



# Serving Arizona Legislative District 26

## **Founded in 1899**, Northern Arizona

University has long been recognized for its delivery of high-quality undergraduate education. With a student population of nearly 30,000 and an average student-faculty ratio of just 21:1, NAU offers an educational experience that is widely accessible and highly personalized to help each student accomplish their goals. Our innovative graduate programs, extensive online and statewide learning options, world-class researchers, and the thousands of Lumberjack alumni who are contributing to the state's economy make NAU an indispensable driver of Arizona's success.

While the residential Flagstaff Mountain campus serves as the university's anchor, online options and more than 20 statewide campuses throughout Arizona offer students options to pursue more than 200 bachelor's, master's, and doctorate programs in their home communities and at a reduced cost. Offering statewide degrees such as nursing, teacher preparation and leadership/management positions NAU students for postgraduate success in communities with critical workforce needs.

## **NAU and District 26**

NAU is dedicated to its mission to educate the next generation of informed, civic-minded, and thriving Arizona citizens, and we are proud that Arizona residents make up nearly 66% of our student population. Today, approximately 240 students and 1,220 alumni call LD 26 their home.

## **Access to Excellence**

Under the leadership of President José Luis Cruz Rivera, NAU aims to be the nation's preeminent engine of opportunity, vehicle of economic mobility, and driver of social impact by delivering equitable postsecondary value in Arizona and beyond. The university's mission is to transform lives and enrich communities through high-quality academics and impactful scholarship, creative endeavors, and public service.

The first and largest step in implementing this new vision for the university was the announcement of a tuition-free college education for every Arizona resident with a household income of \$65,000 or below, assuring tuition will be fully covered by scholarships and financial aid. Approximately 50 percent of Arizona households meet this financial threshold.

## **Impact on Arizona**

- 66% of NAU students are AZ residents.
- Students attend NAU from all 15 AZ counties.
- This year NAU will exceed 200,000 alumni.
- Over 118,500 NAU graduates call Arizona home.
- Top 5 undergraduate programs at NAU:
  - Nursing
  - Psychological Sciences & Psychology
  - Criminology & Criminal Justice
  - Biomedical Sciences
  - Education

## Health Sciences

Northern Arizona University's health sciences programs are among our greatest points of pride. NAU is the only institution in the state that offers public programs for physician assistant (PA) studies, physical therapy (PT), occupational therapy (OT), and dental hygiene. NAU serves a key role in filling industry gaps and increasing access to top-quality healthcare professionals and has grown capacity in allied health programs by over 1500 students in the last decade, or 173%. Looking ahead, NAU continues to accelerate growth in the healthcare professions to meet workforce needs and is prepared to expand by over 1,600 additional students in this area over the next five years.

NAU's Nursing program ranks #2 in Arizona based on cost, reputation and salary and is a particular area of NAU's expansion emphasis. NAU is committed to addressing time to degree with concurrent enrollment programs, accelerated programs and flexible modalities and locations throughout AZ. Nursing program options are being expanded for entry level positions as well as nursing leadership and nurse practitioner education at various sites and in different learning modalities to meet student needs and workforce demands.

In addition to needing an increased healthcare workforce, Arizona struggles with a lack of qualified behavioral healthcare providers. Arizona ranks ninth in the nation for the most healthcare provider shortages, which includes a lack of mental health professionals. In response to this need, NAU is working to expand degree programs in school counseling, mental health counseling, clinical psychology, and social work. NAU is eager to equip Arizona to address this shortage and care for residents across the state who lack access to mental health experts.

## Teachers Academy

NAU's roots as a teachers' college are manifest to this day through our emphasis on excellent teacher preparation, a critical need for the state. For the 2021-2022 school year, the university had just over 2,400 undergraduate students and more than 2,100 graduate students pursuing education related programs. This includes almost 800 students in secondary education programs and over 1,000 students enrolled in the NAU Teachers Academy pursuing a degree tuition-free in return for their commitment to teach in Arizona following graduation.

## Forest Health

NAU is home to one of the top 10 Forestry Schools in the U.S. Part of the largest ponderosa pine forest in the world, Coconino County and NAU are surrounded by a diverse landscape that provides a tremendous educational opportunity for our forestry students. Graduates from the NAU Forestry Program serve in critical position for state, federal and local land management and forestry programs as well as Game and Fish and other wildlife and wildfire management organizations. In collaboration with communities throughout Arizona, NAU supports critical land management planning and fire assessment planning. In 2020, Arizona's three largest wildfires burned nearly 390,000 acres and cost over \$86M. Cost analyses have been conducted regarding forest fire mitigation and forest fire devastation to assist in informing policy makers.