

III | NORTHWESTERN STATE



A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT JAMES T. GENOVESE

March 23, 2025

Dear Faculty and Staff,

This has been one of the most exciting weeks of my presidency, filled with meaningful engagement, powerful events, and remarkable showcases of our university's continued growth and success. I'm proud of the momentum we're building and grateful to share highlights from the week.

Natchitoches-Northwestern Symphony Society

On Monday evening, I joined students, faculty, and representatives from the Natchitoches-Northwestern Symphony Society (NNSS) to celebrate a \$30,000 scholarship allocation benefiting our string musicians. This generous initiative supported 26 student musicians this semester and reflects the society's expanded mission to now include scholarships for all orchestral instruments.

At their concert Tuesday evening, we had the privilege of recognizing Dr. Burt Allen and Dr. Dennette McDermott as the first two Music Professors Emeritus at Northwestern State University. Their collective service to the Department of Music, the School of Creative and Performing Arts and the university spans more than 60 years and has left an enduring legacy of excellence and mentorship.

Special thanks to our Director of Orchestral Activities, Douglas Bakenhus, and NNSS President, Marion Johnston, for their dedication to supporting music education and student achievement.

We are deeply grateful to the 200+ loyal members of the NNSS whose continued generosity makes these scholarships and recognitions possible. Their investment in the arts directly supports the talent, dedication, and dreams of our student musicians.

Red River Special Olympics

Tuesday morning's Red River Area Special Olympic Games at NSU was an inspiring celebration of athleticism, courage, and community spirit. Nearly 165 athletes from across the region participated in the games, supported by law enforcement, local leaders, and our campus community. Our NSU President's Leadership Program led the charge,

with student, faculty, and staff volunteers contributing to an event that truly exemplified what it means to serve others. I was honored to welcome the athletes and their families to our campus.

Beacon Society

Tuesday evening, I welcomed members of our Beacon Society for a focused discussion on recruiting. Emily Miller and Mike McConathy provided an excellent overview of our current strategies. This dedicated group of alumni and supporters continues to offer invaluable input that helps shape the future of NSU. Thank you all for your continued commitment and ideas.

Congressman Cleo Fields Town Hall

Following the Beacon Society meeting, Martha and I attended a town hall meeting in Natchitoches with Congressman Cleo Fields. With a standing-room-only crowd, the Congressman discussed federal priorities, heard from many constituents, and pledged his support for NSU programs. We are grateful for his advocacy and look forward to working with him on initiatives that benefit our university and region.

Discover CENLA Open House

Wednesday morning's Discover CENLA Open House at England Airpark and our CENLA Campus welcomed more than 200 prospective students, community leaders, and partners. It was a powerful day of engagement that included a tour of the AEX Air Traffic Control Tower and a kickoff of the "Fly Local" campaign. Thank you to the faculty and

staff of our CENLA Campus and England Airpark for creating such a dynamic and welcoming experience.

Leadership in the Age of AI

The long-anticipated *Leadership in the Age of AI Forum* arrived Wednesday, drawing a crowd of over 350 attendees eager to hear from our distinguished panel of experts. Dr. Neilank Jha, Dr. Julian Bailes, and Monty Chicola offered compelling insights into the future of artificial intelligence, its ethical considerations, and its expanding influence across disciplines. There was much discussion about practical applications on campus and throughout our community, and transformational opportunities that AI presents us. Conversations between Dr. Jha and NSU faculty and staff provided significant influence on the vision outlined Wednesday evening.

Earlier in the day, Dr. Jha and Dr. Bailes presented *Maximizing Longevity and Performance in College Sports* to more than 300 of our student-athletes, sparking valuable dialogue about brain health, peak performance, and the role of AI and leadership in athletics. The evening forum also marked the launch of the Lola Walker Dunahoe Family Distinguished Lecture Series. We were honored to welcome several members of the Dunahoe family to campus as we commemorated the establishment of the Lola Walker Dunahoe Endowed Chair in Interdisciplinary Studies.

Throughout the week, Dr. Jha engaged with faculty from across campus to begin development of his multidisciplinary leadership course—an exciting initiative that will leverage his expertise in

neuroscience, behavioral economics, and AI to create one-of-a-kind academic experiences for our students.

A special thanks goes to Dr. Greg Handel, who emceed both events and moderated the evening forum, and to local attorney Billy West who moderated the student-athlete discussion. Both have been working behind the scenes for months to bring this remarkable experience to life, and their leadership and dedication made it an unforgettable success.

If you were unable to attend, you can view the full recording of the forum [here](#).

College of Nursing and School of Allied Health Accolades

I'm proud to announce that Dr. Aimee Badeaux has been named permanent Dean of the College of Nursing and School of Allied Health, pending approval from the UL System Board of Supervisors. Her leadership will be instrumental as we continue to elevate our programs and student outcomes.

In other exciting news from the college, our students and faculty have recently achieved significant recognition. At the Louisiana Society of Radiologic Technologists (LSRT) Mid-Winter Conference in Alexandria, two of our junior radiologic sciences students from the Class of 2026—Hailey Stevenson and Jaydon Evans—earned first and second place, respectively, for their outstanding presentations. Faculty members Alicia Book, Katrina Seymore, Tammy Curtis, and Jessica Love also

represented NSU with distinction by presenting at the conference, further showcasing the expertise and engagement of our faculty.

Additionally, Doctor of Nursing Practice student Deborah Carambat, MSN, RN, has been selected as a Graduate Nursing Student Academy (GNSA) Liaison for NSU. She is one of only two students in Louisiana currently serving in this prestigious national role. As a GNSA Liaison, Deborah will help connect her peers to leadership and professional development opportunities while providing feedback to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) on behalf of NSU's DNP student body. This recognition speaks volumes about the quality and leadership potential of our students.

These accomplishments are a testament to the exceptional work happening every day in our College of Nursing and Allied Health.

Demons on the Road – Shreveport and Dallas

Thursday evening in Shreveport, we kicked off our Demons on the Road tour with a wonderful Alumni After Hours event. I enjoyed reconnecting with so many of our graduates and supporters. We had an excellent turnout for Friday night's event in Dallas at the home of alumni Lynn and Lori Kees. Special thanks to Monty Chicola and our Alumni and Development staff for making these events successful. These gatherings provide an excellent opportunity to connect with NSU alumni and supporters. To find an event near you, click [here](#).

Dylan Kyle Poche Memorial Tournament / NSU Bass Fishing Team

I was honored to attend the 9th Annual Dylan Kyle Poche Memorial Tournament this past Saturday—a deeply meaningful event that celebrates the life and legacy of Dylan, a beloved former member of our NSU Bass Fishing Team. This year’s tournament was the most successful to date, with 343 boats participating and an outpouring of support at the weigh-in from family, friends, and fishing enthusiasts from across the region.

Held annually in Dylan’s memory, the tournament supports scholarships for our Bass Fishing Team and serves as a powerful reminder of the lasting impact one young man can have on a community. I was moved by the sense of unity and purpose on display and incredibly grateful to Burt and Shelly Poche and their family for their tireless efforts in organizing this remarkable event year after year.

Adding to the excitement of the day, two of our NSU Bass Fishing Team duos competed in a collegiate tournament on Caney Lake—earning first and third place finishes, respectively. Their success on the water reflects the same passion and dedication that Dylan embodied and serves as a testament to the strength and momentum of our fishing program. What a special day it was for Northwestern’s Bass Fishing Team.

Athletics Update

What an exciting victory Sunday for our Demon baseball team at UNO, 10-9, to capture the Southland Conference series! After the Privateers completed a comeback to take an 8-7 lead in the bottom of

the eighth, our Demons produced the winning three-run rally in the ninth inning and stopped the Privateers just short in the home half. Friday night, NSU sophomore Dylan Marionneux pitched a two-hit shutout to open the series. Our team is home Tuesday hosting Centenary at 6:30 p.m., then again in a three-game SLC series against Nicholls beginning Friday evening.

Following a 6-1 win on Saturday in San Antonio at UIW, our Lady Demon tennis team remains undefeated in conference matches (5-0) heading into Monday's visit to Lamar.

The outdoor track and field season began Saturday at LSU in the Lurline Hamilton Invitational, honoring the first female athlete to receive a scholarship at that institution. Since this is Women's History Month, I want to point out that in 1975, Northwestern became the first higher education institution in Louisiana (including LSU) to provide permanent full athletic scholarships for women, creating 10 - and among the recipients was future Lady Demon basketball coach Pat Nolen Pierson, later chair of our Hospitality and Tourism Management program and today an avid local tennis player. At Saturday's LSU meet, our competitors had an array of personal best performances heading into this week's prestigious Texas Relays.

The Demon softball team continues to impress with its competitiveness against the Southland's best. The first two games of an SLC series against defending champion SLU came down to the final at-bat, and the third was a one-run game going to the sixth inning. None had the desired outcome, but our team, the youngest in the nation, is battling under coach Jenny Fuller.

Congratulations to our Lady Demons basketball team for earning a spot in the Women's National Invitation Tournament, our first postseason appearance since 2016. Although the team did not advance, this marks a major milestone and reflects the turnaround under coach Anna Nimz's leadership. We are incredibly proud of their progress and optimistic about the future of the program.

Congratulations to our friends at McNeese for their NCAA Tournament men's basketball victory over Clemson. It enhances the reputation of the Southland Conference, and also increases the financial share of significant NCAA Tournament revenues shared by all 12 conference member institutions.

Thank you all for your ongoing dedication to our students and our mission. Together, we are building a brighter future for Northwestern State University.

Fork 'Em Demons,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James T. Genovese". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and 'G'.

James T. "Jimmy" Genovese
President
Northwestern State University

