



Office of the President

NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

July 10, 2020

Dear Lumberjacks,

I want to assure every member of our university community that health and safety remain our primary consideration as we return to campus and in our extensive preparations for the fall semester. We continue to enhance our ability to deliver a superior educational experience, whether it be in-person, online, or through our hybrid learning model we call NAUFlex, while adhering to the latest guidance from public health officials.

Health and safety remain our top priority: In consultation with a variety of public health authorities and officials, NAU has developed a comprehensive plan for mitigating health and safety risks, and we are constantly refining that plan as the environment changes and we learn more and receive additional guidance from health authorities. The focus must begin with prevention and education. NAU continues to develop procedures for returning to campus and is accelerating the education of our campus community through regular communications and through faculty, staff, and student training and materials, including campus signage.

Jacks are Back: We have added a new feedback form to our [Jacks are Back website](#), in an effort to provide another channel to ask questions, share perspectives, and ensure that we are providing the comprehensive information you are looking for. We invite you to provide input on any aspect of our return to campus plans, preparations for fall, and ideas for how we can enhance our communications.

Voluntary Retirement or Separation Incentive Program: Another objective we are pursuing is to strengthen our financial sustainability so we can continue to fulfill our educational mission over the long term. Toward that end, we are moving forward on a Voluntary Retirement or Separation Incentive Program. We are offering an incentive payment to faculty who are at least 69 years of age, have 10 years of service, and are interested in retiring by August 1, 2020. This follows our implementation of furloughs, pay reductions, and non-renewals. Eligible individuals are being contacted by Human Resources.

What follows are additional updates of interest to the Lumberjack community.

International students: An announcement made this week through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP), stated that non-immigrant F-1 and M-1 students attending schools operating entirely online may not take a full online course load and remain in the United States. Thankfully, this announcement will not affect current international students who are or will be enrolled in campus immersion courses at NAU.

Students attending NAU on a F-1 visa in Fall 2020 will continue to participate in immersive, synchronous classroom instruction both in-person and through NAUFlex, our hybrid learning option that enables students to participate in the classroom, even while in remote locations.

NAUFlex: We have received emails asking for more information about NAUFlex. I invite you to watch a brief video that provides student and faculty perspectives and features our Dean of the Graduate College, **Maribeth Watwood**. It can be accessed, along with the latest information about NAUFlex, at the [NAUFlex website](#). We will continue to add to the information found on this website.

NAUFlex enables in-person and remote access to almost all classes at NAU without the need for students to specially sign up for this service. Full remote participation through NAUFlex may also be possible and will depend on a student's program of study and specific course schedule. Students interested in signing up for a fully remote semester may call (928) 523-9501 or fill out the online form found in [NAUFlex FAQs](#) under additional resources, and our team will follow up with you to explore available options.

The current surge in new COVID-19 cases in Arizona and throughout the country illustrates the importance of staying vigilant, taking personal responsibility, and following all the necessary steps to protect ourselves and others. Our return to on-campus classes will require everyone's best efforts. Flexibility will also be an important component, as updated information and changes in our environment will guide the adaptation and continued enhancement of our protocols and planning efforts.

I appreciate each of you and your patience, hard work, and creativity as we carefully plan for the return of our students to campus in August.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rita", written in a cursive style.

Rita Hartung Cheng
President