



February 15, 2022

Dear Lumberjacks,

I'm excited to share that NAU has secured **\$81 million** in new investments and obtained approval for the implementation of **new admissions requirements**. Together, these developments position us well as we seek to become Arizona's leading engine of opportunity.

\$81M in public and private funding

On Thursday, the Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) approved NAU's amended three-year **\$51 million funding proposal** for access to public monies made available through the Technology and Research Initiative Fund (TRIF).

NAU will use these funds to foster integrated and complementary educational and research activities that create exceptional impact and value for our diverse students, leading to the betterment of Arizona's communities. Building on past investments, allocations of TRIF funds in this three-year plan will be distributed across three primary efforts: targeted areas of research excellence, access and workforce development programs, and a new competitive intramural process for seed funding.

The new seed funding program will support and incentivize our university's teacher-scholars in the development of new and expanded workforce development programs that enable access, as well as projects that support the intersections between research and experiential learning opportunities for our diverse student population.

In addition, ABOR approved a special one-time **\$20 million TRIF allocation** to support NAU's access and attainment goals. Specifically, this investment targets three key areas that are critical to our student-centered mission, the inclusive academic excellence and student success goals in our emerging Strategic Roadmap, and our commitment to equitable postsecondary value:

- **Broadening participation:** NAU will invest in programs designed to increase the number and diversity of Arizona resident students participating in higher education.
- **Improving completion:** NAU will invest in programs designed to increase completion rates for all students and reduce completion gaps among groups of students.
- **Strengthening post-college outcomes:** NAU will invest in efforts to better align the university's curricular and co-curricular offerings to Arizona's workforce needs.

Finally, in an unprecedented vote of confidence in our university's ability to deliver equitable value, the NAU Foundation (NAUF) approved NAU's request for **\$10 million** in matching funds to bolster ABOR's \$20 million one-time TRIF investment. Through this action, the NAUF is modeling for other public and private organizations how they too can partner with NAU to advance educational attainment and economic prosperity in Arizona.

More information will be forthcoming about the new competitive intramural seed grant program and how we will invest one-time funds to build institutional capacity, support student progression, advance mission-driven priorities, and contribute to the financial health of the university through the generation of new recurring revenue streams. In the meantime, please join me in thanking ABOR and NAUF for their strong support for the advancement of our university's mission.

New pilot program for admissions

I am also grateful to ABOR for approving NAU's proposal to launch a new pilot program for admissions. The idea behind the pilot is as simple as it is powerful: if a hard-working, highly-qualified student meets their Arizona high school requirements with a 3.0 GPA or higher, they will be assured admissions to the excellent education provided by NAU.

The imperative for this policy change is clear: While the economy in Arizona is among the fastest growing in the nation, the educational attainment of Arizonans is among the lowest. Our pilot will ensure that approximately 50,000 students in high schools in Arizona that do not offer all of the courses currently required by NAU, will not be denied the opportunity for assured admissions at our university solely because of the school they happen to attend.

I encourage you to **read the full release that details the specifics of this program**. And I ask that you join me in thanking our teams in Enrollment Management and Academic Affairs for their thoughtful, student-centered planning efforts that advanced this proposal, our Faculty Senate and academic leadership for their input and review, and ABOR for approving this important project.

Looking ahead

As we celebrate these important developments, there are two thoughts that I hope to leave you with today.

First, the funding allocations and policy changes described herein represent crucial waypoints in meeting our vision of becoming a university that is nationally recognized for its ability to deliver equitable postsecondary value. But we have much work ahead, including reconceptualizing our pricing and affordability strategies, reimagining our statewide footprint, revamping our programmatic offerings, and finalizing our Strategic Roadmap, which will provide an organizing and guiding umbrella for all of these efforts.

Second, we are united in these efforts and together we are making an incredible difference in the lives of our current and prospective students. What we have accomplished thus far is the result of the collective efforts of our incredibly

talented and committed faculty and staff.

Today, more than ever, I am confident that the bold and boundless future we have talked about is well within reach.

I look forward to the great work ahead and to your continued partnership.

Sincerely,



José Luis Cruz Rivera
President



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