



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**22<sup>nd</sup> Navajo Nation Council approves legislation  
allowing Navajo Technical College to be named a university**

**WINDOW ROCK** – The 22<sup>nd</sup> Navajo Nation Council on Wednesday approved Legislation No. 0154-13, amending Title 15 §§ 1201 through 1209 of the Navajo Nation Code; changing ‘Navajo Technical College’ to ‘Navajo Technical University’ and establishing the Navajo Technical University Institutional Review Board.

Legislation sponsor Council Delegate Simpson previously introduced a similar bill, Legislation No. 0077-13, during the 2013 Spring Session, however it was voted down on Apr. 16 by the Council to allow time for the sponsor to develop an improved version.

Delegate Danny Simpson (Becenti, Crownpoint, Huerfano, Lake Valley, Nageezi, Nahodishgish, Tse’ii’ahi, Whiterock) asked the Council to support the enhancement of the quality of higher education offered on the Navajo Nation.

Delegate Simpson explained that the proposed IRB, would review and approve all social science and animal research conducted by students.

“Past leaders knew changes would be made to NTC, this is one of them,” said Delegate Simpson.

The legislation drew support from Council members, yet a majority of the discussion centered around concerns over how the IRB would work with the Navajo Nation IRB, established under the Navajo Division of Health.

Council Delegate Dwight Witherspoon (Black Mesa, Forest Lake, Hardrock, Pinon, Whippoorwill) said he thought the proposed IRB policies were inadequate and requested that the bill be tabled until sufficient policies were created.

“I support NTC becoming a university, however these policies are not ready,” said Delegate Witherspoon. “My concern is to protect the Nation from potentially detrimental research.”

Although there was apprehension about the function of the proposed IRB, Council Delegate Leonard Tsoie (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake) argued that the Navajo Nation IRB’s process prolongs research efforts for students.

“It’s my understanding that students don’t want to conduct research on the Nation, because the Navajo Nation IRB does not regularly meet,” said Delegate Tsosie. “Prolonged research jeopardizes their schooling.”

Speaking in favor of the bill, Council Delegate Russell Begaye (Shiprock) stated that he believed the bill encourages students to develop research that impacts the entire world, not only the Nation.

Council Delegate Walter Phelps (Cameron, Coalmine Canyon, Leupp, Tolani Lake, Tsidi To ii) proposed an amendment to the bill, inserting ‘U.S.’ before the ‘Department of Health and Human Services’ on page 11, line 16 of the bill.

The amendment passed with a vote 17-0.

After a lengthy discussion, the Council approved Legislation No. 0154-13 with a vote of 21-0.

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