



# Office of the President

NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

March 5, 2021

Dear Lumberjacks,

Commencement is a joyous event that marks a student's next step toward achieving their aspirations in life and is a fundamental part of our university community life and family traditions.

As we have done since the beginning of the pandemic, we will celebrate with our Spring 2021 graduates through a virtual commencement ceremony the weekend of April 30-May 1, keeping the safety of their loved ones and those in our community in mind, while planning a variety of exciting activities that will appropriately recognize these graduates' extraordinary achievements.

While we are making great strides in vaccination rates and seeing infection rates decrease, we believe it is premature to gather in large groups for an indoor celebration.

On behalf of the Lumberjack community, I want you to know how proud we are of our graduates' achievements, resilience, and perseverance. We will share more information on our upcoming virtual commencement ceremonies within the next few weeks, including details of statewide graduation photo options available in Flagstaff, Phoenix, Tucson, Yuma, and Prescott. Graduates will continue to receive updates via their NAU email addresses, including information on how to register for commencement.

I am excited to share that we are planning to resume fully in-person classes for the Fall 2021 semester. We will continue to explore how the enhancements to our technology infrastructure made as a response to the pandemic can further enhance our students' academic experiences. We will continue to consult with public health experts and will be prepared to modify our plans if events dictate.

As we continue our successful spring semester, we are glad to see the significant reduction of COVID-19 cases nationally and the increasing vaccination rates, which contribute to our sense of optimism for the fall. We are confident that our planning will allow NAU to continue to deliver on its national reputation for a quality education and the need to provide access to all students in Arizona.

To date, NAU has administered 3,221 first doses of the COVID-19 vaccine and 2,270 second doses. In total, 5,491 NAU-affiliated individuals have received a vaccine at Campus Health Services.

Providing access to the vaccine remains a priority, and we appreciate our partnership with Coconino County and others in the community who are working diligently on this effort. While we will continue to focus on second doses next week, NAU is maintaining a **wait list** for those awaiting their first dose of the vaccination. You are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity.

In keeping with our goal to provide the latest information about the spread of COVID-19, as of this afternoon, NAU is managing 63 COVID-19 cases among students on and off campus, up slightly from last week. Updates can be found on **[NAU's coronavirus page](#)**.

Thank you for all you continue to do to remain vigilant about maintaining appropriate health and safety practices.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rita", written in a cursive style.

**Rita Hartung Cheng**  
President