

A Message From President James T. Genovese



December 15, 2024

Dear Faculty and Staff,

As the semester draws to a close, I am continually inspired by the dedication and hard work displayed by our university community. This week included opportunities for engagement, planning, and recognition of our students and alumni—all vital to the continued success of Northwestern State University.

SACSCOC Annual Meeting

Sunday evening, I attended the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Reaffirmation Class of 2027 Orientation, as part of the 2024 annual meeting. On Monday morning, I joined other university presidents for breakfast and an engaging session with SACSCOC President, Dr. Belle Wheelan. Throughout the day, I participated in sessions tailored for campus presidents, while our accreditation team focused on specific SACSCOC principles. These discussions confirmed that our deliberate planning approach is on track. Thank you to our team for their dedication and support, and to all of you for your commitment to ensuring our continued accreditation.

AI Lunch and Learn

On Wednesday, the Office of Economic Development and University Advancement hosted a Lunch & Learn on artificial intelligence at Natchitoches Regional Medical Center. This event featured NSU alumnus Monty Chicola, who will be teaching an AI programming course through Northwestern's School of Business, in partnership with IBM, starting January 2025. This hands-on course will equip students and professionals with advanced AI skills that will position them as leaders in their respective fields. Thank you to everyone involved in organizing this impactful event.

Feedback from those attending confirms my conviction that we all need a much better grasp on AI, as it is rapidly becoming a compelling factor in our daily lives. It also strengthens our confidence that Northwestern's 2025 course offerings, initiated by Monty and Dr. Julian Bailes, will provide great benefit and position us in a leadership role regionally and nationally in this capacity.

Leesville/Ft. Johnson Graduation Ceremony

Wednesday evening, we celebrated our Leesville/Ft. Johnson graduates at a joint ceremony with other institutions. These graduates exemplify an unwavering commitment to service, excellence, and education. We are proud to support their accomplishments as they embark on the next chapter of their journey, carrying the skills and knowledge gained at Northwestern into their communities and beyond.

Campus Master Plan

Wednesday morning, we received an update from AQ Studios and Carbo Landscape Architecture on progress towards the development of our campus master plan. The firm shared results from recent engagement sessions and

design workshops, outlining next steps. I am excited to continue this collaboration as we envision the future of our campus.

Lunch with Alphas

On Thursday, I had the pleasure of joining SGA President, T.J. Woodard, for lunch with members of the Theta Chi Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity. It was great to get to know these outstanding student leaders and hear their insights. Their dedication to academic success, community service, and campus leadership is truly inspiring. I look forward to supporting their initiatives in the future.

Southland Conference Joint Meeting/NIL Collective

Thursday afternoon, I participated in a joint meeting with presidents, athletic directors, and chief financial officers from Southland Conference institutions. The discussion centered on the impact of the *House v. NCAA* settlement and related revenue-sharing plans. This settlement has the potential to bring significant changes to college athletics. Northwestern will be deeply involved in planning and assessing the best course of action to ensure our competitive success.

The Fork 'Em Collective, the official Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) collective for Northwestern State University, was announced this week as part of ongoing efforts to enhance opportunities for our student-athletes. Operating within NCAA, Southland Conference, and State of Louisiana guidelines, this initiative allows businesses, donors, and fans to support student-athletes through activities such as personal appearances, charitable engagements, and commercial sponsorships. For more information, or to donate, click [here](#).

Athletics Update

Focus on final exams for our nearly 400 student-athletes appropriately limited the schedule for our basketball teams, who played their only games of the week on Saturday. The women's squad lost at home to a very good Central Arkansas team. Our men traveled out to Berkley and played Cal competitively while bringing home a nice appearance check. Each team has one game before Christmas, with the men playing at home Friday night.

Plans were announced this week for the Feb. 15 dedication ceremony for Mike McConathy Court at Prather Coliseum, including the creation of a scholarship to help a deserving former student-athlete achieve graduation. Honoring Mike McConathy goes far beyond his coaching accomplishments in 23 seasons and speaks to his great impact throughout our campus, community, and around north and central Louisiana.

As we look ahead, commencement ceremonies this week will serve as a reminder of the transformative power of education. Please join me in celebrating our graduates and their accomplishments. Thank you for your vital role in their success of reaching this milestone!

For more information on Fall 2024 Commencement, click [here](#). Thank you for your continued commitment to our students and to Northwestern.

Fork 'Em Demons,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James T. Genovese". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

President James T. "Jimmy" Genovese
Northwestern State University



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