



Office of the President

NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

December 11, 2020

Dear Lumberjacks,

Today, we celebrate a core value that is a hallmark of NAU—our commitment to free and open expression. Honest, open inquiry done in a respectful environment is key to ensuring successive generations of responsible citizens. I am proud to report that this commitment is alive and well in the Lumberjack community.

This week, we were pleased to receive word that the *Foundation for Individual Rights in Education* (FIRE) ranked **NAU among the top universities nationwide** for its policies on and commitment to free expression—one of only 56 "green light" institutions in the country.

The FIRE recognition confirms our status as a place where students can feel free to express their thoughts, ideas, and opinions without repercussions. Expressing and testing different ideas—even those that may make some of us uncomfortable—is a sign of a great university community. We thank FIRE for this recognition and are resolved to retain our status as a place that welcomes free thought in the years to come.

This is not the only recognition to come our way this week. *The Princeton Review* named NAU's W. A. Franke College of Business to its list of top on-campus MBA programs in the country. *The Princeton Review* chooses schools based on data from a survey of university administrators covering topics such as academic offerings, admission requirements, data about enrolled students, and graduate employment.

The ranking also takes into account survey results from students about their campus and classroom experiences. Congratulations to the W. A. Franke College of Business for this wonderful accomplishment.

These accolades give us energy and remind our community of all that we have accomplished to serve our students during this unprecedented year. As the holiday season approaches, I would like to remind all Lumberjacks to remain vigilant—mask up, follow distancing and hygiene best practices, and celebrate safely and responsibly.

While we await the rollout of a vaccine in the coming months, it is important that we continue to stay focused on our commitment to health and safety and to reducing the

spread of the virus as **outlined by Dr. Cara Christ, director of the Arizona Department of Health Services.**

I would like to thank faculty and staff for participating in this year's annual luminaria display. The 50-year tradition is typically run by students, but due to the early end to fall semester this year, faculty and staff are running the event. Lights will be lit between 5-5:45 p.m. today. For those of you still in Flagstaff, I encourage you to take a drive down Milton Road and enjoy this beautiful display located behind the historic Gammage building on north campus. Thanks to all involved for keeping this community tradition alive.

And finally, my thanks to the facilities services team for bringing some extra joy to the season by adding holiday lights to the top of the Skydome.

I am grateful for all you do. Be well, and enjoy the holiday season.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rita", written in a cursive style.

Rita Hartung Cheng
President