September 9, 2021

Highlights:

- Changing lives by ensuring equitable value

- NAU’s Strategic Roadmap will be organized around six goals with specific, measurable objectives for each goal.

- Lead facilitators and working group facilitators will organize the work ahead.

- Our NAU community will steer the process through frequent, meaningful engagement in shaping and refining the objectives of the roadmap.

Dear Lumberjacks,

Throughout my own journey in higher education—in which I have been a student, a faculty member, an administrator, and parent of several students—I have been inspired by the changes this invaluable work has on individuals, communities, and our world. I can recall countless students whom I have taught or mentored whose lives were changed for the better due to having access to education. A college degree brought them social and economic mobility, the ability to write the future for themselves, their families, and their communities, and the chance to uplift society and drive positive change. This is the value of postsecondary education. I know that all of you here have seen and experienced it, and that is what drives us to do our best work each and every day.

I trust this inspires you as much as it does me. We will be the leaders in the life-changing, value-driven future for our students structured by a bold Strategic Roadmap. I am counting on every member of our Lumberjack community to help us create this future, together.

Our timeline for this work is intentionally fast-paced—matching the urgency of the situation and the need to drive change—resulting in a robust draft of the plan by the end of Fall 2021 and completing our final roadmap for implementation in Summer 2022.

Today I share how our Strategic Roadmap will be structured and paced in the months ahead and how you will be involved.

Organizing our work for the fall semester

Unlike a typical strategic planning process, our roadmap is structured to enable us to move quickly and deliver outcomes that provide real value. Here is how we plan to get there:
• Our work will be focused around six goals that will inform all we do. These goals are critically important to our identity and success and encompass all of the areas of work we engage in at NAU.

• Guiding each goal will be value-centered, action-oriented objectives that will be drafted throughout the fall semester. These objectives will be focused on specific and measurable ways in which we can deliver on the values to which we aspire for NAU.

Lead facilitators

I have called on members of the NAU community to bring their expertise and leadership from key units that are integral to maintaining the pace of our efforts to lead and coordinate our roadmap process. Our work is already underway—I had my first meeting with this energized group on Tuesday. I hope you will join me in thanking them for their commitment.

These Core Team Facilitators will provide centralized coordination of the entire effort:

• Laurie Dickson (Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs/Senior Associate to the President for University Strategy)

• Margot Saltonstall (Interim Vice President for Student Affairs)

• Julie Mueller (Chief Economic Advisor to the President/Professor, The W. A. Franke College of Business)

• Brian Register (Chief of Staff)

These Working Group Lead Facilitators will lead specific efforts around the identified areas of institutional focus for the roadmap:

• Karen Pugliesi (Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs)
  - Inclusive academic excellence

• Anika Olsen (Vice President for Enrollment Management)
  - Equitable student access, momentum, graduation, and post-graduation success

• Jason Wilder (Interim Vice President for Research/Dean, College of the Environment, Forestry, and Natural Sciences)
  - Impactful research, scholarly, and creative activities

• Gabriel Montaño (Chief Diversity Fellow/Professor, Applied Physics and Material Sciences)
  - Enhanced practices for recruiting, retaining, and developing quality, mission-driven, diverse faculty and staff

• Christy Farley (Vice President for External Affairs and Partnerships)
  - Strong stewardship of place and demonstrated engagement with our communities
Throughout the work ahead, I have charged our facilitators to use the principles that shaped the listening and learning process from our 17th presidency’s transition to guide their work: 1) Distinctive Excellence; 2) Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice; and 3) Trust and Transparency. With the help of this team and the lens of our shared priorities to guide the work, I am confident in our ability to articulate and fulfill NAU’s value proposition and undertake the important work to deliver transformative individual, social, and economic value to our students and their communities.

Working group facilitators

The next step in our roadmap process is adding highly engaged members who will represent a cross-section of voices from throughout our community. Each of the six working groups will be composed of facilitators nominated by our Faculty Senate President, the Associated Students of Northern Arizona University and Graduate Student Government Presidents, and our lead facilitators. Together, these individuals will actively support the work of each group throughout the Fall 2021 semester. Each will have the following structure:

- Lead facilitator
- Faculty facilitator
- Student facilitator
- Staff facilitator

We anticipate receiving nominations and finalizing the membership of the six working groups next week. I will share the composition of our overall roadmap facilitation teams shortly thereafter.

These working groups are deliberately small—with the stated goal of quickly driving this work forward. Their focus will be to draft goals and objectives for input from the university community that leverage the important work we have already accomplished in conjunction with best practices and bold new ideas that can help lead NAU into the boundless future ahead.

Your engagement and help steering the roadmap

The structure outlined above is intentionally designed to maximize engagement from our NAU community. These groups will lead in the facilitation of advancing the work around the roadmap; however, the process of steering the roadmap will be driven by you, the members of our NAU community.

It is important to me that you understand the structure by which the work will be organized, but more importantly, I want to assure you that moving forward, we will focus on opportunities for the direct, frequent, and substantive engagement of all of our community, with a transparent view into the work of enumerating our goals and objectives.

The process for refining and forming the goals and objectives will begin soon, as
the facilitation teams ramp up their work. I will continue to share details, and I look forward to your active contributions. In the meantime, I encourage you to provide your thoughts regarding considerations and focal areas of the work. Please do not hesitate to reach our lead facilitators at StrategicRoadmap@nau.edu.

The road ahead

Our Strategic Roadmap process will coincide with impactful work that already exists by aligning these efforts in order to advance a cohesive vision centered on equitable postsecondary value. This will include defining goals of high priority for institutional efforts and identifying areas of importance where localized efforts can help move the needle.

The roadmap will have bold goals linked to explicit actions. I can assure you that this will not be just another planning process that sits on a shelf or lives on a website that no one sees. We will not only say what we plan to achieve, we also will articulate and hold ourselves accountable for when and how we will arrive at the stated destination.

Similarly, we will ensure that our work on the roadmap aligns, complements, and furthers our existing goals and accountability metrics—institutional, departmental, ABOR, and the like—charting a clear and cohesive path forward for NAU.

Thanks to the hard work and dedication of our NAU community, the stage is set to build upon the strong foundation you have created and propel our university into the bold and boundless future ahead.

I look forward to your active engagement throughout this collaborative and important process.

In partnership,

José Luis Cruz Rivera
President