



# DINÉ COLLEGE

THE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION OF THE NAVAJO

## Office of the President

November 2024  
President's report

First, I want to wish everyone a wonderful time with your family as you share a good meal next week. This is a time to be thankful for those we love and those that love us.

Of course, this is also a time as we begin to wind down our fall semester. We have this fall, a large graduating class. This is exciting for us. Dean Tutt and Miranda James have been spearheading this year's commencement. I believe the commencement speaker is someone who can relate to students today and also provides inspiration for following your dreams and finding a job that you love.

This period is one of those times when we must be working within a 360° environment. It provides us an opportunity to reflect on what and how we are doing. The team has done an excellent job in ensuring these students were able to graduate. There will be time to dig deeper into the data to see how we could and must do better. I believe a continued conversation will be taking place on how to improve online learning. This is just the beginning.

The Provost continues to lead assessments in preparation for our HLC visit next year. The detailed work her team is doing will help lay the foundation for a clear visit. It has not been easy and at times it has been downright difficult. We knew this when we started, and we will get to where we need to be.

I believe there are lessons to be learned in some of our programs, for example, our Navajo law program. We have a lot of interest and being able to drill down with students in a focus group environment will provide insight for other new programs.

At the previous governance committee meeting, the issue of shared governance was brought up. The Provost and I met with faculty who were interested in focusing on how we can improve, how we can build trust, and how to be more transparent. We came up with three task forces: the first will deal with clarifying the chain of communication as a way to improve communication between faculty and administration. The second deals with improving the structure and system to improve and create a meaningful shared governance structure, that all can be supportive of. Finally, the third will focus on three classifications of how faculty contracts will align with our focus on teaching and research.

I believe we can agree on all of these areas between faculty and administration. It will take work and it will not be easy, but we will achieve this goal. The structure and systems will be more of an ongoing process as we determine the path forward and the impact on the college charter. As we move forward, we will also ensure that our Navajo values and our college mission is respected and integrated.

While it's been a couple of weeks since the election, every day brings an opportunity for greater insight into the plans of the new administration. Our legislative team has been working on the Dine College Act as well as our O&M request. While it has not been introduced, we did get the draft bill. With the possibility of, the Republican house, Senate, and of course, the president we will see the impact we hope very shortly. In other words, Eli Crane was very aggressive and pushing for our bills and now that Congress has full Republican control, we will see if this reflects further support for our bill.

There are other focuses that we are looking at as we move ahead. Primarily this revolves around funding for tribal colleges, the farm bill, and any new changes to regulations that were suspended during the Biden administration. This is a very fluid time because rather than trying to find a smooth transition, this administration has been looking to create a big splash.

One of the hopes we have for the future is that Indian Affairs continues to be a bipartisan issue. We will be working hard to get our specific needs articulated to the congressional staffers. On the state level, there is less change and therefore our focus on state Support over the last few years will put us in a good position.