



Office of the President

NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

April 2, 2021

Dear Lumberjacks,

With the end of the semester on the horizon, we turn our attention to preparations for commencement. This is an important milestone for our students that recognizes personal achievement and academic success, and it is my favorite time of the year.

Nearly 6,000 NAU undergraduate and graduate students will receive their degrees this month, with more than 600 students already having taken part in graduate photo opportunities across the state.

While full commencement ceremonies will be held virtually, smaller celebratory events are being held in some colleges and programs, which will observe campus and CDC health and safety guidelines. I am excited that our graduates and their families can take part and celebrate from anywhere in the world, whether you are in Flagstaff, out-of-state, or out of the country. Please watch for opportunities to post online on our university **Kudoboard** and congratulate graduates for their effort, persistence, resilience, and successes.

Meanwhile, we are proud to be celebrating Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. I hope you have had an opportunity to read my message about the proud history and NAU's observance of this month. Be sure to read **NAU News** or visit the **IMQ website** for more details. I am proud of my family's Asian heritage and find this a particularly appropriate time to celebrate what these members of our society have contributed to our national fabric.

As we continue to plan for the fall semester, I'm pleased to share that we have created an advisory group of representative stakeholders to advise on plans to return to a more vibrant in-person campus experience. The kickoff meeting is scheduled for April 7, and we will provide frequent updates on their progress.

I close with a COVID-19 update. NAU continues to work with community partners to provide access to vaccines. Now that vaccine eligibility in Coconino County has opened to anyone 18 and older, we encourage all students to register for a vaccine appointment on the **Coconino County website**. State sites in Maricopa, Pima, and Yuma counties now have vaccines available to faculty, staff, and students, as well as anyone over 16 years of age.

NAU continues to follow COVID-19 mitigation protocols. For the safety of our students, faculty, staff, and everyone in our extended communities, we ask that you continue to adhere to our **safety protocols**.

As of this afternoon, NAU is managing 58 COVID-19 cases among students on and off campus, up from last week. Additional updates can be found on **NAU's coronavirus page**.

Let's finish the semester strong!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Aita".

Rita Hartung Cheng
President