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NAVAJO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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EDWARD J. KOURY
County Manager

JUDY JONES
Clerk of the Board

RESOLUTION NO. 80-97

RESOLUTION OF THE NAVAJO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS IN SUPPORT OF NORTHLAND PIONEER COLLEGE BUILDING PLANS FOR A PERMANENT CLASSROOM FACILITY IN KAYENTA, ARIZONA

WHEREAS, The Navajo County Community College District dba Northland Pioneer College (NPC) has provided post-secondary education college level classes to the citizens of Kayenta, Arizona for over 22 years; and

WHEREAS, on May 2, 1995, the voters (including Navajo Tribal members residing in Navajo County on the Navajo Reservation) passed a \$ 15,600,000 bond through a special election to build permanent class room facilities in Holbrook, Winslow, Snowflake, Show Low, and Kayenta; and

WHEREAS, NPC plans to construct a permanent classroom facility in Kayenta utilizing \$ 1.2 million of the bond proceeds, and

WHEREAS, Navajo Community College dba Dine College is effectively attempting to block NPC's construction plans, and

WHEREAS, NPC's Board of Directors have made a commitment to the Kayenta project, but cannot wait indefinitely to resolve this situation before the project is moved to a location outside of the Navajo Nation, and

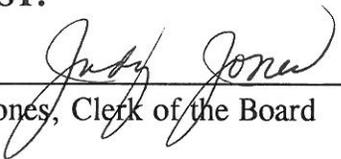
WHEREAS, The Kayenta Chapter, recognizing the importance of a college in the community from an education and economic development standpoint, approved a seven acre land withdrawal for construction of the new NPC facility, and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the Navajo Nation and its citizens to encourage post-secondary education and the related economic development on the Navajo Nation.

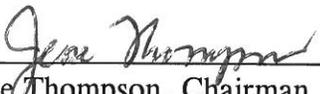
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Navajo County Board of Supervisors encourages the Navajo Nation to recognize that NPC has served the post-secondary education needs of the citizens of Kayenta for over 22 years and authorize NPC to build a permanent classroom facility on the seven acres withdrawn by the Kayenta Chapter for that purpose.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of Navajo County the 23rd day of June, 1997.

ATTEST:



Judy Jones, Clerk of the Board



Jesse Thompson, Chairman
Navajo County Board of Supervisors

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Tradition not for sale

EDITOR

Navajo Times,

In response to recent articles presented in the media regarding Northland Pioneer College's plans to establish a campus in Kayenta, Dine College would like to go on record in order for the Navajo people to understand our position and to set the record straight. There is a need to educate the Navajo Nation about the role of Dine College. The people of Kayenta were only presented with one choice.

It has been a requirement of Navajo law since 1984 that "All Postsecondary education programs and courses offered in the Navajo Nation be approved and continually monitored by the Education Committee, and coordinated through Navajo Community College (now Dine College)." The issues at stake are more than issues of "low empowerment" or "economic development" as stated in the media. They strike at the very heart of Navajo sovereignty; its erosion and the protection thereof.

Dine College's role as the Navajo institution of higher learning was created and established in 1968. Navajo Tribal Council Resolutions CJY-87-68 and CN-95-68 state that specifically, our tribally chartered college would serve the Navajo Nation to provide education and training to the Navajo people.

Regarding other institutions operating on the Navajo Nation, Dine College's prime responsibility as a lead institution of higher learning is to ensure that these institutions must comply with Tribal law and policies and to the sovereignty aspects of the Tribe. This is not to suggest that other institutions, including NPC, cannot cooperate with or form alliances (partnerships) with Dine College in providing educational opportunities for Navajo students. However, assurances must be made that issues such as transfer-ability, that Navajo language, culture, history and values will be taught appropriately and specific delineated service areas will be clearly designated. In essence, to exercise freedom of choice including cultural and traditional learning. As such, Dine College must protect the interest of the Navajo while promoting and providing access to higher learning opportunities.

In the past, higher education was controlled by outside entities which never included Navajo teachings and values. Other institutions came in with their agendas, much the same as the BIA, imposing their will upon the people. Our children were told to disregard Navajo teachings and embrace Western education philosophies and models.

A major obstacle in expanding educational services to local communities is limited fiscal resources. Outside institutions have an advantage in that bond elections are used to finance needed facilities and other needs requiring fiscal support. The majority of this is made possible with the ability of outside municipalities to tax local economies and exercise fund solicitation of all sorts. This is a major difference between Dine college and NPC.

I believe the tax levy of Coconino County includes at least 20% or more of funds provided by Navajos which could be applied to a campus under the direction of Dine College. As the only institution of higher education born on the Navajo Nation Council floor, this is the only vehicle in which a true Navajo education system is in place and where the Dine teachings and body of knowledge are inculcated into the overall curriculum. Elsewhere students are told to disregard Navajo teachings. I believe this leads to loss of self-esteem, confusion, depression, drug and alcohol abuse and many other social and personal problems in their lives.

I would like to summarize a chronological order of events relative to NPC's intent to expand its services in Kayenta, and in which key individuals were involved (since 1992 when I was appointed President of the College). These include:

- Correspondence with the President of NPC, and Coconino Community College regarding the official position of then Navajo Community College accordance to Tribal policy and protocol.
- Correspondence with Daniel Tso, Chairman, Navajo Education Committee (1993) regarding clarification of Tribal policy and other institutions operating on the Navajo Nation, primarily NPC.
- Navajo Community College Board of Regents Resolution supporting its primary responsibility as the Nation's official institution of higher learning (NCC-DEC-1251-93). Attorney Albert A. Hale's legal opinion regarding Coordination of Courses Offered by Off-Navajo Nation's Colleges and Universities (dated December 21, 1993). Attorney Hale interpreted Title 2 Amendment as not altering any prior Tribal authority designation regarding Navajo Education Committee's authority to "regulate" course offerings and found consistency with its "oversight and guidance" role. He further suggested that an official Navajo Attorney General's Opinion be obtained for proper interpretation of Navajo law. Another Tribal entity with similar concerns was provided by Attorney Hale as a case-in-point (Navajo Engineering and Construction Authority's P.L. 638 Contracting Authority with Regard to Proposed Resolution No. 2945 dated April 26, 1993).
- I had requested an opinion to be rendered by the Navajo Nation Attorney General on January 12, 1994. No official opinion was provided after my response for additional information to Frank Seanez, Attorney, Navajo Nation.

We have an obligation to adhere to the protocol of Navajo Law. We can insist on the Dine philosophy for our students. We need to insist that there are certain values which are not for sale and the trade-offs of our actions today may be too costly for our future. We call upon all our leaders, including the Education Committee, the Navajo Nation Council and the President of the Navajo Nation to deal with this matter of utmost importance. I hope and pray we have the will to make the correct decision.

Sincerely,
Tommy H. Lewis, Jr., President
Tsaile, Ariz.