

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Congratulations to the Class of 2026!

Yá'at'ééh Graduates, Families, and Supporters,
Today is more than a graduation; it is a moment of becoming.

To our graduates: I see you. I see the long days, the challenges you carried, the moments you wanted to give up but didn't. You have earned this. Your journey reflects strength, resilience, and a deep commitment not only to your education, but to something greater than yourself.

Many of us come from stories of sacrifice. From families and ancestors who prayed for this moment long before it arrived. So today, as you walk across that stage, remember that you are not walking alone; you carry your parents, your grandparents, your elders, your family, and communities with you. Honor them. They are part of this achievement.

At Diné College, we are guided by Sa'ah Naagháí Bik'eh Hózhóón, a way of thinking, planning, living, and reflecting that reminds us of who we are and how we are meant to walk in this world. This is not just philosophy; it is responsibility. Sa'ah Naagháí Bik'eh Hózhóón calls on you to live with purpose, to lead with integrity, and to remain grounded in your identity, your language, your culture, and your history.

Education is not just about a degree. It is about knowing your reason for being and becoming. Class of 2026, wherever you go next, carry that with you. Be strong in who you are. Be proud of where you come from. And never forget that you have a responsibility to give back, to lift others, and to make things better for those who follow you.

You are ready. We are proud of you.

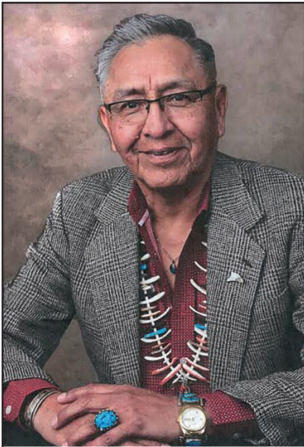
Dr. Deborah J. Dennison

Diné College President

COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER

Dr. Donald Denetdeal

Navajo Educator, Cultural Advocate, and Hózhóóji Practitioner



Dr. Donald Denetdeal, is of the Naaneesh't'ézhi Táchíi'nii clan, born for the Kinyaa'aanii clan. He grew up in Klagehoh Basin and Oak Ridge, Arizona, living in a traditional Hogan without electricity or running water. From a young age, he learned survival skills, cultural values, and the Navajo way of life, including leadership, compassion, and responsibility. The youngest of four siblings, he started school at the age of seven and became the first in his family to graduate from high school and college.

After college, Dr. Denetdeal worked for the Navajo Area School Board Association (NASBA) for 11 years, training school board members in Navajo language and navigating federal and tribal government systems. He later worked for the Navajo Nation Washington Office, lobbying Congress and federal agencies on behalf of the Navajo Nation.

In 1989, he joined Diné College as an academic advisor and later taught Navajo Studies for 30 years, helping develop the college's Bachelor of Arts program in Diné Studies. After retiring, he taught master's courses at Navajo Technical University and lectured worldwide on Navajo culture. A Hózhóóji practitioner, Dr. Denetdeal received an honorary doctorate from Diné College in 2021 for his contributions to education and Navajo culture.

COLLEGE ADMINISTRATION

Board Of Regents:

Dr. Janet Slowman, Chair, Appointed Member
Dr. Maggie L. George, Vice-Chair, Appointed Member
Kimberlee Williams, Treasurer, Appointed Member
Dr. Dolly Manson, Secretary, Appointed Member
Claudia Edgewater, Ex-Officio Member
Ashleigh E. Chee, Ex-Officio Member
Rosalind Smith, Designated Member

President:

Dr. Deborah Jackson-Dennison

Cabinet:

Patrick Blackwater, Acting Provost
Leon Jackson, Interim Vice President of Finance and Administration
Glennita Haskey, Vice President of Student Affairs
Serena Denetsosie, Vice President of Institutional Advancement

School Deans:

School of Arts & Humanities

Irvin Morris, Dean, Professor

School of Business & Social Science

Rosalind Smith, Acting Dean, Assistant Professor

School of Diné Studies & Education

David P. Nez, Dean, Senior Lecturer

School of Science Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

Dr. Shazia Tabassum Hakim, Interim Dean, Professor



THE
NATION'S
COLLEGE

www.dinecollege.edu



ORDER OF CEREMONY

EMCEE:

Tylia Begay, Diné College Graduate

PROFESSIONAL:

Dr. Avery Denny, Hataatii, Professor

POSTING OF COLORS:

Tsaile/Wheatfields & Blackrock Veterans Association

NATIONAL ANTHEM:

Miss Audrey James, Miss Navajo Elementary 2025-2026

INVOCATION:

Lorenzo Max, Hataatii, Associate Professor

WELCOME ADDRESS:

Dr. Deborah Jackson-Dennison, Diné College President

COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER:

Dr. Don Denetdeal, Navajo Educator, Cultural Advocate

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

Patrick Blackwater, Acting Provost

CONFERRAL OF DEGREES & CERTIFICATES:

Dr. Deborah Jackson-Dennison, Diné College President

ALUMNI INDUCTION CEREMONY:

Sharon James, Faculty, Diné College Alumni

CONGRATULATORY REMARKS:

Tiffany L. Curley, Associate of Arts Early Childhood Education

CLOSING REMARKS:

Dr. Buu Nygren, Navajo Nation President

BENEDICTION:

Travis Teller, Student Mental Health Coordinator

RETRIEVAL OF COLORS:

Tsaile/Wheatfields & Blackrock Veterans Association

RECESSIONAL:

Diné College Song

SCHOOL OF ARTS & HUMANITIES

Bachelor Fine Arts, Graphic Design
Etsitty, Misty S (TS)

**Bachelor Fine Arts,
Traditional Painting**
Begay, Savannah Nadine (TS)

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS & SOCIAL SCIENCE

Bachelor of Arts, Business

Administration
Begay, Brandon J (TC) ***
Begay, Shaquille W (TC) **
Carroll, Tyra K (TS)
Cleveland, Vanesha N (WR) **
Foraker, Sarah N (TS) **
Harvey, Dawn (SR) **
Jaka, Kimberly (CP)
Kelewood, Terri Mae (TS)
Woody, Gregarenia (TS)
Yazzie, Chelsea R (SR) *** 🇺🇸
Yazzie, Laramie D (TS)

Bachelor of Arts, Psychology

Begay, Jolanna (SR)
Begay, Lauriel Alana (TS)
Claw, MarLisa (TS)
Cleveland, Shelly Ernestine (TS)
Cuthair, Karsten Ross (TS)
Jones, Laurel L (TS)
Towne, Tylaya M (TS) *
Wero, Dustin V (TC)

**Associate of Applied Science,
Business Management**

Begay, Adrian M (TS) *
Begay, Tylia S (TS) **
Cleveland, Malorie (TS)
Panigeo, Sonya (SR)
Upshaw, Alicia M (WR)
Werito, Shoshanah (TS) **

**Associate of Applied Science,
Office Administration**

Apachito, Chazley L (TS)
Bahe, Megan L (TS)

SCHOOL OF DINÉ STUDIES & EDUCATION

**Bachelor of Arts, Elementary
Education**

Bahe, Wileen (TS)
Bia, Christina (TS)

**Bachelor of Arts, Multicultural
Education**

Begay, Tanya S (TS) **
Nez, Emerlisia (TS)
Paul, Esther M (SR) **

**Associate of Arts, Business
Administration**

John, Rholandolyn C (TC)
Panigeo, Sonya (SR)
Pete, Klai C (SR) **
Wagner, Vernissa (TS) **
Badonie, Chenille (TS)
Bitsilly, Danielle S (TS)
Dedman, Danielle A (TS)
Haskie, Ben V (TS)
Hosteen, Regina (CP)
James, Yvonne A (TS)
Johnson-Byjoe, Samara R (TS)
Lansing, Harriett (SR) *
Lee, Hali Wren (TC)
Shirley, Victor E (WR)
Tracey, Quincy Trent (TS)
Yazzie, Rolinda (TS)

**Associate of Arts, Social and
Behavioral Science**

Araba, Sasha (TS) *
Begay, EmberLynn (TS)
Benally, Gabrielle (TS)
Gamble, Hope Graylynn (TS) *
Honahni, Dabke D (TC)
Smith, Branial (TS) *
Yazzie, Brandon R (TS)

Associate of Arts, Social Work

Anthony, Melia (SR)
Jones, Terri (TS)
Lindholm, Dylan W (TS) **

Minor, Native American Studies
Lee, Mikhail (TS)

**Associate of Arts, Early
Childhood Education**

Curley, Tiffany L (TS) ***
Hanley, Autumn R (SR)

Associate of Arts, Education

Jim, Gailene (SR)
Puente, Ashley D (TS)
Rockbridge, Nanabah (TS)
Sherlock, Katie M (TS)
Yazzie, Daniel L (TS)
Yazzie, Delilah L (TS)

Congratulations Graduates!

SCHOOL OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING & MATHEMATICS

Master of Science, Biology

Chee, Sheldon (TS) **
Nez, Ian Tabaahi (TC) ***

Bachelor of Science, Biology

Anderson, Zuri Eileen (TS) *
Begay, Brittany Raye (TS) *
Clichee, Dominique D (TS)

Bachelor of Science, Public Health

Chee, Raquel (WR) *
Lee, Mikhail (TS)
Nez, Kathleen H (TC)
Nez, Sheryl A (TC) *
Poyer, Alia A (SR) **
Wagner, Clay O'Brien (TS) *
Willie, Cheryl J (WR)

Associate of Science, Biology

Carr, Ayden (TS)
Curley, Savannah (TS)
Paul, Darian M (SR) *
Russell, Daryl R (SR) 🇺🇸
Tah, Deanne (TS) 🇺🇸
Tohee, Lauren W (TS)
Williams, Cissy Mariah (TS) **

**Associate of Science, Environmental
Science**

John, Terion T (TS) **

**Associate of Science, Health
Occupation**

Ashkie, Tyler (TS)
Begay, Matthew L (TC)
Begay, Myia R (TS)
Begaye, Shaandiina Ann Goldtooth (TS)
Bull, Natisha Melanie (TS)
Charley, Marlena Renae (TS) *
Chee, Ashleigh E (TS) ***
Dayzie Jr., Wilbert (TC)
Frank, Randi Ralissa (TS)
Holtsol, Retresha Ashley (TS)
King, Oddonniss Danny (TS)
Lewis, Yvonne (SR)
Owens, Corey Adel (TS) **
Parrish, Kirsten (TS)
Parrish, Thiya (TS)
Paul, Darian M (SR) *
Russell, Daryl R (SR)
Shirley, Shishena (TS)
Tacheene, Hailey Skye (TC)
Tah, Deanne (TS) 🇺🇸
Teller, Shinezbi (TS)
Tso, Tilton (TS)
Wilson, Anetra K (TS) **
Yazzie, June (TS)

**Associate of Science,
Mathematics**

Begay, Asdzaani Nizhoonii Nili (TS) **
Begay, Matthew L (TC)

**Associate of Science,
Pre-Engineering**

Begay, Matthew L (TC)
Morgan, Daunte I (TS)

**Associate of Science, Public
Health**

Dilyou, Natalie H (SR) ***
Johnson, Liam (SR) *
Ross, Maya J (TS)

**Certificate, Computer
Technology**

Begay, Atianna A. (TS)
Ben, Kimmel (TS)
Crank, Markal Jaylen (TS)
Sandoval, Austin R (TS)

Certificate, Medical Assistant

Brown, Vonda L (TC)
Goldtooth, Dakota Lane (TC)
Willie, Cassandra (TC)

Certificate, Public Health

Etsitty, Nizhoniab D (TS)
Martinez, Philepa A (CP)
Pablo, Kristen A (CP)

ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM

Clitso, Justshaina
Davis, Winona L
Foster, Derek E
Johnson, Rosa
Martinez, Cassie A
Nolan, Maysah R
Ray, Sean I
Tan, Amaya

* 3.50 to 3.69 Cum Laude

** 3.70 to 3.89 Magna Cum Laude

*** 3.90 to 4.00 Summa Cum Laude

🇺🇸 Veteran