

## **Rita Hartung Cheng**

Rita Hartung Cheng serves as the 16<sup>th</sup> president of Northern Arizona University. Under her leadership, NAU has engaged in a strategic planning effort to position the university to thrive in the fast-changing environment of higher education. President Cheng's focus is to expand on the university's historical strengths, providing access to an affordable quality education for all students and pursuing the discovery, advancement and application of knowledge in research areas unique and important to the region.

Dr. Cheng has set a bold vision of excellence for Northern Arizona University through student-centered teaching, a robust research environment, an extensive global engagement program, and inclusive support services focused on student success and completion. She is also guiding an expansion of community partnerships focused on strengthening economic and cultural vitality in the region.

Northern Arizona University is at an exciting time of opportunity, transition, and growth in its academic and research mission. More than 30,300 students are enrolled in 200 undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs supported by 4,600 faculty and staff and an operating budget of \$600 million. The university estimates an economic impact of nearly \$1.6 billion to the State of Arizona.

Under President Cheng's leadership, research expenditures have grown by 25 % to \$40 million, and undergraduate and graduate enrollment has grown by nearly 10%. President Cheng has responded to state funding challenges and enrollment growth by leading initiatives, generating administrative efficiencies, enhancing online and community campus operations, improving business operational processes and reducing costs, while protecting the quality of the academic programs.

President Cheng's vision and direction has resulted in a 60 percent increase NAU's education abroad program, increases in the enrollment of international students and is moving NAU closer to becoming the leading university serving Native Americans. She is also guiding an expansion of community and statewide partnerships.

President Cheng was previously Chancellor at Southern Illinois University Carbondale. She spent more than 20 years on the faculty the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, serving in various administrative roles including Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. She is internationally recognized for her research in government and nonprofit accounting.

Dr. Cheng earned a PhD in accounting from Temple University's Fox School of Business and Management, an MBA from the University of Rhode Island and a Bachelors in Business Administration from Bishop's University in Quebec.

Committed to service, Dr. Cheng also serves on a variety of local and national boards.