

III | NORTHWESTERN STATE

A Message From President James T. Genovese



February 9, 2025

Dear Faculty and Staff,

As we move further into the semester, I want to take a moment to express my gratitude for your commitment to our students, our university, and our mission. Your dedication is evident in the remarkable events and achievements taking place at Northwestern each week. From leadership development to recruitment efforts, academic excellence, and alumni engagement, we are making great strides together. Below are some key highlights from the past week and important upcoming events.

Leadership NSU

The Student Government Association's Leadership NSU Conference, held January 31, was a resounding success. This event featured a State of the University Address from SGA, including updates on the spring SGA ballot, as well as sessions with national speakers and NSU staff and alumni on advanced leadership principles. Involving 220 student leaders from recognized student

organizations—Greek life, athletics, honor societies, and departmental organizations—this conference continues to serve as a critical platform for cultivating leadership excellence. Established in 2017, Leadership NSU has become an invaluable tradition that empowers our students to lead with vision and purpose.

Alumni Center Visit

On Tuesday, First Lady Martha Genovese and I toured the historic Alumni Center, originally built in 1927 as the residence for the President of Louisiana State Normal College. This beautiful home, now listed on the National Register of Historic Places, serves as the headquarters for the Office of Economic Development and University Advancement, led by Executive Director Laurie Morrow. During our visit, we discussed how their team is cultivating public-private partnerships to benefit the university. These collaborations unite academia, government, and industry to drive innovation, research, and workforce development while providing NSU with essential funding, resources, and expertise. I appreciate the team's commitment to securing opportunities that enhance our students' education and career prospects.

Shreveport Recruiting Reception

Tuesday evening, Martha and I had the pleasure of meeting prospective students and their families at our Shreveport recruiting reception. It was a fantastic opportunity to share all that Northwestern has to offer and to encourage students to become part of our Demon family. I encourage all faculty and staff to participate in this Saturday's N-Side View Day, where we anticipate welcoming over 500 prospective students. Families will tour campus, meet faculty and current students, and learn about academic programs, housing, financial aid, and scholarships. Your involvement makes a significant impact on recruiting students to Northwestern. For more information on N-Side View Day and upcoming recruiting events, click [here](#).

STEM Day

On Friday, I had the great pleasure to welcome over 500 students from 19 different schools to our campus for STEM Day—a day dedicated to exploration, discovery, and innovation. The event was designed to provide exposure to a wide range of STEM fields and allow students to engage in hands-on experiences as well as connect with faculty across the Departments of Biology and Microbiology, Physical Science, Engineering Technology, Veterinary Technology, and the Division of Mathematics. It was truly an honor to see so many bright, inquisitive minds immersing themselves in STEM. I want to extend my deepest gratitude to the high school teachers and students who participated, as well as the faculty, staff, and student volunteers who worked tirelessly to bring this event to life. Your dedication and enthusiasm continue to shape the future of innovation at NSU. I look forward to seeing these students pursue their passions and make their mark on the world of STEM.

Lola Dunahoe Endowed Chair

I am pleased to announce that the family of the late Lola Dunahoe has established the Lola Walker Dunahoe Endowed Chair in Interdisciplinary Studies at Northwestern State University, honoring her lifelong commitment to education, philanthropy, and service. Through their generosity, \$600,000 in private contributions is eligible for \$400,000 in matching funds from the Louisiana Board of Regents Support Fund. Upon approval of the application for matching funds submitted to the University of Louisiana System and Louisiana Board of Regents, a permanent \$1 million endowment will be created to support the endowed chair. Earnings from the endowment will be used to attract distinguished scholars to the university, further enhancing Northwestern's academic excellence and impact. Lola dedicated her life to education, philanthropy, and service, and this endowed chair will honor her legacy by enhancing academic excellence at our university. I extend my sincere gratitude to her family for this meaningful contribution.

NSU Foundation and Alumni Association Board Meetings

Last week, I had the privilege of attending the quarterly NSU Foundation and Alumni Association board meetings. We also gathered for a reception hosted by Steve and Em Horton, where I had the opportunity to connect with board members and discuss ongoing fundraising and outreach initiatives. I want to extend special thanks to NSU Foundation President Tommy Wright and NSU Alumni Association President Leah Middlebrook, as well as all board members, for their dedication to advancing our university. I look forward to collaborating on new initiatives that will benefit our students and the institution.

Positive Enrollment Trends

Spring enrollment at NSU stands at 7,761 students, with increases in first-time freshmen and transfer students. Housing applications for Fall 2025 are also trending upward, with many high-achieving students citing small class sizes, campus involvement opportunities, and affordability as key reasons for choosing NSU. Recruitment is a team effort, and I appreciate everyone's contributions to bringing new students to our university. Let's keep this positive momentum going!

Athletics Update

Congratulations to Coach Anna Nimz and our women's basketball team, which extended its win streak to four and advanced to 9-4 in Southland Conference games with impressive victories at Nicholls and McNeese last week. Five of their last seven regular-season games are in Prather Coliseum, beginning Thursday night at 6:30. Our men's team plays tonight at Nicholls after a hard-fought defeat Saturday at McNeese. They, too, play at home this week, in a Saturday afternoon doubleheader against Stephen F. Austin.

We have a very busy week ahead for Northwestern sports on campus. Our softball and baseball teams make their homefield debuts this weekend on the new artificial turf playing surfaces provided by the generous support of David and Jennifer Thornton and family. Rainouts are unlikely thanks to the new turf! Lady Demon tennis, after falling in its home opener Sunday afternoon against

North Texas, is slated to play home matches Tuesday vs. LSUA and Thursday against ULM.

Congratulations to NSU alumni and former Demon football players Bill Johnson and Derrick Leblanc, who were just hired as defensive line coaches for NFL teams in Chicago and Jacksonville, respectively. Both have extensive accomplishments and prior NFL coaching experience since their playing days in Turpin Stadium. They continue to make us proud.

February 15 – Ireland and McConathy Events

February 15 will be a historic day for NSU, featuring major events honoring longtime staff members Doug Ireland and Mike McConathy:

- **Doug Ireland Scholarship Announcement**
The NSU Foundation will host a ceremony at 11:00 a.m. announcing a \$100,000 contribution from Robert “Skeeter” Salim to establish a scholarship in honor of Doug Ireland. For more details or to contribute, click [here](#).
- **Mike McConathy Court Naming**
During halftime of the men’s basketball game against Stephen F. Austin, Prather Coliseum’s court will be officially named Mike McConathy Court. The women’s game starts at 1:00 p.m., followed by the men’s game at 3:30 p.m., with a tribute lunch between the games. To RSVP for the lunch, submit photos for the slideshow, or contribute to the Mike McConathy Scholarship Fund, click [here](#).

Thank you for your continued commitment to making NSU a place of opportunity, innovation, and excellence. Your hard work is instrumental in shaping the future of our students and university. Let’s continue building on this momentum and working together toward a bright future.

Fork 'Em Demons,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James T. Genovese". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

President James T. "Jimmy" Genovese
Northwestern State University



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