



NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

# OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

July 9, 2021

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## Highlights:

- A recap of Thursday's Town Hall and updates on our continued planning efforts for Fall 2021
- Announcing the Academic Success, Learning, and Engagement Advisory Committee
- Highlights of the week

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Dear Lumberjacks,

As the week comes to an end, I wanted to share an update on the work we have done and where we are headed.

Rima and I started this week with a celebratory highlight: attending the Flagstaff 4th of July parade downtown. After so many milestones and celebrations during the past year taking place virtually, it was heartening to join members of our new community in-person to celebrate. The vibrancy and enthusiasm of our community fills me with optimism for what we can achieve together as we approach the fall semester at NAU.

### Fall 2021 town hall and continued planning efforts

Much of our work this week continued to focus on preparations for Fall 2021. Yesterday, more than 700 members of our community attended a public health and fall planning-focused town hall. I want to thank our [President's Fall 2021 Planning Steering Committee](#) and Public Health Advisory Committee—in particular, our town hall panelists and presenters, Drs. Dave Engelthaler, Paul Keim, Josh Mackey, and Karen Pugliesi—for their thoughtful work in evaluating and advising on how best to link NAU's mission and vision for the fall with actionable steps that will allow us to be successful in a post-vaccine world.

If you were unable to join the town hall live, I encourage you to [view the recording online](#). I am deeply appreciative of the feedback and engagement from our community leading up to and during this event. As we move toward the fall semester, we must work together as one NAU community. Please continue to stay engaged, ask questions, and provide your insights as we refine our plans for a robust in-person experience.

As I shared at the conclusion of the town hall, we will use every day between now and August 23 to the fullest in preparation to welcome our 'Jacks back in full force. Stay tuned for more information next week on our protocols, as well as updated information and FAQs on our [Jacks are Back webpage](#).

### Academic Success, Learning, and Engagement Advisory Committee

The success of our students through a robust, engaging, and supportive in-person living and learning experience has been an overarching principle that has guided the work throughout our planning efforts. In furtherance of this goal and as part of our comprehensive planning efforts, next week we will convene an Academic Success, Learning, and Engagement Advisory Committee.

Among the top priorities for this group are assessing and developing guidelines for instructional modes and learning environments, course attendance and medical absence policies, and how best

to leverage and deliver academic support services in-person and virtually to maximize student success. As with all of our Fall 2021 planning efforts, the Academic Success, Learning, and Engagement Advisory Committee will be guided by the principles of student success, health and wellness, and transparent communication.

I want to thank the following individuals who will serve on this important advisory group:

- John Georgas (vice provost, Academic Operations), chair
- Chrissina Burke (senior lecturer, anthropology)
- Constantin Ciocanel (chair and professor, mechanical engineering)
- Aaron Cirzan (director, Academic Success Centers)
- Sharon Doctor (director, Office of Indigenous Student Success)
- Kate Ellis (Faculty Senate president)
- Syed Moinuddin (senior associate athletic director, compliance)
- Scot Raab (associate dean, College of the Environment, Forestry, and Natural Sciences)
- Gina Vance (associate vice provost, NAU Online)
- Alicia Voytek (associate vice president, Housing and Residence Life)

### **Highlights of the week**

The parade and our town hall were part of a full week of activities and accomplishments that I am happy to share with you today. I had the opportunity to meet with the leadership of Coconino County and am excited to build on our strong partnership, helping advance educational access and attainment, as well as cultural and economic vitality throughout northern Arizona. I look forward to meeting with leadership from the City of Flagstaff next week and ensuring that NAU is a strong, committed, and engaged partner in our home community.

NAU has been recognized for its exceptional international engagement and programming, and I was delighted to join faculty and administrators from the College of the Environment, Forestry, and Natural Sciences and the Center for International Education in a signing ceremony with our counterparts at Kyushu University in Japan that established a bi-directional dual-degree exchange program. NAU and Kyushu University students can now earn degrees from both institutions, opening tremendous opportunities for learning and cultural exchange.

Finally, this week gave me my first opportunity as president of NAU to visit Phoenix and meet with a few of our many partners in the Valley. Yesterday, I attended my first Phoenix Suns game—and what a game! NAU is a longtime educational partner with the Phoenix Suns, and last night I was introduced to the leaders of this impressive organization who are committed to ensuring access to a quality education for the diverse students of our state. I am thankful that our introduction ended by celebrating a win for our team in the NBA finals. This morning, I met leadership at the Arizona Chamber of Commerce and the Helios Education Foundation. These meetings filled me with optimism about the enthusiasm of our partners and the shared goal of increasing educational attainment and opportunity in our state. NAU will continue to lead the charge in seeking to advance our society and transform lives through higher education. And I know we have the support of tremendous partners to achieve our goals.

Every week, I am inspired by your engagement and our mutual desire to pursue the boundless opportunities before us. Thank you for your hard work and dedication that help ensure a bright future for our students—and for the pride we all take together in being able to call ourselves members of the Lumberjack family!

Wishing you a healthy and restful weekend.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "José Luis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "J".

**José Luis Cruz  
Rivera**  
President