

Diné College makes the President's list

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One of two Arizona colleges on national vaccination challenge

TSAILE, Ariz. – Diné College is one of two colleges in Arizona among 250 nation-wide that has accepted President Joe Biden's challenge to get students and the community vaccinated by July 4, according to online news site [Universitybusiness.com](https://www.universitybusiness.com)

“On Thursday [June 3], the Department of Education launched the [COVID-19 College Challenge](#), effectively asking institutions to take a pledge saying they will strive to get their communities vaccinated,” the online article said. “The ED says the timing is crucial as students head back home for the summer, but will return for fall semesters in just a couple of months.”

“The Navajo Nation is still challenged with Covid-19 cases, so the college would like to do its part to expand the efforts of having our employees and students vaccinated,” Diné College Incident Command Director Velveena Davis said. “Our goal is to ensure the safety and wellness of our campuses as we start the transition to return to face-to-face operation.

“We still recognize that we still have an at-risk population and those who are not eligible for the vaccine due to medical reasons,” she said. “As Diné people, we look at our community as family and we want to help protect our Diné families at our community campuses.

“For this reason, DC is joining this national initiative to continue promoting the efforts to end this pandemic and ensure our community (sic) are able to get vaccinated,” she concluded.

President Biden is reaching out to higher education institutions to play a role in reaching a 70 percent nation-wide vaccination goal by July 4.

“With their vast networking potential, institutions are being asked to double down on the messages and commitments they’ve already made to try to get their students and employees vaccinated,” the Challenge reads. “To that end, the Administration is asking institutional leaders to ensure they are taking a number of steps to achieve those goals.”

The article also says 400 institutions have issued a vaccine mandate.

“More than 400 institutions already have implemented vaccine mandates, but the majority of colleges and universities have not, instead encouraging and relying on their populations to take

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care of doses on their own," the article said.

Diné College is one of the 400 institutions that has a mask mandate in place for staff, faculty, and students.

"Our Incident Command Center also regularly sends out Covid-19 safety reminders and we encourage vaccinations," Marie Nez, Vice President of External Affairs stated.