April 28, 2022

Dear Lumberjacks,

I am pleased to announce today the launch of NAU’s Access2Excellence (A2E) initiative, which underscores NAU’s efforts to deliver equitable postsecondary value in Arizona and beyond.

A2E makes clear to Arizona students and families that NAU is accessible and affordable. When the initiative launches in Fall 2023, Arizona resident students from households making $65,000 or less per year—the state’s current median household income—will attend NAU tuition-free.

A2E complements our new admissions pilot program that was announced earlier this year to truly position NAU as Arizona’s engine of opportunity that will power social impact and economic mobility. In addition, for Arizonans with a household income that is greater than $65,000 per year, NAU continues to offer exceptional financial aid and scholarship packages, with the lowest cost of university attendance in the state.

The A2E initiative communicates to the people of Arizona that the academic excellence and lifelong opportunities and value provided by an NAU education are within their reach. No longer will approximately half of all families in the state have to wonder whether they can pay for tuition or be forced to apply for both admissions and financial aid before knowing the answer to the question. Now, if a student from a working-class family entrusts their educational future to NAU, we will ensure that the out-of-pocket tuition expense truly is zero—and they will know that beginning today.

Implementing A2E has been the product of 10 months of work from a dedicated team. Last July, I charged the President’s Council on Pricing Strategy and Institutional Positioning with aligning our institutional pricing and financial aid strategies with the vision of broadening access, increasing attainment, and ensuring transparency in our pricing, while at the same time securing sustainable revenue for NAU to continue delivering exceptional academic programs and robust student support. The following individuals have dedicated much time, talent, and energy into this work, and I am deeply appreciative of their efforts:

- Bjorn Flugstad, co-chair (Senior Vice President for University Operations and Chief Financial Officer)
- Anika Olsen, co-chair (Vice President for Enrollment Management)
- Amanda Cornelius (Associate Vice President, Enrollment Management)
As I shared in February when our pilot program for admissions was announced, we are taking a holistic approach to achieve the vision that we have articulated through the Strategic Roadmap. There is no time to wait to deliver equitable postsecondary value and transformative programs to broaden access, expand participation, and accelerate post-college outcomes. Today, with the launch of A2E, we have reached an important milestone in these efforts, positioning NAU to truly be our state’s engine of opportunity, social impact, and economic mobility for all.

My thanks to all who have contributed to this effort, and I look forward to the excellent work ahead.

Sincerely,

José Luis Cruz Rivera
President