January 21, 2022

Highlights:

- Summary of Public Health Advisory and AY21-22 Steering Committee recommendations
- Operating status unchanged with no significant adjustments to operations
- COVID-19 data
- The week ahead

Dear Lumberjacks,

In sharing this week’s community COVID-19 update, the information reviewed throughout the week’s deliberations have left me with a sense of hope that we are heading in the right direction and that our university is weathering this new and challenging phase of the pandemic.

I know that our success is ultimately thanks to the continued dedication of our faculty and staff who support a vibrant and enriching educational experience for our students—in-person, throughout the state, and online.

At the same time, I am keenly aware of the fatigue engendered and toll taken by this pandemic. I have personally felt whiplash from the ups and downs of the curve we’ve worked so hard and for so long to flatten. It’s hard to not feel discouraged as we learn of colleagues, family, and friends who nearly two years into the pandemic—after all the loss we have collectively experienced—are testing positive or becoming ill.

Yet, I’m heartened by the care and compassion deeply ingrained in the NAU community. As we dive into this week’s update, let’s take a moment to reflect on all we have accomplished by being mindful of our own well-being and that of our family, friends, colleagues, and neighbors.

Public Health Advisory and AY21-22 Steering Committee recommendations

- NAU’s Public Health Advisory Committee met on Wednesday to review NAU’s latest COVID-19 data and operational updates, and the represented groups shared specialized information from their fields. Overall, while the virus remains prevalent, current mitigation measures coupled with stability of the regional status suggested no major changes to NAU’s response for the week ahead.
NAU’s AY21-22 Steering Committee met on Thursday to review the information from the Public Health Advisory Committee and considered several operational matters, such as maintaining enhanced mechanisms for rapid contact of students who test positive and educational awareness and visibility of recommendations for individuals who have been exposed.

After careful consideration of the recommendations of the Public Health Advisory and AY21-22 Steering Committees, as we ready for the week ahead, NAU will:
- Continue to deliver instruction and support services in their originally designated modalities (in-person, hybrid, remote) to sustain student academic momentum.
- Continue to provide accommodations for individuals who need to quarantine or isolate due to testing positive or being exposed to COVID-19 or experiencing other COVID-19 related circumstances.
- Continue the enhanced mitigation efforts enacted last week for settings outside of the classroom environment to slow the spread of the Omicron variant.

**Operating status unchanged with no significant adjustments to operations**

NAU’s operating status for the week of January 24 will remain unchanged—with primarily in-person instruction and support services on the Flagstaff Mountain Campus and at Statewide sites with in-person modalities, and full residential capacity on the Flagstaff Mountain Campus.

**Ongoing mitigation measures**

- **Important general guidance:**
  - *If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, please stay home and work with your instructor or supervisor.*

- **Masks:**
  - Masks are required on NAU campuses in all classrooms and academic buildings and other locations where physical distancing is not possible, and strongly encouraged for outdoor events and gatherings.
  - The [CDC provides resources](https://www.cdc.gov/) about types of masks and their benefits, as well as how to wear and care for your mask.
  - Disposable masks as well as a limited supply of N95 and KN95 respirator masks are available to employees and departments on request through Campus Supply: 928-523-6414 or [NAU-CampusSupply@nau.edu](mailto:NAU-CampusSupply@nau.edu).

- **Testing:**
  - NAU strongly encourages individuals randomly selected for mitigation testing or who have been exposed to COVID-19 to be tested at any of the sites identified through the following links:
    - [NAU Fieldhouse and Campus Health Services](https://www.nau.edu/)
    - [Coconino County](https://coconino.az.gov/)
    - [Arizona Department of Health Services](https://www.azdhs.gov/)
  - As shared last week, the federal government is shipping free at-home COVID-19 tests. Visit [COVIDTests.gov](https://www.covidtests.gov) for more information and to order.
• Vaccination:
  ○ NAU strongly encourages all individuals in our community to get vaccinated and receive a booster shot. **Vaccines are a proven and effective means of reducing the risk of infection and lowering the risk of adverse health effects.** More information about vaccines and their benefits can be found on the [CDC website](https://www.cdc.gov). Visit the following links for information on where you can be vaccinated:
    - NAU Fieldhouse and Campus Health Services
    - Coconino County
    - Arizona Department of Health Services

• Managing exposure:
  ○ The [CDC recommends different routes to manage exposure](https://www.cdc.gov), depending on your vaccination status. We strongly encourage individuals to review the latest recommendations on what to do if you have been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

**COVID-19 data**

The following data informed the approach described above.

• **COVID-19 cases:** The number of [Arizonans testing positive for COVID-19](https://www.cdc.gov) continues to be high, but there has been a slight decline over the past few days. [Coconino County’s most recent weekly report](https://www.coconino.az.gov) shows a high rate of transmission.

• **Isolation and quarantine:** As of today, NAU is managing 611 COVID-19 cases among students on- and off-campus on the Flagstaff Mountain Campus, representing 3.2% of the total Flagstaff Mountain Campus student enrollment. This number is up slightly from last week.

• **Ongoing mitigation testing:** Today, 2,500 members of the NAU community were called for mitigation testing to be completed next week.

• **Testing results at the Flagstaff Mountain Campus:** For the week ending January 15, testing at the Fieldhouse, Campus Health Services, and self-reported COVID positives yielded the following results:
  ○ 5,110 tests—up from the previous week’s total of 4,962
    - 2,970 tests by NAU students, faculty, and staff
    - 2,140 tests by non-NAU community members
  ○ 1,315 positives (25.7%)—down from the previous week’s total of 1,506
    - 713 positives (24.0%) among NAU students, faculty, and staff
    - 602 positives (28.1%) among non-NAU community members

**The week ahead**

We plan to share a similar briefing next Friday, following the same process of review and advisement by our Public Health and AY21-22 Steering Committees. If emergent conditions require a more rapid update, we will provide updates accordingly.

Thank you for all you do as members of our Lumberjack community.
Sincerely,

José Luis Cruz Rivera
President

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