



July 2, 2021

Dear Lumberjacks,

My family and I are looking forward to experiencing all that Flagstaff has to offer during our first 4th of July in our new community. Thanks for the many recommendations, including the well-known parade in the heart of downtown. I hope to see some of you as we are out enjoying these celebrations.

Before starting our long weekend, I'm happy to share a few highlights of a very engaging and productive week.

On Saturday, I was privileged to witness the groundbreaking ceremony for the Kemper and Ethel Marley Foundation Astronomy Discovery Center at the Lowell Observatory. The center will be an incredible vehicle to advance science education and instill a culture of inquiry among its visitors—young and young at heart. I was pleased to represent NAU and introduce myself to state and city elected officials, philanthropists, researchers, educators, and community members.

On Monday, I joined the summer meeting of the Faculty Senate—my first official meeting as president of NAU with our faculty governance group—alongside Interim Provost Karen Pugliesi. I would like to thank my colleagues for the open engagement and thoughtful dialog. There is much work to be done, and I look forward to collaborating with the provost and the Faculty Senate throughout the year ahead to advance our university's mission.

I also had the distinct honor of meeting Hopi Tribal Chairman Timothy Nuvagyaoma, the Executive Director of the Hopi Cultural Preservation Office (HCPO) Stewart Koyiyumptewa, and other members of the Hopi Tribal Executive Committee. I was proud to learn about our longstanding relationship with the Hopi Tribe and that our work together resulted in Protocols for Native American Archival Material in a partnership between HCPO and NAU's Cline Library. This meeting reinforced to me the critical importance of our partnership and collaboration with indigenous communities in our region and throughout the country. I look forward to continuing this work and to reaffirming our support for Native American students at NAU.

Other highlights of the week included a planning meeting focused on the future of our University Leadership Program; a meeting with the president of the Southside Neighborhood Community Association, focused on the relationship between NAU and Southside and our future partnership and opportunities; and a briefing on the work of NAU's Office of Native American Initiatives and how we can support and advance this core area of our mission.

We also had an academic leadership appointment this week, and I would like to congratulate Dr. Lori Poloni-Staudinger as the new Interim Dean of the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences (SBS). She has most recently served as associate dean and professor in Politics and International Affairs in SBS and brings substantial depth and breadth of institutional knowledge to this important position. As he leaves our community, I also offer my thanks to John Masserini for his service as Interim Dean of SBS and in the many leadership roles in which he has supported NAU.

And, of course, much of our work this week has continued to focus on Fall 2021 preparations. Both the [President's Fall 2021 Planning Steering Committee](#) and the Public Health Advisory Committee met to review and evaluate public health and return to in-person staffing protocols.

Please hold your calendars for the town hall we have scheduled for **1 p.m. Thursday, July 8**. This virtual event will provide an important opportunity to hear from members of these committees about current science related to public health, our guidelines for Fall 2021 opening, and updates on our in-person work plans for the start of the academic year. The town hall is also a forum to ask questions you may have.

Details of the program and links to join will be shared early next week. I encourage you to submit any questions or feedback you have [via our online form](#) in advance. Hearing from you directly is a tremendous help in shaping our planning efforts as we look toward a vibrant and fulfilling fall for our students, faculty, and staff.

I am optimistic and invigorated by the energy and enthusiasm of our NAU community. As the third week of my tenure comes to a close, I know there is much hard work ahead, but I am confident and inspired by the strength of our Lumberjack community and pledge to provide periodic updates on how I am investing my time to advance our collective goals.

Please enjoy a safe and happy 4th of July with friends and family.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "José Luis Cruz Rivera". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

José Luis Cruz Rivera
President