



Office of the President

NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

Sept. 4, 2020

Dear Lumberjacks,

The big news of this week is our seamless transition to in-person classes, which by all indications has been a success.

We are gratified by the response of both faculty and students to our migration to in-person learning. Our success in making this transition underscores the importance of NAUFlex as our means of ensuring appropriate physical distancing and an in-person experience that emphasizes safety and mitigation of risk.

The picture below demonstrates what a typical NAU classroom looks like, with NAUFlex facilitating in-person instruction. You can see that we have appropriate spacing between students and that there is good engagement between faculty and students. What is particularly encouraging is the number of faculty members who have taken to this mode of instruction. One in particular was laudatory, saying "the microphones and speakers are strategically placed in the room such that the questions asked by the in-person students can be heard by the remote students and vice versa. I hope to see an increasing number of in-person students."



As we head into the long Labor Day weekend, I hope that all of you spend time with friends and family, but that you do so safely while wearing a mask and physically distancing. While the semester has started off well, we need to remain vigilant in order to progress as intended throughout the semester.

We would like to encourage you to stay on campus or remain in-state if you do not have to travel. This is a truly amazing part of our country, and you have an unparalleled opportunity over a long weekend to take advantage of what Arizona has to offer. We are lucky to have many options for our students, faculty, and staff to enjoy the outdoors while physically distancing, not just in Flagstaff, but also around the state.

Northern Arizona alone has great options. Sedona, the Grand Canyon, Walnut Canyon, and the San Francisco Peaks are among the many natural wonders that are just a short distance away. Bike trails and hiking opportunities abound here, too.

Public health experts emphasize that one of the most significant threats we face is the introduction of COVID-19 from outside the state. Please do not travel to states or regions where there is a heightened risk of COVID-19 transmission. There are plenty of things to do and to see right here in our own backyard.

We also ask that you discourage visitors—including family and friends—from coming to campus. We are safest when maintaining the maximum amount of control over our living and learning environment.

Meanwhile, our ability to monitor and test on an ongoing basis has dramatically increased, as have the tools we have available to monitor the spread of COVID-19. We want to make sure you are aware of the tools we have to help keep you and our campus safe.

Just this week, we launched **Covid Watch Arizona**, an app that allows users who have tested positive for COVID-19 to anonymously notify others who may have been exposed.

Covid Watch, developed in partnership with the Arizona Department of Health Services and piloted by the University of Arizona, is safe, secure, and privacy-preserving. No personally identifiable information, including your location, is collected or stored by the app. It works by noting app users' anonymous Bluetooth signals. You are encouraged to download and use the Covid Watch app so together, we can keep our campus safe.

We appreciate your dedication to keeping yourself and others healthy by taking advantage of the monitoring and testing protocols that provide us with the best possible opportunity to keep our campus open and vibrant. Keep up the great work, and have a safe holiday weekend.

Sincerely,

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

Rita Hartung Cheng
President