

# SKYHAWK PRESS

A PART OF YOUR EVERYDAY LIFE

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## Understanding Blood Types: A Key to Safe Patient Care

Crownpoint, NM—On March 4, 2025, in Dr. Omosehin Moyebi's Body Structures and Functions lectures at Navajo Technical University's Nursing Program, students learn about the different blood types in the human body and the significance of blood type compatibility. This understanding is crucial, as mismatched blood can lead to severe reactions, ensuring students are prepared to provide safe and effective patient care.

The Nursing Program at NTU is committed to addressing the nursing shortage, particularly within the Navajo Nation. It equips students with essential skills for the field through rigorous coursework, advanced simulation labs, and experienced faculty. With a strong emphasis on patient care, critical thinking, and cultural competency, the Nursing Assistant program prepares students for certification, immediate employment, or further nursing education.

Endless possibilities await.

For additional information, please contact:

RN Program  
E: [schoolofnurse@navajotech.edu](mailto:schoolofnurse@navajotech.edu)



## NTU's Free Food Distribution with La Planta Organization

Crownpoint, NM - On March 5, 2025, in collaboration with the La Planta Organization, the Peer Navigators at Navajo Technical University hosted a successful food donation event at the Wellness Center for the NTU community. All food was provided free of charge, and participants were encouraged to complete a brief survey for data collection purposes.

Peer Navigator Kory Begay stated, “We distributed twenty-two pallets of food—our most extensive distribution to date! The support of our volunteers made all the difference. I thank Victor Jesus Flores and Oswaldo Aragon of the La Planta Organization. Their connection through Jonathan Nez helped create a powerful and lasting impact on the community.

Jonathan Nez collaborates with organizations such as the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine and La Planta, which promote health and wellness within the communities surrounding the Navajo Nation.

Jonathan Nez spoke about these organizations during the New Student Orientation event in January in Kirtland, NM. Kory approached Nez to discuss a food drive, and they discovered common ground. Nez was already familiar with La Planta and had collaborated with Victor and Oswaldo to coordinate the event using various resources. “I appreciate the volunteers; everyone is eager to give back to the community, and delivering fresh produce always brings smiles. It benefits our health and wellness, and we look forward to collaborating with other communities. Again, I appreciate Kory for reaching out. That’s what brought all of us together,” Nez stated.

The event’s success would not have been possible without the dedication and hard work of the Student Services department. This team consistently excels in providing peer navigation and support for the NTU community. Their commitment to organizing and facilitating events like this underscores their invaluable role in creating a welcoming and supportive environment for students and others.

“This effort wouldn’t have been possible without La Planta, who gathered donations from as far away as Los Angeles, demonstrating the strength of community support. I deeply appreciate everyone who dedicated their time to helping distribute the food. Your efforts made a real difference,” Kory concluded.



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# SAVE THE DATE

## 5th Annual Sheep Shearing School

April 24 - 25, 2025

Free Public Event!

Meals Provided!

MUST register to attend.

MUST attend both days!

LIMITED to 30  
participants!

For more information  
and/or to register,  
contact the NTU Land  
Grant Program at 505-  
387-7410.

## Final Exams

May 12 – 15, 2025

All NTU Campuses

## Final Grades Due

Friday, May 16, 2025

All NTU Campuses

## 2025 Spring Graduation

May 16, 2022

Starts at 10:00 AM

NTU Wellness Center,

NTU Main Campus,

Crownpoint, NM

## Spring Intersession Begins

May 19, 2025

## Summer 2025 Instruction Begins

June 9, 2025

## NTU 12th Annual Research Day Competition

Crownpoint, NM - On March 6, 2025, Navajo Technical University hosted its 12th Annual Research Day competition, providing a platform for students from various disciplines to showcase their research projects. The event awarded cash prizes to the top three submissions displayed for visitors.

First place went to NTU students Cajaan Cleveland, Jennifer Morgan, and Jacob Largo for their project titled "Incorporating Dine' Bizaad into a Dataset Format for Machine Learning & AI." Their research revealed a decline in the use of Dine' Bizaad, the Navajo language, within the Navajo Nation. In response to this challenge, they developed a dataset of conversational Dine' Bizaad terms, words, and subjects, converting them into a machine-readable format. This innovative approach lays the groundwork for creating language learning applications, translation tools, and other digital resources.

The second place was shared between two groups. One group, comprising NTU Chinle students Syerra Wartz, Eugenia Bia, and Tierra Francis, presented their project titled "Building Economic Development Strategies to Raise Income and Standard of Living for Chinle, AZ." Their research focuses on developing economic strategies tailored to Chinle, AZ, by analyzing the area's natural characteristics, demographics, and social and economic factors. They assessed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to establish development goals. Successful implementation of these strategies will require strong leadership from the local government and active contributions from organizations and residents.

The other second-place group, consisting of Brandon Yonnie and Daniel Moore, conducted a study titled "Robotics in Education: Teaching the Next Generation." Their research explored using robots as teaching tools in the classroom, providing students with hands-on learning experiences that enhance critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and collaboration skills, especially in STEM subjects across the Navajo Nation.



DO YOU HAVE AN ANNOUNCEMENT TO MAKE? CONTACT DALE MORGAN AT

[dmorgan@navajotech.edu](mailto:dmorgan@navajotech.edu)

YOUR ANNOUNCEMENT WILL APPEAR IN THE FOLLOWING MONTH'S NEWSLETTER.

## I BET YOU DIDN'T KNOW...



Avocados were named after reproductive organs.

T.S. Eliot wore green makeup.



The word “fizzle” started as a type of fart.

Avery Begay secured third place for her project. Avery Begay's biological research was placed third in the project “Exploring the Biodiversity of Endophytic Fungi: A Possible Source of Pinyon Decline.” This study demonstrated that endophytic fungi are microbes that colonize the tissues of organisms, such as plants and trees, without causing harm. The project focused on isolating these fungi and utilizing molecular biology methods to confirm the mycobiome in the bark of pinyon trees, which was successfully identified.

The annual research event was held exclusively for NTU students, where they presented and discussed their research projects. Five university officials judged the projects based on their ability to deliver their analysis thoroughly, their comprehensive impacts, and the organization of the subject. The event featured 15 research projects from NTU's environmental science, engineering, and biology programs.

Dr. Casmir Agbaraji stated, “The students are growing into empowered individuals, especially through the insights their coaches and knowledgeable scholars provided! This opportunity allows us to embrace Indigenous knowledge from around the world. Be sure to apply these valuable lessons in your lives—together, we can make a meaningful difference!”



## SAVE THE DATE

### Shił Nahółne': Literary Arts & Oral Stories Symposium

April 17th - 18th, 205  
Indian Pueblo Cultural Center

2401 12th ST NW  
Albuquerque, NM 87104

For more info:

Delila Nakaidinae  
(505) 387-7359

[dnakaidinae@navajotech.edu](mailto:dnakaidinae@navajotech.edu)

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10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

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## Crownpoint Campus Tour Visit by the Opportunity Career Center

Crownpoint, NM - On March 6th, 2025, students from the Opportunity Career Center in Gallup, New Mexico, decided to visit the main campus of Navajo Technical University (NTU). This visit gave students a firsthand look at NTU's diverse programs, trades, and community events.

Brenda Yazzie, an NTU recruiter, welcomed the students warmly as part of the NTU community and conducted an engaging campus tour that allowed the students to envision their future there. High school students can benefit from NTU's dual credit program, which enables them to earn college credits while still in high school. This remarkable opportunity enhances their educational experience and lays a strong foundation for their future academic and career endeavors.

The program helps students gain valuable insights into college expectations, facilitating a smoother transition into higher education. One of the program's most significant advantages is that it fully covers tuition, books, and general fees for participating students, making it an accessible and cost-effective way to begin a college education.

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For more information, contact:

NTU Admissions Office

E: [admissions@navajotech.edu](mailto:admissions@navajotech.edu)

Candice Craig

Dual Credit Coordinator

E: [c.craig@navajotech.edu](mailto:c.craig@navajotech.edu)



## Navajo Technical University Competes in the 33rd Annual Chocolate Fantasy

Albuquerque, NM - On March 8, 2025, the NTU Culinary Arts and Commercial Baking program participated in the 33rd Annual Chocolate Fantasy event, titled "Lights, Camera, Action," presented by KPMG. The event occurred at the Sandia Resort & Casino from 6 p.m. to midnight.

Lorena Giesbrecht and Walter Cloud entered their chocolate sculptures, "Flying Solo" and "A Dessert Fire, KaChow," in the competition, winning both "The People's Choice Award for the Most Artistic Sculpture" and "Best BonBon." The Chocolate Fantasy event showcased various chocolatier sculptures, bonbons, entertainment, dinner, dancing, and plenty of chocolate. Proceeds from the event benefited the New Mexico Museum of Natural History Foundation.

"I want to express my gratitude to Nicholas Cloud and Nicole Livingston, whose hard work helped Walter and I complete this sculpture and the candies. Creating this piece was incredibly enjoyable, and we made wonderful memories. Competing in the Chocolate Fantasy has been one of the best experiences I've ever had," Lorena shared.

In addition to the sculpture competition, Lorena and Walter also participated in the BonBon competition, where they created 300 pieces of their chocolate candy recipe and secured 1st place.

This year, NTU entered two pieces in the Chocolate Fantasy:  
- "Flying Solo," created by Lorena and Walter.  
- "Director's Cut," created by Shiela and Melvina.

For the Best BonBon competition, they submitted "A Dessert Fire, KaChow" by Lorena and Walter. Throughout the evening, event attendees could vote for their favorite sculpture of the night.

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For more information, contact:  
Walter Cloud  
Technical Instructor of Culinary Arts  
E: [wcloud@navajotech.edu](mailto:wcloud@navajotech.edu)



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## Special Site Visit from U.S. GAO & NNWO

Crownpoint, NM - On Tuesday, March 11, 2025, Navajo Technical University (NTU) welcomed a delegation from the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) and the Navajo Nation Washington Office (NNWO). The visit aimed to promote discussions between faculty researchers and the delegation regarding federal research funding opportunities.

Dr. Elmer Guy, President of NTU, greeted the GAO representatives: Candice Wright, Director; Britney Tsao, Analyst-in-Charge; Megan Sussman, Analyst; and DeWayne Crank, Deputy Director from the NNWO inside the NTU Hogan. The GAO is an independent, nonpartisan agency that provides objective, fact-based information to assist Congress and federal agencies to improve government efficiency.

During the visit, Ms. Leah Brown presented the university's institutional data alongside Micheryl Miller, who manages Federal Grants and Contracts. They provided an overview of data-sharing practices within NTU. Following this presentation, guests moved to the Student Union Building for a faculty panel discussion featuring Dr. Soundappan, Dr. Irene Ane-Anyangwe, Dr. Peter Romine, Dr. Roy Chowdhury, and Mr. Scott Halliday. They shared insights about their research and projects during interviews with the GAO representatives.

The visit also included a walking tour of the NTU campus, led by Ms. Mallorie McKerry, the Student Services Grant Manager. Guests explored the new Academic Building, the Science Building, and the Trades Building, culminating in a visit to the Center for Advanced Manufacturing. The tour concluded with a discussion involving Dr. Guy in the Empowerment Building. Additionally, a luncheon featured a presentation by Environmental Science student Randy Largo on "Grant Funding and My Academic Experience."

The GAO is reviewing how federal agencies conduct outreach to enhance the participation and competitiveness of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), and Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) in federally funded research programs and initiatives.

"We are very fortunate to have the opportunity to share the university's work and demonstrate the impact of federal grant funding on the academic experiences of NTU students. Students' and faculty's perspectives created deeper insight into the importance of continued federal funding, which is critical to support classroom learning and the application of knowledge in research activities," said Dr. Colleen Bowman, NTU Provost.



## 2025 AIHEC Competition

Rapid City, SD - On March 15 -16, 2025, students and coaches from Navajo Technical University (NTU) proudly represented their institution at the 2025 American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC). This exciting event brought together over fifty U.S. tribal colleges and universities to engage in friendly competition, fostering an inspiring atmosphere of collaboration, learning, and cultural celebration.

NTU students participated in a variety of competitions, including robotics, knowledge bowl, traditional arts, and STEM challenges, showcasing their academic excellence and technical skills. They also attended workshops and discussions focusing on cultural preservation, student success, and the evolving role of tribal higher education in today's world. Through their hard work and dedication, NTU students demonstrated their commitment to innovation and resilience while building lasting connections with peers from across the nation.

Beyond the competitions, AIHEC served as an opportunity for NTU students to step outside their comfort zones, embrace new experiences, and gain valuable insights from other tribal colleges and universities. While securing top honors is always a goal, the true spirit of AIHEC lies in the journey—learning, growing, and strengthening the bonds within the Indigenous academic community. NTU's participation in the 2025 AIHEC was not just a testament to their academic and cultural pride but also a reaffirmation of the vital role tribal colleges and universities play in shaping the future of Native American education.



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## NTU at the 3rd Annual TCU Native Languages Summit

Rapid City, SD - On March 16, 2025, Navajo Technical University students and faculty represented at the 3rd Annual TCU Native Languages Summit. This event brings together Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) to share ideas, research, and strategies for strengthening Native language programs and revitalization efforts.

NTU Student Presenters: Cajaan Cleveland, Jennifer Morgan, and Jacob Largo  
Presentation Topic: Incorporating Diné Bizaad into a Dataset for Machine Learning and AI.

The NTU students are leading research on how the Navajo language can be integrated into modern AI and machine learning applications, ensuring its preservation for future generations!

NTU Faculty Speaker: Dr. Franklin Sage, Assistant Professor of Graduate Studies is a key figure in Indigenous language sustainability, leading efforts in the first-ever PhD Program in Diné Culture and Language Sustainability at a TCU!

This Summit, supported by AIHEC's National TCU Center of Excellence on Native Languages, is all about creating a strong future for Native languages through collaboration, innovation, and community engagement. NTU is proud to be at the forefront of these critical discussions!



## American Indian College Fund Campus Visit

Crownpoint, NM— On Tuesday, March 25, 2025, Navajo Technical University (NTU) hosted a meeting with the American Indian College Fund (AICF) to explore and promote vibrant higher education opportunities. NTU is well-known for its exceptional programs, culturally relevant curricula, and comprehensive student services.

Dr. Elmer Guy, President of NTU, welcomed the AICF representatives, including Tamela Miller-Carlson, Chief Financial and Operations Officer; Dina Horwedel, Senior Director of Public Education and Communications; Aderet A., Assistant to the President's Office; Cherylynn T., Assistant to the Chief Financial Officer; and Crystal Y., Major Gifts Officer. The visit from AICF provided instructors and students with opportunities to advance their careers, pursue higher degrees, and better support their communities.

The visit included a walking tour of the NTU campus led by George LaFrance, the Athletics Director. Guests had the chance to explore the Biology Lab, the Science Building, Trades Building and Diné Studies program inside the Hogan. The tour culminated at the Center for Advanced Manufacturing, where students showcased their significant programs and studies. The visit concluded with a stop at the Culinary Arts program and a tour of the KCZY radio station hosted by Cuyler Frank.

Tammy Miller-Carlson expressed gratitude for the tour, stating, "We are incredibly grateful for the opportunity to visit Navajo Technical University and learn more about the institution and the impact your students have within the Navajo Nation and beyond. We were inspired and amazed from the beginning of our visit, especially hearing President Guy's vision and perspective through every program we experienced. The level of work students are doing, and the caliber and passion of the faculty and staff rival any Ivy League institution."

Their visit gave students valuable information on applying for the AICF Full Circle Scholarship for the Fall 2025 semester. Topics covered included eligibility requirements, application tips, support services, and various resources aimed at helping students achieve success. These scholarships and resources are designed to support Native students in reaching their academic goals.



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## Congratulations to the 2025 AIHEC National Basketball Tournament Winners

OKMULGEE, OK. - The College of the Muscogee Nation (CMN) hosted the 2025 American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) basketball tournament in Okmulgee. The event featured teams from various tribal colleges across the United States.

The Navajo Technical University Skyhawks Men's team finished second, while the Lady Skyhawks took third.

The results for the 2025 AIHEC National Basketball Tournament are as follows:

Men's Division II Awards:

- 1st Place: Chief Dull Knife College

- 2nd Place: Navajo Technical University

Women's Division II Awards:

- 1st Place: Sisseton Wahpeton College

- 2nd Place: Oglala Lakota College

- 3rd Place: Navajo Technical University

Congratulations to all the winners of the 2025 AIHEC National Basketball Tournament!



## 2025 NTU Spring Career Expo

Crownpoint, NM – On Wednesday, March 26, 2025, the NTU Office of Career Services, led by Shawna Begay, hosted its annual Spring Career Expo at the Wellness Center on the NTU main campus.

The event ran from 9 AM to 2 PM and featured 20 participating companies, organizations, and universities. The expo provided students with an excellent opportunity to explore potential career paths and connect with recruiters. Students engaged in one-on-one conversations throughout the event, gathered valuable information and learned about different organizational cultures.

The Office of Career Services hosts career expos each spring and fall at the main campus, helping students navigate their post-NTU careers. Shawna Begay and the entire Career Services team extend their gratitude to all the organizations that participated and took the time to connect with NTU students. The career services office remains committed to supporting students through various events and resources to ease their workforce transition.

-----  
For more information, contact:

Shawna Begay  
Career Services Coordinator  
E: [shawna.begay@navajotech.edu](mailto:shawna.begay@navajotech.edu)



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## NTU Peer Navigator Health Screening Event

Crownpoint, NM - On March 27, 2025, Peer Navigators at Navajo Technical University, in collaboration with the First Nations Community Health Source and Molina Healthcare, hosted a successful health screening event at the Wellness Center for the NTU community.

The event provided a range of essential health services, including basic health screenings, COVID-19 and flu vaccinations, and testing for HIV, HPV, and syphilis. It was open to all students, staff, faculty, and the Crownpoint community.

Peer Navigator Kory Begay expressed, “We hope you took advantage of this opportunity to keep you and your family healthy during these challenging times. I want to thank Kynedi Ben of the First Nations Community Health Source; their connections help bring other health organizations like Molina Healthcare and the New Mexico Department of Health together to make a meaningful and lasting impact on the community.”

Kynedi Ben had initially contacted Navajo Technical University during the La Planta Food Distribution event a few weeks prior. She approached Kory to discuss essential healthcare services, stating, “I felt that college students are often too busy with their education, making it important to provide an integrated and culturally sensitive health delivery system that addresses the physical, social, emotional, and spiritual needs of NTU community members.”

The event’s success would not have been possible without the dedication and hard work of the Student Services department. This team consistently excels in providing peer navigation and support for the NTU community. Their commitment to organizing and facilitating events like this underscores their invaluable role in creating a welcoming and supportive environment for students and others.

“The organization operates three clinic sites, five school-based health centers, and two outreach programs in Gallup and Farmington, all dedicated to delivering comprehensive care. We encourage NTU students to prioritize the well-being and welfare of ensuring they have easy access to essential healthcare services, including virtual and in-person visits,” Kynedi concluded.



## NTU Competes at the 2025 SkillsUSA New Mexico State Leadership Conference

Albuquerque, NM—On March 29, 2025, NTU SkillsUSA students participated in the 2025 SkillsUSA New Mexico State Leadership and Skills Conference (SLSC). This event allowed students to compete in various areas offered at Navajo Technical University, including culinary arts, speech, and information technology.

“Being part of SkillsUSA as an NTU advisor and administrator is challenging and enjoyable. It was wonderful to see our students compete and showcase the skills they have acquired through their chosen trades and majors. Observing them apply their academic knowledge to real-world situations gives them valuable insights,” explained Wilbur.

The conference allowed students to demonstrate their skills and compete against peers statewide. NTU students earned three gold, four silver, and three bronze medals. Only the gold and silver medal winners will advance to the national competition, which is scheduled to take place in Atlanta, Georgia, in June 2025, where they will compete with students from all over the country.

### Gold Medal Winners:

- Angel Joe - Restaurant Service
- Dillon Dale - Photography
- Dillon Dale - Job Skills Demo Open

### Silver Medal Winners:

- Antonio Valencia - Automotive
- Karen Dan - Job Skills Demo A
- Silver Team Medal: Jonathon Dennison and Shinaeya Watson - Cyber Security
- Shyler D. Martin - Photography

### Bronze Medal Winners:

- AJ Velasquez - Prepared Speech
- Pauline Mescale - Job Skills Demo Open
- Jasmine Charles - Job Skills Demo A

“The representation of our students has consistently been among the best. I am confident that the experiences they gain at SkillsUSA will inspire them to share their stories, which will help recruit future students and sustain their programs. I always enjoy watching them excel and grow into the professionals they aspire to be,” concluded Wilbur Tso.



## SAVE THE DATE

### Shił Nahółne': Literary Arts & Oral Stories Symposium

April 17th - 18th, 205  
Indian Pueblo Cultural Center

2401 12th ST NW  
Albuquerque, NM 87104  
For more info:

Delila Nakaidinae  
(505) 387-7359  
dnakaidinae@navajotech.edu

### Gardening Workshop: Irrigation Strategies

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

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-May 23rd: Herbs & Garden Salads

NTU Land Grant Building,  
Crownpoint, NM

Please contact NTU Land Grant at (505) 387-7410

### Spring Benefit Palooza

April 16, 2025

10 am - 2 pm

NTU Wellness Center

For more information,

please contact

skyhawneeds@navajotech.edu or call

Kory at 505.387.7514

Tam at 505.387.7431



# SAVE THE DATE

## 5th Annual Sheep Shearing School

April 24 - 25, 2025

Free Public Event!

Meals Provided!

MUST register to attend.

MUST attend both days!

LIMITED to 30 participants!

For more information and/or to register, contact the NTU Land Grant Program at 505-387-7410.

## Final Exams

May 12 – 15, 2025

All NTU Campuses

## Final Grades Due

Friday, May 16, 2025

All NTU Campuses

## 2025 Spring Graduation

May 16, 2022

Starts at 10:00 AM

NTU Wellness Center,

NTU Main Campus,

Crownpoint, NM

## Spring Intersession Begins

May 19, 2025

## Summer 2025 Instruction Begins

June 9, 2025

## NTU's AIBL Club Wins the Tribal College Division Chapter of the Year Award

Las Vegas, NV - On March 10–11, 2025, the American Indigenous Business Leaders (AIBL) Chapter at Navajo Technical University (NTU) achieved First Place in the Chapter of the Year - Tribal College category. This exciting accomplishment occurred during AIBL's National Business and Leadership Student Conference at Caesars Palace.

The NTU AIBL Club comprised three advisors and five attending students. On the first day of the conference, two students, Constance Begayne and Cheyenne Woodie, participated in the Elevator Pitch Competition. The NTU AIBL advisors and students gained access to the conference through their AIBL registrations.

“Constance and I had the opportunity to volunteer for the conference. The students were able to network with other AIBL Chapters and connect with potential sponsors,” Kashayla noted.

On the second day of the AIBL Conference, the students competed in the Chapter of the Year competition. NTU AIBL President Constance Begayne, Student Senate Representative Cheyenne Woodie, and AIBL Member Shannon Smith (who filled in for NTU AIBL CFO Larris Enrico) presented their chapter's accomplishments. Their presentation focused on community outreach, fundraising, and leadership initiatives over the past year. Each team had five minutes to present, followed by a five-minute Q&A session with the judges.

During the Chapter of the Year presentation, NTU AIBL President Constance Begayne was honored to recognize Navajo Nation's Madam Vice President, Richelle Montoya, and Miss Navajo Nation, Ranisha Begay, for their attendance.

Kashayla commented, “Overall, the students presented professionally and demonstrated a passion for their hard work over the past year.

The advisors and students were thrilled to attend the banquet and receive the Chapter of the Year Award trophy and a \$1,000 check.

“On behalf of the NTU AIBL Club, I would like to thank our sponsors: Dyran Murphy Architects, Kelly and Associates, Navajo Nation Shopping Centers, Navajo Technical University, and the American Indian College Fund,” Kashayla concluded.



## NTU Featured Staff

George LaFrance, the athletics director, emphasizes the importance of the Wellness Department, which promotes health and supports all community members in making healthy lifestyle choices.

Originally from New Iberia, Louisiana, near Lafayette, LaFrance graduated from New Iberia Senior High School before attending Baker University in Baldwin City, Kansas, where he played wide receiver for two years. In 1998, he signed with the Green Bay Packers and participated in a few preseason games before deciding to focus on his education and complete his studies at Baker University. George explains, "Education is key, and that's what this is all about—preparing yourself for life after sports."

At NTU, George LaFrance shares his extensive football, baseball, cycling, and basketball knowledge with the youth community. Participants learn essential techniques such as playmaking, route design, catching, and route running, covering offensive and defensive strategies. Every summer, George skillfully guides young athletes in understanding play calling and effectively reading the game. He tailors his coaching to meet each student's needs, drawing on his rich background in football.

George is honored to have been inducted into the AFL Hall of Fame and has made history as the only player to win the ArenaBowl MVP award three times while wearing #25 for the Storm in ArenaBowl IX. He was the first player in the Arena Football League and the second player in professional football to compile 20,000 career all-purpose yards. In his final game, George recorded 14 kickoff returns and 397 all-purpose yards, ranking second in that category in AFL history.

George LaFrance is grateful for his family's unwavering support. He met his wife, Darlene, in college, and they were together for six years before getting married. His oldest daughter, Ahsaki LaFrance-Chachere, owns Ah-Shí Beauty and LaChachere Music Group in Houston, TX. Nizhoni LaFrance is an entrepreneur who developed the Plank Helper device. His youngest daughter, LaBelle LaFrance, is a senior at NTU and competes in various sports. The LaFrance family continues volunteering alongside George's mother, Joycelyn LaFrance, at NTU events like the fishing tournament. The LaFrance family resides in Beshbitoh Valley, where George tends to livestock on their 20 acres of farmland and maintains gardens.



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## NTU Featured Alumni

Navajo Technical University proudly presents Dalyna Hannah from Ramah, NM. She is Naakai dine'e (Mexican People Clan) and is born for Dibe' lizhini (Black Sheep Clan). Her maternal grandparents belong to the Kinyaa'aanii (Towering House) clan, while her paternal grandparents are from the Tshi'naajinii (Black Streak Wood People) clan.

Dalyna graduated from Ramah High School in 2015, the home of the Mustangs. After high school, she earned an Associate of Applied Science and a Bachelor's in Environmental Science and Natural Resources from Navajo Technical University.

In addition to her academic success, Dalyna significantly contributed to several AIHEC volleyball and hand game championships while at NTU, and she placed third in the Research Competition.

Dalyna has been accepted into the Bridge to Doctorate Program for her PhD in Natural Resources at the University of Idaho, where she has received a full tuition waiver and a stipend to support her studies. As a PhD student, she works on two chapters in the Forestry department. The first chapter, "Determining the Effects of Mastication on Seedling Growth and Survival," focuses on the impact of growth. The second chapter, "Evaluating Technology by Using Smartphones' IMEI Sensors to Detect Seed Growth," explores innovative methods of measuring growth. Dalyna plans to extend her research to include a study on forestry within the Navajo Nation.

Additionally, Dalyna has been accepted as a tribal fellow in the College of Natural Resources at the University of Idaho, where she serves as an instructor involved in various projects and workshops.

During the summer, she worked with the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) in Boise, ID. The NIFC's fire management program aims to achieve practical fire suppression goals while efficiently and cost-effectively fulfilling a broad range of natural resource objectives. Dalyna hopes to secure a position with the NIFC after completing her education.

Dalyna has had numerous opportunities to gain extensive experience in environmental science. Along with her instructors, Dr. RoyChowdhury and Dr. Chischilly, she expresses gratitude for her experiences and encourages other students to pursue similar opportunities.



## NTU Featured Student

Navajo Technical University is excited to introduce Justina Smith, who is working towards her Associate of Applied Science degree in Culinary Arts. Justina is a member of the Ta'baqhi (Water Edge people) and Tódichíin'ii (Bitter Water) clans. Her maternal grandfather is from the Táchii'nii (Red Running into the Water) clan, and her paternal grandfather is from the To'ahani (Near the Water) clan. Justina was born and raised in White Valley, Arizona, where she graduated from Pinon High School, class of 2023.

During the summer of 2024, Justina completed an internship at Yellowstone National Park. She assisted guests and visitors in experiencing a culinary journey rich in history and architectural grandeur. Justina gained experience in the hotel dining room, which offered a charming atmosphere where guests immersed themselves in towering log beams and a cozy fireplace, creating a unique dining experience.

"I am overflowing with gratitude for the unwavering support and guidance from my incredible mentors, Chef Walter, Chef Brian, and Chef Bob, as well as my loving family. I am especially thankful to my mom and brother for their constant encouragement, an immense source of strength. Their unwavering belief in me has been an incredible driving force, and I feel truly blessed to have such an amazing support system," Justina passionately expressed.

Chef Walter Cloud commended Justina as a dedicated and diligent student. Despite her reserved nature, her work reflects her strong commitment and grasp of the course material. Always punctual and dependable, Justina consistently produces high-quality work while adhering to instructions meticulously.

"Her valuable industry experience from her internship at Yellowstone last summer enhances the classroom environment. Her strong work ethic and proficiency in kitchen protocols ensure that she will graduate with all the skills needed to excel in the industry. Chef Cloud concluded, "Justina's future in the culinary world looks incredibly promising, and we're excited to witness her continued success."



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