

## A Message From President James T. Genovese



September 29, 2024

Faculty and Staff,

It has been an eventful and inspiring week across our campus and community. From cultural events and strategic planning to developing and strengthening exciting partnerships, Northwestern continues to grow, thrive, and honor the traditions that have defined us for generations.

### **Symphony Society**

Tuesday evening, I had the pleasure of attending the season opener for the Natchitoches-Northwestern Symphony Society. The concert featured the incredible cello virtuoso John-Henry Crawford, a Shreveport native, performing Haydn's *Cello Concerto No. 1 in C*, alongside works by Mendelssohn, Rossini, and Stella Sung. I was so impressed!

The Symphony Society orchestra, under the direction of Dr. Douglas Bakenhus, is a tremendous educational and cultural resource for both NSU and the broader community. In addition to their five annual concerts, the orchestra is a highlight of the Dear School of Creative and Performing Arts' Christmas Gala.

Continued community support is essential to provide scholarships for these talented musicians and sustain the orchestra's contributions.

### **Visit from Speaker of the House Staff**

Wednesday morning, we welcomed Matthew McKee, a member of Speaker of the House Mike Johnson's staff, to our campus. Matt's wife is a graduate of our nursing school. This visit highlights the strong connection NSU has with our federal representatives. It is a great honor to have our institution represented by one of our nation's top leaders.

Visits like these provide valuable opportunities to showcase our campus and discuss the important role Northwestern plays in the region, especially in areas such as workforce development, education, and community engagement. We look forward to continuing these vital partnerships and working with our federal leaders to advance the university's mission.

### **Strategic Planning Team**

Wednesday afternoon, I received a dynamic and insightful update from the University's Strategic Planning Team. Northwestern has completed its seventh iteration of exercising the University's Institutional Effectiveness (IE) Model as part of the Strategic Plan 2023-2028 - Providing Education of Enduring Value. The past year's focal point addressed sustaining success and refining procedures and processes to strengthen our culture of continuous improvement.

"Assessment Cycle 2023-2024 – Driving Change" reflects strategic and operational planning, allocating budget and resources, and evaluating programs and services, including administrative and experiential learning activities. It includes identifying and measuring outcomes across all objectives, such as strategic focus areas, student learning, service, and core competency outcomes, and analyzing data and assessment results to inform decision-making. Thank you to everyone involved in making these efforts a success!

### **Welcome Reception**

Wednesday evening, Martha and I were honored to be able to visit with many friends of Northwestern at a wonderful reception at the Prudhomme-Rouquier House hosted by my Northwestern tennis teammate and longtime friend Skeeter Salim. We are inspired by the people we are meeting who are excited about our University and the great things that you and our students are doing, and what we can accomplish.

### **Cane River Discovery Center**

Thursday afternoon, I had the pleasure of meeting with Cane River National Heritage Area President and CEO Rebecca Blankenbaker and members of the board to discuss exciting plans for the Cane River Discovery Center. This proposed development, situated near the NSU Grady Erwin Nature Area, will serve as a unique educational and cultural hub, blending the rich history of Natchitoches and Northwestern.

We are thrilled about the potential partnership with the Cane River National Heritage Area to pursue mutually beneficial federal grants. Their dedication to preserving and promoting the historic character of the Cane River region aligns perfectly with our mission to enhance educational and community engagement opportunities. We look forward to working together to secure federal support and make this visionary project a reality for both our campus and the broader community.

### **Lady of the Bracelet**

Thursday evening, I attended the 67th annual Miss Northwestern Lady of the Bracelet Scholarship Program. This is one of our university's treasured traditions and an entertaining show. Congratulations to Jesse Foshee of Provencal for being crowned this year's winner! Jesse, a sophomore majoring in elementary education, is impressively involved on campus as a member of Sigma Sigma Sigma sorority, Demon Dazzlers, NSU Dance Company, Alpha

Lambda Delta Honors Society, the Demon VIP program, and as a Presidential Ambassador and Presidential Honors recipient. Jesse has earned spots on both the President's List and Dean's List. She will proudly represent Northwestern in the Miss Louisiana Scholarship Contest next June in Monroe.

### **Athletics Update**

The football team played valiantly Saturday at 13<sup>th</sup>-ranked Southeast Missouri. Our Demons held the Red Hawks to their lowest point total by far, 19 points, against same-level (FCS) competition this season. This Saturday night takes the Demons to nearby Nacogdoches to play old rival Stephen F. Austin, then we are at home again Oct. 12.

### **Remembrance**

The Northwestern community has experienced great loss with the recent passing of three cherished alumni: Lola Dunahoe, Julia Hildebrand, and Bryan Stamey.

Lola made a lasting impact on our university and the broader community through her service as a member of the University of Louisiana System Board of Supervisors, the NSU Foundation Board of Directors, and as CEO of the Mary R. Gallaspy Charitable Trust #2. Julia, a devoted educator, member of our Hall of Distinguished Educators, and community servant, was the beloved wife of former Northwestern Athletic Director Tynes Hildebrand. They shared 73 years of marriage. Bryan, like his parents David and Brenda Stamey, was a proud Northwestern graduate and an enthusiastic supporter of NSU Athletics, especially our baseball program.

Please keep their families in your thoughts and prayers during this difficult time.

### **Looking Ahead**

I want to extend my gratitude to everyone in the NSU community for your continued dedication to making our university an exceptional place to learn, grow, and serve. Let's keep building on this momentum and work together to ensure a strong future for Northwestern.

Fork 'Em Demons,



**President James T. "Jimmy" Genovese**  
Northwestern State University



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