



THE NAVAJO NATION

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President Begaye and Vice President Nez tell NAU Students to maintain focus

FLAGSTAFF-Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez told Northern Arizona University (NAU) students to maintain their focus and take care of themselves in these days after a tragic campus shooting left one NAU student dead and three injured.

“Campus is usually a family and NAU is no different. You are family and it’s good that you came together tonight,” President Begaye told the students and faculty. “When tragic things happen in your life, you have to remember to take care of yourself, first and foremost.”

In recollecting on teachings his family has passed along, President Begaye said it’s important to “keep your thoughts holy”.

“There is purpose for your continued education and that is to grow your thoughts, knowledge and philosophy on life,” he said. “Think positively and don’t put bad thoughts into your mind.”

Students and faculty gathered on Oct. 12 at the Native American Cultural Center, Building 17, on NAU campus to meet with President Begaye and Vice President Nez. The meeting focused on reinforcing morale with the students and consoling those who were affected by the shooting.

“As an alumni of NAU, this event really shocked me,” Vice President Nez said. “This tragedy really hit home having happened at my alma mater. It’s heartbreaking.”

With Monday, Oct. 12, starting a new week of classes post-tragedy, Vice President Nez said he and President Begaye wanted to let the students know that they are not alone. They are a part of a larger family in all NAU students and alumni.

“There is a lot of wisdom in the alumni here. If there is anything you’re going through, whether it stems from this tragedy or not, you should talk with them,” he said. “We all know it’s tough going through college. Persevere and don’t give up.”

President Begaye and Vice President Nez were joined at the meeting by NAU President Rita Cheng and Advisor to the President Dr. Joe Martin. The meeting was organized by Kathleen Frank of the Native American Cultural Center and was filled to capacity with students and faculty.

The President and Vice President would like to extend their gratitude to the students, faculty and NAU President Cheng for welcoming them to the university.