

## United States Senate

### Message from United States Senator Jeff Bingaman October 4, 2005

I would like to thank Dr. Sherman Wilcox for inviting me to be a part of this celebration today. I am pleased to take part in the 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Navajo Language Instruction at the University of New Mexico (UNM). I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Department of Linguistics for their hard work in helping preserve Navajo language and culture through their efforts at the University.

I would also like to single out for praise William Morgan and Robert W. Young for their ground-breaking work that ultimately led to the publication of *The Navajo Language: A Grammar and Colloquial Dictionary*. Your hard work and commitment to the Navajo culture, UNM and the State of New Mexico are to be commended.

For many years, UNM has been home to some of the country's most talented instructors and researchers, who have dedicated themselves to preserving Navajo language and culture. I'm sure you have done this because you know the Navajo language is essential to ensuring that the Navajo culture continues to thrive.

Preserving the Navajo language also helps us keep a tremendously important part of 20<sup>th</sup> Century American history alive. All of us know the story of the Navajo Code Talkers, who used the Navajo language to develop a code that helped us win

World War II. In the face of decades of government efforts to downplay tribal culture and language in favor of assimilation, these brave men stepped up and proudly developed this unbreakable code.

The University of New Mexico continues to contribute to the positive direction of diversity in our state. It is clear that UNM's role in this worthy pursuit will be even greater in the years to come. Once again, I congratulate the UNM Department of Linguistics on this very special occasion and wish you the best of luck in the future.

Jeff Bingaman  
United States Senator