

A Message From President James T. Genovese



November 17, 2024

Dear Faculty and Staff,

As we approach the holiday season, I want to take a moment to reflect on the remarkable accomplishments, events, and collaborative efforts that have shaped our university this week. Your hard work and dedication to our students and community make Northwestern State University a special place to learn and grow.

Tour of Watson Library

On Wednesday morning, I had the opportunity to tour the Eugene P. Watson Memorial Library, and I was thoroughly impressed by all we have to offer within the 95,000-square-foot facility. The library provides spaces for individual and group study, as well as resources for research, with professional librarians available to assist both in person and remotely. It also houses the Academic Success Center, a computer lab, and the Café DeMon Coffee Shop.

I was particularly impressed by the Cammie G. Henry Research Center, which preserves our university archives, Special Collections, and the Louisiana

Collection. Special thanks to our Director, Megan Lowe, and her dedicated staff for the outstanding work they do to support our students and preserve our history.

NSU's Got Talent and Inferno Pitch

This week showcased the incredible talent, creativity, and ingenuity of our students across multiple platforms. On Wednesday evening, I had the honor of serving as a judge for NSU's Got Talent. The performances highlighted the remarkable skills of our students. Congratulations to all the participants and especially to our winners—you truly showcased what it means to be a Demon!

Earlier that day, the College of Business and Technology hosted the annual Inferno Pitch, an entrepreneurial and business development competition designed to encourage students to embrace entrepreneurship. Congratulations to Valeria Mendieta Montoya, the first-place winner, for her innovative start-up, MendiHealth. Her project, inspired by her personal experiences, uses artificial intelligence to help manage non-communicable diseases through early detection and personalized health tracking, demonstrating how passion and innovation can drive impactful solutions. Valeria will now prepare MendiHealth for the prestigious Entrepreneurship Pelican Cup in 2025, where we hope to see another NSU success story.

Pharmacy Partnership

This week, Northwestern's Department of Biology and Microbiology signed a memorandum of understanding with the University of Texas at Tyler. This partnership will facilitate the transition of our undergraduates to the Doctor of Pharmacy program through UT-Tyler's Early Assurance Program (EAP).

The EAP provides a streamlined pathway for students with a GPA of 3.0 or higher and offers academic and career advising, mentorship, and exposure to diverse pharmacy careers. Students in the program are assured an interview for UT-Tyler's Doctor of Pharmacy program, which significantly reduces the stress

of competing in a highly selective admissions process. This is a tremendous opportunity for our students to advance their academic and professional goals in a supportive and structured environment, representing one of many initiatives by the pre-professional school advisory committee to help students further their education in healthcare fields.

Red River High School Student Visit

On Thursday morning, I had the pleasure of joining Dr. Fran Lemoine for two engaging sessions with visiting students from Red River High School who were interested in student media/journalism. During these sessions, we led activities exploring similarities and differences among peers and colleagues to highlight varying perspectives and strategies for effective communication. It was a wonderful opportunity to connect with these students and provide them with a glimpse of all that Northwestern has to offer. A special thank you to Dr. Jessica Zhang and Dr. Lemoine for organizing these impactful sessions and for their dedication to fostering meaningful interactions with prospective students.

Quarterback Club Lunch

On Thursday, I attended the Quarterback Club lunch downtown with avid Northwestern supporters. Coach McCorkle and Assistant Coach Chris Gistorb shared their enthusiasm and strategy for the upcoming game against McNeese, and for the long-range development of our football program. Their passion for the team and our athletes is evident, and I encourage everyone to support our Demons as we build momentum in athletics. The last luncheon of the season is this Thursday at 11:30 at Merci Beaucoup.

Winter Wonderland Event

Thursday evening, Martha and I enjoyed the Winter Wonderland event organized by the University Programming Council. It was a delightful celebration of the season, complete with activities that brought joy to our students and community. I especially enjoyed engaging with our students during the event, hearing their excitement and sharing in the festive spirit.

E-Lab Veterans Program and Military Appreciation Events

On Friday morning, I joined faculty, staff, and students at the NSU Elementary Lab School for their annual Veterans Day program. The event included a procession of veterans, a keynote address by Operation Enduring Freedom veteran and Purple Heart recipient, Mike Cozad, and recognition of student essay and poster winners. It was inspiring to see our youngest Demons honoring our nation's heroes.

Saturday's military appreciation events further highlighted Northwestern's deep connection to the armed forces. From the display of military vehicles by the Louisiana Army National Guard to the recognition of LTC John Hatley, our military honoree, the day underscored the sacrifices and dedication of our servicemen and women. Special thanks to our 75th Demon Battalion and the veterans' organizations for their contributions to this memorable day.

Enrollment Consultant

Dr. Andy Benoit conducted a two-day site visit this week, meeting with various departments involved in enrollment and recruitment to offer insights and strategies to enhance our processes. Dr. Benoit currently serves as Vice President for Enrollment Management and is a President's Fellow at Texas A&M Corpus Christi. A Gueydan native who grew up in Welsh, he brings extensive experience from his work at several universities in Louisiana, specializing in enrollment management and recruiting.

We are grateful to the students and alumni who participated in the sessions during his visit. Their valuable insights provided a deeper understanding of the student experience and will be instrumental in shaping our future strategies. We look forward to Dr. Benoit's report and recommendations as we continue to prioritize enrollment growth and student success.

Athletics Update

I was pleased to see a fine turnout at Turpin Stadium Saturday afternoon for our last home football game, and the final performance of the Spirit of Northwestern band. Our team competed relentlessly against a much more experienced McNeese squad. The band show was another excellent performance.

We are seeing more reason to believe basketball season is going to be very fun to watch for Demon fans. Our men's team led into the second half Monday night at the University of Oklahoma in a competitive loss, then was just a few seconds away from victory Saturday, losing in overtime at Rice. Women's basketball also had encouraging strides although it dropped road games at Tarleton State and Texas A&M.

The men play home games this week Tuesday and Friday, both at 6:30 in Prather Coliseum.

FUMC Men's Breakfast

Early Sunday, I enjoyed visiting with the First United Methodist Men of Natchitoches at their monthly breakfast. I appreciated the invitation of lifelong Northwestern supporter Sonny Evans and his wife, Evelyn, and was able to share with the group many highlights of faculty and staff achievements, and our vision for continuing to progress this academic year and moving forward.

Louisiana High School Cross Country Championships

If you were on campus or in Natchitoches Sunday, you saw a beehive of activity based around the Walter P. Ledet Track Complex as the LHSAA again stages its state cross country championships at Northwestern. Nearly 330 schools have runners competing, bringing hundreds of athletes and thousands of supporters here for practice Sunday and races Monday. Thanks to coach Mike Heimerman and his track and field staff, our athletic staff and others for their efforts hosting the meet. Let's be sure our visitors feel welcomed.

Thank you all for your continued dedication and commitment to Northwestern.
Each of you contributes to the success of our students, our community, and our
university.

Fork 'Em Demons,



President James T. "Jimmy" Genovese
Northwestern State University



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