



Office of the President

NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

September 25, 2020

Dear Lumberjacks,

We appreciate Governor Doug Ducey's remarks during his press conference yesterday and his recognition of the roles NAU and our sister universities are playing in the fight against COVID-19.

He also recognized NAU's Center for Health Equity Research (CHER) for its work with northern Arizona communities and the work of Regents' Professor Dr. Paul Keim in leading the Arizona COVID-19 Genomics Union as they trace where and when the virus entered our state, furthering our effort to better understand how the virus spreads.

I was able to be with the governor yesterday as he committed \$8 million to Northern Arizona University, ASU, and UArizona to support our fight against COVID-19. I would like to express my gratitude to Governor Ducey for his leadership and for demonstrating his support for the important work happening at NAU.

Our work includes aggressive testing, tracing, isolating, and quarantining, all of which are essential in supporting our ability to slow the spread of COVID-19. NAU remains committed to mitigation testing for the entire campus community, with an expanded focus on high-risk and asymptomatic students. NAU is testing approximately 13-14 percent of the campus every week. On average, test results have been returned in less than 48 hours, followed by, if necessary, contact tracing in partnership with Coconino County Health and Human Services, then managed isolation and quarantine. Since Sept. 2, we have administered more than 8,500 tests, and we are currently managing 226 positive cases (both on- and off- campus).

I want to acknowledge the support we continue to receive through an extensive partnership with Coconino County. We began our important work together at the beginning of the pandemic when members of the CHER team joined the county monitoring team. Today, our partnership includes an agreement to hire seven new positions at NAU to perform contact investigations in support of county contact tracing.

The additional funding and community partnerships will certainly help, but it does not substitute for the sense of personal responsibility we all need to demonstrate in our daily lives. We will continue to reinforce our expectations—of our students and every member of our community—to adhere to all health and safety protocols. These include the safe practices of wearing masks, physical distancing, proper hygiene, and no gatherings of more than 10 people.

Before I close, I would like to call your attention to two additional items.

I have just released my annual [President's Report](#), which celebrates student success, research initiatives, and recaps the university's response to COVID-19. I hope you'll enjoy reading about the incredible accomplishments of NAU students, faculty, and staff and their impact on the region, the

nation, and the world.

And, on October 3, we celebrate one of our favorite fall traditions—**Family Weekend**. The celebration will be virtual this year, but will be no less rewarding than usual. I would like to thank the organizing committee of students, faculty, and staff for creatively assembling a lineup of exciting **events**—a reflection of our Lumberjack spirit. We hope you will participate with your friends and family, enjoying a newfound sense of excitement from wherever you may be.

As always, thank you for your cooperation. We appreciate your efforts in helping keep our community safe, ensuring students are able to continue classes and achieve their aspirations in this very challenging time for us all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rita". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rita Hartung Cheng
President