December 20, 2021

Dear Lumberjacks,

Today, I write to thank you all once again for a memorable first six months as president of NAU. Our university is healthy and vibrant, and it is poised to be a national leader and an engine of mobility and opportunity through our commitment to equitable postsecondary value. As we prepare to celebrate the holiday season, I am humbled by the accomplishments and contributions of all members of our NAU community in this first phase of our 17th presidency.

Northern Arizona University has just received a special early Christmas gift. In the true spirit of the season of joy and giving, longtime Lumberjack supporters Michael and Karen Kitt have made a generous donation to NAU.

Both Michael and Karen are first-generation college graduates and understand the importance of a variety of educational experiences in shaping their own lives, so they want to ensure college students today and in the future benefit from top-tier musical performances.

The Kitts’ foresight, leadership, and generosity have had a transformative impact on NAU faculty, students, and the Flagstaff community, elevating NAU’s prestige in Arizona and the region for excellence in the musical arts. In recognition of their incredible legacy, NAU is proud to name the Kitt School of Music in their honor and create the Michael and Karen Kitt Directorship within the school. This gift will directly support the School of Music’s priorities, including increasing NAU’s recognition of outstanding faculty and students, providing opportunities for future generations of music teachers, conductors, performers, and scholars, and offering engaging community performances that can be enjoyed by all.

I can’t think of a better way to end the year than with this wonder gift, the largest in the history of the College of Arts and Letters, and honoring the Kitts for their leadership and support of NAU’s mission, and the future of the arts and sciences for years to come.

Please enjoy these last few days of 2021. My best wishes for a safe and joyous holiday season, and I look forward to our work together in 2022.

Sincerely,

José Luis Cruz Rivera