June 13, 2022

Dear Lumberjacks,

One year ago, President Biden signed legislation establishing Juneteenth National Independence Day as a federal holiday that recognizes emancipation in the United States and the history of African American peoples and communities.

Today, as part of this year’s celebrations and aligned with our university's value, I am pleased to announce that NAU will observe Juneteenth as a paid university holiday beginning on June 19, 2023. At NAU, we are committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive community—one where we recognize and understand our history, strive for greater knowledge that will advance equity and propel positive social impact, and endeavor through our actions to create the conditions that will lead to a more perfect union. As we look forward to celebrating Juneteenth this year on Sunday, June 19, NAU is pleased to partner the Flagstaff Murdoch Center for their Juneteenth celebratory events, which include the Community Festival at the Murdoch Community Center from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on June 18. More information is available online, and I hope many within our community will join the weekend’s events and activities celebrating this important milestone in our nation’s history.

In order to facilitate this observance, we will make a minor adjustment to the university’s 10 paid holidays for 2023, with Juneteenth being added and the day after Thanksgiving being shifted to a paid University Closure to accommodate the adjustment. For more information, please visit the NAU Holidays page.

As we prepare to celebrate Juneteenth in a few days, I encourage our university community to reflect on the historical arc that led to the
creation of this holiday; to consider, in light of our stated strategic priorities, how NAU can contribute to a more equitable and just society; and how we as individuals can be engaged in ways small and large that contribute to a better society and better future for all.

Sincerely,

José Luis Cruz Rivera
President