



Office of the President

NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

August 14, 2020

Dear Lumberjacks,

We are up and running for our fall semester!

We have started the semester, and our re-entry to campus has been a gratifying success. It is great to see students settling into residence halls or off-campus housing, establishing new relationships, rekindling old ones, participating in online classes and engaging with faculty, attending physically distanced activities outdoors, and enjoying the unique environment that we have all come to love about NAU and Flagstaff.

The success of these first few days of classes can be found by tracking our virtual activity. Blackboard Learn and BB Collaborate reported 273,082 sessions and 3.6 million pageviews from August 10-13. This week, we have held 6,676 Zoom meetings with 71,747 participants. In addition, NAUgo traffic over the past seven days has been at 14,400 unique visitors with 48,312 screen views on the first day.

In addition, NAUFlex has received a good deal of attention, as more than 2,000 students and faculty have viewed our training videos on what to expect from this innovative approach to hybrid learning.

My thanks to our faculty for embracing NAUFlex and through this technology, helping us continue to deliver academic excellence, both in-person and virtually.

This week, more than 600 students, faculty, staff, and community members took advantage of the free COVID-19 testing at the NAU University Union Fieldhouse, with visits averaging just 15 minutes. I encourage you to mask up and get tested. Remember that **[preregistration is required](#)**. The site is open this weekend and all of next week, and free parking is available on the upper levels of the San Francisco parking garage. Let's all do our part by getting tested!

NAU is known for our personal engagement opportunities. While things are different this year, there are still many activities you can participate in virtually, as well as select in-person events that are being held on a highly-controlled basis. Following guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Arizona Department of Health Services, we have developed an approach that guides us in determining when an event or activity must be fully virtual or can be modified to allow a certain level of in-person engagement. Our campus is not currently open for public events, but I want to assure you that when the time is right and health officials provide direction that we can resume all or part of our normal events regimen, we will do so.

Many of our traditional welcome events can now be found in the **[Lumberjack Experience](#)**, allowing students to safely meet other Lumberjacks and start getting engaged for this memorable year.

Last week I shared some of our efforts focused on the safety of the community beyond NAU. We are proud of our many community partnerships and are committed to making sure that when our students are out in the community, they are educated about and understand the importance of following [the mask and physical distancing requirements](#) in place for the City of Flagstaff and Coconino County. I would like to reiterate how important it is to have everyone respect these guidelines and be good neighbors and members of our community.

Even with all the changes the pandemic has brought to our lives, I truly believe it is a great time to study and live at NAU. The quality of an NAU education remains exceptional, no matter which modality in which you choose to learn. And, with the help and support of your friends, classmates, and faculty, the skills you will gain as you learn while navigating the current situation will prepare for the rest of your lives.

One of my favorite moments during Welcome Week has always been when the NAU band plays our fight song. Performances like this are reminders of what makes NAU great and the sense of tradition that animates our university. [Watch this unique performance](#)—I hope you enjoy it as much as I do!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rita". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Rita Hartung Cheng
President