

# III | NORTHWESTERN STATE



## A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT JAMES T. GENOVESE

April 27, 2025

Dear Faculty and Staff,

I hope this message finds you well as we approach the final days of the spring semester. It has been a busy and exciting time on campus, with many events highlighting the achievements of our students, faculty, and community partners. Thank you for all you do to support the success of Northwestern State University.

**Board of Regents and University of Louisiana System Meetings**

Board meetings for the Louisiana Board of Regents (BOR) and the University of Louisiana System (ULS) were held last week.

At the BOR meeting, annual support fund recommendations were approved, including matching funds for the Anne Barry Graves Superior Graduate Scholarship and the Dr. Jack Russell Endowed Professorship and full funding for two departmental enhancement projects. Dr. Daniel Rivera-Vasquez received funding in the amount of \$55,148 for his project, "Acquisition of Ductless Chemical Fume Hoods for Chemistry Undergraduate Laboratories and Outreach Activities at NSU," and Dr. Valerie Salter received \$135,017 for her project, "Enhancement of the Undergraduate Hospitality Management & Tourism (HMT) and Culinary Arts Program." Special thanks to Dr. Chris Lyles for his diligent work in preparing the Anne Barry Graves application and congratulations to Dr. Rivera-Vasquez and Dr. Salter on these well-deserved awards.

At the ULS meeting on Thursday, I am also pleased to report that Dr. Aimee Badeaux was appointed as the permanent Dean of the College of Nursing and Allied Health. Dr. Badeaux's appointment reaffirms our commitment to academic innovation, research excellence, and preparing graduate students to meet the evolving demands of today's workforce.

### **Senior Ring Ceremony**

I was honored to participate in the Senior Ring Ceremony Wednesday evening, celebrating the achievements of our soon-to-be graduates. It

is always inspiring to see the pride in our students as they prepare for the next chapter of their lives. It was equally rewarding to engage with parents and family members and to share in the excitement and joy of this significant milestone.

### **Lisa Chesser Borders Meraki Scholarship**

On Wednesday, I attended the Lisa Chesser Borders Meraki Scholarship presentation, an inspiring event that celebrates creativity, dedication, and compassion. Elizabeth Maynard of Natchitoches was honored as the 2025 recipient of the scholarship, which supports students pursuing degrees in Fine and Graphic Arts at NSU. James Borders established this scholarship to honor his late wife, Lisa Chesser Borders, who exemplified a life of love, faith, and service. We are grateful to the many individuals and community sponsors who support this important initiative, which not only honors Lisa's memory but also invests in the future of our students and university.

### **Cane River National Heritage Area Fundraiser**

On Thursday evening, I attended the Cane River National Heritage Area fundraiser for the Cane River Discovery Center. This project has tremendous potential for our university and community. Special thanks to Rebecca Blankenbaker for her outstanding leadership in organizing such a meaningful event. We value our strong relationship with CRNHA and look forward to working together to bring this important vision to life.

### **Social Work Visit to the Capitol**

Last week, faculty and students from our Social Work Department traveled to Baton Rouge to visit the state capitol. During their two-day visit, students engaged with Department of Child and Family Services staff, toured Capitol Park, attended committee hearings, and observed the legislative process firsthand. Thanks to Senator Alan Seabaugh, they were recognized on the Senate floor and had the opportunity to meet with legislators and state officials. I enjoyed catching up with them at the DCFS offices on Thursday and hearing about their experiences. Northwestern was very well represented. Special thanks to Social Work faculty members Kirby Peddy, Andrew Fultz, Lisa Mount, and Maryanne Candley, and to DCFS staff members Brett Hanemann and Melissa Horton for coordinating this outstanding learning opportunity.

### **43rd Annual Chris Roper Memorial Golf Tournament**

On Saturday morning, I had the honor of welcoming participants at the 43rd Annual Chris Roper Memorial Golf Tournament. It was wonderful to meet Rick and Mary Roper and express our gratitude for all they have done for Northwestern. The tournament honors the memory of Chris Roper, a senior at NSU and top golfer on the 1981 Demon squad, who tragically lost his life in a traffic accident in 1982. Proceeds fund two scholarships awarded annually to deserving Health and Human Performance majors. Over the years, the tournament has generated over \$360,000 for student scholarships, leaving a lasting impact on our university and students.

### **Funding Workshop Empowers Local Entrepreneurs**

Earlier this month, the Hendricks Room hosted a dynamic funding workshop for local entrepreneurs and small business owners. Sponsored by the Entrepreneurial Accelerator Program (EAP), the Launch Network, and the LWCC Foundation, and presented in partnership with NSU's Office of Economic Development, NEDA, and the Natchitoches Chamber of Commerce, the event offered practical strategies for business growth. Participants gained valuable insights into identifying funding opportunities, building financial models, and crafting effective pitch decks. This event supports our broader efforts to develop Innovation Park and strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem in our region.

### **Bright Futures Powered by Cleco: NSU Students Tour Power Generation Facility**

Students from NSU's Institute for Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) chapter, along with Engineering Technology Instructor Craig Caskey and representatives from the Office of Economic Development, recently toured Cleco's power generation facility in Lena. The hands-on experience provided students with valuable insights into electricity generation and energy industry operations. As an Advanced Manufacturing Partner (AMP) for NSU, Cleco plays an integral role in preparing students for careers in high-demand fields. This partnership supports the launch of our new Advanced Manufacturing Associate Degree Program in Fall 2025, further strengthening our commitment to industry-driven education and career readiness. Thank you to Cleco for your ongoing support of NSU students and programs. Learn more about the AMP program at [nsu.la/AMP](https://nsu.la/AMP).

## **Athletics Update**

Tuesday night's 13-3 resounding win at No. 7-ranked LSU drew plenty of national respect and heightened attention on our baseball program, which went on to take an important Southland Conference series win at Stephen F. Austin this weekend. Coach Chris Bertrand's ballclub will play four non-conference games this week, all on the road, before the final homefield series May 8-10 against McNeese.

As the Southland Conference Outdoor Championships approach May 15-17, our track and field teams continue to post outstanding performances. Saturday in Baton Rouge at the LSU Alumni Gold meet, our men's 4x400 meter relay team of Galen Loyd, Vincente Graiani, William Achee and Desmond Duncan ran a 3:06.16, breaking a Demon record that had stood since 2003. Lady Demon star Maygan Shaw lowered her own 400-meter school record considerably from 51.87 to 51.19, a time ranking 11<sup>th</sup> nationally. The team competes at TCU this Saturday.

The Lady Demon tennis team, regular-season co-champions in the Southland, was edged 4-3 Thursday night by SFA in the SLC Tournament semifinals. It has been so impressive to see these student-athletes battle through injuries and hotly contested matches to a championship season.

Our softball season also ended over the weekend, not without one more victory for the nation's youngest team, a 9-1 rout of A&M-Corpus Christi. Four-year senior Bailie Ragsdale provided wonderful

leadership this year, helping coach Jenny Fuller establish the culture that will generate much success ahead.

Spring football concluded with a very encouraging 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Joe Delaney Bowl Saturday morning, with the improvement over last year very apparent. We are on the right path to building a championship program with coach Blaine McCorkle steering our program.

Saturday afternoon at the Collins Family Pavilion, the Demon Brothers Booster Club hosted the first CrawFest, a combined crawfish boil and concert under a big tent. It was a first-class event. With nearly all my life spent in south Louisiana, I know good crawfish, and these were GREAT crawfish. For those like First Lady Martha Genovese who is allergic to crawfish and couldn't enjoy the crawdads, Layne Miller's jambalaya was as good as it gets. The enthusiasm level was at a fever pitch among alumni, supporters, and new friends. Thanks to our personnel who helped with event management. Immense gratitude goes to our former football players involved, the Demon Brothers board of directors and especially Bryan Arceneaux for setting a reach-for-the-stars tone with CrawFest.

Thank you once again for your commitment to the success of our students and our university. It is truly a privilege to serve you and to work alongside each of you as we continue to move Northwestern forward.

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 the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

James T. "Jimmy" Genovese  
President  
Northwestern State University

---

## Northwestern **Now**

You are receiving this email because you are affiliated with Northwestern State University.

© Northwestern State University of Louisiana

<https://www.nsula.edu>

A Member of the University of Louisiana System

Accredited by SACSCOC