



August 13, 2021

Dear Lumberjacks,

As another busy and productive week ends, we are swiftly moving closer to the start of the fall semester. The phased move-in of our residential students starts on Sunday and faculty will be back preparing on Monday. In my first two months as a Lumberjack, I have come to admire the determined dedication of our university community—we've been working hard to create the conditions for a vibrant fall, and while many challenges remain, I feel confident about our ability to deliver on the NAU promise of academic excellence.

Before going any further, I want to share an [amazing graphic](#) with information about our community partners HYPO2 and their athletes who trained in Flagstaff to prepare for the Tokyo Olympics. I've been told that nearly 190 of those Olympic athletes trained right here on the NAU campus. How cool is that? It is not only an amazing testament to training at high altitude, but also to the exceptional community we are fortunate to call home as well as the quality of NAU facilities.

Town Halls

My thanks to the more than 1,000 NAU community members who joined our Town Hall on Wednesday and thousands more who watched it later on NAU's YouTube and social media accounts. The scientific information from local experts was very helpful, and I was able to provide updated guidelines on face coverings. I encourage you to [watch the Town Hall](#) and review the information found in [yesterday's message](#).

I want to thank our Town Hall panelists, Dr. David Engelthaler (TGen) and Dr. Joel Terriquez (Northern Arizona Healthcare), for their insight and expertise. NAU has deep connections in our community, and we rely on the support of our partners to share knowledge, provide advice, and work together to advance our university and our region. Thank you for your contributions.

Next week, we will host another Town Hall that will focus on NAU policies and protocols for the fall. Please mark your calendars for **9:30 a.m. on Tuesday, August 17**. We will send a reminder and links to join on Monday, but I encourage you to start submitting your questions and comments, specific to NAU's Fall 2021 operations, in advance via the [online feedback form](#).

Highlights of the week

While much of our work continues to focus on preparations for the fall, I spent time throughout the week meeting with colleagues and university partners to advance other threads of our work. On Monday, I met with our academic deans to provide an overview of the road ahead and respond to questions about and field ideas for accelerating progress in the advancement of our mission. Later in the week, I participated in various media interviews, joined in on a tri-university leadership meeting, and traveled to Phoenix for engaging meetings with our longtime partners at TGen and members of our Board of Regents. Our conversations filled me with confidence about the potential of our university and how our contributions can impact educational attainment, knowledge, and prosperity throughout our region.

This past week, I also had the opportunity to meet our Lumberjack coaches. Our athletics program and our student athletes experienced tremendous success academically and competitively last year, and after our meeting this week, I anticipate we will excel again this year. I can also share that because this is technically my freshman year as President of NAU, I have been given the honor of leading the Running of the Freshmen and the Sprinting of our Sophomores at our home opener football game on September 2. For my safety and that of all those around me, I hope speed-walking is acceptable.

Looking ahead

Next week will be full of activity. Monday begins the 2021 Tribal Lands and Environment Forum, hosted by NAU's Institute of Tribal and Environmental Professionals. I will be sharing a welcome to this virtual convening of more than 700 people and am excited about the role NAU is playing in advancing tribal and environmental knowledge throughout the state and across the country. The forum is open to the NAU community. [Register online.](#)

Over the course of the week, I will be meeting with each academic college to welcome back our faculty and share our vision for the bold and boundless future ahead. I'll be joining our Alumni Employee Picnic on Wednesday. And I am most looking forward to walking our beautiful Flagstaff Mountain Campus and having the opportunity to see it revitalized by the energy of our students' return. I cannot wait to greet our students and their families and welcome our Jacks Back for Fall 2021.

Wishing you a restful and healthy weekend.

Be well,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "José Luis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

José Luis Cruz Rivera
President