NAU's historic commitment to local and rural communities across Arizona is evidenced by our partnerships with every community college in every county across the state. The university also delivers programs to government organizations and community partners specific to the workforce needs of the community. Under this budget request, NAU can expand program delivery to local law enforcement agencies, implement more 90/30 programs for the construction and manufacturing communities, and expand our pathways with CTEDs across the state.

On the cover: NAU has a long history as a leader providing access to teacher-preparation programs to Arizona students. We are continuing that tradition with nearly 800 Teachers Academy students.
NAU is a critical partner in guaranteeing Arizona has the talent pipeline it needs to succeed in the new economy. More than 6,000 NAU students are currently pursuing degrees in the health sciences and the university currently operates the only public programs in Arizona for Physician Assistants, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Athletic Training, and Dental Hygiene. State funding for the following areas will address patient care in Arizona to reduce industry shortfalls and prepare the workforce of Arizona’s future.

**Nursing**
NAU offers a variety of nursing programs throughout Arizona and online capturing individuals new to the workforce and those who are pursuing a new career. Expansion of these programs will reduce long student waitlists, and specialization opportunities will provide employers with the specific workforce they need.

**Physical Therapy**
The US Bureau of Labor Statistics reports there are approximately 17,800 annual openings for physical therapists in the United States and growing. Consistently ranked as one of the nation’s top programs for PT, NAU proposes growing its existing program by 25 percent to meet the Arizona and national shortage.

**Physician Assistant**
The university proposes to expand our Physician Assistant Studies program by 20 percent. The allied health professions are serving increasingly important roles in primary care—especially in Arizona’s rural areas. Our program gives preference to Arizona’s residents which translates to 84 percent of our graduates remaining in our state after graduation.

**Behavioral Health**
The Arizona Department of Health Services and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) have designated many parts of Arizona as Mental Health Professional Shortage Areas. The Arizona state average for the ratio of mental health providers to population is 839:1. In 2016, the national average was 640:1. Meanwhile, Arizona’s public schools’ student to counselor ratio at approximately 900:1 nearly doubles the national average. A partnership with the state will help bolster our already excellent and established programs in School Counseling, Psychology, and Social Work and lift NAU’s newly implemented PsyD program in Clinical Psychology.

**Cybersecurity**
Across the region, there are thousands of vacant positions for cybersecurity professionals at all levels. A state investment will assist NAU as it develops and implements bachelor’s and master’s degrees in cybersecurity to provide high-quality programs for students seeking career opportunities at the local and national level.