December 16, 2021

Dear Lumberjacks,

As we look back over the arc of the fall semester, I believe the NAU community is stronger than ever. I appreciate the many contributions you have all made to our university’s success and vitality, and in advancing our Strategic Roadmap.

Draft #3: Status

Earlier this month, I received an initial version of Draft #3 of the Strategic Roadmap. The draft presents a robust and refined distillation of the feedback from our university community on how we can best advance the seven goals that have been articulated through this process. Our working groups have invested much time, talent, and energy in this crucial work, and I am pleased with the ideas put forward to support the individual goals.

Before releasing Draft #3, we are adding in an additional step in the review process to achieve a more succinct, actionable, and measurable plan, with greater coherence across goals and more intentional language reflecting the boldness of the vision for NAU and current strategic context of the higher education landscape.

Key characteristics to guide next draft

As we have discussed, our Strategic Roadmap must both guide how we will structure and pace our work as a university and serve as our statement of intent and external value proposition—to students, to communities, to policymakers, to funders, and beyond.

The process we have used to date is important because it has helped us think through and articulate our priorities. And that is essential work. However, when thinking of where the roadmap must be in its final form, this is a moment to consider those priorities and spell them out. We must state clearly and unequivocally our institutional goal of being a nationally recognized leader in providing equitable postsecondary value to students and the communities they represent—and this ethos must permeate every aspect of the plan.

At its core, our final roadmap should exhibit the following characteristics:

- **Succinct**: Encapsulating and articulating our value proposition in a manner that speaks to a broad range of audiences.
- **Actionable**: Ensuring the roadmap is more than just words—it must be an actionable blueprint for our work moving forward.
**Measurable**: Aligning our actions with concrete metrics and targets to gauge progress toward and hold us accountable for fully achieving the goals of the plan.

**Bold**: In order to realize the future we aspire to and to transform the lives of a generation, we must dare to be bold in our aspirations for a boundless future for NAU.

In reviewing the current draft, many of these characteristics are reflected in part, but a sharper, more cohesive articulation is essential. In addition, a coherence within and across the goals is paramount. Nothing in the roadmap should be taken in isolation. It is a whole that represents the many interlocking and complimentary facets of who we are at NAU.

Next steps

Per the above, a more holistic Draft #3 requires us to bring together the seven independent strands of the roadmap into a coherent whole that reflects the university’s input to date. To achieve this, I have charged the core facilitation team with the following:

- Honor the intentional and extensive work the NAU community has already contributed.
- Bring the document into structural alignment with the characteristics envisioned for the final plan: succinct, actionable, measurable, bold.
- Ground the principles of equitable postsecondary value at all levels of the roadmap.
- Consider the broader political, demographic, and market constraints and opportunities with which the plan will be deployed.
- Assess the convergence of institutional priorities and deliverables, including revenue streams, ABOR metric setting, the statewide context, and the like, to help inform the roadmap, making it complementary to our other work strands and giving credence to the actionability of its statements.

In support of our commitment to transparency, I will ask for two steps to serve as checks and balances before the next iteration reaches my desk:

- Document proposed changes with clear rationale informed by the charge above.
- Convene meetings of the core facilitation team with each of the seven working groups to review proposed changes and additional feedback.

Once this has been completed, I will look forward to an updated draft that, following my own review, will be shared with our university community.

Note of appreciation

Throughout this process, we have set a lofty goal and an ambitious timeline. But we have also been clear that the process is itself flexible and responsive. We can and will take into account what we hear from you and what the world beyond our community is doing. And that will make our plan stronger. Flexibility is an asset in an ever-changing world and it is what will, I firmly believe, make our NAU Strategic Roadmap one that will transform the path and help us realize a future that is as boundless as we are.

Thank you to all who have contributed thus far, and thank you for all you will contribute in the months and years to come. I look forward to sharing the results of this next phase with you all in the new year.
In partnership,

[Signature]

President
José Luis Cruz Rivera

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