provides federal guidance in developing the national capacity to lower violence against women.
- Two pieces of state legislation aimed at kick-starting a college and career readiness program, and which would provide high-speed Internet services at the John Pinto Library at Diné College's Shiprock campus, cleared the New Mexico Senate Indian Affairs Committee. Senate Bill 214 (SB 214) sought \$500,000 from the state general fund for the readiness program and to provide funds for equipment and personnel at the college's Shiprock campus. Senate Bill 215 (SB 215) sought \$494,000 to begin broadband services. Both bills pertain to the college's Shiprock campus.



# 2019 - 2020 MILESTONES



## March 2020

- Diné College moves to a four-day work week beginning March 23, 2020, and the majority of employees will work remotely. The move is in response to the coronavirus outbreak.
- Diné College extended Spring Break 2020 until March 20, 2020, then moved all classes online for the remainder of the semester. The extension is in response to the international coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak. Diné College President Charles Monty Roessel established an incident command structure.
- Diné College postponed its annual Spring commencement ceremonies.

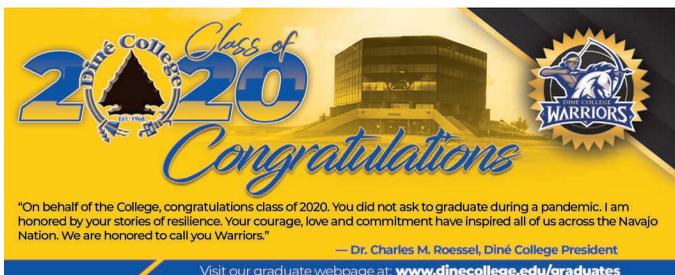
## April 2020

- Two Diné College science instructors received a \$60,000 National Institutes of Health equipment grant to develop research opportunities and infrastructure. The college is a partner institution with the University of Alaska at Fairbanks in the endeavor which is entitled, "Biomedical Learning and Student Training (BLAST)."

- English instructor Matthew Jake Skeets is the recipient of a \$50,000 grant from the Whiting Foundation. Every year, 10 emerging writers receive the Whiting Award based on promising accomplishments early in their careers.
- Diné College Director of Information Technology Joy Thompson oversees laptop distribution to students. Thompson said after the college shifted to online course instruction around the end of March due to Covid-19, the school knew some students would need assistance completing assignments. So, laptops were ordered and Internet "hotspots" put in place to help students out.
- Close to 300 people representing the arts and humanities, education, law, business, politics, science, the armed services, human rights, and other sectors, are the newest members of the Cambridge, Mass.-based American Academy of Arts and Sciences (AAAS) — the country's oldest honor society. Among the new members is Diné College President Charles Monty Roessel. The membership list includes high-ranking college officials from around the world and Roessel is the first Diné College president to be a part of AAAS. The 2020 list includes eight Indigenous scholars.



Táá Awołíbee Ánit'i Yéego Ánit'I – Keep At It and Work Hard



**2020**  
Diné College  
Classes of  
*Congratulations*  
WARRIORS

"On behalf of the College, congratulations class of 2020. You did not ask to graduate during a pandemic. I am honored by your stories of resilience. Your courage, love and commitment have inspired all of us across the Navajo Nation. We are honored to call you Warriors."  
— Dr. Charles M. Roessel, Diné College President

Visit our graduate webpage at: [www.dinecollege.edu/graduates](http://www.dinecollege.edu/graduates)

<p><b>School of Arts, English and Humanities</b> <b>Associate of Arts, Liberal Arts</b> Apachito, Frank (TC) * Benally, Erin Ann (CH)</p> <p><b>Associate of Arts, Fine Arts</b> Lucasop, Maria Andra (TS)</p> <p><b>Certificate, Art Endorsement</b> Jackson, Kayla C. (TS)</p> <p><b>Certificate, Digital Arts</b> Hale, Anthony J. (TS)</p> <p><b>Bachelor of Fine Arts</b> Jackson, Kayla C. (TS)</p> <p><b>School of Diné Studies and Education</b> <b>Associate of Arts, Early Childhood Education</b> Blackhair, Kristina Lynn (TS) * Jackson, Kiara Ashley (WR) * Teller, Alejandra (SH)</p> <p><b>Associate of Arts, Dine Studies</b> Jones, Sheneca Inabaa (TS) * Russell, Donovan K. (SH) * Tso, Ashley Lynn (TS)</p> <p><b>Associate of Arts, Education</b> Baha, Isabel (TS) Bahe, Lovelle Lynn (TS) Castillo, Stephanie Jon (CP) * Freeman, Valerie L. (TS) Jones, Morales Lee (TS) Wilson, Marc (TS)</p> <p><b>Bachelor of Arts, Elementary Education</b> Eawonja, Jacqueline Clarice (TS) Freeman, Valerie L. (TS) Gray, Keshia (TS) Hanks, Kayla Mae (TS) * James, Dominique Sarah (TS) Mark, Angel Mariah (TS) Tom, Ian Howard (TS)</p> <p><b>Certificate, Navajo Cultural Arts</b> Begay, Kayla Dawn (TS) * Hill, Naabaa Hastahle-Nez (TS)</p> <p><b>School of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math</b> <b>Associate of Science, Environmental Science</b> Begay, Lynshell (TS) Charleston II, Allen Baker (SH) Fritz, Candice Tiffany (TS) King, Jessica Leticia (SH)</p> <p><b>Associate of Science, General Science</b> Begay, Lynshell (TS) Betony, Althea (TS) Harvey, Brittany Nicole (TC) James, Kiara Dana (TS) Lansing Jr, Paul L. (TS) Tsoosie, Megan Janelle (TS)</p>	<p><b>Associate of Science, Health Occupation</b> Bedonie, Marley Kay (TC) * Begay, Brittany Raye (TS) * Begay, Kimberly (TS) Begay, Raemina J. (TS) * Begays, Tania L. (TC) Belin, Selena (TC) Bigwater, Kaya Donae (TS) Blagody, Corinne Mary (TC) Cleveland, Erin L. (TS) Dayzle, Utahana Mariah (TC) Denny, Jocelyn Carrson (TS) Du Puy, Tina M. (TC) Gray, Ashley Nicole (TS) Henry, Charmayne B. (TS) Iyua-Lincoln, Victoria (CH) * James, Daanna Lynn (TS) James, Kiara Dana (TS) Lee, Mariah Rae (TS) Lewis, Dailie (TS) Mann, Tasha T. (TS) Nez, Clara Lynn (TC) * Nez, Jary W. (TS) Nez, Raquel Timika (TS) Powless, Danielle Shandlin (TC) Price Jr, Benjamin H. (WR) Reeburrow, Charya (TC) Smith, Deandra K. (SH) Tso, Trudy Shannon (TS) Tsoosie, Ashley Nambah (TS) Ward, Socorro Owen (TC) Wartz, Shania Louise (TS) Wauneka, Jevette B. (TS) Whitehorse, Brandon Bobby (SH) * Yazzie, Arianna Marie (TS) Yellowhair, Aurelia (TC) Yellowhair, Sara Dawn (TC)</p> <p><b>Associate of Science, Biology</b> Charleston II, Allen Baker (SH) James, Kaitlin (TS) Johnson, Redynia (TS) Leslie, Angel-Grace Charity (TS) New, Jay W. (TS)</p> <p><b>Associate of Science, Mathematics</b> Laurent, Don McKenley (TS) * Lis, Alana Rae (TS) * Tsoosie, Sheldon (TS) Whitehorse, Latrell Alden (TS)</p> <p><b>Associate of Science, Pre-Engineering</b> Lee, Alana Rae (TS) * Yazzie, Shane Davis (TS)</p> <p><b>Associate of Science, Health Education</b> Begay, Lisa L. (CH) Begay, Shannon H. (TS) * Cornfield, Tony P. (CH) Mitchell, Adrienne (CH) Nez, Sheryl Ann (TC) Sorrrell, Faye Hannah (TS) * Tsoosie, Dalvina Ann (CH)</p>	<p><b>Bachelor of Science, Biology</b> Begay, Eric B. (TS) Begay, Nolan Stephen (TS) Silvers, Alandria L. (TS) Tsoosie, Megan Janelle (TS) Tsoosie, Melissa Lynn (TS)</p> <p><b>Bachelor of Science, Public Health</b> Begay, Chastity (TS) Begay, Lisa L. (CH) Bennett, Ashleigh Rae (TS) Jim, Andriana (CH) Jones, Karianna Maria (WR) * Paul-Wheeler, Dorothea R. (CH) * Tsuniljinnee, Yannahab (TS) Yazzie-Begay, Tiffany D. (CH)</p> <p><b>Bachelor of Science, Secondary Education, Science</b> Mungui, Mark Mondogjar (TS)</p> <p><b>Certificate, Public Health</b> (in conjunction with University of Arizona) Begay, Tony Lynn (CP) Brook, Alex (TC) Cornfield, Tony P. (CH) Harvey, Brittany Shay (TS) James, Rael Rae (TS) Kayonnie, Darnella (TS) Lynch, Rolanda (SH) Mitchell, Adrienne (CH) Sandoval, Misty M. (SH) Smith, Olivia Jean (SH) Sorrrell, Faye Hannah (TS) * Tsoosie, Dalvina Ann (CH) Tsoosie, Leona (TS) Yazzie, Emmeline (TS) Yazzie, Shaneyka Kaye (SH)</p> <p><b>School of Business and Social Science</b> <b>Associate of Arts, Business Administration</b> Bancroft, Henrietta (TC) Brown, Shelby Allison (WR) Clark, Candice L. (CP) Dugi, Bernadka K. (TC) Endischee, Melvina R. (TS) Graham, Alexandria Dougl. (TC) Jelugbo, Tope (TS) Kanaswood, Kelley Mariah (TC) Parker, Quailin (TC) Sandoval-Redhouse, Maria A. (TS) Tapaha, Delores (TS) Tom, Annette P. (TS) Tom, LaDonna L. (CH) Yazzie, Gabriellin Sandy (TS)</p> <p><b>Associate of Arts, Social and Behavioral Science</b> Ashley, Elenor W. (CP) Begay, Lajiana L. (TS) * Belin, Kelly Beatrice (SH) Blakeddy, Tacy L. (TC) Boyd, Kineticia C. (TS) Calamity Sr, Albert. (CP) Clyde, Victor J. (WR) Deneco, Natalie (TS) * Harrison, Arcadia (TS)</p> <p>Hobbs, Brianna Allah (TS) Huskie, Shari B. (TC) Joe, Dorothy K. (CP) Martin, Amanda A. (CP) Morgan, Scott Tyne (TS) Murphy-Willeto, Rhea (CP) Tacheene, Jadedcolby (TS) Tsoosie, Shresha Army (CH)</p> <p><b>Associate of Arts, Social Work</b> Begays, Megan Mae (TS)</p> <p><b>Associate of Applied Science, Office Administration</b> Bustamante, Rosalinda (SH) Davis, Brooke S. (SH) Hosteen, Jessica Dawn (SH) Iyua, Shaatika Grace (TS) Mallman, Karen Blair (SH) * Tom, Melvina (TS)</p> <p><b>Bachelor of Arts, Business Administration</b> Bahe, Rochelle L. (TS) Begay, Xandria Adero (TS) Francis, Alene (TS) Jaka, Kimberly Kayla (TS) Kinlaheeheny, Althea (TS) Nez, Joleen B. (TS) Tallwood, Quenda (TS) Tom, Annette R. (TS) Tsoosie, Georfilina (TS) Vicent, Koystal (TS)</p> <p><b>Bachelor of Arts, Psychology</b> Attakai, Ryan D. (TC) Bainbridge, Corrina A. (WR) Bitsule, Alysha Lea (TS) Bekay, Francis (TS) Brock, Michelle Carol (TC) Calamity, Raquel (TC) Clark, Shoshonia Water (TS) Cruye, Chris Mason (TS) Curley, Josephine (WR) Francis, Tyrone (TS) James, Monique Shalana (TS) Teller, Travis L. (TS) Toney, Elaine Meroprie (SH) Tsoosie, Taralaton (TS) Vesenti, Denise Ellen (TS) * Wallace, Christine (WR) Wauneka, Della Lene (TS) Whitehair, Hope L. (TS) Willie, Lorencta (TS) Yazzie, Veronica (TS)</p> <p><b>Graduation with Honors</b> * 3.50 to 3.69 Cum Laude ** 3.70 to 3.89 Magna Cum Laude *** 3.90 to 4.00 Summa Cum Laude</p>
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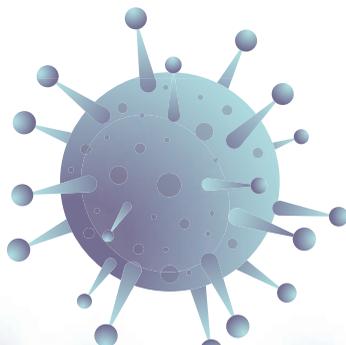
- Diné College students picked up their emergency aid CARES Act checks at campus sites in Arizona and New Mexico. The checks arrived under a \$1.3 million grant secured via the U.S. Dept. of Education's Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act).



- Diné College President Charles Monty Roessel joined the Achieve60AZ Board of Directors. The addition of Roessel to the Board of Directors represents the organization's ongoing commitment to implementing a broad approach to improving educational attainment that takes Arizona's diverse population into consideration.
- As part of an effort to give back to the community during the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, Diné College began daily meal delivery to Navajo elders in the Tsaile, Lukachukai and Wheatfields areas of the Navajo Nation.
- A research paper authored by two Diné College science professors Drs. Joseph DeSoto and Shazia Hakim, about the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic and its impact upon Native Americans, provides clarification of the transmission and virulence of the virus, the professors stated.

May 2020

- The worldwide coronavirus (Covid-19) did not stop Diné College from recognizing 176 graduates and conferring a record 53 bachelor's degrees May 8. This year, due to Covid-19, the college recognized students for their achievements through the college's website. The virtual graduation and was featured in an Arizona Republic news story.

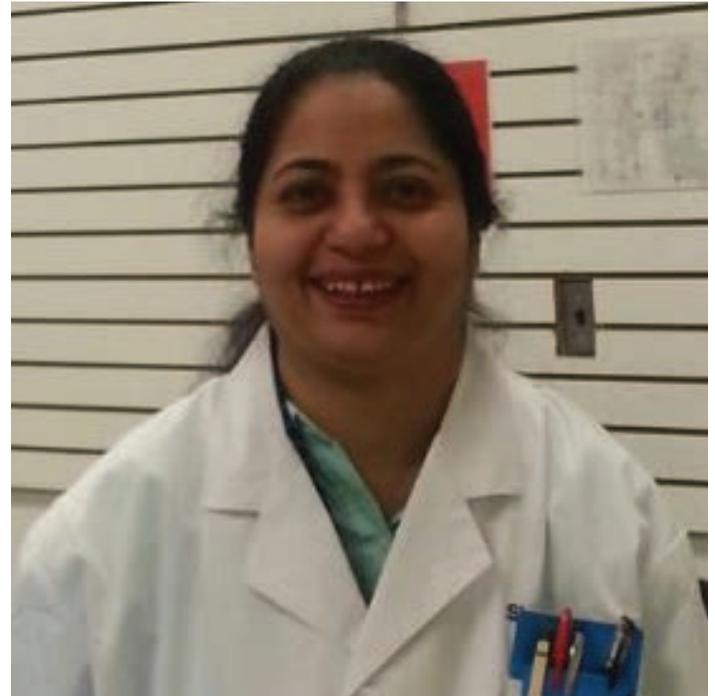


# 2019 - 2020 MILESTONES

- Diné College was named a top school in several categories by bestvaluecolleges.com, an online independent and nonprofit entity which measures financing and academics.

## June 2020

- Summer Semester began June 22.
- The SREP program typically engages students in three weeks of classroom instruction on the Diné College Tsaile campus, then coordinates six-week hands-on internships with different agencies and mentors, generally located on the Navajo Nation, that provide students with practical experience in data collection and analysis in a health-related program in a community setting. This year, all in-person activities were eliminated, and students did not work directly with any public health organizations on the Navajo Nation. All lectures at the beginning of the program were through Zoom.
- The first presidents of the U.S. were notorious slaveholders, committed countless acts of violence against Native Americans and have a history of bad politics. That's the gist of an article published by Diné College English instructor Alysa Landry in the July edition of *Cowboys & Indians*.
- Diné College debuted a new certificate program that is relevant and timely during the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. That was the mindset of officials at Diné College as they moved ahead with implementing a Certified Medical Assistant (CMA) certificate program — the first of its kind offered on the Navajo Nation.



## July 2020

- The college enacted a 50 percent tuition discount for students — new, returning, continuing, and transferring — for the Fall 2020 semester.
- The college offered 358 courses in Fall 2020, with all but 20 courses face-to-face for labs and culture courses. College staff also readied themselves for the return of students by instituting campus-wide safety measures, a \$8.4 million technology upgrade, developing a laptop loaner program, and other student success measures.
- Mark Bauer, Joseph DeSoto, Shazia Hakim, science instructors, received the Exemplary Service Award for services to the Navajo Nation. The honor was presented by the Diné College Board of Regents.



## August 2020

- A group of students spent their summer researching the coronavirus pandemic. It's a research project showing the correlation between Covid-19 and the impacts on Diné people through SREP. *AZ Family*, a Phoenix TV station, aired a news story on the students.
- Fall semester began Aug. 17.
- Diné College associate professor Matthew Jake Skeets received the *American Book Award*.
- Diné College reported a Fall 2020 student enrollment of 1,369 and returning students were met with some big changes. The number of enrolled students represents a high amount, considering the coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak. The Fall 2019 enrollment was 1,415. The Associated Press ran a story headlined, "Enrollment Exceeds Expectations."
- Nine stories about the heroic Navajo Code Talkers were featured in a film ceremony as part of Navajo Code Talkers Day. The films were created by students from Diné College and Winona State University in Minnesota.

## September 2020

- The college's Marketing and Communications Department was a finalist in four categories in marketing and public relations with the National Council for Marketing and Public Relations. Diné College Marketing Director George Joe won the District 6 2020 Communicator of the Year award and is one of seven finalists for the organization's national Communicator of the Year award.
- Professor Shazia Hakim, Ph.D., a Tuba City-based professor at Diné College's School of Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, is one of the co-investigators of the team that recently secured a Los Angeles-based W.M. Keck Foundation Grant for the next three years.



# FY 2020 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Net operating results was negative \$28.2million in 2019. Operating revenue fluctuates year to year due to enrollment, which affects tuition, federal student aid, and Auxilliary Enterprises. Operating expenses increase by 2 percent this year, the increase in operating expenses was due an increase in Institutional support, research and public service. The non-operating activities increased by 9 percent due to increase in Navajo Nation appropriation by \$500,000 and utilization of funds from federal appropriations, state and Navajo Nation funding, that resulted in a change in net asset of a positive \$5.5 million for 2019.

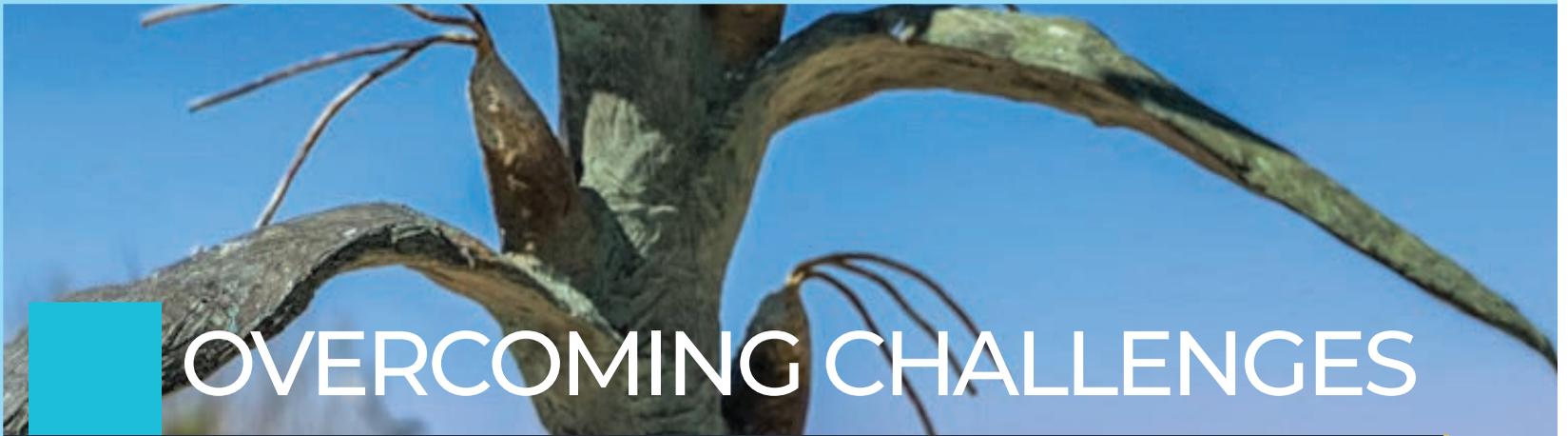
REVENUES	2016	2017	2018	2019
Tuition and Fees, Net	538,454	284,780	337,309	297,593
Grants and Contracts	3,481,025	4,868,507	5,873,638	7,299,118
Auxiliary Enterprises	1,479,185	1,055,703	913,711	1,078,955
Total Revenue	5,498,664	6,208,990	7,124,658	8,675,666

EXPENSES	2016	2017	2018	2019
Instruction	8,096,671	9,394,391	9,505,833	9,563,755
Research	815,621	799,237	1,227,146	1,553,302
Public Service	17,402	12,557	-	2,170
Student Aid	3,498,905	5,037,282	5,209,197	5,128,034
Academic Support	2,247,548	2,396,815	2,948,140	2,518,292
Student Service	1,758,104	1,541,703	1,452,018	1,649,137
Institutional Support	11,781,928	12,883,941	13,674,911	14,389,610
Auxiliary Enterprises	2,129,854	2,330,803	1,978,052	2,036,653
Total Expenses	30,346,033	34,396,729	35,995,297	36,840,953
Net Operating Results	(24,847,369)	(28,187,739)	(28,870,639)	(28,165,287)

NON-OPERATING ACTIVITES	2016	2017	2018	2019
Federal Appropriations	13,440,659	13,960,848	13,598,810	13,580,928
Navajo Nation Appropriations	4,200,000	4,200,000	4,200,000	4,700,000
Scholarships	5,564,243	7,483,707	7,034,462	7,342,688
Investments Income	438,756	495,627	419,262	604,386
Net Non-operating Activities	23,643,658	26,140,182	25,252,534	26,228,002
Capital Appropriations, Grants & Gifts	2,958,269	2,538,479	5,532,554	7,416,173
Total Non-operating Activities	26,601,927	28,678,661	30,785,088	33,644,175

TOTAL RESULTS	2016	2017	2018	2019
	1,754,558	490,922	1,914,449	5,478,888





# OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

“People were panicking and I was scared too,” remembers Shelby White, a third-year student pursuing a bachelor’s degree in fine arts at Diné College. It was late March and other students had been talking about the coronavirus in the days and weeks before. But they didn’t think it was going to be at their doorsteps. “It seems like it just came out of nowhere,” White says about Covid-19.

On March 22, just before Spring Break ended, college officials made the decision to move all courses online, close the student dormitories, close the campus and have employees and faculty work from home.

“It was like doing the impossible,” said Diné College Provost Dr. Geraldine Garrity about transferring the courses online, smack in the middle of the semester. “A lot of students didn’t have computers or a laptop at home, and depended on our computer labs. Then

a majority didn’t have Internet access, at their homes either. And some of our faculty had never taught an online course or were not computer literate. We had a big challenge.”

And some of the courses were difficult to transfer online. Notably, were the science lab courses and Navajo culture and language courses. “We had a real hard time at the beginning,” Garrity said. “But as the semester moved on things got better.”

William Nez said, ‘Instructing wasn’t the same as in-person, especially for courses like chemistry.’ Nez, a junior majoring in pre-engineering and is from St. Michaels, Ariz. He first struggled because he didn’t have a laptop. “It was kind of difficult at first. Before he (the teacher) would show us and explain to us. And at the time I didn’t have a laptop. I had to pick up a job to finally buy a laptop,” Nez said.





# COLLEGE STAFF

While students were adjusting to the change, they had to deal with the uncertainty and the unknown makeup of the coronavirus. Meanwhile, college president Dr. Charles M. Roessel had to keep everything together and make difficult decisions.

Should the school shut down completely and end the semester as some schools had done? How do we protect ourselves from the virus, when there were no definite pieces of information. Do we have a graduation? With no playbook to guide the school leadership, decisions had to be made – fast.

“About 1/3 of our staff continued working from home and a few came in.” Roessel said.

For graduation, a special webpage was created to honor the graduates, who received their diplomas by mail.

Despite the situation, the college awarded the highest number of bachelor’s degrees in its 52-year history and 179 students graduated. Summer enrollment was also steady with over 500 students enrolling — and with no in-person classes.

The next challenge was Fall 2020 enrollment. “The college thought that there would be furloughs because fall enrollment was going to be low,” Roessel said. But instead, the college was 50 students shy of last year’s enrollment.

The enrollment was attributed to 50 percent price reduction, a loaner program for laptops and internet hotspots, and heavy advertising on Albuquerque and Phoenix TV stations, radio, and social media advertising.

Shelby White



## Fall Enrollment is High



It's been a topsy-turvy year in academics, not only at Diné College, but in higher education circles everywhere.

For most of the summer, Diné College officials were concerned that enrollment would significantly drop due to Covid-19 challenges facing students. But by Aug. 24, the school was 57 students shy of last year's enrollment with 1,356 students enrolled.

"At first I thought we weren't going to get very high enrollment mainly due to limitations with Internet broadband and connectivity," Diné College Provost Geraldine Garrity, Ed.D., said.

The high enrollment comes at a time when the college was forced to transfer classes and registration online due to Covid-19.

"It's an unusual and unfortunate situation that we are in with this pandemic," Diné College Director of Enrollment Priscilla Leonard said. "Another reason for the high enrollment is that parents wanted their

child to stay home during this unprecedented time. They didn't want them returning to the cities."

Leonard noted that a lot of returning students who previously graduated from Diné College with associate's degrees, chose to enroll again for a bachelor's degree program. Notably, there are a number of returning students from 2012 and 2015 who want to continue their academic path, she said.

The college also attributes the Fall 2020 student enrollment to a 50 percent reduction in tuition cost, a student loaner laptop program and more than 350 online course offerings. The marketing department placed TV advertisements in the Phoenix and Albuquerque markets, plus in some strategic print advertisements, and social media.

The Diné College dorms were opened on a limited capacity, with 26 students and the campuses are heavily regulated with strict CDC coronavirus enforcement. The Tsaile campus is closed to the general public, as a means of protection for students and employees.

Aside from safety measures in place and a reopening guide, each of the libraries at Diné College now has a specialized ultraviolet machine that disinfects books, Garrity said.

After the Thanksgiving break, 31 face-to-face classes will transition to online instruction. And, members of the Diné College faculty are enrolling in an 11-week Quality Matters teaching program, whereby they can obtain online teaching certification, she said. Student internships will resume, but virtually, Garrity said.

Diné College Athletic Director Shawn Frank said that the school's cross-country team will field a squad of six male and female runners this year.

## What's Being Planned?

- Degree programs in nursing, microbiology and pre-med are being discussed along with a master's degree program in interdisciplinary science and a fully online fine arts program.
- The business school wants to put their degree program online and so does the Bachelor's of Fine Arts program. In order to be in compliance, they are certified online.
- Master's degree programs in STEM.
- Public health, nursing, microbiology and pre-med programs are being discussed.
- Plans are underway to build a STEM research lab which will be near Gorman Classroom Building in Tsaile.
- The first ever winter graduation takes place in December.

## New Faculty

- Marilyn Begay, assistant professor, School of Social Science and Business
- Gabriela Cruz, faculty, School of Arts, Humanities and English
- Christopher Dickerson, faculty STEM
- Rajneesh Verma, faculty STEM
- Suzanne Russ, an associate professor, School of Social Science and Business
- Kevin Webster, an instructor with STEM

## Retired Faculty

- Wilson Aronilth Jr.
- Martha Austin-Garrison
- Margaret Meyer
- Karen Willetto

## \$8.4M Information Technology Upgrade Across Diné College

With \$8.4 million funding from the \$150 billion Coronavirus Relief Fund, Diné College made a major investment into its information technology grid.

“We have always needed this technology upgrade and now we had the opportunity to do it with the CARES Act funding,” Diné College President Charles Monty Roessel said.

“Prior to this upgrade, as an analogy, if we only operated on a four-lane highway before this, we will now be operating on a 24-lane superhighway,” Diné College Information Technology Director Joy Thompson explained about the internet upgrade.

The college also spent the funding in other technology related areas such as upgrades within the Department of Information Technology (IT) — specifically, building

out the college’s distance learning environment. The upgrades included expanded broadband capacity, Zoom studios and a laptop loaner program.

Thompson said that wireless Internet units with data plans were ordered for students who do not have Internet access at their homes. In addition, the technology was situated so that students can access the Internet from wireless access points at any of the college’s six campuses in Arizona and New Mexico. The access points are at the student parking lots.

“As a result of the upgrades, students, staff and faculty were able to work and study from home with a high-quality of network and software services to provide course delivery and remote connection capabilities for enterprise applications,” Thompson explained.



### Diné College Distributes Covid-19 Relief Checks to Students

Diné College students picked up their emergency aid checks at three campus sites in Arizona and New Mexico. The checks arrived under a \$1.3 million grant secured via the U.S. Dept. of Education’s Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act).

Three hundred checks were distributed to students at the Tsaile campus. And, checks were issued at the Shiprock (NM) campus and at the Tuba City (AZ) campus. Students who did not pick up their checks received them by mail. The check amounts ranged from \$474 to \$697.

The CARES Act amount (Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund) granted to Diné College was \$1,346,931. Fifty percent of the relief funds are pre-allocated by the grant to go directly to students, while the remaining 50 percent is allocated to the institution.

### IT Upgrades:

- Increased Internet access at the Tsaile campus and a local Internet connection at all five campuses and wireless access at the student parking lots.
- Online services regarding admissions and enrollment and Zoom expansion. “There is a learning system integration with a video library for asynchronous learning, touchless applications and electronic document management. These are robust applications that can be served from one portal. It allows for a completely remote existence for students,” Thompson said.
- An audio-visual overhaul allows for faculty to have more quality time teaching, instead of battling issues with inadequate or absent equipment.
- New positions created: Distance Learning Coordinator, Academic Technologist and Instructional Designer were established to facilitate the highest quality of online course delivery and to standardize classes. “The personal loaner program gave students laptops and a wi-fi connection (modem) to connect to the Internet to attend classes. We (IT) also provided a computer in every dorm room for students to use. Following Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines, the college’s computer labs are now closed, but will be reconfigured when reopened for social distancing and personal space for student’s study or complete coursework.”
- Micro-Campuses have been established to create a space for students to attend class remotely in a learning center environment. They will be equipped with computer labs and a Zoom-enabled classroom with Internet access,” Thompson said.

## Diné College Students Present Covid-19 Summer Research Findings



Rapidly transitioning from an in-person program to one entirely online was a challenge, but public health students with Diné College's Summer Research Enhancement Program (SREP) delivered outstanding presentations, the professor who oversees SREP said.

The presentations were part of a public health course requirement and carried coronavirus pandemic (Covid-19) themes. Specifically, the student presentations covered the impact of Covid-19 on the mental health of caregivers on the Navajo Nation, the impact of Covid-19 policies on mental health within the Navajo Nation and the impact of Covid-19 on Diné College employees.

Mark Bauer, Ph.D., the science professor who oversees SREP, said the goal in highlighting Covid-19 topics this year was for the students to study and understand how the disease impacts their communities on the Navajo Nation — which has a continuously high rate of Covid-19.

SREP engages students in three weeks of classroom instruction, then coordinates internships with different agencies and mentors around the Navajo Nation. The internships give students practical experience in data collection and analysis in a health-related program in a community setting. In the final week, students return to the Tsaille campus and give presentations to departmental faculty, internship mentors and peers.



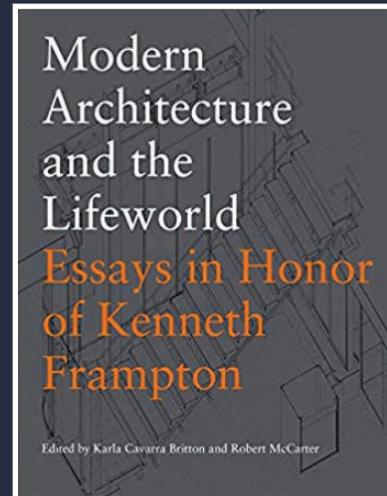
**Prof. Karla Britton**

In October 2019, Britton, Ph.D., was the keynote speaker at the anniversary celebration for an event at the University of Southern Indiana. The topic: “New Harmony as a Response to Estrangement.”

A graduate of Harvard University, Britton is the principal investigator for a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (Tribal Colleges and Universities), “Contemporary Navajo Art and Artists: Identity, History, and Culture” and with the “ArtPlace America,” in partnership with the Indigenous Design + Planning Institute, University of New Mexico.

The Diné College School of Arts, Humanities and English (SAHE) received federal and state grants to support art history initiatives. The federal grant is in the amount of \$99,000 and comes compliments of the National Endowment of the Humanities (NEH) and supports a project called, “Contemporary Navajo Art and Artists: Identity, History, and Culture.” The state grant is in partnership with the Indigenous Design and Planning Institute at the University of Mexico. That grant is from ArtPlace America and is in the amount of \$130,000. The purpose of the state grant is to empower students at Diné College to reimagine their communities through new curricula focused on indigenous design and planning.

## New Book Publication and Guest-edited Journal



Modern Architecture and the Lifeworld: Essays in Honor of Kenneth Frampton, edited with Robert McCarter (London: Thames & Hudson, 2020). The book addresses theories of regionalism related to the concept of placemaking as related to the Diné College grants from ArtPlace and NEH.

“Architecture and Displacement,” edited with Nader Ardalan, 2A Magazine: Architecture & Art (published in Tehran, Iran; issue 45, summer 2020).

## New Chapters in Edited Volumes and Academic Journal

“Permanence and Impermanence: Architecture and Migration,” Christian Theology in the

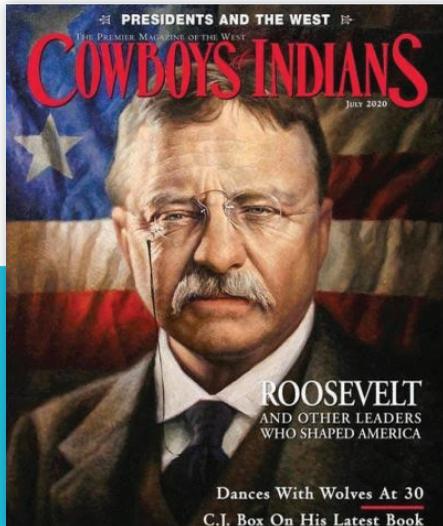
Age of Migration: Implications for World Christianity, ed. Peter Phan (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, Rowman & Littlefield, 2020). (book graphic 2)

“A Diaspora of Modern Sacred Form: Auguste Perret, Le Corbusier and Paul Valéry,” in eds. Ross Anderson and Max Sternberg, Modern Architecture and the Sacred (London: Bloomsbury Press, 2020).

“Theoretical A/gnosticisms: Paul Tillich, Colin Rowe, and the Theology of Architecture,” with Kyle Dugdale, in eds. Elke Couchez, Rajesh Heynickx, and Ricardo Agarez, Architecture Thinking Across Boundaries: Knowledge Transfers Since the 1960s (London: Bloomsbury Press, 2020).

“Paul Rudolph and the Psychology of Space: The Tuskegee and Emory University Chapels,” cover story in JSAH, the Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, 78/3 (University of California Press, September 2019).

# FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS



## **Assistant Professor Alysa Landry:**

Landry is entering her second year as an English faculty and is now completing her doctoral dissertation in Holocaust and Genocide Studies from Gratz University.

She will have two academic/nonfiction books published in 2021: The first is *The Navajo Code Talkers* will be published by Ohio University Press. The second is *U.S. Presidents and the Destruction of the Indian Nations*, coauthored by Dr. Michael Genovese of Loyola Marymount University, will be published by Palgrave Macmillan.

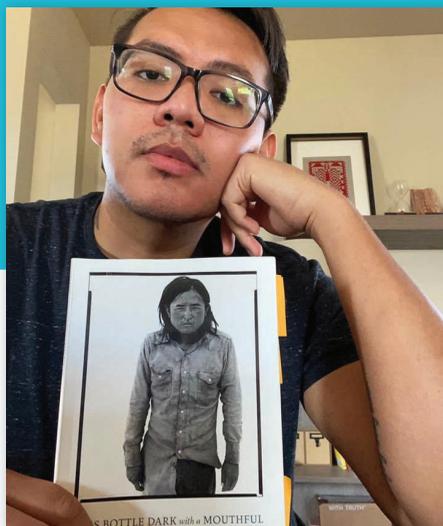
Professor Landry also wrote an article for *Cowboys & Indians* magazine that was published in July. She has received invitations from colleges and universities who want her to present at conferences or as a guest lecturer. The first is in October 2020, at Washington and Lee University in Virginia.



## **Associate Professor Christine Ami:**

She holds a Ph.D. from the University of California.

Ami is a faculty member in the School of Business and Social Sciences. This past year she received the Native Arts and Culture Distance Learning grant for the Navajo silversmithing BFA arts track degree program from the American Indian College Fund. She was also accepted as an Indigenous Visionaries Mentor to two BFA Navajo Women Students.



## **Assistant Professor Matthew Jake Skeets:**

Matthew Jake Skeets has a Master's degree from the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe and was promoted.

Matthew Jake Skeets was promoted this past Spring semester and now carries a new title: Assistant Professor. In September, Skeets was awarded the American Book award, one of the most prestigious awards in fiction writing. His poetry book, *Eyes Bottle Dark with a Mouthful of Flowers*, was selected as a winner of the National Poetry Series, published in 2019 from Milkweed Editions. He is also recipient of the Whiting Award for Poetry Winner 2020 and the Mellon Projecting All Voices Fellowship 2020-21.

(photo: Facebook)



**Assistant Professor Matthew Bollinger:**

He has a MFA in Painting from San Francisco Art Institute and a Master of Architecture from the University of New Mexico.

Graphic Arts Assistant Professor Matthew Bollinger has held two individual exhibits this year. The first was the Chromaticism, AC2 Gallery, Albuquerque. The second was the Psychic Typographies and Guiltless Repetition, Harwood Art Center, also in Albuquerque.

Bollinger also participated in three group exhibitions. Two in 2020: Breathing While Black, Augusta Savage Gallery – University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Mass., and “We, the People of the Land,” Lakewood Cultural Center, Lakewood, Colo. Then in 2019, the AMoA Biennial-600 Textile/Fiber, The Amarillo Museum of Art, Amarillo, Texas.



**Gabriela Cruz: New Digital Photographer Faculty:**

Gabriela Cruz has an MFA from the University of Texas at San Antonio.

Publications: Fifth Wheel Press, “Moon Soaked” Book, Page 19, Collected by Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Powers, Julie Rae, “Soft Lightning Volume 1” Soft Lighting Studio, Book, Page 68-69, collected by Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

This year Cruz won two contemporary art month CAMMIES, awarded by Blue Star Contemporary and Luminaria Contemporary Cultural Center in San Antonio, Texas. The other was an artist residency, Casa Lu, Mexico City, Mexico, Arch and Anne Giles Kimbrough Grant, Awarded by the Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, Texas. She also participated in two exhibit/ shows: That’s Not Ladylike, Casa Lu Gallery, Mexico City and a solo show, Creative Distancing, Chapman Gallery inside of the Art Museum of South Texas, Corpus Christi, Texas, Group Show.



**Shaina Nez, Adjunct Faculty**

Shaina A. Nez, a program coordinator and adjunct faculty was announced as 2020 Eliza So Fellowship finalist in June 2020 for her work entitled, Sun Child. Nez is also publishing with the Massachusetts Review, for an essay entitled, “Diné Abecedarian.” The piece will appear in the Winter 2020 issue. This is a special issue featuring Native and Indigenous writers and artists, of more than 30 contemporary writers from all over the country.



## Professor Hakim Plays Key Role in Diné College Research

Aside from her teaching duties and involvement with student projects, Shazia Hakim, Ph.D., conducts research and is the grant recipient for the School of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics at Diné College. Hakim is a graduate of the University of Karachi in Pakistan and has an academic background in microbiology and infectious diseases. Hakim's research and presentations have focused on several Covid-19 topics this past year.

Hakim is the Principal Investigator for a grant from the American Society for Microbiology Conference Grant to organize a conference in Spring 2021 entitled, "Emerging Infections and Tribal Communities: What

We Learned from the Covid-19 Pandemic?"

Hakim is the Co-Principal Investigator for a grant from the W.M. KECK Foundation entitled, "Biogeophysics: Seismic Activity Stimulates Microbial Activity."

### Conference Research Poster Presentations

Five (05) research posters presented at International Moot of American Society for Microbiology "ASM Microbe 2020" (July, 2020) (in person cancelled due to Covid-19 Pandemic). The posters were:

- "Salvia apiana the White Sage, Bee Sage, or Sacred Sage extract: a promising antibacterial candidate against ESKAPE pathogens."
- "Proteome-wide Screening to Discover Potential Druggable Proteins in Anaplasma Phagocytophilum."
- "Application of Insilico Docking of Potential Drug Targets in Cronobacter Sakazakii"
- Sp291"
- "Deserted Dry Land Soil: Source of Future's Promising Antibiotics?"
- "Antimicrobial Activity of Aloe barbadensis (Aloe vera) gel against ESKAPE pathogens and
- Candida albicans."

### Research Publications

Hakim, Boyd and DeSoto, (2020): The Pathophysiology of Virulence of Covid-19.

DeSoto, Hakim. (2020): Medical Basis for Increased Susceptibility of Covid-19 Among the Navajo and other Indigenous Tribes: A Survey. (J Biomed Res. Rev. Vol: 3, Issue: 1. (37-41)).

De Soto, Hakim, Foust D. (2020): Complementary Pharmacological Treatment and Therapeutic Prospects for Covid-19

## Partnership with Navajo Nation in Child Health Needs Assessment

The Navajo Epidemiology Center and Diné College jointly published the “2020 Navajo Nation Maternal and Child Health Needs Assessment.”

The report was developed collaboratively with the Navajo Native American Research Centers for Health Partnership (NNARCH), Diné College and Northern Arizona University, and the Navajo Department of Health. Funding was provided by NNARCH and the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS).

Mark Bauer, Ph.D., and his public health students conducted the research.

The report incorporates Navajo traditional understandings of health, including the Sa’ah Naaghai Bik’eh Hozho framework which means to live a long healthy life maintaining balance and harmony. The use of this framework connects kinship, the environment, and personal and community health.

“Our goal is to improve the health and well-being of mothers and children here on the Nation,” said Amber-Rose Waters, Project Coordinator in Diné College’s Public Health program. “We listened to the voices of parents, grandparents, teens, elders, and others in order to make this Report as complete and useful as possible.”



### Professors Research Causes of Covid-19

Professors Joseph DeSoto and Shazia Hakim, published a research paper about the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic and its impact upon Native Americans.

The paper, The Medical Basis for Increased Susceptibility of Covid-19 among the Navajo and other Indigenous Tribes: A Survey, written by Joseph DeSoto, MD, Ph.D., and Shazia Hakim, Ph.D., concludes, in part, that “...ethnic and anatomic expression patterns of angiotensin converting enzyme 2 (ACE2) and associated pathophysiology suggests that Native Americans and Asians may be particularly susceptible to this disease (Covid-19).”

The paper was accepted for publication on May 29 by the Journal of Biomedical Research and Reviews. DeSoto and Hakim said the document represents the first comprehensive world-wide scientific

understanding of the high rate of infectivity among the Navajo and Indigenous tribes of the SAR-CoV-2 from a molecular medical perspective on Covid-19. The two professors work in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) division of the Diné College.

Two more papers are also being published within weeks in major peer reviewed Medical and Scientific Journals by De Soto and Hakim, “The Medical Treatment for Covid-19,” and with

Fred Boyd, Ph.D., of Diné College, a well-known molecular physiologist, “The Pathophysiology of Covid-19,” both of which have already received international attention via preprints. DeSoto, M.D., Ph.D., is a medical school graduate of Howard University. His specialty is molecular medicine and pharmacogenetics.



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**Medical Basis for Increased Susceptibility of COVID-19 among the Navajo and other Indigenous Tribes: A Survey**

Joseph Angel de Soto\*  
Shazia Tabassum Hakim

*Department of STEM and Biomedical Science, School of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, Diné College, USA*

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**Abstract**

**Introduction** The SARS-CoV-2 virus was initially reported in Dec 2019 as the causative agent of a pneumonia breakout in Wuhan China. This virus rapidly spread from China to Europe and the East Coast of the United States eventually reaching the South West United States and indigenous tribes in mid-March. Since then the indigenous tribes have been devastated by the virus which the Governor of New Mexico has likened as an existential threat. **Methodology** An initial PubMed search was performed utilizing specific Boolean operators and words. Three thousand one hundred and nineteen papers were elicited. Articles that had similar information were eliminated with more recent paper having preference. This left 472 papers. Each paper was then evaluated by three content experts with the most relevant and scientifically sound 50 kept for this survey. **Results** The literature suggests that the Navajo's and other indigenous peoples may have elevated levels of ACE2 receptors in their lungs and other tissues allowing greater susceptibility to the COVID-19 virus. Increased levels of diabetes and protein nutrition are directly related to increased morbidity and mortality in this group while obesity, COPD, and heart disease are not. The increased morbidity and mortality is exacerbated by an inability to test or treat for SARS-CoV-2. **Conclusion** The infectivity rate of Navajo's on the reservation is the highest in the Nation at 5.25 times higher than the national average and with a death rate at 2.05%. Co-morbidities account for some of the increased morbidity and mortality while lack of access to adequate health care unnecessarily magnifies the poor outcome. The threat to indigenous tribes in the Southwest due to COVID-19 is dire.

**Keywords:** COVID-19, Indigenous Tribes, Navajo, Medical Presentation, Medical Resources, Comorbidity.

**Introduction**

In late March, New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham stated that the SARS-CoV-2 virus could “wipe out” native 21 tribes [1]. In Dec 2019, a pneumonia appeared of unknown etiology appeared in the Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market adjacent to the Wuhan Institute of Virology [2]. The virus rapidly spread throughout China and to Europe which then spread to the east coast of the United States. The new virus was found to be a corona virus with a close genetic sequence to the SARS virus [3]. The corona virus is normally an innocuous cold virus that spreads during the winter months [4]. Yet this virus has turned out to be much more readily passed than either the SARS virus that cause an epidemic in 2003 and the related MERS virus responsible for the epidemic that began in 2012.

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**Conflict of Interest:** Angel de Soto J (2020) Medical Basis for Increased Susceptibility of COVID-19 among the Navajo and other Indigenous Tribes: A Survey. J Biomed Res Rev Vol 3, Issue 1, 137-141.

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## Several Construction Projects at Diné College's six campuses are underway, among them:

- Tsaille Gorman Classroom Building (GCB): The most recent grant related to the coronavirus (Covid-19) included an HVAC system, with the project going to bid in July. The Projects Department is now coordinating the renovation of four classrooms, so that it coincides with the HVAC upgrade for the entire building.
- Tuba City Science Lab: The science lab tables and gas lines pertaining to the project are underway and are part of the project's last phase.
- Tsaille Security Department: The architectural and design work for the project and parking lot is complete. The Projects Department put out the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the site work and paving of the security department parking lot in September.
- Shiprock Agricultural Multipurpose Center: The charrettes portion of the architectural and engineering phase of the project is near completion. The college's Projects Department and Land Grant Office have been meeting with Dyron Murphy Architects of Albuquerque to finalize the floor plan and begin the estimating and design processes.
- Shiprock Math and Science Building: The RFP was finalized in September and a revised schedule has been developed to reflect completion in November 2020. RMKM of Albuquerque and the Diné College Projects Department have been working with the college attorney to finalize bidding documents.
- Title III FY 2020: On Aug. 18, 2020, the U.S. Department of Education sent notification that the Title III application submitted by Diné College in April was approved. Currently, the Projects Department is about to begin the scope of work for the identified projects for FY 2020.



## Construction of the \$6.3M Shiprock Math and Science Building Begins in January 2021



Covid-19: The Navajo Nation and Coronavirus, Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act funded Diné College on Covid-19 related projects. Currently, the Projects Department is working on a December 30, 2020 deadline for:

- Shiprock North Campus Gym — HVAC
- Shiprock North Campus Main Building — HVAC
- Shiprock South Campus Classroom Building — HVAC
- Shiprock South Campus John Pinto Library — HVAC
- Shiprock South Campus Student Success Center — HVAC
- Shiprock Outdoor learning space — South Campus
- Tsaile Gorman Classroom Building — HVAC
- Tsaile Ned Hatathli Center — HVAC (2 floors)
- Tsaile Cafeteria — HVAC
- Tsaile Student Union Building (North Wing) — HVAC
- Tsaile Gym — HVAC
- Tsaile Kinyaani Library — HVAC
- Tsaile Student Family Housing Central Hogan (modifications)
- Tsaile Outdoor Learning Space (GCB and Archive)
- Tuba City Classroom Building – HVAC
- Tuba City Outdoor Learning Space
- Window Rock outdoor learning space
- Micro-campus (New Mexico)
- Micro-campus (Arizona)



## CONTACT US

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