



Office of the President

NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

October 2, 2020

Dear Lumberjacks,

As of this afternoon, NAU is managing 127 COVID-19 cases of on- and off-campus students, nearly 100 fewer cases compared to last week. I would like to thank you all for your efforts to maintain your personal care and the health of your fellow Lumberjacks. Together, we are helping to mitigate risks, protecting our community, and maintaining our commitment to learning and academic excellence even under these challenging circumstances. Please visit nau.edu/coronavirus for current updates on cases and the latest COVID-19 information.

I would like to turn my attention to our students, which is only fitting, as today we welcome our Lumberjack families to our Virtual Family Weekend 2020. Over the years, this has become a great tradition and a way for families who are new to NAU to learn more about the university. While everything about 2020 has required us to adapt, we hope that through this virtual format, we can reach new families who were not able to join us in the past due to distance or other circumstances.

This year's events range from an "Away" 5K, to a virtual mind-reading show, to NAU's Recognition of Academic Achievement ceremony, which celebrates students with a GPA in the top 10 percent of all NAU students. For a full schedule of events, to register, and to plan your weekend activities, visit the [Virtual Family Weekend website](#). I hope you will join us as we celebrate our students and families with virtual Lumberjack spirit!

I am continually amazed and gratified by the ability of our students to persist and succeed during a time of great uncertainty. A great example of this is the students who worked to archive a collection of nearly lost photos from a World War II soldier to create the Martin-Springer Institute's new online exhibit illustrating a seminal era in world history. I hope you take a moment to [read the story in today's NAU News](#) and [view the James P. Kuykendall Photography Collection](#).

I would also like to recognize doctoral student Annika Gustafsson, who was one of only 35 women globally (and 10 in the United States) to receive an Amelia Earhart Fellowship, which is given to women pursuing doctoral degrees in aerospace engineering and space sciences.

In addition, sophomore Matthew Greyeyes, who is studying biomedical science in the

College of the Environment, Forestry, and Natural Sciences and the Honors College, is a Cobell Scholarship finalist. The Cobell Scholarship is a national scholarship available to students who are enrolled in a federally recognized tribe.

We encourage our students to engage in their civic duty and register to vote. The **NAU Votes Coalition**, the Associated Students of Northern Arizona (ASNAU), and the Graduate Student Government (GSG) joined me in an effort to increase voter registration and participation at NAU. The student voting rate for presidential elections in the U.S. is 48.3 percent, and the voter registration rate is 70.6 percent. It is our goal to reach 80 percent this voting cycle. No matter who you support, it is important that we all exercise this fundamental right as American citizens. The deadline to register to vote is Monday, October 5.

Also in partnership with ASNAU and GSG, we notified students this week that we are accepting applications for the position of student regent with the Arizona Board of Regents. Appointed by the governor, the next student regent will be selected from Northern Arizona University and serve from July 2021 to June 2023. We look forward to providing the governor with a list of candidates who represent NAU's excellence and Arizona's universities in this vital role, which provides students a voice in critical deliberations about the issues important to them.

My compliments once again to the students cited above and those many others doing equally important work this semester. You have honored us through your accomplishments, and provide proof our students' pursuit of excellence continues, even in the time of this global pandemic.

Stay well and keep achieving!

Sincerely,

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

Rita Hartung Cheng
President