

## III | NORTHWESTERN STATE



### A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT JAMES T. GENOVESE

June 29, 2025

Dear Faculty and Staff,

As we approach the midpoint of summer, I want to thank each of you for the energy and dedication you continue to bring to our campus and our students. Important progress is underway across all areas of the university, and I am pleased to share a few key updates from this past week.

#### **ULS Board Meeting**

On Thursday, I attended the University of Louisiana System Board meeting held on the Southeastern campus in Hammond. During the meeting, we heard an engaging presentation from the System's

Management and Leadership Institute. We are especially proud of our NSU participants, Qwontice McDowell and Lindsey Vascocu, for their contributions to this important leadership initiative.

Several items were approved during the board meeting that are significant for our campus:

- Approval to offer a **Bachelor of Fine Arts in Creative Writing**. Since 2019, we have offered a concentration in creative writing within the Bachelor of Arts in English. The growth in enrollment and interest has created the opportunity for this new standalone degree program.
- Approval to enter into a **Ground Lease/Lease Back Agreement** with the Northwestern State University Demons Unlimited Foundation. Through this agreement, a \$1.7 million investment will support the resurfacing of the Leon Johnson Track and the installation of new lighting at the Walter P. Ledet Track Complex.
- Approval of the **appointment of Dr. Mary Edith Stacy as Dean of the Graduate School**, effective April 14, 2025. Dr. Stacy brings a wealth of experience and insight, and we look forward to the leadership she will provide in this important role.

Additionally, the System unveiled its new Strategic Plan, which focuses on four priorities: Operational Excellence and Efficiency, Student Access and Success, Research and Talent Development, and External Affairs. We look forward to working collaboratively with System leadership to align these goals with our institutional priorities.

## **HRSA Award to Expand Behavioral Health Workforce**

I am proud to announce that NSU has received a \$494,755 continuation award from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration through the Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training Program for Professionals. This award is part of a four-year, \$1.97 million initiative led by Dr. Aaron Stigers, Director of the Master of Science/Post-Master Certificate Programs. The project, titled *PMHNPs: Bridging the Behavioral Healthcare Gap*, strengthens our efforts to prepare Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioners to serve rural and underserved communities in northern Louisiana. The program provides interdisciplinary clinical training, integrates telehealth and digital health literacy, supports a diverse behavioral health workforce, and enhances preceptorships through structured training and financial support. This continuation award affirms federal confidence in NSU's leadership and impact in behavioral health education and highlights our commitment to addressing workforce shortages across our region.

## **Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame Weekend**

This weekend, Natchitoches played host to the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony and related events, which drew visitors and sports legends from across the state. For the first time, the ceremony was televised live on Louisiana Public Broadcasting with several vignettes showcasing Natchitoches inserted between inductions. The weekend not only celebrates the incredible athletic achievements of the inductees but also brings a significant economic and cultural boost to our local community. Northwestern is proud to

be a longstanding partner of the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame, and we thank the Hall of Fame Foundation, Louisiana Sports Writers Association (LSWA), and the Louisiana State Museum for their continued collaboration.

### **Athletics Update**

Today is the 42<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the untimely and heroic death of Joe Delaney, who gave his life trying to save three drowning boys, one who survived. Joe may be the greatest athlete to ever represent Northwestern, an All-American in football and track, an NCAA champion in track, and a Pro Bowl running back. Vice President George Bush was among those attending his funeral in Haughton, and President Reagan gave him the country's highest honor for heroism. Please keep his wife Joann, his three daughters, and the Delaney family in your thoughts and prayers.

Our sports information staff received high honors this weekend from the Hall of Fame and the LSWA. Ronnette Pellegrin was surprised as the third-ever (in 12 years) recipient of the Marty Mulé Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame Hero Award, which recognizes her remarkable impact on the LSHOF during the 20 years she has worked as administrative assistant in the Sports Information department and has volunteered with the Hall of Fame.

Sunday, our associate athletic director/sports information director, Jason Pugh, was presented the prestigious Mac Russo/Jack "Britt" Brittain Award, which is awarded to an individual who "contributes to the progress and ideals of the LSWA." Jason also received four awards

in the LSWA's sports information contest, including a first place for feature writing. Assistant Sports Information Director (SID) Brad Welborn earned two awards, one for writing and one for graphic design. Congratulations to Ronnette, Jason, and Brad for this well-earned recognition.

Thank you for your continued commitment to Northwestern State University. Whether you are teaching summer courses, supporting campus operations, mentoring students, or preparing for the fall semester, your work is essential to our success.

Fork 'Em Demons,

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

James T. "Jimmy" Genovese  
President  
Northwestern State University

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**Northwestern Now**

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