



Office of the President

NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

January 8, 2021

Dear Lumberjacks,

As we move into the spring semester, we look forward to welcoming our new and returning students on their journey to achieve their aspirations. Beginning a new year brings personal resolutions and hope for a better tomorrow, about which I am sure most of us feel strongly for 2021. In light of what we witnessed in our nation's capital this week, I encourage our Lumberjack community to continue to come together in our tradition of respect, thoughtful leadership, and engagement in civil discourse.

Almost a year into the pandemic, we are experiencing a surge in cases throughout the nation and in our state, which makes it extremely important that we don't let up in our efforts to stay safe and consider the health of others. This means continuing to wear masks, wash our hands, maintain appropriate distancing, avoid large gatherings, and take your responsibility to facilitate contact tracing seriously.

For the start of our spring semester, we will closely follow our strategies and protocols that aided in a successful return to campus in the fall. It is vital that we continue to work together to promote health and safety on our campuses.

One of the important steps is frequent testing. Free saliva-based testing is being conducted at the NAU Fieldhouse and is available to the entire campus community with **easy registration**. Since the testing site reopened Wednesday, we have already provided more than 1,000 tests, and we encourage everyone to regularly take advantage of this convenient service. Our statewide faculty and staff also have access to testing and can access the most convenient registration and **testing location at AzDHS**. In addition, NAU will conduct mandatory COVID-19 testing for all students, faculty, and staff this semester to help reduce the spread of the virus. This testing is essential to NAU's ability to continue to offer a safe in-person education for our students and help safeguard the health of our broader community; without it, we have no way to identify asymptomatic individuals before they spread the virus to others.

We also have important information to share about vaccinations. NAU is working with Coconino County in accordance with standards set forth by the Arizona Department of Health Services. Currently, the county is administering the vaccine to individuals in Phase 1A, which includes health care workers. NAU has provided registration

information to individuals in this first population. More information about the COVID-19 vaccine distribution plan can be found on [NAU's Vaccine Information page](#). Statewide programs can find vaccination information by going to your county's public health department website. We encourage you to actively monitor eligibility and vaccine availability in your county.

Vaccine supplies continue to be extremely limited. Coconino County has started registration for Phase 1B, which is a large group that includes educators, child care workers, law enforcement, and those 75 years of age and older. Phase 1B includes NAU's faculty and staff, as well as students who are participating in student teaching programs this spring. Details can be found at the [county website](#). As educators in Coconino County, NAU employees are eligible to register for the vaccine at current clinics under Phase 1B. NAU will be offering the vaccine at Campus Health Services, with registration information forthcoming, and we encourage you to take advantage of this partnership with the county coming soon. It requires our entire community to support this intensive effort to beat COVID-19.

I encourage you to stay informed throughout the semester; you can start by looking for the latest information at the [Jacks are Back website](#). Some items to keep top of mind:

Self-assess: Before arriving on campus or participating in campus activities each day, all students, faculty, and staff should complete their daily health assessment on [NAU Healthcheck](#).

Testing: Free COVID-19 testing is available now at NAU's University Union Fieldhouse. For more information, including how to preregister, visit the [NAU testing page](#).

Distancing and masks: Read the requirements for [mask wearing and physical distancing](#) for students, staff, faculty, and guests.

Confidential Exposure Notification: Find out if you may have been exposed by downloading the anonymous exposure notification app, [Covid Watch](#).

As we enter this spring semester, I trust we can stay on track with our academics, our research, our service, and the many other facets of the NAU experience. Let's continue to be mindful of what is being asked of us to keep ourselves and our communities safe.

In addition to our focus on health and safety, we want all of our students to start the semester strong. To that end, I encourage you to check your Louie account for current class schedule information and watch the latest [Forecast from Flagstaff](#), which has great information and updates about starting the spring semester.

I value your ongoing trust and commitment, and I look forward to successfully meeting the challenges ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rita". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'R' and a trailing flourish.

Rita Hartung Cheng
President