



Office of the President

NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

March 19, 2021

Dear Lumberjacks,

It's a special week for Lumberjacks everywhere as we celebrate the **fourth national championship in five years** for NAU's men's cross country team.

Congratulations to freshman Nico Young, senior Blaise Ferro, sophomore Abdihamid Nur, and senior Luis Grijalva for placing in the top 10 of individual performers. The team's 60 points was almost 30 points ahead of runner-up Notre Dame and is the lowest team champion score since 2005. A national champion team has not placed four men in the top 10 runners since 2003.



The women's team also performed well, finishing 11th. Starting the season at No. 26, the Lumberjack women pushed their way to No. 9 entering the competition. Junior All-American runner Taryn O'Neill led the women's team, finishing sixth in the 6K. Hers was the best finish in 16 years for a Big Sky women's runner. All in all, it was a very rewarding week for our cross country teams and a proud one for NAU.

I believe we have all been shaken by the rise in anti-Asian violence that has coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic. In light of recent events around the country, I would like to reiterate NAU's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and the safety of every single member of our community. These incidents do not represent NAU. We have zero tolerance for discrimination. In that spirit, I would like to stand in support of our students,

faculty, and staff and offer resources to help provide support for all members of our community.

I encourage our community to take advantage of the resources available to them:

- **Counseling Services**
- **Employee Assistance and Wellness**
- **Office of Inclusion: Multicultural and LGBTQIA + Student Services**
- **Center for International Education**

To report incidents:

- **NAU Equity and Access Office**
- **Office of the Dean of Students**
- **Campus Inclusion Team**
- **NAU Police Department**

As we prepare for spring commencement, the Events Office is offering graduates the opportunity to have free professional photos taken at several Arizona locations. Watch your email for details on reserving a time on March 24 and 25 or sign up now:

- **Flagstaff**
- **Phoenix**
- **Tucson**
- **Yavapai/Prescott**

I would like to express my gratitude to the more than 1,000 people who provided input to the NAU Office of Sustainability on NAU's Climate Action Plan. The plan's goals include eliminating emissions, aligning our planning with regional priorities, using the campus as a living laboratory that mobilizes the efforts of faculty, staff, and students, and building resilience so we maintain our ability to withstand climate activity for many decades into the future. The plan is both ambitious and practical, and it is a model for collaboration among all of our key stakeholders.

I'll close today with an update on COVID-19, including guideline changes, and updates on testing, vaccines, and active cases.

The positive cases at NAU's testing sites as well as the overall positivity rate from campus testing continue to decline, and we are seeing declines in our surrounding community as well. As we have throughout the year, NAU continues to adapt to our changing environment, and we are happy to provide new event guidelines available at the NAU Events website. This includes allowing in-person events of up to 30 people. For more information on COVID-19 event guidelines, visit the **NAU Events website**.

At this time, Campus Health Services is offering only second dose vaccinations; we are working with our community partners to provide access to vaccinations. Coconino County just dropped the vaccine eligibility age to anyone 18 and older, and we encourage all of our students to sign up for a vaccination. Scheduling your vaccination as soon as possible will allow you to get both your first and second dose before the end of the semester. **Register at the Coconino County website.**

Our faculty and staff in Maricopa County can now schedule appointments at statewide sites under educators and education staff. We continue to work with other counties statewide and refer faculty and staff at our statewide sites to the **Arizona Department of Health Services** for eligibility and vaccine site information. We appreciate the hard work of all involved in this effort to advance the vaccine rollout so quickly in Coconino County and across Arizona.

As of this afternoon, NAU is managing 11 COVID-19 cases among students on and off campus, down from last week. Additional updates can be found on **NAU's coronavirus page.**

My continued and profound thanks for all of you for continuing to observe health and safety practices.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rita", with a small blue mark to the right.

Rita Hartung Cheng
President