



## Statement

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### Arizona Board of Regents Responds to Auditor General Report on NAU Travel Expenses

Phoenix, Ariz. – In response to the recent recommendations and report from the Arizona Auditor General regarding internal control over financial reporting and compliance at Northern Arizona University, Arizona Board of Regents Chair Larry E. Penley states:

“The Arizona Board of Regents takes seriously its oversight of public dollars and insists that Northern Arizona University and President Rita Cheng comply with board travel policies.

“This audit uncovered weaknesses and vulnerabilities that exist in NAU travel documentation. The board has asked President Cheng and NAU to implement measures to strengthen and clarify procedures to ensure adequate and appropriate documentation for travel expenses. The board is vigorously overseeing this process and has asked NAU to align their procedures with best practices to further strengthen their policies.

“The board expects Arizona’s public universities to have national and international collaborations that promote the best interests of Arizona. We appreciate President Cheng’s strategic engagement with partners in Russia that enhance research critical to the needs of Arizona for healthy forests. The NAU School of Forestry is one of the best in the nation, recognized as a national and international leader in natural resource education and forest research. Our forests are a treasure that maintain the watershed that is so essential to Arizona agriculture and our state’s needs for sustainable water supplies.

“Foremost, the board holds itself accountable to ensure compliance with the law and policies at the highest level. Strengthened policies and procedures in NAU’s travel documentation are critical. The board is working closely with NAU to take every precaution to prevent any future lapses.”

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