



# Office of the President

NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

December 4, 2020

Dear Lumberjacks,

As we approach the end of 2020, we look forward to the holidays and the opportunity to recharge our batteries and celebrate with friends and family to the extent possible in this unusual time in our history. The holidays also are a time when many of us count our blessings and give back in return.

In the holiday spirit, NAU's tradition of giving to our local community continues, and our events that emphasize giving continue, albeit in different forms.

One such event is the **President's Holiday Reception**, which hosts a tradition called **Mountain of Giving** that encourages guests to bring donations of unwrapped gifts and nonperishable food to benefit Northern Arizona Law Enforcement Toy Drive, the Senior Corps Program, Northland Family Help Center/Women's Shelter, Louie's Cupboard and the Flagstaff Family Food Center. **[Learn how to donate to these organizations.](#)**

Please consider giving to one of these organizations. Our local community has been hard hit by the pandemic and there is always room to give to those who support us. Other organizations that are accepting donations can be found on the **[EAW website](#)**.

I would like to thank all those who gave during the NAU Foundation's Giving Tuesday event on December 1. Together, we raised more than \$68,800, including \$26,120 for the **NAU LEAF**(Lumberjack Emergency Assistance Fund) Program.

The giving spirit extends beyond dollars to those who give their time. So, I would also like to thank and recognize those of you who take time to volunteer.

My thanks also extend to those loyal, engaged Lumberjack alumni who do so much for their alma mater and current students. Nearly 8,000 alumni engaged with NAU this year, participating in Alumni Association programs, attending university events, volunteering, serving on boards, leading alumni chapters, mentoring, and making a gift to the NAU Foundation.

I offer my gratitude for all you do for NAU. You contribute to NAU's strength and sustainability, creating opportunities for current and future generations of Lumberjacks, and providing a helping hand to those who need it most.

Winter term is now in full swing, and you still have time to take advantage of the many classes we have to offer.

- You may still register for **Winter Term**. There are two start dates remaining: December 7 and December 14.
- You can learn online from anywhere, with more than 260 courses to choose from, including courses that explore the human experience, such as:
  - **Introduction to Sustainable Communities** (SUS101) examines the relationship between communities and sustainability; it looks at philosophical, social, and economic paradigms about the environment, while exploring alternatives that better support flourishing human communities.
  - **Introduction to Indigenous Studies** (AIS 101), which uses examples from diverse indigenous cultures to show the interdependence of social, political, religious, and economic aspects of the indigenous experience.
  - **Humankind Emerging** (ANT 101), which introduces human evolution, primates, fossil hominids, race, population genetics, and the development of culture.
  - **Tutoring and peer coaching sessions** are available for winter term. Students are also encouraged to participate in **virtual events** to stay connected to friends and classmates.
- I also encourage you to sign up to participate in the just-launched **Winter Wellness Challenge**—a creative way for students to stay well this winter by taking part in weekly challenges.
- For more information on Winter Term, visit [nau.edu/winter](http://nau.edu/winter).

Finally, from September 2 through November 24 we administered more than 34,000 COVID-19 tests, with an overall positivity rate during that same time of 4.5 percent.

As a testament to our mitigation efforts, NAU's positivity rate has been below 4 percent since the week of October 12, and under 3 percent in the final three weeks of the semester, while testing about 2,800 faculty, staff, students, and members of the community per week.

We consider our efforts a success and are implementing a similar strategy for the spring semester. NAU will resume mitigation testing in January.

Once again, my heartfelt thanks to you for all you do for NAU.

Sincerely,



Rita Hartung Cheng  
President