

Diné College elementary education students honored at awards reception

Written by Staff Reports

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TSAILE, Ariz. — The Center for Diné Teacher Education at Diné College honored five graduating seniors at an awards reception Dec. 8 at the college's Ned Hatathli Museum. The event included student presentations and featured a brief musical recognition by CDTE instructor Blackhorse Mitchell.

Mitchell played renditions by the late blues musician Fats Domino. Navajo Nation Vice President Jonathan Nez was penciled-in as the guest speaker, but cancelled.

"They are all very wonderful and smart students," Mitchell said. "They are hard-working and have already achieved success."

Denise Denny, one of the senior honorees and a graduate of Chinle High School, conducted her student teaching at Tsaile Public Schools. The student teaching aspect was what each graduate talked to the public about in pull out sessions.

Denny spent four months student teaching seventh and eighth graders and used a U.S. Revolutionary War taxation without representation example "to get my students upset and thinking about something that wasn't good for people at the time," Denny explained.

"The example I used was about the colonists wanting to break from Great Britain because their money was being unfairly taken," Denny said. "They [students] were very interested in the learning model."

Charleton Long, a CDTE instructor and a co-coordinator of the event, said the oral presentations and student teaching components represent a step along the way to certification. He said three of the students were in at least one of his elementary education classes. The graduates received sashes and assorted gifts.

EARLY COMPLETION

The five completed the elementary education program at Diné College early and will formally graduate with a Bachelor of Arts degree in spring 2018.

The presentations encompassed professional portfolios and unit lessons that the students prepared for full-time mock teaching jobs. Each said they welcomed going back to their respective Navajo Nation communities to teach.

“The college is doing an amazing thing in producing graduates who want to go back to their communities,” Brandon Dinae, a Diné College elementary education student and also an event organizer, said. “Diné College really does have a lot to offer.”