

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NTU Students Represent at the New Mexico State Capitol

SANTA FE, NM — Students, staff, and administrators from Navajo Technical University (NTU) traveled to the New Mexico State Capitol in Santa Fe to participate in the 39th Annual American Indian Day at the Legislature on Friday, February 6, 2026. Hosted by the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department, the annual event honored Native American citizens and leaders while recognizing their enduring contributions to the State of New Mexico.

During the visit, NTU students had the opportunity to meet New Mexico Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, who took time to speak with them and offer words of encouragement. Her interaction with students highlighted continued support for Native education and student leadership.

Throughout the morning, NTU students Kendrick Sorrell, Student Senate Master of Arms; Tamalaya Begaye, Student Senate Secretary; Kory Begay and Amber James, Peer Navigators; along with NTU staff Michael McMillin, Student Recruiter, and Dee Anna Lee James, First Year Experience Career & Academic Advisor, engaged with state and tribal leaders to share information about NTU's academic programs, enrollment opportunities, and student support services. They were joined by NTU administrators Dr. Jason Arviso, Vice President of Operations; Abe Bitok, Director of Support Services; and Darly Begay, Government Affairs Officer. Together, the delegation served as strong advocates for the university, amplifying student voices and emphasizing the importance of access to higher education for Native communities.

Reflecting on the experience, Dr. Jason Arviso, Vice President of Operations, praised the students' leadership and presence at the Capitol.

"Our students carried themselves with confidence, purpose, and pride," said Dr. Arviso. "Their willingness to speak up, represent their university, and engage with leaders shows the strength of Native student leadership and the bright future they are building—not only for themselves, but for their communities."

NTU representatives also met with leaders from the Navajo Nation and officials from New Mexico state agencies, including Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren; Speaker of the Navajo Nation Council Crystalyne Curley; Navajo Nation Delegates Dr. Andy Nez and Amber Crotty; Lynda Lovejoy; JoAnn Jayne, Navajo Nation Deputy Attorney General; Stephanie Rodriguez, Secretary of the New Mexico Higher Education Department; and Marisa Valdez, Infrastructure Program Manager with the Department of Finance and Administration. These conversations helped strengthen relationships that support NTU's mission and future collaboration.

NTU's participation in American Indian Day at the Legislature reflects the university's continued commitment to student advocacy, civic engagement, and expanding higher education opportunities for Native students across New Mexico and the Navajo Nation.

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PHOTO (L-R) Kendrick Sorrell, NTU Student Senate Master of Arms, New Mexico Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, Tamalaya Begaye, NTU Student Senate Secretary.



PHOTO (L-R) Dee Anna Lee James, First Year Experience Career & Academic Advisor, Amber James, NTU Peer Navigator., Navajo Nation Council Delegate Dr. Andy Nez, Dr. Jason Arviso, NTU Vice President of Operations, Kory Begay, NTU Peer Navigator.



PHOTO (L-R) Michael McMillin, NTU Student Recruiter, Speaker of the Navajo Nation Council Crystalyne Curley, Amber James, NTU Peer Navigator, Kory Begay, NTU Peer Navigator.



PHOTO (L-R) Dr. Jason Arviso, NTU Vice President of Operations, Dee Anna Lee James, First Year Experience Career & Academic Advisor, Amber James, NTU Peer Navigator, Marisa Valdez, Infrastructure Program Manager with the Department of Finance and Administration, Kory Begay, NTU Peer Navigator, Abe Bitok, NTU Director of Support Services.



PHOTO (L-R) Abe Bitok, NTU Director of Support Services, Navajo Nation Delegates Amber Crotty, Darly Begay, NTU Government Affairs Officer.



PHOTO (L-R) Lynda Love Joy, Dr. Jason Arviso, NTU Vice President of Operations, JoAnn Jayne, Navajo Nation Deputy Attorney General.



PHOTO (L-R) Dr. Jason Arviso, NTU Vice President of Operations, Stephanie Rodriguez, Secretary of the New Mexico Higher Education Department, Abe Bitok, NTU Director of Support Services, Wade Shannah, NTU Marketing Multi-Media Specialist, Michael McMillin, NTU Student Recruiter.



PHOTO (L-R) Clinton Desiderio, NTU Director of Marketing and Communications, Dee Anna Lee James, First Year Experience Career & Academic Advisor, Abe Bitok, NTU Director of Support Services, Michael McMillin, NTU Student Recruiter, Amber James, NTU Peer Navigator, Dr. Jason Arviso, NTU Vice President of Operations, Kendrick Sorrell, NTU Student Senate Master of Arms, Tamalaya Begaye, NTU Student Senate Secretary, Kory Begay, NTU Peer Navigator.