

## **\$5.6 million approved for Diné College, Navajo Tech University**

Written by gallupsun

Wednesday, 18 October 2023 19:35

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WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — The 25th Navajo Nation Council approved Legislation No. 0118-23, which will appropriate supplemental funds of over \$5.6 million from the Unreserved, Undesignated Fund Balance for Diné College and Navajo Technical University Oct. 17.

Legislation sponsor Council Delegate Dr. Andy Nez (Crystal, Fort Defiance, Red Lake, Sawmill) explained that the supplemental funding request was being made due to Diné College and Navajo Technical University having not received the full amount of their grant funding due to the grants not being encumbered before the Fiscal Year 2022 closeout.

“Due to discrepancies over time, these funds landed back into the Navajo Nation General Funds and back into the UUFB, which is the source we’re requesting to take the funds from,” Nez said. “We’re here to request the funding to replenish what was unallocated from Fiscal Year 2021 to our higher educational institutions.”

The emergency legislation indicated that almost \$5.8 million was being requested to supplement four institutions including Diné College, Navajo Technical University, Navajo Preparatory School, and Phoenix Indian Center.

The Council passed an amendment to narrow the funding request to just over \$5.6 million for Diné College and Navajo Technical University only.

Council Delegate Vince James (Jeddito, Cornfields, Ganado, Kinlichee, Steamboat) said that all funding requests must follow proper procedure in having an updated letter from the Office of the Controller and the Office of Management and Budget to allow the request to move forward, as well as a balance sheet indicating the balance from the funding source.

“These are the driving documents to draft a legislation. The legislation that came before us had different numbers and four different institutions,” James said. “When this legislation was put on the five-day comment period, the people saw that it included different amounts and additional institutions. We could have made an amendment with these changes before it came to Council. Because it was an emergency legislation, these changes weren’t made and that’s what we debated today.”

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Nez said he had met with both OOC and OMB before presenting the legislation and requested the support of his colleagues for Navajo students who are enrolled at both institutions.

"I'm very glad that our higher educational institutions are obligated funding on behalf of the Navajo government," Nez said. "When I first learned about the funds that were not allocated to them in previous years, that prompted me to drop this legislation. They were carrying the weight of years of unallocated funds."

Diné College President, Dr. Charles Monty Roessel, joined Nez in presenting the legislation and thanked the 25th Navajo Nation Council for acting on behalf of Navajo students who will benefit from the funding.

"We've been covering these costs for the past two-and-a-half years," Roessel said. "This will help give more scholarships to students. This will help us build new facilities. This will help us invest in faculty. This helps us to invest in strategic planning."

Legislation No. 0118-23 was approved by a simple majority vote with 16 in favor and one opposed. Once the resolution is certified and delivered to the Office of the President and Vice President, Navajo Nation President Dr. Buu Nygren will have 10 calendar days to consider the resolution.

