February 25, 2022

Highlights:

- Operating status unchanged
- Summary of Public Health Advisory and AY21-22 Steering Committee recommendations
- COVID-19 data
- Free N95 respirator masks available

Dear Lumberjacks,

Today, I am pleased to report that COVID-19 cases are low and continue to trend downward and that the CDC has issued new guidelines that will help inform our plans. As a result of these developments, our operating status for the week of February 28 will remain largely unchanged, but we will devote time during the week to review the possibility of phasing out mask requirements on or before March 28, as CDC guidance and conditions allow.

Looking ahead, I encourage all in our community to continue to support each other and make informed choices that acknowledge the physical and mental health needs of each and every Lumberjack. And let’s do all we can to ensure this semester will be a most excellent and memorable one.

Overall operating status

NAU will operate as follows during the week of February 28:

- Continue to deliver instruction and support services in their originally designated modalities (in-person, hybrid, remote) to sustain student academic momentum.
- Continue to provide accommodations for individuals who need to quarantine or isolate due to testing positive or being exposed to COVID-19 or experiencing other COVID-19 related circumstances.
- Expand opportunities for engagement in all areas, building upon the work of previous weeks, including shifting from masks required to masks recommended at Campus Recreation.

We plan to share a similar briefing next Friday, following the same process of review and advisement by our Public Health and AY21-22 Steering Committees. Given current trends, we expect the committees to discuss how best to adapt our strategy to ensure safety while providing more opportunities for community engagement.
Summary of Public Health Advisory and AY21-22 Steering Committee recommendations

Our plans for the week of February 28 are based on the information below and will continue to be evaluated and updated weekly basis.

- NAU’s **Public Health Advisory Committee** met on Wednesday to review NAU’s latest COVID-19 data and operational updates; the represented groups also shared specialized information from their fields. Based on the information considered, the group supported current operational direction and encouraged informed individual choice regarding risk factors, with corresponding education on mask types and vaccines.
- NAU’s **AY21-22 Steering Committee** met on Thursday to review the information from the Public Health Advisory Committee. Based on the information, the group supported the continued direction of the university in COVID management.

COVID-19 data

The following data informed the deliberations described above.

- **COVID-19 cases**: The number of Arizonans testing positive for COVID-19 has continued to decline. [Coconino County’s most recent weekly report](#) shows high transmission.
- **Isolation and quarantine**: As of today, NAU is managing 20 COVID-19 cases among students on- and off-campus on the Flagstaff Mountain Campus, representing .01% of the total Flagstaff Mountain Campus student enrollment. This number is down from last week.
- **Testing results at the Flagstaff Mountain Campus**: For the week ending February 19, testing at the Fieldhouse, Campus Health Services, and self-reported COVID positives yielded the following results:
  - 1,387 tests—down from the previous week’s total of 1,843
    - 1,004 tests by NAU students, faculty, and staff
    - 383 tests by non-NAU community members
  - 81 positives (5.8%)—down from the previous week’s total of 139
    - 54 positives (5.4%) among NAU students, faculty, and staff
    - 27 positives (7.0%) among non-NAU community members
- **Ongoing mitigation testing**: Today, 2,500 members of the NAU community were called for mitigation testing to be completed next week.

Ongoing mitigation measures

- **Important general guidance and new information**: NAU strongly encourages all individuals in our community to get vaccinated and receive a booster shot if they are eligible. **Vaccines are a proven and effective means of reducing the risk of infection and lowering the risk of adverse health effects.** More information about vaccines and their benefits can be found on the [CDC website](#). Visit the following links for information on where you can be vaccinated:
  - [NAU Fieldhouse and Campus Health Services](#)
  - [Coconino County](#)
- Arizona Department of Health Services

- Masking:
  - Masks are required on NAU campuses in all classrooms and academic buildings and other locations where physical distancing is not possible, and strongly encouraged for outdoor events and gatherings.
  - The CDC provides resources about types of masks and their benefits, as well as how to wear and care for your mask.
  - N95 masks from the federal government are being distributed in Coconino County. Please fill out the form on the North Country Healthcare website to request an N95 mask.
  - In addition, NAU has N95 masks available for students and employees:
    - Students can find masks at info desks in the Union and DuBois Center
    - Employees can pick up masks via Campus Supply at NAU-CampusSupply@nau.edu

- Testing:
  - NAU strongly encourages individuals randomly selected for mitigation testing or who have been exposed to COVID-19 to be tested at any of the sites identified through the following links:
    - NAU Fieldhouse and Campus Health Services
    - Coconino County
    - Arizona Department of Health Services
    - The federal government is shipping free at-home COVID-19 tests. Visit COVIDTests.gov for more information and to order.

- Managing exposure:
  - The CDC recommends different routes to manage exposure depending on your vaccination status. We strongly encourage individuals to review the latest recommendations on what to do if you have been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

Thank you to all in our community for doing your part to slow the spread and contributing to a successful and enriching spring semester.

Sincerely,

José Luis Cruz Rivera
President