



# Office of the President

NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

April 30, 2021

Dear Lumberjacks,

Today we celebrate the Class of 2021, and I hope you are as inspired as I am by the graduation of the record 6,000 Lumberjacks who succeeded in this unprecedented and challenging time. Our graduates, equipped with their degrees and accomplishments, will use their knowledge and experiences from NAU to realize meaningful lives and careers and positively impact and serve the communities where they live.

Commencement is the culminating achievement for our students and one of the most rewarding moments for our NAU community. It reminds us of the importance of our mission and the life-changing impact higher education can have on individuals, as we celebrate the hard work, passion, and perseverance of each of our students.

My sincere thanks to our faculty and staff for all you have done to ensure our students are successful as they move on to the next chapter of their lives. I also want to commend you for the leadership and commitment you have shown throughout this global pandemic, which has been the most challenging year and half in NAU's 120-plus year history.

I truly appreciate your continued dedication to this tremendous organization. You are the foundation for NAU's success and the services we provide to our students, our communities, and our state. In recognition of your contributions, we know we must invest in you and your future at NAU.

It has been nearly two years since we were last able to adjust compensation for our employees. In light of this, I am particularly pleased to share with you that I have approved funding for up to a 3 percent salary increase to all eligible faculty and staff.

Additional details about faculty and staff salary increases will be shared with employees next week and information will be available on the HR website, but most of you will see this increase reflected in next week's paycheck.

Our NAU community stepped up during these challenging times, and we are pleased to step up to support you.

Before I close, I want to highlight a [special story in today's NAU News](#) about a donation by Theodore Roosevelt's great-granddaughter, which puts the 300-acre Historic Hat Ranch near Williams into the care of NAU. We are so thankful to Roosevelt family descendant Joanna Sturm and Hat Ranch owner Kristie Miller for entrusting us with this property, which will enhance NAU's ability to offer our students and researchers an opportunity to explore and understand this historic rural ranch land and its connections to the Colorado Plateau. NAU is proud to support the goals of this gift—to foster innovative, science-based solutions for climate change adaptation, restoration of degraded lands, and sustainable recreation through place-based teaching and learning, research, and collaboration.

As we close this semester, we remain focused on monitoring health and safety as we prepare for an in-person fall semester. After much conversation throughout our community, no adjustments to the fall 2021 academic calendar are planned at this time. We look forward to welcoming our students back to campus on August 23 for a vibrant and engaging fall semester. It will be here in the blink of an eye, so it is with that in mind that I encourage you to take a deep breath and reflect on all that you have accomplished so you are ready to re-engage refreshed and focused in the fall.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rita". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'R' and a trailing flourish.

**Rita Hartung Cheng**  
President