



NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

June 25, 2021

Highlights:

- Updates from this week's Steering Committee and Public Health Advisory Committee meetings
- NAU Protocols: Updated
- NAU Protocols: Under Review
- Public Health/Fall Planning Town Hall on July 8: Save the date and [submit your feedback in advance](#).

Dear Lumberjack community,

As the week comes to an end, I wanted to provide an update on our Fall 2021 plans. [Per my previous messages on this important issue](#), we are planning for our Jacks to be back in full force by the first day of our fall semester on August 23, 2021.

To this end, I have charged our [President's Fall 2021 Planning Steering Committee](#) and Public Health Advisory Committee with contemplating how—knowing what we know today about the efficacy of vaccines, the latest CDC guidance, and federal and state regulations—we can best position NAU for a successful fall semester.

Based on their discussions and recommendations to date, I am pleased to share an update on our current vision and plans for what Fall 2021 will likely look like.

NAU Protocols: Updated

The following public health guidelines will go into effect at all NAU facilities throughout the state, effective immediately.

Vaccinations

In keeping with [EO2021-15](#), NAU will not require that students be vaccinated and will extend this policy to faculty and staff.

The university will continue to strongly recommend that all members of the NAU community be vaccinated. Vaccines have been scientifically proven to be highly effective in mitigating the effects of COVID-19 and all of the known variants of the virus to date, and they are broadly available in Arizona.

I am appreciative of the input from the Public Health Advisory Committee, in particular our pathogen experts Dr. Paul Keim and Dr. David Engelthaler, who have shared their expertise on the tremendous benefits and protections conferred by vaccines.

Masks

In keeping with [EO2021-15](#) and adhering to the most recent CDC guidance, NAU has moved from masks required to masks recommended at all indoor locations.

Masks will be required in the following locations: Campus Health Services and while riding on campus public transportation (NAU buses).

NAU continues to recommend that students, faculty, and staff wear masks indoors at all NAU facilities throughout the state. Masking guidelines apply to all NAU faculty, staff, and students.

Testing

In keeping with [EO2021-15](#), NAU will only require that students, faculty, and staff be tested for COVID-19 if an outbreak has been determined to occur, subject to the concurrence of the Arizona State Department of Health.

We will work with state and local partners to make testing available to members of the NAU community who choose to self-monitor through testing.

To mitigate risks, NAU continues to strongly recommend that students, faculty, and staff who feel unwell and/or experience symptoms associated with COVID-19 stay home, get tested, and follow guidance from medical professionals.

NAU Protocols: Under Review

Given the updates above, the President's Fall 2021 Planning Steering Committee, in consultation with the Public Health Advisory Committee, is now turning its attention to the following areas.

Capacity

In keeping with our commitment to plan with an optimistic outlook for an engaging and vibrant experience, our intention is to operate at full capacity for all indoor and outdoor spaces by the start of the Fall 2021 semester, including classrooms, laboratories, meeting spaces, and performance and athletic venues.

To realize this goal, risk management and mitigation strategies are being developed and reviewed, including exposure alert systems and preventative public health monitoring, to ensure that full capacity is viable, appropriate mitigation measures are in place, and that quick adjustments can be made if at any point conditions suggest that limits need to be put in place. In the weeks ahead, we will share our work on this front.

In-person staffing

In conjunction with capacity guidelines, we are also working toward a sequenced and strategic roadmap for ramping up to full in-person staffing of university offices. The goal is to reach pre-pandemic in-person staffing levels in advance of the semester start so services are ready to operate at full capacity on day one for our students.

Public Health/Fall Planning Town Hall

Members of the President's Fall 2021 Planning Steering Committee and the Public Health Advisory Committee will host a town hall on the university's public health protocols and Fall 2021 planning efforts. This forum will provide an overview of our current status and allow you, our NAU community, to ask any questions you may have related to our Fall 2021 plans.

In order to maximize participation, we have decided to hold the event a few days later than originally anticipated: **1 p.m. on Thursday, July 8**. Details will be forthcoming. In the meantime, [we encourage you to submit any questions or feedback in advance](#).

Looking ahead

As our planning for Fall 2021 progresses, we will continue to work with an understanding that the situation is still fluid and NAU must remain nimble and able to quickly adapt to new developments. Please know that we are committed to providing our NAU community with prompt and clear communications about any alterations to protocols that may need to be implemented at any point.

Thank you for your support and collaboration as together we create the conditions for a safe and successful Fall 2021 semester.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "José Luis Cruz Rivera". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

José Luis Cruz Rivera
President