



Office of the President

NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

March 12, 2021

Dear Lumberjacks,

I'd like to start today's communication expressing my deepest condolences to the family, friends, and NAU community on the sudden passing of Eugene Hughes, NAU's 12th president. I considered Gene a friend and mentor, and I know many others in the NAU community did too. We lost a great leader and champion and an important member of our Lumberjack family. His contributions from decades of service to NAU built the foundation we enjoy today.

As we hit the one-year mark of the COVID-19 global pandemic, it is a good time to reflect on all we have accomplished during this tumultuous time, where we are today, and what comes next as we work to emerge into a world with a greater sense of normalcy.

While there is reason for optimism as more of us complete our vaccinations and COVID-19 cases dramatically decline nationwide, we remain vigilant and cautious in order to solidify the gains that have been made. More than 70 colleges and universities throughout the country, including NAU, have canceled spring break to eliminate the potential of spreading infections from travel.

Like us, these schools are encouraging "staycations" on campus, which is in keeping with current guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

To that end, Student Affairs has rolled out NAU's Staycation plans for March 12-19, which includes activities and programming that encourages and promotes wellness, such as hikes, beach volleyball, and virtual game nights.

NAU Health Promotion will be offering wellness kits to students. Students who attend these outdoor events will receive an entry to win a Staycation Pack for each event attended. Information regarding events, locations, and times can be found at nau.edu/staycation. Staycation Week will wrap up with virtual concerts hosted by ASNAU.

I'd like to congratulate the winners of the [President's Achievement Awards](#). This year, we recognize 10 employees for their dedication to their professional roles and active support to NAU's mission, values, and goals. I trust you will join me in saying congratulations!

I'll end with an update on testing, vaccines, and active cases.

To date, NAU has administered 3,245 first doses of the COVID-19 vaccine and 2,838 second doses. In total, 6,083 vaccines have been given at Campus Health Services. Providing access to the vaccine remains a priority, and we appreciate our partnership with Coconino County and others in the community who are working diligently on this effort.

In keeping with our goal to provide the latest information about the spread of COVID-19, as of this afternoon, NAU is managing 25 COVID-19 cases among students on and off campus, down from last week. Updates can be found on [NAU's coronavirus page](#).

My continued and profound thanks for all you continue to do to remain vigilant about maintaining appropriate health and safety practices.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rita". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small mark to the right of the name.

Rita Hartung Cheng
President