



NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

# OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

July 30, 2021

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## Highlights:

- Jacks are Vaxed
- Lumberjacks at the Olympics
- Showcasing the excellence of our student-athletes
- Join the NAU HealthyU team for the Climb to Conquer Cancer on August 21
- Update on activities from the week

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Dear Lumberjacks,

As July comes to a close, we have an important and busy month before us. August marks the return of our faculty, staff, and students—new and continuing—for the start of a new academic year filled with the hope and optimism that university life and the pursuit of knowledge bring. Traditionally, this is a time filled with many celebratory events and engagements, and, after the largely virtual environment of the past academic year, I am thrilled to be here to welcome our Lumberjacks back in person.

As we prepare for this milestone, I have several updates for our community this week.

### Jacks are Vaxed

Just a week after launching our **Jacks are Vaxed** promotion, I'm pleased to report that thousands of students have voluntarily uploaded proof of vaccination. I'm excited—and a bit envious!—that one of our students will have the opportunity to get a signed Devin Booker Phoenix Suns jersey in recognition of their commitment to community health as part of this week's drawing. We have other exciting prizes to give away as well, including a 100-block meal plan and \$200 Safeway gift card this week.

More importantly, the number of vaccinated people on our campus is a testament to the community of care throughout our student population. Many of you have taken the crucial step of getting vaccinated. As the start of the semester approaches, we continue to learn more about the role COVID-19 will continue to play in a post-pandemic future. Vaccination is, and will remain, the key tool to protect ourselves, our families, and our community. I encourage you to stay informed and take advantage of the vaccination resources available at NAU. I'm heartened by the results to date and look forward to having our Jacks back—and fully vaxed—very soon.

### Lumberjacks at the Olympics

Like many of you, I've been enjoying the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. It is extra exciting this year because three Lumberjacks are competing on the biggest athletic stage.

Senior **Luis Grijalva**, a member of our NCAA national champion men's cross country teams in 2017, 2018, and 2020, will be running the 5,000-meter race on August 3, representing Guatemala. Luis' story hits close to home. As an immigrant with DACA status, he has been able to realize his dream as a student-athlete at NAU. I am thankful for the tremendous support he has received,

which enabled him to travel and compete at the Olympics, and grateful for the NAU excellence he represents both in and out of competition. Luis' journey serves as a poignant reminder that we must reaffirm our commitment to access and justice in higher education.

We also have another Lumberjack joining Luis in the 5,000-meter race. David McNeill, who ran cross country at NAU from 2007-2010, is representing Australia in Tokyo. As a Lumberjack, David was a nine-time All-American in both cross country and track.

I'll be setting my alarm for 4 a.m. local time on August 3 to cheer on Luis and David—and hope you will, too!

Finally, alumna Brooke Andersen will be representing the U.S. in the women's hammer throw. Brooke, who graduated in 2018, was an All-American thrower and Big Sky record-holder at NAU. She finished in second place at the Olympic trials last month, and I'm excited to see her continued excellence on the international stage. She competes in the preliminary competition on Saturday evening. Go Brooke!

### **Showcasing the excellence of our student-athletes**

In other news from Lumberjack Athletics, I want to share that NAU has been awarded the **Big Sky Presidents' Cup** for 2020-21—the fourth time our university has been awarded this prestigious honor. The Presidents' Cup promotes the Big Sky's commitment to academics and recognizes a member school's overall success in the classroom and athletic competition. It is given annually to the school that excels both academically and athletically.

I want to offer my congratulations to our student-athletes for their dedication to their studies and their success in their athletic endeavors. I also want to recognize the tremendous coaches and staff in our athletics department who support our students' success. This recognition makes me more excited than ever to kick off the academic year and join our NAU community in cheering on our Lumberjack sports teams.

### **Join me and the NAU HealthyU initiative at the Climb to Conquer Cancer on August 21**

I wanted to share with our NAU faculty and staff a special opportunity to support our community and give back to an important cause. On Saturday, August 21, my office will be sponsoring 100 NAU faculty and staff to register as part of the NAU HealthyU Climb to Conquer Cancer team for this annual American Cancer Society event. Promoting health and wellness is important for all of our community, and I hope to see many of you on Snowbowl Road in August as part of the NAU team. Funds from this event support the fight to end cancer and help people take steps to reduce their risk of cancer or find it early when it is most treatable.

Complimentary spots on the NAU team are available on a first-come, first-served basis. To sign up, please visit the **Climb to Conquer Cancer website**, enter "NAU HealthyU" for the team name, and use the code "LOUIE2021" at checkout. Questions can be directed to [ask-eaw@nau.edu](mailto:ask-eaw@nau.edu) or (928) 523-1552. I look forward to seeing you on August 21 and to supporting this great cause.

### **Balance of the week**

Our work continues to balance a focus on the immediate goal of a successful and vibrant fall semester and looking forward to the future of our university. This week, our Fall 2021 planning teams met to ensure we are monitoring the latest guidance and science and aligning our plans accordingly. I also enjoyed meeting with our colleagues in the Summer Faculty Senate to discuss how we are organizing the work associated with several important issues the Senate has brought to our attention, previewing our fall 2021 marketing strategy, and strategizing with members of our Executive Team on our FY22 budget request.

I enjoyed a number of opportunities to meet with community partners this week to engage on important topics around NAU's partnership in support of educational access and attainment and the overall vitality and well-being of our community and our region. These included meetings with the superintendent of Flagstaff Unified School District, as well as members of the **Northern Arizona Leadership Alliance** (NALA) and the NALA Education Committee, and long-time friends and donors of our university.

I was also able to spend some time out on the Flagstaff Mountain campus. I got my first COVID-19 test at the NAU Fieldhouse site and was impressed by the non-invasive, quick, and seamless process. I encourage all of you to **bookmark this resource** and test to monitor your health or check if you have concerns about being exposed to COVID-19.

Earlier today, I met with admitted students and their families during an NAU Admissions Preview Day. Moments like this, spent with students excited for the future and the beginning of their college career, remind me why our work is so important. Plus, I got to eat at the HotSpot for the first time—it's as delicious as I've been told.

Finally, we announced this week that The W. A. Franke College of Business **will partner with Dignity Health Global Education** to create an online, health care-focused MBA degree that is both affordable and accessible. I'm excited about this innovative program, particularly in our world today.

I wish you all a good weekend. Thank you, as always, for your hard work, commitment, and enthusiasm. We have a bright future ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "José Luis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**José Luis Cruz Rivera**  
President