

# NEWS RELEASE

## Office of Public Relations

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Diné College Employees Recognized**

**FARMINGTON, N.M.** — Close to 200 Diné College employees, a former legislator and president of the Navajo Nation from Arizona, and friends and family of some employees, gathered May 16 at the Town Suites Marriott for the College's annual Employee Appreciation Day.

There were dozens of awards given out, among them one for retirement to Don Denetdeal and an Employee of the Year award to accounting specialist Kate Slowman.

The event is an occasion whereby workers from Diné College's six campuses are recognized over lunch.

"If it is to be, then it's up to me," guest speaker and State Sen. Albert Hale, D-St. Michaels, said. The adage is something college employees practically live by. "Everyone here is a very important part of what Diné College does day in and day out," Hale later said.

Hale, a lawyer by profession and with degrees from Arizona State University and the University of New Mexico, talked about the role Diné College plays around the Navajo Nation. Sara Kien, Ph.D., and a psychology professor, received the Faculty of the Year honor and the popular Ed McCombs, a graphics and content specialist, received recognition for his 30-plus years of service.

"(Kate) goes above and beyond what her actual job duties are," Vice President of Finance Bo Lewis said. "I think anyone who has been here

for many, many years knows (Ed McCombs)," Vice President of External Affairs Marie Nez said.

Instructor and writer Anna Walters received an Outstanding Community Award and Charleton Long and Rosalind Smith were two instructors selected by Diné College deans who got awards. Administrator Reeverson Descheeny was honored. Descheeny oversees the Peer Mentor program.

Denetdeal, who ends with 29 years as an administrator and instructor, was presented with a Pendleton blanket and a certificate.

"(Don Denetdeal) is a great instructor," former student Natalie Denezpi said. "He taught me important life lessons that helped me to succeed. His teachings are both inspirational and educational."

Avery Denny, a medicine man and an instructor with the School of Diné Studies and Education, provided an invocation. College President Monty Roessel lauded the entire faculty and staff, peppering his remarks with anecdotes about the institution over the past 50 years.

The College is celebrating 50 years this year. Library Director Herman Peterson emceed the three-hour event.

"Applaud yourself, because you truly deserve it," Roessel said. "You are the first and last points of contact for students and that is something that is very important."