

SKYHAWK PRESS

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Energized Watershed Exchanges Knowledge and Resources at NTU

Crownpoint, NM - On May 1, 2025, Energized Watershed—a consortium of universities, clean energy organizations, and tribal communities in New Mexico—hosted a Listening Session to discuss ideas for advancing water and energy sustainability in the Eastern Agency of the Navajo Nation.

The session, titled Tó Nizhóni dóó Nizhóni Ahoodziil, took place from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Navajo Technical University main campus Wellness Center. The event was co-sponsored by NTU's Environmental Sciences Department and the nonprofit Southwest Research and Information Center (SRIC), which has worked with Diné communities for four decades to address water and health concerns.

NTU President Dr. Elmer Guy welcomed the guests and provided opening remarks. Dr. Abhishek RoyChowdhury, Associate Professor of Environmental Science, showcased the progress of the NTU-NMT Navajo Nation Water Purification Project (N 4 WPP), where a 500-gallon-per-day water filtration unit is being deployed for the Becenti Chapter.

Dr. Roy Chowdhury states, "Events like this listening session are significant for community members and our students. Community members can see how NTU is positively impacting the Navajo Nation, and while doing so, our students also learn how to engage in community outreach. We will continue to host events like this in the future."

Attendees included UNM VP of Research Dr. David Hanson, the CNM Deep Dive team, the NMSU Agricultural Extension Center, Santa Fe Community College, and representatives from other higher education institutions. Community members from different Navajo Eastern Agency Chapters participated in the event and shared their perspectives on access to clean water and energy throughout the Navajo Nation.



NTU Student Wins 2025 Year-End Bareback Championship

Prescott, AZ – On May 3, 2025, Navajo Technical University proudly announces Mr. Isaiah Tom as the 2025 Year-End Regional Bareback Champion. Isaiah was awarded a custom saddle for his achievement in the regional finals rodeo for placing first. To conclude the college rodeo season, he won both the long and short go-rounds and was crowned the average champion for the weekend.

“I couldn’t be prouder of Isaiah. He has worked hard and always brings a great attitude to competition. He stays positive no matter the challenge, is quick to lend a hand to his teammates, and sets an excellent example with his sportsmanship. He is one of the toughest athletes I’ve had the honor of coaching, both mentally and physically, and he truly earned this championship title,” stated Coach Pino.

The NTU Rodeo team kept its focus and will compete at the College National Finals Rodeo in Casper, Wyoming, from June 15-21, 2025. The event showcases college and university rodeo athletes from across the country competing in various events.

For more information, contact:

Ms. Nicole Pino
NTU Head Rodeo Coach - Athletics
P: 505-387-7385 X1029
E: npino@navajotech.edu



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SAVE THE DATE

Navajo Tech Innovation Center Open House

Friday, June 13, 2025
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM
309 E Historic 66, Church
Rock, NM
(1/4 mile east of Fire Rock
Casino)

For more info, contact:
Verna Yazzie at
v.yazzie@navajotech.edu
or (505) 905-7800

Juneteenth June 19, 2025

All NTU sites will be
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Men's Basketball Try-Outs

June 16-18, 2025
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM
NTU Wellness Center

Youth Basketball Skill Camp

June 16 - 17, 2025
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
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Spring 2025 Biology CAPSTONE

Crownpoint, NM—On May 2, 2025, students from the Biology Program at Navajo Technical University's School of Science presented their CAPSTONE research, showcasing innovative projects that address real-world challenges affecting the Navajo Nation. These investigations, which reflect months of dedication, critical thinking, and a strong commitment to using science for the benefit of Indigenous communities, are as follows:

Avery Begay is examining the role of fungi in the widespread die-off of pinyon trees, suggesting that bark beetles may introduce harmful fungi, thereby revealing complex environmental interactions.

Layla Marie James investigates the effects of uranium contamination on *Caenorhabditis elegans*, highlighting how uranium exposure, a legacy of mining, disrupts biological health and raises concerns about broader environmental impacts.

Drealie Estrada is studying how uranium exposure may influence the antimicrobial properties of Big Sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*), a plant of deep cultural significance to the Navajo. Her research aims to understand how environmental factors could affect the plant's effectiveness in traditional healing practices, thus preserving its medicinal value.

Francesa Noble analyzes leafy greens sold near the Navajo Nation for uranium and parasitic contamination. To address these issues, she explores hydroponic farming as a sustainable alternative that minimizes soil contamination while aligning with Navajo Diné Philosophy. Her model promotes food security and environmental health in a manner that respects cultural values and supports community well-being.

These student-led projects highlight the meaningful research taking place at NTU. The Biology program combines rigorous academics with hands-on experience in genetics, ecology, and physiology, preparing students for healthcare, environmental science, and biotechnology careers. With a strong focus on serving Native communities, the program provides real-world learning and specialized support for pre-med students, including MCAT/PCAT preparation.



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

dmorgan@navajotech.edu

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

I BET YOU DIDN'T KNOW...



The French have their own name for a French kiss.

Movie trailers originally played after the movie.



Mercedes invented a car controlled by a joystick.

Career Services Salsa & Success Networking Fiesta

Crownpoint, NM - On May 5, 2025, the NTU Career Services Office hosted a themed networking and stress-relief event titled Salsa & Success Fiesta in the lobby of the SUB building on NTU's main campus.

Led by Shawna Begay, the event was designed to help current students align their academic efforts with future career goals while also providing a fun opportunity to unwind before finals week. Shawna, along with the NTU Peer Navigators, facilitated engaging activities that reflected the event's festive theme. These included salsa dancing lessons led by Samantha Antone and piñata breaks filled with candy and small toys. While students enjoyed chips with salsa or guacamole, Shawna shared tips and insights on career planning and personal development.

The Office of Career Services provides personalized support for students preparing for life after graduation. Shawna and her team assist with résumé writing, mock interviews, internship searches, and the drafting of cover letters and letters of interest, among other career-focused services.



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NTU Hosts 3-Spot Shot Archery

Crownpoint, NM - On May 4, 2025, Navajo Technical University hosted this year's first archery competition in the main campus Wellness Center. Despite a late start due to rainy weather, Diné College's archery team was able to travel and arrive at their competition spot to face off against NTU. Despite the long drive, Diné College came focused and ready. NTU maintained its composure on home ground, and both teams brought solid energy.

The competition featured recurve and compound bows, with shooting distances ranging from twenty to fifty meters. Both teams sustained a high level of focus throughout the competition, delivering consistent, accurate shots. With tight groupings and smooth, controlled releases, the NTU and Diné College archers demonstrated technical proficiency.

NTU's Archery team, known for its disciplined training and competitive edge, had a strong home advantage but faced fierce competition from Diné College, which brought a high level of focus and technical ability. The event highlighted archery's role in fostering school pride and community representation across the Navajo Nation. The performances from NTU and Diné College made it clear that collegiate archery within the Navajo Nation is evolving into a highly competitive arena. These athletes are not only meeting expectations—they're redefining them.

Women's Individual Scores:

DC - Nanibah Bigman – 164

DC - Tomilethia Chee – 147

NTU - Happy Cynthia – 311

DC - Wilmena Joe – 173

DC - Kaitlyn Yazzie – 149

NTU - Tevielynn Yazzie – 181

Men's Individual Scores:

NTU - Navarro Burnside – 499

DC - Corbin Charley – 107

NTU - Wacey Desiderio – 316

DC - Seidel Joe – 300



2025 PNM Scholarship Award

Crownpoint, NM—On May 6, 2025, students from Navajo Technical University were honored as recipients of the PNM Scholarship. This competitive award supports students pursuing degrees in energy, science, technology, engineering, and business.

The event began with welcoming remarks from Pete K. Atcitty, Senior Manager of Tribal Government Relations at PNM, who congratulated the students and acknowledged their hard work and dedication. NTU Financial Aid Manager Gary Segay greeted the attendees and congratulated the students for their efforts and achievements. Gary plays a key role in facilitating scholarships, including the PNM Scholarship, ensuring that students have the financial support they need to succeed in their education.

NTU President Dr. Elmer Guy addressed the students as they received their awards, encouraging them to continue advancing in their academic journeys and to honor their scholarships by using their education to serve and uplift the Navajo Nation. He also shared personal experiences regarding his challenges while pursuing his doctoral degree, emphasizing the importance of perseverance and commitment to one's goals.

Cathay Newby, Director of Tribal Government Relations and Customer Engagement at PNM, spoke about the significance of perseverance, urging students not to give up when faced with difficulties. In her role, she strengthens partnerships with tribal communities and supports educational opportunities like the PNM Scholarship.

After the congratulatory remarks, students were presented with certificates, custom Pendleton stoles embroidered with the PNM and NTU logos, and PNM backpacks—ideal for carrying the extra books they'll need on their academic journey. These students have tirelessly worked to reach this milestone, and as they continue forward, their achievements reflect their dedication and determination.

2024 Fall PNM Scholarship Graduates:

Makeiyla Begay, Biology, BS
Cory Long, Construction Technology, AAS
Debra Tolino, Biology, BS
Joel P. Yazzie, Mathematics, AS

2025 Spring PNM Scholarship Graduates:

Fleming Benally, Jr, Electrical Trades, Certificate
Joel P. Yazzie, Mechanical Engineering, BS



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Grant Award for the NMHED Technical Assistance Center

Crownpoint, NM— On May 7, 2025, Navajo Technical University gathered in the SUB building for an overview grant from the Technical Assistance Center to develop culturally relevant and linguistically appropriate curricula and instructional materials. The university organized the meeting to enhance educators' skills and knowledge while fostering inclusive and culturally responsive learning environments.

Wilbur Tso, the HR Training Coordinator, opened the meeting with a prayer, and NTU President Dr. Elmer Guy provided an overview of the Technical Assistance Center Grant. The discussions focused on creating career pathways for American Indian educators and offering professional development opportunities for licensed school employees and administrators in culturally and linguistically relevant pedagogy.

NTU collaborated with all New Mexico tribal colleges, including the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA), Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI), and Diné College, which participated in the meeting. SIPI specializes in technical and vocational education, IAIA emphasizes artistic disciplines, and Diné College centers around Navajo language, culture, and heritage. NTU's Early Childhood Multicultural Education department meets regularly, engaging with faculty in a diverse range of projects that leverage the strengths of these institutions alongside NTU TAC's initiatives.

The meeting aimed to enrich the educational experience by establishing career pathways for American Indian educators to promote professional growth and improve outcomes for indigenous students through mutually beneficial partnerships with school districts, charter schools, early childhood programs, BIE schools, and public and tribal higher education institutions.

This comprehensive collaboration underscores NTU's commitment to building a supportive and culturally relevant educational environment for American Indian students.



NTU Marketing Hosts Free Frappe Event to Celebrate End of Spring Semester

Crownpoint, NM - On May 8, 2025, the NTU Marketing Department hosted a free frappuccino event in the Student Union Building lobby to celebrate the final weeks of the spring semester. The event began at 10:00 a.m. and continued until supplies ran out around 11:00 a.m.

Open to the entire NTU community, the event offered one complimentary drink per attendee upon completing a brief survey. Meriel Simpson, the department's graphic designer, led the initiative and created the menu of frappe options available at the event.

The gathering drew a large crowd, with students, faculty, and staff enjoying socializing while waiting for their drinks. As a token of appreciation, each participant also received a sticker featuring the NTU Skyhawk logo.

The Marketing Department sincerely thanks everyone who attended and completed the survey. We wish you the best of luck on your final exams and hope you enjoy a well-deserved summer break. We look forward to welcoming everyone back in the fall semester!



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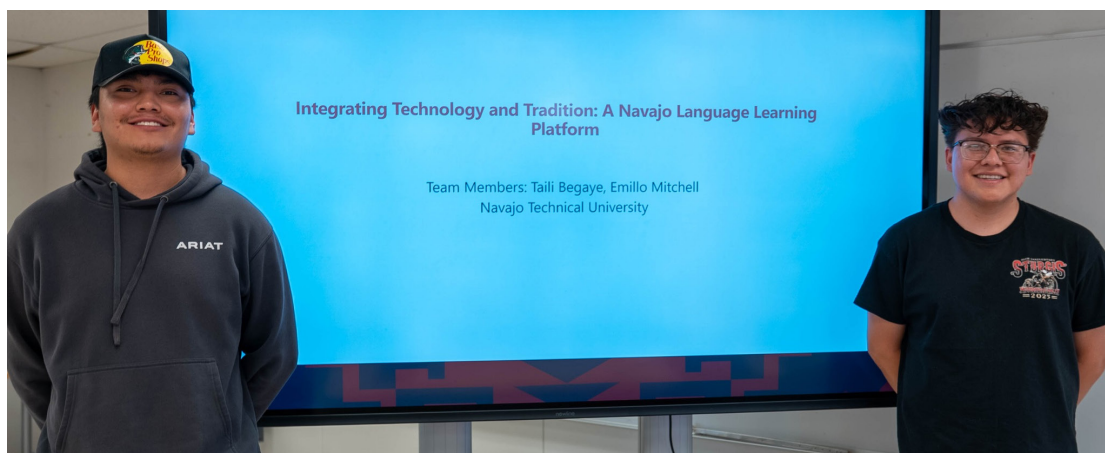
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Two NTU Students Delivered a Seminar Presentation in Computer Science

Crownpoint, NM— On May 8, 2025, Taili Begaye and Emillo Mitchell, two computer science students at Navajo Technical University, presented their project, “Integrating Technology and Tradition: A Navajo Language Learning Platform,” to students, staff, and faculty. This study explores the preservation and promotion of the Navajo language through the creation of a web-based crossword puzzle game.

The agenda included introductions, an overview of the project, and discussions on future improvements. The conversations focused on the user interface, particularly its design for everyone, especially young learners. The game, which features Navajo words, was developed using HTML, CSS, and JavaScript. Its interactive nature makes it an effective tool for language learning, particularly among younger generations. By providing an engaging and accessible platform, the game facilitates the intergenerational transmission of the Navajo language, enhances cognitive functions, and strengthens community bonds and cultural identity.

This project instilled a sense of pride and belonging within the Navajo community, and similar techniques can be applied to other endangered languages. The day concluded with a Q&A session, a preview of the web-based game, and a review of the current statement of work, student pathways, and alignment with the goals of the Computer Science and Diné Culture and Language Sustainability program.



Chase Dreams, Catch Success

Crownpoint, NM—On May 16, 2025, the NTU community, friends, and family gathered to celebrate the graduates' achievements. We honored over ninety students who excelled in their fields by earning degrees and certificates. The ceremony occurred at the NTU Wellness Center, attended by the graduates' families, friends, esteemed guests, and dignitaries.

The commencement began with the Posting of Colors, led by Diné Saani Silalotsoi, which set a memorable tone for the event. Dwayne Lake, an NTU student and United States Marine Corps veteran, served as a corporal. He provided the Pledge of Allegiance as LeHarris Lee, Student Senate Secretary, offered a heartfelt invocation, asking for blessings for the commencement proceedings.

Dr. Elmer J. Guy, President of NTU, congratulated the students, stating, "As they step into the world beyond the university, these graduates become ambassadors of change, striving to bring positive transformations in their communities and beyond." The Navajo Nation's only university is both an educational institution and a beacon of hope, fostering a unique blend of Western education and traditional Navajo teachings.

Special Guest Speaker Jayvion Chee addressed the audience, acknowledging the students for their hard work, expressing pride, and offering well-wishes for their future. He said, "Congratulations to the Class of Spring 2025. May you always have new opportunities come your way, and may you be consistently successful in your life." Mr. Chee also thanked the students, staff, and faculty for a beautiful Commencement Ceremony in recognition of leadership, guidance, and dedication.

Dr. Buu Nygren, President of the Navajo Nation, spoke to all the graduates, announcing, "As the Spring Class of 2025 walked across the commencement stage, they have gained knowledge, faced challenges, made supportive mentors, and had life-changing experiences. Look to the future, but never forget where you come from and where your home is."

John Lasiloo, Zuni Board of Trustees, delivered the benediction, marking the conclusion of an event filled with pride and optimism for the future. We extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who supported and participated in organizing the graduation ceremonies.



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2025 NTU Employee Appreciation Luncheon

Crownpoint, NM — On May 21, 2025, Navajo Technical University celebrates twenty-three employees for their years of service to NTU, recognizing 2024 as a year of significant achievements due to our staff's hard work and dedication.

NTU values everything you contribute to moving us forward. Whether in teaching, administration, or support services, NTU staff play a vital role in our mission to educate students, support communities, and preserve our culture.

This year, the NTU Human Resources Department hosted a Mexican-themed event, featuring motivational speakers, food, music, awards, and laughter.

The Skyhawk Nest, inside the Wellness Center, also opened today to the NTU community. NTU Peer Navigators distributed various food items, including frozen vegetables, breakfast bowls, waffles, ice cream, Cool Whip, pies, and hamburger patties.

NTU thanks those for their ongoing commitment to the upcoming fiscal year, which has a meaningful impact. We appreciate your daily efforts. Let's carry this momentum into another year filled with growth and influence.

Thank you. Go, Skyhawks!



SKYHAWK PRESS

CHINLE INSTRUCTIONAL SITE

PO Box 849, Chinle, AZ 86503

NTU Free Food Distribution in collaboration with La Planta Organization

Chinle, AZ - On May 14, 2025, Navajo Technical University's Chinle Campus partnered once again with La Planta Organization to provide fresh produce to students and local community members.

La Planta distributed produce boxes to the NTU instructional site in Chinle, underscoring its ongoing commitment to supporting NTU and its surrounding areas. The event began at 3 p.m. in the main building lobby and continued until all supplies were distributed. Participants were asked to complete a brief survey before receiving their produce. Produce boxes were distributed to NTU's Kirtland and Teec Nos Pos instructional sites.

The timing aligned with the end of the semester, allowing students to take home nutritious food as they prepared for the break. NTU's Chinle students, staff, and faculty sincerely thank La Planta for their continued generosity and look forward to future food distribution collaborations.



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NTU Signifies Chinle High School Dual Credit Program

Chinle, AZ— On May 14, 2025, Navajo Technical University's Dual Credit Program honored Chinle High School students at a recognition ceremony held in the Two-Story Academic Building. This event celebrated their commitment to earning college credits while still in high school and highlighted the program's role in empowering students academically and preparing them for higher education.

The ceremony began with Naracaho Dahozy, a dual credit senior, praising the achievements of both university and high school students. At the same time, Arlena Benallie, Director of the Chinle Instructional Site, delivered a welcoming speech.

Tomasita Clarke, the Chinle Dual Credit Coordinator, emphasized that the program helps students earn the necessary credits for their high school diplomas and future postsecondary qualifications. "The students had the privilege to take college-level courses, often taught by high school teachers who are approved to teach at the college level, but it also gave them a chance to earn a degree faster by using their college credits for advanced placement," Tomasita elaborated.

CHS Navajo Language Instructor Farrah Begay emphasized the program's lasting effect on students' futures. "This program enhances both high school and college courses. Students get a sense of what to expect from college while still in high school. It allows them to discover or affirm their interests in specific academic areas as potential career paths," Begay noted.

The event concluded with closing remarks from Dr. Elmer Guy, President of NTU, who highlighted the university's history, curriculum, and STEM programs. "I would like to express my gratitude to all the teachers involved and leaders such as Dr. Andrade, Principal of CHS, and Ken Sanford, CHS Counselor. This distinction signifies our commitment to education and requires active participation from faculty and staff in self-assessment and ongoing quality improvement processes," Dr. Guy remarked.

Congratulations to the seniors, juniors, sophomores, and first-year students of Chinle High School on their dual enrollment and earning college credits with Navajo Technical University.



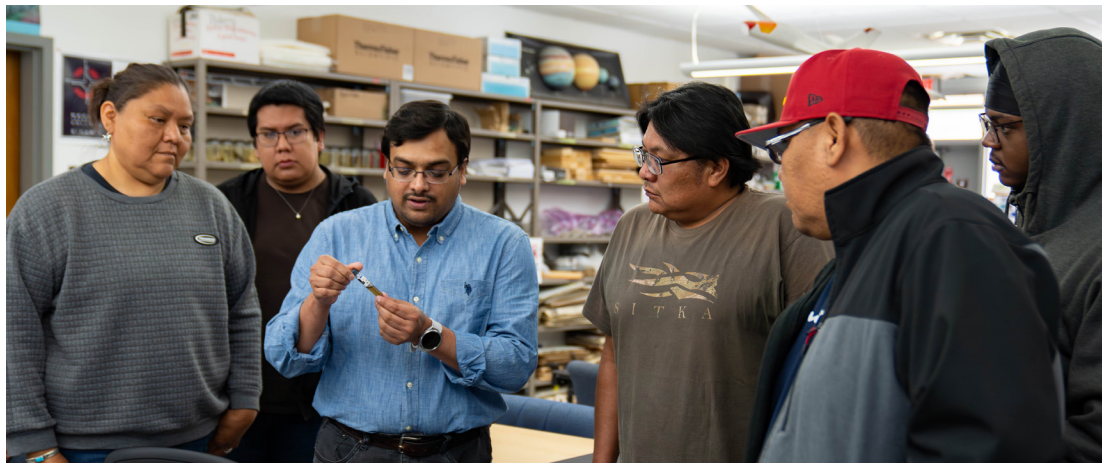
NTU Featured Staff/Faculty

Dr. Abhishek RoyChowdhury is an Associate Professor of Environmental Science and Natural Resources at NTU. He joined NTU in 2019 and holds a BS in Biology and an MS in Environmental Science from the University of Calcutta, India. He earned his PhD in Environmental Management from Montclair State University, New Jersey, and worked as a Postdoctoral Fellow at Stevens Institute of Technology, New Jersey.

Dr. RoyChowdhury is an environmental clean-up and remediation expert, focusing on abandoned mine site remediation, water and wastewater treatment, and developing eco-friendly “green” approaches for treating heavy metals from contaminated soil and water. He has received funding for his ongoing research projects from the USDA, NSF, NASA, the U.S. Department of Interior- Office of Surface Mining and Reclamation Enforcement, the U.S. Department of Interior- Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, and the First Americans Land-Grant Consortium. Since joining NTU, Dr. Roy Chowdhury has achieved several notable accolades. In 2022, he was awarded the American Society of Reclamation Science (ASRS) Early Career Award and the American Academy of Environmental Engineers and Scientists (AAEES) 40 Under 40 Rising Star Award. He also received the Albuquerque Business First 40 Under 40 Award for the State of New Mexico. In the same year, he was recognized by the New Mexico State Senate Fifty-Fifth Legislature, and he was selected for the USDA 2023 Terra Preta do Indio Tribal Science Fellowship.

He believes in experiential learning and incorporates laboratory/field activities into his courses. At NTU, he teaches students how to recognize and address environmental justice issues and generate sustainable solutions for their communities. His students have worked on projects including creating the first-ever community garden on campus, which grows Indigenous crops without chemicals, developing rainwater harvesting techniques, and implementing a campus-wide recycling plan.

Dr. RoyChowdhury leads a joint initiative between Navajo Technical University and New Mexico Tech, the Navajo Nation Water Purification Project (N4WPP). The main objective of this project is to deploy cutting-edge water filtration technology in various locations to provide usable water to the Navajo Nation. In 2023, the U.S. Department of Energy’s Office of Legacy Management granted N4WPP \$6 million in funding over five years. Through this project, NTU students will receive hands-on water research experience and community outreach training.



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NTU Wellness Center

NTU Featured Alumni

Dwight Carlston, a member of the Navajo Nation from the To'aheedliinii and Ts'ah yisk'idnii clans, hails from Falcon Nest near Twin Lakes, New Mexico. He graduated from Tohatchi High School, excelling in Cross-Country.

After high school, Dwight attended Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado, to compete in Cross-Country. However, he felt out of place and decided to work and save money for a different school. During this time, he took carpentry classes at the old Navajo Technical College under Tom Bebo. Having grown up around livestock, Dwight eagerly joined the Rodeo Team at Navajo Technical University, competing in bull riding across the southwestern U.S.

In 2009, he earned his carpentry certificate and transferred to Haskell Indian Nations University to enroll in environmental science. During his first year, he won the men's cross-country conference championship, gaining confidence and returning to Navajo Technical University to continue his two-year environmental science program.

Dwight worked hard to complete his associate's degree and pursued a bachelor's thereafter. The American Indian College Fund honored him as Student of the Year during the 2010 AIHEC conference in Green Bay, Wisconsin, recognizing his achievements. He was elected as Student Congress President and NTU Student Senate President, serving two terms in each role.

In 2016, Dwight earned his bachelor's degree in environmental science. He served as Student Senate President during the campaign for the institution's name change before the Board of Regents and the Navajo Nation Council. NTU President Dr. Elmer Guy often invited him to advocate.

After NTU, Dwight enrolled in a master's program in environmental science at the University of Georgia, specializing in Agriculture Leadership, Environmental Education, and Communication.

Now a senior environmental inspector in the Arizona Department of Agriculture's air quality program within the Gila River Indian Community, he also represents the National Tribal Air Association. "In this role, my focus is on ensuring companies do not pollute our resources," Dwight explains.

For the past four and a half years, he has worked closely with the EPA, industrial businesses, state agencies, and community stakeholders to ensure compliance with environmental standards in Phoenix, AZ. He conducts inspections, identifies non-compliance areas, and develops corrective plans.



NTU Featured Student

Wayant Billy began his academic journey in Automotive Technology at NTU, driven by an interest in energy systems. He belongs to the Áshiihí (Salt Clan), born for Bit'ahnii (Folded Arms People) and Tó Dích'íí'nii (Bitter Water), Kinłichii'nii (The Red House People Clan). Wayant is originally from the community of Tse'ii'ahi or Standing Rock, NM.

His career shifted after engaging with NEST Lab's innovative research on biofuels, crucial for sustainable energy and tribal economic resilience. Inspired, he transitioned from an associate degree in Automotive Technology to NTU's Bachelor of Science Chemistry Program.

At NEST Lab, Wayant received hands-on training in electrochemical techniques, material characterization, fuel cell testing, and biofuel synthesis from local biomass. This experience expanded his scientific understanding and connected his work to his Navajo community's energy needs, emphasizing environmental sustainability.

Wayant's research quickly gained national recognition, often presenting at AIHEC conferences, where he won honors in the Undergraduate Research Competitions (2024).

His research journey was vertically integrated in biofuels and horizontally expansive into environmental science, energy systems, and materials chemistry. Mentorship from Dr. Thiagarajan Soundappan provided him with the tools to author research abstracts, develop reports, and communicate findings effectively.

Currently, Wayant is preparing for doctoral studies, with two peer-reviewed publications in the ECS Sensors Plus Journal. His long-term goal is to join Harvard University's PhD program in Engineering and Applied Sciences, driven by years of mentorship, research achievements, and a commitment to community benefit, positioning him as a leader among NTU's aspiring STEM professionals.



SAVE THE DATE

Navajo Tech Innovation Center Open House

Friday, June 13, 2025
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM
309 E Historic 66, Church
Rock, NM
(1/4 mile east of Fire Rock
Casino)

For more info, contact:
Verna Yazzie at
v.yazzie@navajotech.edu
or (505) 905-7800

Juneteenth June 19, 2025

All NTU sites will be
closed.

Men's Basketball Try-Outs

June 16-18, 2025
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM
NTU Wellness Center

Youth Basketball Skill Camp

June 16 - 17, 2025
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
NTU Wellness Center