



Office of the President

NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

November 13, 2020

Dear Lumberjacks,

With just a few weeks until the end of the fall semester, I want to take a moment to thank you for your efforts to help us keep our campus communities safe.

To faculty and staff: Thank you for all you have done to embrace technology, follow physical distancing protocols, and keep students engaged.

To our students: I am proud of the resilience you have shown in meeting the challenges this year has brought. We have much to celebrate as we look forward to the graduation of more than 2,500 students.

Emblematic of our students' resilience are the 200 members of our Interdisciplinary Global Program (IGP) who were called home from overseas last spring at the start of the pandemic. This week, I spoke to a group of 32 of these students as they presented their final projects, which featured presentations in their chosen languages on their subjects of study, including chemistry, physics, mechanical engineering, and marketing.

For many of these students, the pandemic meant leaving their host countries, cutting short an experience they had prepared for and looked forward to for years. After returning home, they completed their programs through a combination of efforts with NAU mentors and host country mentors online.

I encourage you to go online and [watch their presentations](#). You'll find them very compelling on their own terms, but even more so given the challenges these students faced in order to complete them.

Our students' achievements exemplify the very meaning of resilience, and I am so proud of them for their work.

Their achievements also reflect what I consider to be two essential lessons of the pandemic: No matter your best-laid plans, life often changes course, and the more quickly we adapt, the more successful we will be at work, in school, in relationships, and within ourselves.

One great adaptation to change has resulted in a new, highly flexible approach to the winter term this year. The early end to the fall semester is allowing us to offer five- and six-week classes in addition to our standard four-week classes. Start dates for winter sessions are November 30, December 7, and December 14. Students can access free academic support resources virtually, including [tutoring](#) and [peer academic coaching](#). Whether students are looking to catch up on credits to stay on track for graduation or get ahead of the game, we encourage them to take

advantage of this great opportunity over the winter. Visit the [Academic Success Centers webpage](#) for more information.

As we near the finish line and head into Thanksgiving, I'd like to ask a few things of you:

- Stay healthy as you prepare to go home.
- Get tested. Use the mitigation testing available at NAU before you go home.
- Download [Covid Watch](#) so you can help with contact tracing efforts.
- Get ready to come back knowing what we have to do to succeed, as we continue to take care of those around us.

I close this week's message with the latest update on our COVID-19 mitigation efforts. As of this afternoon, NAU is managing 46 cases among students on- and off-campus, down from last week. Updates can be found on [NAU's COVID-19 page](#).

Keep up the great work, Lumberjacks.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rita". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small mark to the right of the name.

Rita Hartung Cheng
President