

Diné College now offers four-year degrees in Public Health, Studio Art

Written by By Bernie Dotson Public Relations Officer Diné College
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TSAILE, Ariz. – Diné College has been given approval by the Chicago-based Higher Learning Commission (HLC) to begin offering two new degree programs in its School of Arts, Humanities and English and School of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. Both colleges are part of a recent college-wide academic reorganization plan.

The new programs mean the college now offers a Bachelor of Fine Arts (B.F.A.) degree in Studio Art and a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree in Public Health. Professors Paul Willeto and Mark Bauer will oversee the new programs.

“It is with great pride and gratitude to faculty and staff that I inform you that (HLC) has approved our Bachelor of Fine Arts and Public Health degree programs,” Diné College President Monty Roessel said in an Oct. 27 announcement. “This is a great step forward in creating a Diné College that continues to meet the needs and aspirations of the Navajo people,” Roessel said.

Diné College Provost Dr. Geraldine Garrity said the new programs will help grow local education in the fields of art and science. Garrity projected that overall school enrollment could double after the programs kick in come spring 2018.

Bauer said the new programs mean “a lot more” students enrolling and taking advantage of employment opportunities at places like the Indian Health Service (IHS) as well as with county and state jobs in public health. Plus, Bauer said, there are students already pursuing associate degrees at Diné College in various fields of science and those students can continue right through to the four-year program.

“This is definitely a win-win situation for the college and students,” Bauer said. “We’re ready to go.”

THE B.F.A. PROGRAM

Willeto, a fine arts and humanities faculty member, said B.F.A. course curriculum includes art

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history, drawing, painting and photography.

“Yes, an artistic background is ideal,” Willeto said of entry into the program. “Students who have a passion for art and who want to make art their profession are primary candidates.”

Willeto noted that students who graduate from the program can go into teaching, architecture, the virtual game industry, public and private museum work or endeavor as individual art entrepreneurs.

Willeto and Bauer said new staff might not need to be immediately brought aboard because much of the subject matter is already being taught. Both, however, predicted ultimate employment growth at the college.

HLC/DINE COLLEGE

The HLC is an independent corporation and one of six regional institutional accreditors in the U.S.

Founded in 1968 as Navajo Community College, Diné College is a two- and four-year degree granting institution with satellite campuses in Crownpoint, Shiprock, Chinle, Window Rock and Tuba City.

By Bernie Dotson

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