



February 21, 2022

Highlights:

- Announcing the search for the Vice President/Chief Diversity Officer
 - Announcing the reappointment of Karen Pugliesi as Interim Executive Vice President and University Provost and timeframe for a national search
 - Appointments and reappointments of President's Cabinet positions
 - Ongoing and upcoming searches
 - The road ahead
-

Dear Lumberjacks,

At all levels and across all areas, NAU is a people-driven university. Today, I share an update on my efforts to assemble a high-quality, collaborative, mission-driven, and effective leadership team for NAU. With such a team in place, I am confident in our ability to deliver on our mission and propel our university to new heights.

I also recognize that strong leadership must be supported by a depth and breadth of talent throughout the university, and I am pleased to see that the numerous faculty and staff searches currently underway are making good progress and that a strong foundation has been set for others that will soon be launching.

Vice President/Chief Diversity Officer (VP/CDO)

Having closely evaluated our organizational structure and leadership team to ensure our university is equipped and positioned to deliver on our mission, I have identified several areas where we need to build capacity. I am still thinking through some of these and will provide additional information to you in due time, but one critical area where I think we are all in agreement is the need to fill a **Vice President/Chief Diversity Officer (VP/CDO)** position to lead our institutional Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) initiatives.

To this end, I am pleased to announce that over the course of the next several weeks we will secure the services of a national search firm to help us craft the position description for NAU's founding VP/CDO and launch the search in **Fall 2022**.

The VP/CDO will report to me, serve as a member of the President's Cabinet, and be charged with elevating, coordinating, and advancing our DEIJ work throughout NAU. Areas of responsibility will include leadership of the Diversity

Fellows program, the Diversity Commissions, and the Center for University Access and Inclusion. Key priorities will include operationalizing our Diversity Strategic Plan and advancing initiatives associated with the crosscutting goals and objectives of the Strategic Roadmap. Additional information about how we will engage the university community in the development of the position description and the search process will be forthcoming.

In the meantime, we will continue to build on the momentum of the DEIJ work we have advanced in the last several months. I will be sharing more on the robust accomplishments and key next steps for our DEIJ-focused work soon, and I know that I will be able to rely on the strong support and energy of our leadership team, our Diversity Commissions and Diversity Fellows, our governance groups, and the rest of our university community to continue advancing excellence in DEIJ that will better our university and give a strong foundation for the VP/CDO to excel.

Executive Vice President/University Provost (EVP/UP)

Acknowledging that the scope of work for the **Executive Vice President and University Provost (EVP/UP)** position is still evolving as our strategic and operational priorities for the years ahead come into sharper focus, I am pleased to announce the reappointment of Dr. Karen Pugliesi as interim EVP/UP and my intent to launch a national search for a regular appointment to this position in **Spring 2023**.

Dr. Pugliesi's interim leadership to date has provided far more than just a stabilizing hand. She has led with vigor and purpose in advancing the bold vision for NAU across multiple fronts, serving as a driving force behind revisions to our Faculty Senate's Constitution, strategic review of statewide programs and services, updating of faculty policies and search process, the launch of many faculty searches across our colleges and the adoption of a faculty cluster hiring model, the advancement of the teaching track proposal, and much more. She has done all of this in short order through close collaboration between the Provost's Office team, leadership from the Faculty Senate, Deans of our colleges, and others in our academic community. She has promoted practices of consultation and collaboration and demonstrated the utmost commitment to the values of transparency and shared governance, bringing together our diverse university community in creating a better future for us all.

I am thankful for Dr. Pugliesi's leadership and continued partnership in advancing our academic mission for the year ahead, which will ensure we are prepared for a national search that will lead to the selection of our first regularly appointed EVP/UP.

Appointments and reappointments

I am also cognizant of the many ongoing and emerging searches needed to fill faculty, staff, and administrative positions throughout NAU and the time, talent, and energy that we must invest to manage these to maximum effect and ensure proper on-boarding of new personnel into our university's operations. In order to stabilize the **President's Cabinet** and ensure the continuity of our efforts and maintenance of our momentum, I have decided to approve regular appointments, subject to the corresponding annual reappointment process, for the following direct reports to the president (in alphabetical order):

- Ann Marie Chischilly, Vice President for Native American Initiatives (formerly interim)
- K. Laurie Dickson, Vice President for Strategy and Senior Associate to the President
- Christy Farley, Senior Vice President for Engagement and Public Affairs
- Bjorn Flugstad, Senior Vice President for University Operations & Chief Financial Officer
- Mike Marlow, Vice President for Intercollegiate Athletics
- Julie Mueller, Chief Economic Advisor to the President
- Anika Olsen, Vice President for Enrollment Management
- Kim Ott, Associate Vice President for Communications and Media Relations
- Michelle Parker, Vice President for Legal Affairs and General Counsel
- Brian Register, Chief of Staff
- Margot Saltonstall, Vice President for Student Affairs (formerly interim)
- Jason Wilder, Vice President for Research (formerly interim)

Having worked with each of these leaders from my first day on the job, I've had occasion to witness first-hand their professionalism, sense of mission, and collegiality and look forward to their continued leadership and excellent work as we seek to meet the challenges and seize the opportunities before us.

In addition, I want to assure you that the regular appointment of those who have been serving in an interim capacity responds as much to the high quality of their work and alignment with the ethos of our leadership team as it does to my carefully considered determination that stability and continuity of leadership in these areas is of utmost importance as we move our work forward.

Ongoing and upcoming searches

To optimize engagement and minimize disruption in our operations, we will continue to stagger current and emerging leadership searches to the extent possible. Below is an overview of these searches.

- **Vice President for Capital Planning and Campus Operations:** Status: developing profile for search to launch later this semester.
- **Vice President for Advancement:** Status: developing profile for search to launch in Spring/Summer 2022.
- **Dean for the College of Health and Human Services:** Status: search currently underway. Planned appointment of dean completed by the start of Fall 2022.
- **Dean for the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences:** Status: search currently underway. Planned appointment of dean completed by the start of Fall 2022.
- **Dean for the College of the Environment, Forestry, and Natural Sciences:** Status: Jason Wilder to lead CEFNS until an interim appointment is made later this semester, with a search planned to launch in Fall 2022 (following the appointment of HHS and SBS deans). Details on the consultation and appointment process for the new interim dean will be forthcoming.
- **Vice Provost, Global Affairs:** Status: search currently underway. Planned appointment of vice provost completed by the start of Fall 2022.

The road ahead

I am proud of the work we have accomplished thus far, which has received **resounding support in recent days** for mission-critical endeavors, and I am pleased with the strong and dedicated leadership team we have assembled who have given momentum to this important work.

As the searches listed above roll out, we will look to the thoughtful input and active engagement of our university community. Leveraging the structures of our **University Advisory Board and various governance groups**, we also will support broad and diverse representation in all searches—both on the committees and in the forums for engagement.

Please join me in thanking our colleagues for the great work they have accomplished and to the bright future they are helping shape for our university.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "José Luis Cruz Rivera". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

José Luis Cruz Rivera
President