August 3, 2021

Dear colleagues,

Throughout the transition and over these initial six weeks of our 17th Presidency, I have worked to engage all aspects of our community to help understand and synthesize the vision for the future of NAU, along with the priorities and work that lay ahead. This has included close consultation with many of you to help guide our work toward a vibrant fall semester, while also continuing to move forward the vision for a bold and boundless future for our institution.

During this time, I have been thankful for the tremendous colleagues throughout the team at NAU. This period has allowed me to take a close look at the structure of the Office of the President and evaluate how best to organize the work and deliver on the promise of a new NAU. In assessing the people and positions, I have been mindful of how to achieve high standards of operations, fill critical vacancies, advance our institution, and steward university resources. Based on this assessment and to help achieve our work and our vision, I am pleased to announce three important appointments to the President's Executive Team, all effective August 2.

First, Laurie Dickson, vice provost for curriculum, assessment, and accreditation, has graciously accepted a split appointment between the Office of the Provost and the Office of the President. She will serve as senior vice provost of academic affairs and senior associate to the president for university strategy. As senior vice provost, Laurie will serve as the principal deputy to the provost and oversee crucial units and processes within Academic Affairs, including curriculum and assessment, program development, institutional accreditation, and academic compliance. As senior associate to the president for university strategy, she will work with the NAU leadership team, the Arizona Board of Regents, and other key stakeholders to elevate and optimize the positioning of NAU in the local, state, and national higher education landscape. Laurie will serve as the principal liaison for NAU with ABOR and work to align and advance our institutional agenda within the Arizona public higher education ecosystem.

Second, Brian Register, director of operations for the Office of the President, will serve as chief of staff. In this capacity, he will oversee all operations of the President's Office and University Events, prioritize the flow of information and coordination of work within the university's leadership team, and spearhead presidential initiatives that cut across the university's operations.

Third, Julie Mueller, professor of economics in The W. A. Franke College of Business and School of Earth and Sustainability, will split her time as chief economic advisor to the president and a valuable member of the college faculty. She will be responsible for leading special projects and analysis and contributing to cross-divisional efforts that draw on her academic expertise and focus on our university's economic impact. We aim to optimize our work and ensure economic rigor is part of our institutional decision-making process—from statewide and online enrollment growth to tuition setting to ensuring our institutional metrics are aligned with our stated goals.

To ensure adequate capacity to support the substantive work of the Office of the Provost, we will soon launch an internal search for an associate vice provost for curriculum and assessment. Additional information and a call for applications will be communicated soon via the Office of the Provost.

As we continue to advance the work to achieve our vision and mission, I expect there will be additional steps needed to restructure and realign our operations. As such, I will continue to
communicate these important changes in a timely and transparent manner.

In closing, I would like to recognize **Josh Mackey** for having served as the interim executive vice president and chief of staff since March 2020, in addition to his permanent role as vice president of human resources. I also want to express my appreciation to **Christy Farley** for serving as senior associate to the president, and I look forward to her continued support as vice president for external affairs and partnerships into the future.

Please join me in welcoming Laurie, Brian, and Julie, and in thanking Josh and Christy for their many contributions and ongoing leadership as members of my executive team. I know they will provide much support to the new members of our team to ensure an effective transition.

Sincerely,

José Luis Cruz Rivera  
President