**Northland Pioneer College**

**Kayenta Center Annual Community Outreach Meeting**

Kayenta Township – Town Hall

**February 7, 2017**

11:00AM- 1:00PM

**In attendance:** Center Staff: Myrtle Dayzie-Grey, Chantal Kescoli, and Calandra Walker; Moderators: Ricky Jackson, Ann Hess, and Josh Rogers.

**Invited Guests**: Geraldine Laughter, Lorraine Benally, Lillian Smith, Charlie Smith, Annaleta Osif, Bryce Anderson, Rodger Grey, and Terrance Tenakhongva.

**Purpose:** Opportunity to discuss community needs and concerns with top college officials (NPC College Events Calendar, 2017)

**Agenda:** None

Meeting opened with introductions from all attendees. Staff members (Myrtle Dayzie-Grey, Rickey Jackson, Chantal Kescoli, Josh Rogers, Ann Hess and Calandra Walker) of Northland Pioneer College gave a warm welcome and an explanation of their position within the college. It was agreed at the beginning of the meeting; everyone in the room supports education in any shape or form.

Ricky Jackson, Dean of the Arts and Sciences Department at NPC, made note that he and his colleagues (Josh Roger & Ann Hess) are representing on behalf of NPC President and Vice President of Learning and Student Services. He went on to mention, the NPC College President will retire in June of 2018 and the college has begun its search for a new president. The college is working hard to provide educational services to students within Navajo and Apache County, stated Jackson. However, the college will potential be impacted financially, due to the closure of the Navajo Generating Station and then Peabody Coal Company; and perhaps the Cholla Power Plant following suite. Cholla shutting down one unit has decreased property taxes already.

On a lighter note, Jackson mentioned NPC was awarded a grant, which benefits high school students in Navajo and Apache County. The grant, also known as, the TALON Project, allows high school students to take college level classes and earn college credit while still in high school. Currently, 10 and counting public high schools are under the TALON project. Technology has actually made it possible for high school students to earn college credit. NPC college instructors are being broadcasted via SmartBoard into high school classrooms and instructing students on lessons. College level courses in the following departments are being taught: Mathematics, English, Foreign Language, Arts & Humanities, and Social and Behavioral Sciences.

Josh Rogers, NPC Director of Student Services, oversees several departments at NPC (Academic Advising, Student Disability Services, Tutoring, Career Services, and Student Activities Clubs/Organizations) is working on several goals for the college. Rogers goals included, increasing the quality of education, increasing graduation rates, continue to provide services for students, and making use of a new system (Starfish) to communicate with not only the student, but the students’ entire educational network.

Ann Hess, Marketing Director of NPC, mentioned she and her team will revamp the entire NPC online website. Hess said the new NPC website will be user friendly, compared to the old website. Hess also pointed out the new website will be compatible with mobile/tablet devices. Ann then directed everyone’s attention to the NPC Career Focus magazine. The Career Focus magazine is an excellent tool student’s and community members can use to obtain helpful information on enrollment, available programs, upcoming events and read about personal success stories.

Community members were all thankful for the services NPC has and is still providing for the community. However, community members addressed some areas that could use improvement. Terrance Tenakhongva, community member and NPC student, suggested NPC offer science courses at the NPC Kayenta Center. Currently, the NPC Kayenta Center does offer the lecture for science courses, but the student would still need to travel for the lab. The nearest lab for a science course is either in Holbrook or Winslow. Terrance stated, he is not the only student who is lacking the required science requirements. Due to this matter, the NPC Kayenta Center has referred students to Dine College and Navajo Technical University.

Though students of all ages are welcome to attend NPC, the NPC Kayenta Center has noticed a great number of high school students dropping out to obtain their GED through NPC. Calandra Walker, who works with the NPC GED department, does not agree with these students leaving high school. Walker’s reasons are: it is not free to obtain a GED with NPC and earning a GED takes longer to complete than a high school diploma. Walker notices her students seem to be getting younger and younger each year. She would like for them to enjoy their high school years. Dean Jackson said the college discourages student’s leaving high school early. Over the years, college officials have visited with the local high schools, to provide sample questions of the GED test and to speak to the students about finishing high school. The difficulty of the GED test is much more difficult than in the past, according to Jackson.

Lorraine Benally, former Kayenta Center NPC Center Manager, said she’s witnessed this first hand when being a center manager. Benally believes the local high school could do a better job at preparing students, academically, for what is to come after high school. Reasons behind her comment include: top ten scholars or those with prestigious scholarships leave home to attend universities, but return home and enroll in NPC. Also, Benally said her son personally told her, his high school counselors did not prepare me for anything after high school.

Annaleta Osif, a former educator, said there is lack of communication within the educational system. Osif clearly stated, “We no longer talk to one another in the community.” Osif expressed this lack of communication is hurting the young people of this generation. She went on to ask why the leaders of the community were not present at the meeting and leaders need to take the time to be involved in education.

Lorraine Benally informed Osif, the community outreach meeting is extended to all members of community. In addition, the leaders of the Kayenta community are formally invited to the event via postal mail, email, and telephone call. However, when the event takes place, Kayenta town officials are not to be seen. Benally believes their presence is mandatory as well. Benally was quite upset when she noticed none of Kayenta’s top officials are at this meeting. Benally believes they should be here, supporting education. Rather than just expressing it during campaigns, she would like them to put their words into action.

Lillian Smith, community member, believes all communication is lost among individuals in the community. The leaders of the community are no longer coming together, Smith pointed out. Personally, Smith feels lost. She does not know who to go to anymore. Smith says, “We need to put Kayenta back on the map.”

Members of the meeting suggested NPC collaborate with other businesses/services within the community. Geraldine Laughter, Principal Economic Development Specialist from Kayenta Township, mentioned she sees NPC as a potential partner in the near future. Laughter would like to collaborate with NPC to establish classes/services to small business owners/potential owners. Laughter believes small business owners would really benefit from this. Benally also suggested NPC team up with the local police force and start a Police Academy here in Kayenta. Kayenta Unified School District Superintendent, Bryce Anderson, mentioned that his door is always open to anyone who wants to talk about education.

Rodger Grey, Kayenta Township Commissioner said he is appreciative and proud to have a community college in his town. He further explained that the Township is working hard to clean up old buildings then invite and place entrepreneurs in these areas. With this said, he would like to see Northland Pioneer College to have a visible reference point for its center. Such as, near the main road so potential businesses and visitors coming to Kayenta know that there is a community college in our town and of course, even for potential college students.