23rd Navajo Nation Council
Office of the Speaker

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 19, 2016

MEDIA CONTACTS
Jared Touchin (928) 221-9253
Jolene Holgate (928) 380-4174
Crystalyne Curley (928) 286-7918
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

Council recognizes Arizona State University's American Indian Council for advocating for Indigenous Peoples Day

PHOTO: Council Delegate Jonathan Perry recognizes American Indian Council president Megan Tom and vice president Thomasina Denetdale of Arizona State University during the opening day of the 2016 Fall Council Session on October 17, 2016.

WINDOW ROCK – During the opening day of the 2016 Fall Council Session, the 23rd Navajo Nation Council recognized the American Indian Council, a student coalition at Arizona State University for their strong advocacy to promote the acknowledgement of Indigenous Peoples Day throughout Arizona State University and the City of Phoenix. On Sept. 6, ASU approved an ASU senate bill to recognize Indigenous Peoples Day on all four ASU campuses. Oct. 5, the Phoenix City Council unanimously approved a resolution to officially declare the second Monday of October as Indigenous Peoples Day.

Council Delegate Jonathan Perry (Becenti, Crownpoint, Huerfano, Lake Valley, Nageezi, Nahodishgish, Tse'ii'ahi, Whiterock) recognized American Indian Council president/facilitator, Megan Tom, and vice-president/co-facilitator, Thomasina Denetdale, on the council floor and

awarded the students with recognition plaques. The Council Chamber filled with applause when the two ASU students were awarded.

In 2015, the American Indian Council and the American Indian student community took the initiative and lead a petition and hosted cultural events to raise awareness. The petition was used to create the ASU Undergraduate Student Government bill, which was passed on Sept. 6. Furthermore, the American Indian Council testified on behalf of the American Indian community to the City of Phoenix Council to support the declaration of Indigenous Peoples Day.

"The passage of Indigenous Peoples Day is a stepping stone that will promote community awareness and it will continue to build a Native network to address issues related to culture preservation, land, water, and environmental concerns throughout Native communities. Indigenous Peoples' Day also provides the opportunity to reveal historical truths about the genocide and oppression of Indigenous peoples'," stated Delegate Perry.

The American Indian Council is one of the seven minority student coalitions that serves as an umbrella group for the American Indian student organizations and strives to unify American Indian students with the vision and mission of developing confident leadership skills and abilities.

"Declaring Indigenous Peoples' Day gave ASU Native students a platform to address their passion and concerns. The declaration would give us the opportunity to educate non-Natives about our way-of-life, culture, traditions, and philosophies. The declaration would also promote efficient tribal consultation with non-Native leaders. The effort to recognize this declaration will also allow us to help and support each other as Native students," stated Tom.

"American Indian Council has worked hard to recognize the declaration. This effort was completed by determined students and we will continue to work on future opportunities," added Denetdale.

Delegate Perry congratulated the American Indian Council on their outstanding achievement.

"This is a great day to celebrate our youths' dreams and goals. Many of our young educated Navajo students are doing great initiatives at universities. On behalf of the 23rd Navajo Nation Council, I want to thank our brilliant students," stated Delegate Perry.

# # #

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit www.navajonationcouncil.org or find us on Facebook and Twitter, keywords: Navajo Nation Council