



June 22, 2021

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**Highlights:**

- NAU has established the **President's Fall 2021 Planning Steering Committee**, charged with making recommendations to the president on revisions to the university's COVID-19 health protocols and the development of a sequenced management plan for in-person staffing of all of its campuses.
  - NAU has also established a **Public Health Advisory Committee** to provide analysis and feedback on current COVID-19 guidelines and proposed updates.
  - In pursuing its work, the Steering Committee will be guided by considerations of student success, health and wellness, and transparent communications.
  - NAU expects to present updated COVID-19 protocols later this week. Information regarding in-person staffing plans will follow shortly thereafter.
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Dear Lumberjack community,

Last Thursday, I wrote to you about how we are **looking ahead to the fall semester**. In that message, I addressed the evolving strategic context that will shape how we are planning for a healthy and vibrant living and learning community for Fall 2021 and provided an overview of the path forward.

Today, nine short weeks before the start of our Fall 2021 semester, I write to provide you an update of how our planning is unfolding.

**The overarching goal for Fall 2021**

The overarching goal for the fall semester is simple, but robust:

NAU will aim to operate at pre-pandemic levels, including a vibrant, in-person campus experience in Flagstaff and at our locations throughout the state. This will include engaging classroom instruction and academic experiences, the in-person staffing of our statewide campus offices to provide exceptional service, and the reintroduction of

services, activities, and events that contribute to the vibrancy of student life and the vitality of our university community.

We will work toward this goal by thoughtfully responding to evolving public health guidelines, strategically leveraging the opportunities and new means of working and learning that have been realized during the pandemic, and responsibly growing and enhancing our reach through flexible modalities and enhanced technologies. In doing so, we will ensure our university is positioned well to continue to deliver on its mission.

### **President's Fall 2021 Planning Steering Committee: Composition**

With the above goal in mind, I have convened the President's Fall 2021 Planning Steering Committee and have tasked the committee with meeting throughout the summer to ensure broad coordination of Fall 2021 planning efforts and responsive updates to university guidelines and management plans.

The Steering Committee is composed of the following individuals, representing a broad cross-section of university leadership, operational areas, and representatives from faculty, staff, and student leadership groups:

- Josh Mackey (interim executive vice president/chief of staff and vice president and chief human resources officer), *co-chair*
- Karen Pugliesi (interim provost/vice president of academic affairs), *co-chair*
- Maylee Acosta (ASNAU president)
- Anthony Caniglia (CSAC chair)
- Laurie Dickson (vice provost of academic affairs)
- Kate Ellis (Faculty Senate president)
- Christy Farley (vice president of external affairs)
- Anika Olsen (vice president of enrollment management)
- Kim Ott (associate vice president of communications)
- Michelle Parker (vice president of legal affairs)
- Brian Register (director, President's Office)
- Margot Saltonstall (interim vice president of student affairs)
- Rebecca Seeger (GSG president)

### **President's Fall 2021 Planning Steering Committee: Guiding principles**

The Steering Committee will seek input and request information from stakeholders on a range of topics, convene advisory committees as appropriate, and make recommendations to the president on critical, universitywide decisions that will shape our work for Fall 2021. Throughout, their work will be grounded in three guiding principles:

- **Student success:** NAU's mission is focused on the success of each and every student. The work of the university must prioritize student success through a vibrant and fully realized student life experience that includes exceptional opportunities for academic engagement with faculty and classroom instruction, as well as significant and diverse support and resources that promote student success outside of the classroom.

**- Health and wellness:** In order to successfully deliver on our mission, NAU must prioritize the health and wellness of our community: faculty, staff, students, and the communities in which we live, work, and serve. As we turn from the emergent challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic experienced over the last year and a half to a new future with rapidly evolving guidance and state directives, NAU will follow the science to inform our plans to staff and reopen in-person services throughout our statewide locations. As we strive toward a rich and vibrant Fall 2021, we will continue to keep our community's health and wellness top-of-mind in all locations—from our classrooms to our workplaces to our residence halls.

**- Transparent communications:** As we approach Fall 2021, we will keep the NAU community informed of the deliberations and rationale behind the university's decisions in a transparent and timely fashion. We will work together to provide clear direction and expectations, allow for bi-directional communication that is considered throughout the planning and implementation process, and ensure there are no surprises in actions that affect our students, faculty, and staff.

### **President's Fall 2021 Planning Steering Committee: Priorities**

The first two priorities of the Steering Committee are updating NAU's current COVID-19 health protocols and guidelines and developing a sequenced management plan for in-person staffing of the university's campuses.

#### Priority #1: Updating of COVID-19 health protocols

A comprehensive review of health and wellness protocols is currently underway. They will be evaluated through the lens of current science, CDC guidelines, and state mandates.

To aid in this process, and as stated in last week's message, we are convening a **Public Health Advisory Committee**, composed of the following experts in public health, epidemiology, and infectious disease, to provide analysis and feedback on current guidelines and proposed updates to the Steering Committee:

- Josh Mackey (interim executive vice president/chief of staff and vice president and chief human resources officer)
- Dave Engelthaler (director, TGen North)
- Paul Keim (Regents' Professor, Cowden Professor, and executive director of the Pathogen and Microbiome Institute)
- John Mouglin (chief quality officer, Northern Arizona Healthcare)
- Kim Musselman (director of Coconino County Health and Human Services)
- Brettania O'Connor (associate professor, Department of Health Sciences)
- Matt Wise (staff physician, Campus Health Services)

We look forward to sharing the balance of the Steering Committee's work with the Public Health Advisory Committee later this week. Additionally, before July 4, we will hold a town hall forum for our university community to ask questions about the revised

guidelines and ensure that we are communicating clearly the expectations and plans for Fall 2021.

### Priority #2: In-person staffing of NAU campuses

In conjunction with our considerations of public health and in service of our objective of returning to pre-pandemic levels of campus-based service, the Steering Committee has begun work on a sequenced management plan for in-person staffing of campus locations throughout the state. More information will be released soon—informed by the health guidance that is covered in priority #1—regarding how campus spaces will be staffed and the timelines for individual employees who have yet to do so to physically return to their departments and units.

### **Next steps**

I encourage you to stay informed and to keep the lines of communication open as we move forward in this planning process. The **Jacks Are Back website** will serve as the central repository for information on NAU policies and protocols. Please check that website regularly for the most up-to-date information.

In addition, as our Steering Committee works to chart a path forward, I recommend you visit the **Fall 2021 Steering Committee webpage** to review the charge and associated communications and to submit any feedback or questions you may have.

I look forward to our work together this summer as we recommit ourselves to the success of our students and the vitality of NAU.

In partnership,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "José Luis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**José Luis Cruz Rivera**  
President