

## III | NORTHWESTERN STATE



### A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT JAMES T. GENOVESE

May 10, 2026

Dear Faculty and Staff,

As we approach Spring Commencement, this is an exciting and meaningful time across our campus. The final weeks of the semester have been filled with celebrations of student achievement, hands-on learning experiences, community engagement, and continued momentum across the university. I want to thank each of you for the role you play in supporting our students and advancing Northwestern's mission every day. I would like to wish all of the NSU mothers in our NSU family a Happy Mother's Day.

**Toast for Tourism with Visit Natchitoches**

Northwestern's Office of Economic Development and faculty from our Hospitality Management and Tourism (HMT) program recently participated in "Toast for Tourism" hosted by Visit Natchitoches. The event provided valuable insight into the impact of tourism across our parish, including visitor trends, annual highlights, and strategic marketing efforts that continue to elevate Natchitoches while supporting local businesses and experiences.

A highlight of the evening was celebrating two of our own Northwestern students who have contributed to Visit Natchitoches over the past several years. Faith Hinds, an HMT major graduating this week, will soon begin her career in Alaska. Tyson Warren, who is continuing his studies at Northwestern, was recently promoted to Sports Development Coordinator. We are proud of both students and excited for the opportunities ahead of them.

### **Cane River Children's Discovery Center**

Northwestern was proud to participate in the Cane River Mini Golf Classic last week, a fundraising event supporting the creation of the Cane River Children's Discovery Center. The center is envisioned as a hands-on children's museum and visitor center that will celebrate the unique natural resources, agriculture, history, and cultural heritage of the Cane River region. Representing the university as Team Go Demons! were Trenton O'Neal, Edgar Martinez, Dr. Chris Lyles, and Dr. Damien Tristant. Jill Leo also volunteered during the event, and Corbin Covher provided a painting demonstration. We appreciate everyone who participated and supported this important community initiative.

## **Commencement Award Ceremonies**

Last week, our School of Education honored graduating seniors in advance of Spring Commencement. Congratulations to all of the award recipients and graduates recognized during the ceremony. Our Department of Military Science and Leadership also hosted its spring awards program for the 76th Demon Battalion. In addition to recognizing outstanding cadets, several commissionees will take the oath of office this week in conjunction with commencement exercises. Special thanks to our faculty and staff for organizing these meaningful events honoring our graduates and student leaders.

## **Celebrating Nurses Week 2026**

As we celebrate National Nurses Day and Nurses Week 2026, May 6-12, we are reminded of the extraordinary impact nurses have at Northwestern State University across Louisiana and throughout the nation. This year's theme, "The Power of Nurses," recognizes the important role nurses play through care, leadership, education, advocacy, innovation, and service. At Northwestern, that impact is reflected in a nursing community supported by approximately 100 faculty and staff members serving more than 1,700 nursing students across our Associate of Science in Nursing, Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Master of Science in Nursing, Post-Master's Certificate, and Doctor of Nursing Practice programs. Through these programs, Northwestern continues to prepare future registered nurses, nurse practitioners, nurse anesthetists, and nursing leaders.

This Nurses Week is especially meaningful as it comes just before Spring Commencement, where CONSAH will celebrate nearly 240 nursing graduates. These graduates will continue Northwestern's long tradition of producing the finest nursing service, leadership, and compassionate care throughout the state. Since welcoming its first baccalaureate nursing students in 1949, Northwestern State University has conferred more than 17,000 nursing degrees. Today, our graduates serve in hospitals, clinics, advanced practice settings, educational institutions, and communities across Louisiana and beyond. To our nursing faculty, staff, students, alumni, preceptors, clinical partners, and all nurses who serve with compassion and dedication, thank you for the important work you do each day. Happy Nurses Week 2026.

### **Forestry Field Experience**

Last week, a unique field experience near Natchitoches gave student leaders and Gallaspy Scholars an up-close look at forestry, land management, and wildlife conservation in Louisiana. Students joined trustees of the Mary R. Gallaspy Charitable Trust #2, along with forestry professionals and conservation experts, for a day focused on how managed forests support healthy ecosystems, wildlife habitats, and economic sustainability. Representatives from the American Bird Conservancy, Echo Forestry, Walsh Timber, and RoyOMartin helped lead discussions and demonstrations throughout the visit. Students were able to see firsthand how forestry management decisions impact wildlife conservation, water quality, soil protection, and long-term land stewardship.

The experience highlighted Northwestern's commitment to practical, hands-on learning opportunities that connect classroom concepts with real-world applications. Students gained a greater understanding of how fields such as science, conservation, agriculture, business, technology, and public service intersect in meaningful ways across Louisiana's working forests and natural resources. We appreciate all of the organizations and professionals who helped make this valuable experience possible for our students.

### **Business Students Supporting Regional Organizations**

This spring, students in Northwestern's College of Business & Technology partnered with several regional organizations on projects that provided valuable real-world experience while supporting community needs. Student teams worked with Timber Ridge Adventure Park, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Central Louisiana, St. Mary's Residential Community, and the Natchitoches Skating Rink on projects focused on organizational growth, operations, marketing, and community engagement.

These partnerships reflect Northwestern's commitment to experiential learning by giving students opportunities to apply classroom knowledge while working directly with businesses and nonprofit organizations across our region. We appreciate these organizations for partnering with our students and thank Dr. Scott Wysong, Dean of the College of Business & Technology, for his leadership in creating these opportunities. Organizations interested in future student projects are encouraged to contact Dr. Wysong at [wysongs@nsula.edu](mailto:wysongs@nsula.edu).

## **Athletics Update**

Tuesday, we received excellent news from the NCAA. In addition to capturing four conference championships, Northwestern's student-athletes also delivered in the classroom during the 2024-25 academic year. They combined for a 986 overall score in the NCAA's annual Academic Progress Rate calculation, the program's second-highest score since the metric was introduced in 2003.

The APR provides a real-time measure of a program's academic success each semester by tracking the progress of scholarship student-athletes. The metric accounts for eligibility and retention and provides a benchmark for each Division I team's performance compared to its peers.

Overall, seven Northwestern sports programs, baseball, men's basketball, men's cross country, softball, soccer, tennis, and volleyball, recorded perfect 1,000 scores, more than double the number from the 2023-24 report. Our other sports also showed notable progress. The 986 overall mark qualified Northwestern to receive the NCAA Academic Unit Award, a financial incentive presented to athletic departments that post a score of 985 or greater. Congratulations to our student-athletes, coaches, staff, and faculty on this milestone accomplishment.

Our Demon baseball team begins Southland Conference Tournament play Thursday at 1 p.m. in Beaumont, Texas, against UT Rio Grande Valley. In the final regular-season series on the road, McNeese overcame exceptional pitching performances by Dylan Marionneaux

and Kevin Robinson to record one-run extra-inning victories. Coach Chris Bertrand's squad finished tied for fourth in the Southland Conference standings.

Our outstanding track and field teams begin the Southland Conference Outdoor Championships Thursday in Nacogdoches, Texas, following many impressive regular-season performances. The Lady Demons are seeking a fourth consecutive Southland Conference Outdoor title, and the Demons expect to contend for the men's team championship. While individual NCAA Championship competition still lies ahead, this week represents the culmination of the hard work and preparation that Coach Mike Heimerman, Coach Adam Pennington, their staffs, and our student-athletes have focused on throughout the spring. Best of luck to all of our NSU teams.

### **Looking Ahead**

Northwestern is hosting a variety of camps and student groups throughout the summer. From science and the arts to athletics and career exploration, our summer camps offer opportunities for children of all ages and interests to engage with our campus. These programs provide meaningful educational experiences while also helping young students and their families become familiar with the opportunities available at Northwestern. More information about summer camps can be found by clicking [here](#).

As we wrap up the semester, we look forward to celebrating our graduates during Spring Commencement and welcoming alumni back to campus for the Class of 1976 Golden Jubilee Reunion this week.

For more information, including ceremony times and livestream access, click [here](#).

Thank you again for your hard work and dedication throughout the semester. The accomplishments of our students and the continued progress of our university would not be possible without your commitment to Northwestern State University. I look forward to celebrating with our graduates and continuing the important work ahead as we prepare for another exciting summer and fall semester. We must keep up our momentum, so I ask each of you to go out and “tell the NSU story.” Unquestionably, NSU is the best regional university, at the best price, and with the best access.

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'.

James T. "Jimmy" Genovese  
President  
Northwestern State University

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