



A MESSAGE FROM
PRESIDENT JAMES T. GENOVESE

March 15, 2026

Dear Faculty and Staff,

As we move deeper into the spring semester, it has been encouraging to see so many activities taking place across campus and throughout our region. From legislative meetings and community partnerships to student competitions and alumni engagement, this past week reflected the many ways Northwestern State continues to serve our students and communities.

Southland Conference Board of Directors Meeting

On Monday and Tuesday, I attended the Southland Conference Men's and Women's Basketball Tournaments in Lake Charles, where several

Southland Conference presidents and institutional leaders were also present to support our student-athletes and championship competition. While in Lake Charles, I also participated in the Southland Conference Board of Directors meeting. As the landscape of college athletics continues to evolve rapidly, we received briefings on developments related to Name, Image, and Likeness, the transfer portal, and other issues facing collegiate athletics. These changes could have significant implications for institutions across the country. However, Southland Conference members remain committed to working collaboratively to provide the best possible experience for our student-athletes.

Legislative Meetings

On Tuesday afternoon, I traveled to Baton Rouge for meetings with members of our regional legislative delegation, including State Representative Jason DeWitt, State Representative Gabe Firment, who serves as Chair of the House Insurance Committee, and State Representative Jack McFarland, Chair of the House Appropriations Committee, as well as key legislative leaders including State Representative Tony Bacala, Chair of the House Ways and Means Committee, and Julie Emerson, Chief of Staff to Governor Jeff Landry.

During these conversations, we reviewed progress on several important projects, including improvements to Warrington Hall and the continued development of Innovation Park. We also discussed the importance of continued state support for academic programs that prepare students to meet Louisiana's workforce needs and provide strong educational opportunities for military service members and

their families. I am grateful for the support and advocacy of our legislators as we work together to advance initiatives that strengthen our campus, expand educational opportunities, and support student success.

Recreation Complex Enhancement Fund

I am pleased to share that Jarrod Cox, Director of Northwestern Hills Golf Course, has established a new program enhancement fund for the Robert Wilson Recreation Complex. This fund will support improvements, programming, and future opportunities connected to the complex and its activities. Initiatives such as this provide a great example of how targeted giving can directly support specific programs that benefit our students and community. I encourage other departments, organizations, and supporters to consider similar enhancement funds that help strengthen the programs they care about most. These efforts allow alumni and friends of Northwestern to invest directly in areas that make a meaningful difference. To make a contribution to the NSU Recreation Complex Enhancement Fund, click [here](#).

Demon Battalion Hosts Successful Demon Challenge Competition

Congratulations to the Demon Battalion for planning and executing another successful Demon Challenge competition on Friday. Now in its third year, the event brings JROTC students to campus to compete in a series of physical and knowledge-based challenges. This year, more than 50 JROTC cadets participated, representing six high schools: DeRidder, Grant, Haughton, Leesville, North Caddo Magnet, and

Pineville. The competition provided an action-packed day of teamwork and leadership development for participating students while also serving as an important recruiting opportunity for Northwestern State University and the NSU ROTC program. A special thank you to the Demon Regiment Alumni, Athletics, Campus Police, and NRMC staff for their support in making this event possible.

BOM Bank Operations Center

On Thursday, I joined NSU Cheerleaders, the Demon Dazzlers, and the NSU Pom Line, along with Miss Louisiana Volunteer 2026 Jesse Foshee, representatives of the Natchitoches Chamber of Commerce, city and parish leaders, several businesses, and representatives from the offices of Senator John Kennedy and Lt. Governor Billy Nungesser to celebrate the opening of BOM Bank's new state-of-the-art operations center. Founded in 1903 as the Bank of Montgomery, BOM Bank has grown over the past 123 years to more than \$1 billion in assets with branches across Natchitoches, Grant, Rapides, Bossier, Caddo, Bienville, and Sabine parishes as well as several cities in East Texas. BOM Bank is the official bank of Northwestern State University and has been a great partner. We congratulate the entire BOM team on the opening of this impressive facility as well as the 20th anniversary of BOM Financial Services, which was also celebrated this past week.

Club Sports

On Thursday, I met with Patric Dubois and Jason Stelly for an update on club sports at Northwestern. Currently, NSU offers 11 club sports,

providing students with additional opportunities aside from the NCAA to compete, build friendships, and remain engaged in campus life. We discussed opportunities for expanding these programs and identifying ways to strengthen support for club sports moving forward. These organizations play an important role in the student experience and can also serve as a valuable recruiting tool by attracting students who want to remain active in sports while pursuing their academic goals.

Northwest District Literary Rally

The Northwest District Literary Rally was held Saturday, welcoming participants from 38 high schools across the region. Academic proctors and staff administered 77 tests across 49 subject areas, with 2,003 printed exams prepared for 1,544 registered students. The annual event also featured hands-on experiential sessions hosted by several academic departments, including Psychology and Addiction Studies, Social Work, the School of STEM, School of Business, CONSAH, School of Education–Educators Rising, Hospitality Management and Tourism (HMT), and ROTC.

Staff members from Testing, Counseling Services, Career Services, Student Engagement, Institutional Technology, Recruiting, Health Services, Accessibility and Disability Support, and TRIO Support Services volunteered throughout the day to help ensure the event ran smoothly. Student volunteers from Recruiting and Student Government also played an important role in supporting the day's activities. In addition, the Office of Student Engagement hosted an organizational browse that allowed visiting students to learn more about student involvement opportunities beyond the classroom.

This collaborative effort across departments and divisions ensured a smooth and productive experience for all participants. Special thanks to Dr. Yonna Pasch, Northwest District Rally Coordinator, and committee members Star Hamous, Peyton Romero, Emily Miller, Jorge Rodriguez, and Zoe Johnson for their leadership in organizing this successful event.

Department of Music Collaboration with Rapides Symphony Orchestra

Yesterday, seventeen Northwestern State University faculty members, students, and alumni performed as part of the Rapides Symphony Orchestra in a concert entitled *Aspiration*. The orchestra was joined by the Red River Chorale and Northwestern's own Choral Artists under the direction of Dr. Shane Thomas.

Graduate student Larheen Lazo and Dr. Shane Thomas were featured as soloists in the concert's closing selection, "Make Our Garden Grow" from *Candide* by Leonard Bernstein. Another highlight of the evening was Grieg's *Piano Concerto in A Minor*, Movement I, performed by José Luzuriaga Herrera, a first-year NSU piano performance major and Youth Division winner of the Rapides Symphony Concerto Competition. José studies piano with Associate Professor of Music Dr. Francis Yang.

Events such as this highlight the tremendous talent of Northwestern's Department of Music while providing meaningful performance

opportunities for our students and strengthening Northwestern's partnerships with arts organizations across the region.

Athletics Update

Our baseball, softball, and tennis teams made this an exceptionally successful week, while there are high hopes for our women's basketball team to receive a postseason tournament bid for the second consecutive year.

Our softball program took a significant step forward this weekend by winning its three-game series at the Demon Diamond against McNeese. The Cowgirls came to Natchitoches ranked 19th in the NCAA's Ratings Percentage Index after impressive non-conference wins. Coach Jenny Fuller rebuilt our roster following her first season here, and the turnaround is now apparent. Combined with a 10-0 victory at Grambling last Tuesday, her team has won 11 of its last 14 games after a pair of walk-off victories over McNeese Friday night (7-6) and Saturday afternoon (1-0). It is Northwestern's first series win over McNeese since 2015 and just the fifth conference series loss for the Cowgirls against any Southland Conference opponent since 2021.

The Demon baseball team swept Texas A&M-Corpus Christi in a three-game series at Brown-Stroud Field, extending its win streak to six games. Sunday's 4-3 triumph marked the seventh time this season Coach Chris Bertrand's club has prevailed in its final at-bat. The Demons won 5-1 Friday night and 10-4 Saturday, following a 13-2 victory at home Tuesday night over Alcorn State. In the current NCAA

RPI rankings for baseball, Northwestern leads the conference and is ranked 56th nationally.

The defending Southland Conference co-champion Lady Demon tennis team won both of its home matches this weekend, earning a third straight 4-3 victory Friday over a strong UNO team before defeating Nicholls 6-1 on Sunday. Coach Marcos Morelli's squad is 8-4 overall and leads the Southland with a 4-0 record.

Although our women's basketball team was defeated Monday in the second round of the Southland Tournament quarterfinals, the Lady Demons are likely to receive an invitation to the WNIT following their best season in more than a decade. Their 18 wins are the most for the program in 10 seasons. In six years, Coach Anna Nimz has rebuilt the program from the ground up, and a second consecutive postseason tournament appearance now appears likely.

Looking Ahead

Twenty years after one of the most memorable moments in March Madness history, the "Demons of Destiny" will be honored during an anniversary celebration on March 17 from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. at the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame and Northwest Louisiana History Museum. The event will feature former head coach Mike McConathy and members of the 2005-06 Demon basketball team, whose NCAA Tournament victory over third-seeded Iowa on Jermaine Wallace's last-second three-pointer captured national attention on St. Patrick's Day in 2006 and ultimately led to the General Motors Game Changing Performance Award for the tournament, which supports a fully

endowed academic scholarship at NSU. Please join us to celebrate this unforgettable moment in Northwestern history.

The 10th Annual Dylan Kyle Poche Memorial Bass Tournament will take place March 28 at Cypress Bend Park. Since the first tournament was organized following Dylan's tragic passing in 2016, the event has continued to honor his legacy by supporting scholarships at Northwestern State University. The tournament will include family activities such as kids fishing from the bank, food, raffles, inflatables, and live music. The registration deadline is March 27 at 2:00 p.m. Additional information and online registration are available [here](#).

Upcoming Creative and Performing Arts events include the NSU Opera Theater ensemble, under the direction of Dr. Robert Cardwell, presenting *Hansel & Gretel* March 20–21 at 7:30 p.m. in Magale Recital Hall. The Natchitoches-Northwestern Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Dr. Douglas Bakenhus, will present a concert featuring NSU student Concerto Competition winners on Tuesday, March 24, in Magale Recital Hall.

A reminder that Flavor of Louisiana, our signature spring seafood celebration and fundraiser, will take place this Friday, March 20, at Prather Coliseum, with Happy Hour starting at 5:00 p.m., and with the main evening starting at 6:00 p.m. The event brings together outstanding restaurants from across the state and serves as an important fundraiser supporting student scholarships and university initiatives. Click [here](#) for more information or to purchase tickets.

For more information about upcoming events and activities at Northwestern State University, click [here](#). Thank you for the continued dedication each of you brings to Northwestern State University and to our students. Your work makes a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve.

Fork 'Em Demons,

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

James T. "Jimmy" Genovese
President
Northwestern State University

Northwestern Now

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