

SKYHAWK PRESS

A PART OF YOUR EVERYDAY LIFE

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77th Annual Navajo Nation Fair Parade - NTU

Window Rock, AZ— On September 6, 2025, Navajo Technical University proudly participated in the 77th Annual Navajo Nation parade. The theme, “Strength and Resilience: Celebrating the Spirit of the Navajo Women,” powerfully emphasizes the resilience, bravery, and spirit of Navajo women, both historically and today.

The parade lineup began at 8 AM, marking the start of the Navajo Nation’s most cherished event, which stretched from Tse Bonito to just before St. Michaels, AZ. Attendees enjoyed floats, marching bands, dancers, and more. The NTU parade float, led by the radiant Miss Crowned NTU Star O’riah LaPahe, NTU student athletes, and the lively Sammy the Skyhawk, brought joy and smiles to everyone present. Seeing the Navajo Nation unite to celebrate was truly heartwarming.

Additionally, NTU sincerely thanks everyone who coordinated and participated in the event. A big thanks to law enforcement agencies that helped ensure the success and safety of the Navajo Nation Fair this weekend. Your support means the world to us, and we commend your dedication to your local university.



Cook, Create, and Celebrate: NTU Culinary Arts Program Recognized as ACF Western Region Finalist

Las Vegas, NV – On July 31, 2025, Navajo Technical University's Culinary Arts Program and Chef Robert L. Witte were named finalists for the Western Region. The American Culinary Federation (ACF) recognizes outstanding member achievements, making this a significant honor.

Chef Witte, along with colleagues Chef Brian Tatsukawa, Chef Sheila Begay, Chef Lorencita Billiman, Chef Melvina Jones, and Chef Walter Cloud, was honored at the President's Gala during the 2025 ACF National Convention at Paris Las Vegas Hotel & Casino, where the national winner was announced.

Certified Sous Chef (CSC) and Certified Working Pastry Chef (CWPC), Chef Walter Cloud from Coolidge, New Mexico, received the 2025 Cutting-Edge Award, which recognizes a chef's leadership and service to the culinary field. This award highlights exceptional chefs who serve the culinary industry by staying current with trends, volunteering their time, and mentoring others. It's a prestigious acknowledgment from the ACF, celebrated at national and regional conferences.

Chef Cloud expressed, "I was highly honored to be nominated for this year's cutting-edge award. None of it would have been possible without the guidance of Chef Bob and Chef Brian, as well as the support from Chef Melvina, Chef Lorena, Chef Sheila, Chef Cita, and my family for their continued support in all my endeavors, alongside Chef Brian Tatsukawa, who is also a recipient back in 2022."

Chef Tatsukawa and Chef Witte founded the Four Corners Chapter of the ACF. They created a website to help passionate chefs share ideas, document recipes, plan activities, and seek employment in the area. Membership is open through an application process with varying fees, and members are categorized based on their professional or student status.

"The award is meaningful because it recognizes the Four Corners region and highlights local community efforts like catering. We were all excited—initially, we knew about the AFC West Regional but not the national level. It was special to see Chef Bob accept the award and share this achievement with us. We are focusing on continuing education for our students," Chef Brian said.



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Connection Before Corrention: NTU Trauma Seminar

Crownpoint, NM—On September 12, 2025, the Counseling Department at Navajo Technical University hosted a thought-provoking seminar featuring guest speaker Donna Lucero. The event occurred in the NTU Hospitality building and was attended by NTU staff, faculty, and students.

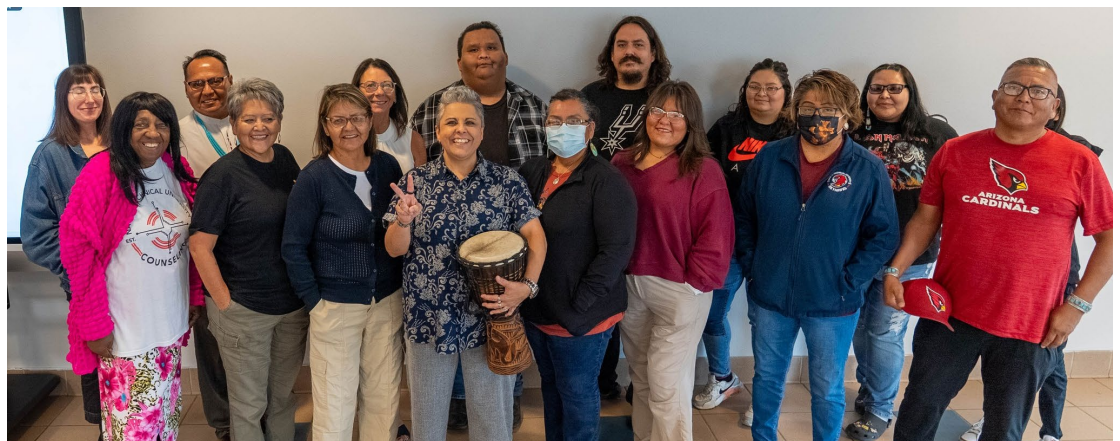
The seminar centered on understanding and addressing the impact of trauma, covering key topics like effective communication. Attendees gained valuable insights into navigating change through open discussions and ongoing dialogue. These seminars, typically geared toward mental health, social work, and education professionals, aim to educate participants on trauma-informed care principles, best practices, and evidence-based treatments.

Participation in these activities included one person sharing their desired life changes with the speaker while another listened and provided feedback. This exercise aimed to strengthen relationships by offering suggestions and analysis and promoting open agreement or disagreement. The ultimate goal was to foster self-reflection and improve our listening and communication skills.

“I am grateful for this opportunity to share this information and my previous experience teaching a suicide prevention class to NTU students last semester. I hope this information will be helpful to others and applicable to the broader NTU community,” Donna expressed.

Donna Marie Lucero is from Albuquerque, New Mexico. She has a BA in psychology and family studies and an MA in counseling from the University of New Mexico. She is finishing a second master’s in Language, Literacy, and Sociocultural Studies with a Race and Social Justice certificate.

Donna’s trauma-informed care is based on current brain development research and models such as the Neurosequential Model, Attachment, Circle of Security, and Brain Gym. She has 20+ years of experience as a clinical supervisor and teaches at the University of New Mexico.



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...



Europeans were scared of eating tomatoes when they were introduced.

Humans aren't the only animals that dream.



The inventor of the microwave appliance received only \$2 for his discovery.

NTU Women's Basketball Team 2025-2026

Aanor Louis, head coach of the NTU Women's Basketball team, passionately prepares for the upcoming season with strong determination. He is optimistic about the team's prospects and hopes players will support each other while adjusting to the fast-paced collegiate basketball environment. Let's welcome the NTU Women's Basketball 2025-2026 roster, which includes:

- #11 Jocee Henderson - Biology
- #32 Asia Kee - Nursing
- #15 Latisha Mutte - Nursing
- #25 Tyra Bitsue - Nursing
- #13 Kalise Steven - Animal Science
- #3 Maria Begaye - Welding
- #14 Keitha Phillips - Law Advocate
- #22 Daliyah Morris – Biology



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NTU Rodeo Team Fall 2025

Get ready to witness Coach Nicole Pino's incredible energy and passion as she prepares for the 2025 fall season with determination! Under her expert guidance, the NTU Rodeo Team has dedicated countless hours to sharpening its skills and gearing up for an exciting season. Coach Pino's strong leadership and unwavering commitment have been vital to the team's success. She eagerly anticipates reuniting with the team and truly appreciates the collaborative effort that has brought them to this point.

The team is prepared for the new season, and Coach Pino is confident in their outstanding potential. Join us in welcoming the NTU Rodeo 2025 team roster:

- Andre Foster: Welding degree/ Bullriding
- Alvaro Begay: Energy Systems/ Bareback
- Adrian Begay: CDL & Heavy Equipment/ Saddle Bronc
- Autumn Lee: Welding/ Breakaway/ Team Roping
- Isaiah Tom: Construction degree/ Bareback/ Bullriding
- Cajaun Cleveland: Diné Studies/ Barrel Racing
- Wyatt James: Welding/ Bullriding
- Kailar Charley: Animal Science/ Bullriding
- Cimmaron Curley: Welding/ Bullriding
- Kayden Isaac: Environmental Engineering/ Team Roping (not pictured)

Joining NTU's Rodeo Team means joining the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association (NIRA). Students can explore New Mexico's stunning landscapes and participate in thrilling rodeo events. This program helps student-athletes develop teamwork skills and demonstrates their dedication and exceptional horsemanship, proudly representing Navajo Technical University. Watch for the NTU Rodeo team schedule for the 2025 season.

Embark on this exciting journey by applying to NTU now and becoming a proud member of the Skyhawk family!



Navajo Nation Poet Laureate 2025-2027 Honored at Reception

Gallup, NM – On September 4, 2025, the BFA Creative Writing Program at NTU and the Navajo Nation Poet Laureate Committee recognized Matthew Jake Skeets from Vanderwagen, New Mexico, as the new Navajo Nation Poet Laureate for 2025-2027. The celebration took place at the Hilton Garden Inn.

The event brought together Dr. Casmir Agbaraji, Dean of Undergraduate Studies; Dr. Colleen Bowman, NTU Provost; the NTU Arts & Humanities faculty committee; and Matthew’s family, who gathered to acknowledge his achievements and the impact of his work in promoting creative writing and oral storytelling as a means of personal growth, expression, and community connection.

Associate Professor Anita Roastingear of NTU led the opening prayer. Dr. Jennifer Wheeler thanked everyone for their warm welcome, emphasizing the importance of events like this in honoring Navajo storytellers, the Diné language, and culture, and celebrating Navajo heritage. Dr. Agbaraji and Dr. Bowman also shared their thoughts at the event.

Luci Tapahonso offered warm wishes to the future poet laureate, advising him to “be prepared for certain projects – the presented workshops are always remembered by people who tell the right stories. As with manners, when someone is talking, be respectful and listen. Give your full attention, show understanding, and value the words to foster their trust and conversations,” Luci stated, explaining her upbringing in a Navajo life. “We value the way we talk to each other. It’s the kind of power a writer holds.”

Guest speakers from Jake’s family, friends, and relatives expressed their support for him as a local and regional writer. Jake shared his journey to becoming a writer, read some poems, and discussed storytelling’s powerful and healing role, particularly within Indigenous cultures.

“I always feel like being a poet means being reflective,” Jake said. “My poems come to me like a ceremony - quiet and observing. That’s just how I am when I’m ready to write. I’m truly honored to have this title and take the helm for my family and community.”

Jake and Luci Tapahonso, the former Navajo Nation Poet Laureate, were given personalized turtle necklaces, and Jake received a medallion with his name engraved. Other honors include an NEA Grant for Arts Projects, a Mellon Projecting All Voices Fellowship, and the 2023-2024 Grisham Writer in Residence at the University of Mississippi.



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NTU Men's Basketball Team 2025-2026

Get ready to experience the passion and dedication of head coach Michael McMillan as he prepares for the upcoming season with the NTU Men's Basketball team! Coach McMillan has assembled a talented roster of players from the Navajo Nation, and his excitement is truly contagious. Look forward to an exciting schedule featuring matchups against various colleges and universities in the southwestern region.

Join us in warmly welcoming the highly anticipated NTU Men's Basketball 2025-2026 team roster, brimming with talent and potential:

#25 Joshua Kee - Electrical Engineering
#13 Zonte Upton - Culinary Arts
#30 Torman Lang - General Studies
#2 Uriah Gill - Business Program
#44 Ira Mayweathers - Culinary Arts
#22 Troy King - RN/Biology
#10 Martell Tuley - RN/Biology
#11 Adakai Yazzie - General Studies
#4 Arsean Bozo - Engineering Technology
#32 Oraias Begay - Welding Technology
#50 Ethan Billy - Engineering Technology
#0 Ohmry Secatero - Culinary/Baking Program
#3 Christopher Rodriguez - Culinary Arts
#23 Eric Slim Jr. - Electrical Trades
#34 Keaton Long - New Media

Go Skyhawks!



NTU Archery Team Fall 2025

Under Head Coach Martin Perry’s leadership, the team actively seeks top bow shooters from across the Navajo Nation to represent NTU in collegiate competitions throughout the Southwest. The archery team participates in various styles, including Compound, Barebow, Recurve, and Traditional.

Coach Perry promotes skills like focus, self-confidence, and teamwork, which help achieve personal bests and foster strong camaraderie among team members, including:

- Donovan Martinez - Automotive Tech
- Alexis Arviso - Business Administration
- Jayna Wilson - Automotive Tech
- Nona Nez - Mechanical Engineering
- Owen Hunter - Automotive Tech
- Adrian Larson - Construction Tech
- Nate - Construction Tech
- Kiersten Tsosie - General Studies

Navajo Tech’s co-ed archery team competes under the U.S. Collegiate Archery Association (USCA), continually improving with focus, accuracy, and discipline. Representing NTU with skill and dedication, the team strives to establish a new standard in collegiate archery.

Whether experienced or just getting started, join a proud tradition and aim for success with NTU Archery!

Go Skyhawks!



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Meet the New Faces of NTU Cross-Country

Over the years, Coach Leonard Lee has highlighted the athletic talent and created a space where teamwork, leadership, and cultural pride come together. Navajo Technical University is proud to introduce this year's Cross-Country team, a group of dedicated student-athletes committed to representing their university and their community excellently in the classroom and on the course. For students at NTU, running also teaches focus, endurance, and the value of setting goals—skills that complement their academic and career paths.

NTU is proud to introduce this year's Cross-Country team. These student-athletes are committed to representing their university and community both on the course and in the classroom.

Team Members:

Zonte Upton – Culinary Arts
Elley Noble – Culinary Arts
Talia Tom – B.A. Biology
Emily Bennett – Animal Science
Adrian Bochinclonnie – Welding

We look forward to a strong season and invite our NTU community to support these athletes as they proudly represent Navajo Technical University.

2025 Cross-Country Schedule:

August 30 – NAU XC Invite | Flagstaff, AZ
September 13 – UNM XC Invite | Albuquerque, NM
September 26 – New Mexico Highlands | Las Vegas, NM
October 10 – NTU Home Meet | Crownpoint, NM
October 25 – Colorado Mountain College | Glenwood Springs, Colorado
November – Penn, PA Championship

Whether you aspire to compete at the collegiate level or maintain a healthy and active lifestyle while completing your degree, NTU provides the environment to succeed academically and athletically. Prospective students can take their first step by contacting the Skyhawk Central Admissions team to apply and become part of the NTU community today.



NTU with Diné College Kickoff Northern Navajo Nation Fair

Shiprock, NM – On September 29, 2025, Navajo Technical University and Kirtland’s Instructional site collaborated to participate in the Northern Navajo Fair Kickoff Event Frybread Contest, hosted by our sister institution, Diné College.

The 2025 Northern Navajo Fair Frybread Champion is NTU’s Ms. Dee Anna James from Main Campus Admissions. This was her first experience preparing an outdoor fire pit; her winning frybread recipe was taught to her by her grandpa.

NTU finished second in the Preliminary round, earning a place in the Grand Champion Finals. They also secured 5th place in the Frybread Showdown. The NTU Outdoor Kitchen Support Team included Kyle Arviso from Main Campus Advising, Garrett Yazzie from NTU Kirtland and Tee Nos Pos Site Director, Quentin Bowman-Martinez with NTU Kirtland Admissions, and Vernetta Begay, NTU Kirtland Administrative Assistant.

The support team set up the NTU canopy information booth, helped gather the supplies/materials, assisted with the setup and cleanup of the outdoor kitchen, and coached/cheered our Champion on to Victory!

Go Skyhawks!



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NTU Gathers to Promote Native Health at Annual Conference

Minneapolis, MN - From September 14-16, 2025, Navajo Technical University's Culinary Arts Program, along with Technical Chef Walter Cloud (CCC, CEPC) and students Kelly Bitsoi and Bryton Sewequeqtewa, participated in the Chef Expo during the Seventh Annual Conference on Native American Nutrition.

This important event is part of a series of annual gatherings focused on the diversity of Indigenous people and food issues across Turtle Island. "Traveling to Minnesota and taking part in such a meaningful event was a fantastic opportunity for both our students and me," said Chef Cloud.

The conference, hosted by the University of Minnesota Healthy Foods, Healthy Lives Institute, brought together tribal and community leaders, health and nutrition educators, researchers, students, health practitioners, government officials, funders, and others to discuss the latest scientific and indigenous knowledge on Native food systems, food sovereignty, nutrition, and health.

The event aimed to highlight innovative research, facilitate networking, encourage community engagement, and foster new partnerships. It also seeks to support the diversity of Indigenous peoples and showcase pre-contact food sources.

The group was surrounded by so many talented & fabulous Chefs, new friends from all different tribes. "Collaborating with so many skilled indigenous chefs was an inspiring experience. We all greatly valued the shared knowledge and connections we made," Chef Cloud added.



SKYHAWK PRESS

CHINLE INSTRUCTIONAL SITE

Navajo Nation Fair 2025 Kids Day

Window Rock, AZ – On September 3, 2025, the NTU Chinle Recruitment Team had an amazing time connecting with families and future Skyhawks at Kids Day during the Navajo Nation Fair. Shoutout to the Chinle Recruitment team as they set up a recruitment booth and passed along information and swag.



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NTU Nursing Students Build Skills in Compassionate, Trauma-Informed Care

Ft. Defiance, AZ—On September 15 – 18, 2025, Navajo Technical University nursing students participated in FDIHB's Trauma-Informed Care Intensive, led by trainers from the National Native Children's Trauma Center, University of Montana, inside the Conference Room of the Fort Defiance Indian Hospital Board.

During the event, students engaged in discussions covering foundational topics on trauma-informed care within Indigenous communities and resilience. The afternoon session was especially relevant, highlighting the importance of building protective factors and practicing self-care in the high-stress nursing field.

The training was deeply rooted in cultural traditions, beginning and ending with prayer led by staff from FDIHB's traditional and cultural services, with smudging available at day's end. A local drum group, Intertribal Boys, performed songs and facilitated reflection. The importance of language was emphasized, with a shift from trauma-informed care to healing-centered engagement. Students found the training beneficial and impactful for their nursing careers.

"We are excited that the nursing students could attend and participate in FDIHB Inc.'s 2nd Annual Trauma-Informed Care Intensive," said Dr. Cristina Carpenter. "This full-day event was facilitated by the team from the National Native Children's Trauma Center. We are mindful of the language shift around trauma-informed care to healing-centered engagement and will be utilizing this language in the future."

Trauma-informed care (TIC) involves understanding, recognizing, and responding to the effects of trauma throughout a person's life. It emphasizes providing physical, psychological, and emotional support to help trauma survivors regain control and feel empowered. Students were introduced to research on trauma as it relates to AI/AN people and Tribal communities, including trauma types, brain science, developmental and behavioral effects, and the connection between historic and current traumas.



NTU Featured Staff

Navajo Technical University praises Chef Walter Cloud, who is Kiis'áanii and born for Deeschii'nii. His maternal grandparents are bilagáana, and his paternal grandparents are Cherokee. Originally from Coolidge, NM, he graduated from Thoreau High School in 2006. He is a Certified Sous Chef (CSC) and Certified Working Pastry Chef (CWPC). He started his culinary studies at NTU in 2013 and received his Certification and Associate's degree in Culinary Arts in 2018.

While in high school, he started working for the nonprofit Cottonwood Gulch Foundation in 2004 as a kitchen intern, advancing to head cook by 2008 and working there until 2019.

Now an instructor, Chef Cloud believes his students will engage in all aspects of baking, preparation, decorating, theory, and safety. He exemplifies the knowledge needed to earn the Certified Chef de Cuisine badge, demonstrating intermediate skills and culinary experience in food preparation, food safety, sanitation, culinary nutrition, supervisory management, and high-standard food production.

Chef Cloud hopes to remain at NTU for a few more years. "I like working closely with our students and chefs nationwide to help them realize their potential and set future goals. Ultimately, I aim to open a small pastry or coffee shop or a restaurant," he said.

He joined the American Culinary Federation (ACF) in 2014 and is now a Certified Chef De Cuisine and a Certified Executive Pastry Chef. He received the Cutting-Edge Award in 2025.

In 2021, he was named "Pastry Chef of the Year" by the New Mexico Chapter of the ACF. He holds the Certified Chef de Cuisine (CCC) designation, awarded by the American Culinary Federation.



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NTU Featured Alumni

Jacqueline Lee hails from Three Turkey Ruins, Arizona, located approximately 20 miles southeast of Chinle, near a prominent mountain called Fluted Rock. The local population is about 30, all closely related through family ties. Jacqueline is a Tó dich'ii'nii (Bitter Water Clan) member born for the Tó Baazhni'azhi (Two Who Came to Water Clan). Her maternal grandparents belong to the Kinyáa'aanii (Towering House Clan), while her paternal grandparents are from the Tó dik'ozhi (Salt Water Clan).

Jacqueline sought a stable job in a healthcare facility to provide for her family and has always wanted to help others. As a certified nursing assistant (CNA), she works under a nurse's direction, providing patient care and comfort. Her responsibilities in the hospital include taking vital signs, transporting patients within the facility, and monitoring intake and output. She excels in building strong interpersonal relationships with patients. "NTU changed my life in many ways, providing personal and professional growth. It helped me with career preparation, self-awareness, and the discipline to work hard," Jacqueline shares.

"I owe my parents a debt of gratitude for encouraging me to return to college and for their constant prayers. I want to provide for my daughter, who is a significant motivator of my determination to succeed. My partner, Kyler, has also played an instrumental role in my education by providing transportation, financial support, and endless encouragement."

She advises incoming students to always believe in themselves and maintain confidence. "When you feel lost, asking questions and seeking help is crucial. Stay strong-minded regardless of the circumstances and work hard for your future."

Jacqueline graduated from Chinle High School in 2014 and participated in a dual enrollment program with Northland Pioneer College. After working for two years as a retail manager, she pursued a more fulfilling career. She enrolled in the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program at Navajo Technical University (NTU) in Chinle. She is proud to have graduated from NTU with a 3.8 GPA and to have made the Dean's List in Fall 2024. Jacqueline is currently nursing at the Chinle Comprehensive Health Care Facility in Chinle, AZ.

"Thanks to NTU, I have gained new perspectives on life and made significant progress in my field of study."



NTU Featured Student

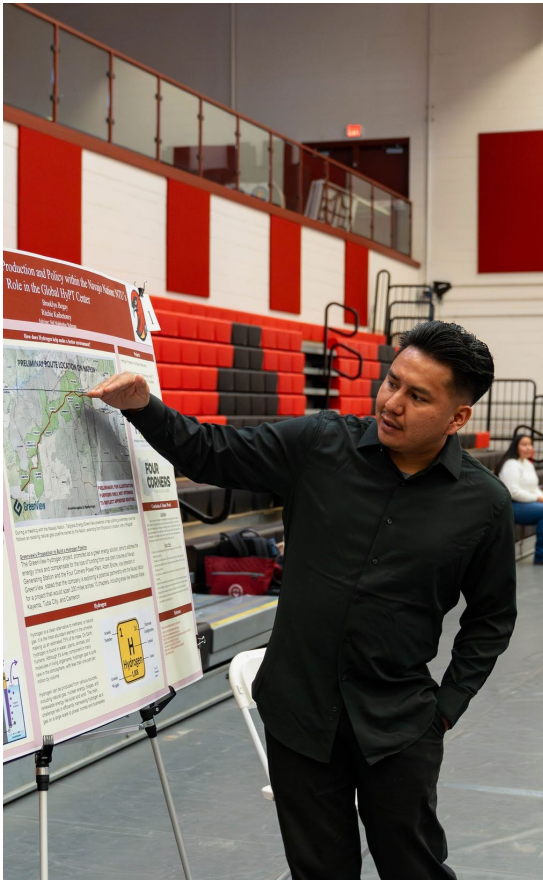
Navajo Technical University proudly welcomes Ritchie Kaibetoney from Tuba City, AZ. He is Tsi’naajinii (Red Streak) born for Ta’baq̣hi (Water Edge people), with maternal grandparents from Tódichín’ii (Bitter Water) and paternal grandparents from Táchii’nii (Red Running into the Water). As a Tuba City Warrior alumnus, Ritchie is a second-generation college graduate in his family. At NTU, Ritchie is currently pursuing an engineering technology degree.

Before attending NTU, he worked in various roles abroad and locally. He has collaborated with Dr. Rahman on engineering projects and traveled widely during his internship, including visits to QCAM. Ritchie presented his research—”Advancing Hydrogen Production and Policy within the Navajo Nation: NTU’s Role in the Global HyPT Center”—at NTU’s Annual Competition Day in Crownpoint, NM, and in London, UK.

He aims to earn a master’s degree to inspire his community in Tuba City, showing that dreams are achievable through education at NTU. He demonstrates that many programs and opportunities are accessible nearby. “I’ve been through a lot; there are many people to meet, and everyone has different lessons,” Ritchie says.

His mother, his idol, has motivated him to pursue education and to become someone others can look up to.

Ultimately, Ritchie Kaibetoney exemplifies how dedication and perseverance can lead to success. He relaxes by playing pool and emphasizes ongoing learning, personal growth, and pushing boundaries. If you enjoy competition, join him in the game room. Keep practicing, stay focused, and aim high!



Academic Calendar

- Census Date
Sep 5
- Fall Graduation Petition Due
Oct 3
- Midterm Exams
Oct 6 - 10
- Spring 2026 Pre-Registration
Oct 20
- Last Day to Withdraw
with a "W" Oct 27
- HOLIDAY Veterans Day
Nov 11
- Fall Break
Nov 24-26
- HOLIDAY Thanksgiving Day/
NN Family Day
Nov 27-28
- Final Exams
Dec 8-10
- Grades Due to Registrar
Dec 11
- Fall Graduation
Dec 12
- Winter Holiday
Dec 24 - Jan 2