



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 19, 2018

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Navajo Nation Council approves \$14.3 million for student housing for Navajo Technical University

WINDOW ROCK – On the third day of the 2018 Spring Council Session on Wednesday, the 23rd Navajo Nation Council unanimously voted in support of Legislation No. 0082-18, approving \$14.3 million for the Crownpoint Student Housing Expenditure Plan from the Síhasin Fund to construct on-campus student housing at Navajo Technical University’s campus in Crownpoint, N.M.

NTU is a fully accredited university that offers vocational training, certificates, associate degrees, dual credit opportunities, baccalaureate degrees, and a master’s degree program. NTU has 31 student family housing units and 89 dormitories that accommodate approximately 209 students.

Legislative sponsor Council Delegate Jonathan L. Hale (Oak Springs, St. Michaels), asked for the Council’s support to assist in the construction of the student housing as a means to help Navajo students who are in great need of resources to pursue higher education.

“NTU came before the Síhasin Fund Subcommittee to request for funding to construct student housing. NTU also reported that it is not able to accommodate all students due to the full

capacity of the current dorms. They need approximately 600 additional beds to properly meet the long-term needs of Navajo students. The availability of student housing would help students achieve their academic goals because they would have access to campus resources,” said Delegate Hale, “Additionally, NTU has taken the initiative to secure additional funding to leverage the total project cost.”



PHOTO: Council Delegate Jonathan L. Hale, Navajo Technical University president Dr. Elmer Guy, and NTU student Wallace Dale, present Legislation No. 0082-18 during the Spring Council Session on April 18, 2018 at the Council Chamber in Window Rock, Ariz.

According to NTU President Dr. Elmer Guy, the project would house approximately 270 students at an estimated overall cost of \$27.6 million. NTU will contribute \$4 million and Navajo Housing Authority has committed \$9.3 million.

"No institution of higher learning can achieve anything unless students work hard to achieve their personal educational goals. Students at NTU have also, for years, pushed for projects like the gymnasium and new dorms through participation in focus groups, strategic planning sessions, clubs, competitions, and other venues. We have tried to listen and have worked hard to make those student focused projects become reality," said Dr. Guy.

The legislation also recognizes NTU and NHA's contributions for the project, which satisfies the Síhasin Fund policy that requires all expenditures plans to leverage the cost of projects with other sources of funding.

Speaking in support of the legislation, Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau) stated that the funding request presents a great opportunity to invest in the future of higher education for Navajo students.

"We need to invest in our tribal higher education institutions. Therefore, we must provide the best educational resources for our Navajo students to succeed. Our Navajo children are very talented and intelligent and we to have provide them opportunities to make their goals and dreams come true," said Delegate Yazzie.

During the discussion, Council Delegate Herman Daniels, Jr. (Shonto, Naa'tsis'Áán, Oljato, Ts'ah Bii Kin), said the initiative would also encourage students from the Western Navajo Agency to attend Navajo Technical University.

"The NTU report demonstrated that only five-percent of Western Navajo Agency students attend NTU. The many miles of travel and lack of transportation could factor the low percentage of attendance. However, the new student housing will provide a great opportunity for students who live far from Crownpoint," said Delegate Daniels, who represents four communities located in the Western Navajo Agency.

NTU student Wallace Dale, who is a dual major in Electrical Engineering and Diné Culture, Language, and Leadership, also joined Dr. Guy during the presentation to the Council, and stated that the campus housing would make transition into college life easier and provide access to campus services, activities, programs, tutoring, high speed internet, and counseling.

The Navajo Nation Council approved Legislation No. 0082-18 with a 19-0 vote.

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