

## III | NORTHWESTERN STATE



### A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT JAMES T. GENOVESE

May 17, 2026

Dear Faculty and Staff,

As another academic year comes to a close, I want to take a moment to thank each of you for your dedication, professionalism, and commitment to our students and university. The final weeks of the semester are always filled with celebrations, accomplishments, and important milestones, and this past week provided many opportunities to reflect on the strength and spirit of Northwestern State University.

#### **Spring Commencement**

Commencement is one of the most joyful and meaningful traditions we celebrate at Northwestern. It is a time to recognize the hard work,

resilience, and accomplishments of our students as they transition into the next chapter of their lives. Last week, over the course of three ceremonies across two days, we conferred 886 degrees to graduates representing every college and academic program. The energy, pride, and spirit of Northwestern were on full display throughout the ceremonies.

On Tuesday evening, I had the honor of participating in the Stole Ceremony for our student-athlete graduates. This tradition celebrates those who have excelled both academically and athletically while demonstrating leadership, discipline, and a strong commitment to the university. Their success reflects the very best of Northwestern State University.

We were also honored to welcome back members of the Class of 1976 to celebrate their Golden Jubilee. On Tuesday evening, I joined them for a reception, and during Wednesday morning's commencement ceremony, these alumni were recognized and presented with their 50-year diplomas. It was a pleasure to host a reception and breakfast in their honor and later visit with them during the annual 50+ luncheon, where I shared a state of the university update. Their return to campus served as a meaningful reminder of the lifelong connection our alumni share with Northwestern.

Following Thursday afternoon's commencement ceremony, I attended a commissioning ceremony hosted by our Department of Military Science, where ROTC Cadets Christian Holmes of Shreveport, Ethan Jones of Montgomery, Lawson Turner of Houghton, and Layla Wood of Gheens were commissioned as second lieutenants in the United

States Army. Congratulations to these outstanding graduates as they begin lives of leadership and service to our nation.

Our spring commencement ceremonies were a powerful reminder of the lasting impact of a Northwestern education. From our newest graduates to our Golden Jubilee honorees, the Demon spirit continues to thrive across generations. Congratulations again to the Class of 2026. We look forward to their continued success as alumni of this great institution.

### **NSU Hosts Technology in Today's Investigations Course for Law Enforcement**

On Monday and Tuesday of this week, Northwestern State University welcomed law enforcement officers from across the region to campus for the "Technology in Today's Investigations" course. The training provided detectives and public safety professionals with instruction on emerging crime trends, digital evidence, and modern investigative techniques. The course highlighted the growing role technology plays in criminal investigations and reinforced the importance of continuing education opportunities for law enforcement agencies. It also demonstrated Northwestern's ongoing commitment to supporting public safety, workforce development, and regional partnerships through specialized professional development initiatives. Special thanks to Dr. Daniel Gordy, the Office of Economic Development and University Advancement, and Many Police Department Chief Cheryl Wooley for coordinating efforts to make this training opportunity possible.

## **NSU Faculty and Staff Attend Rally the Region Workforce Summit**

Northwestern State University was well represented Tuesday at Rally the Region, a regional workforce and economic development summit hosted by Louisiana Central in Alexandria. The event brought together education, business, industry, and community leaders from across Central Louisiana to discuss strategies for strengthening workforce pipelines, expanding regional collaboration, and enhancing economic competitiveness. Attendees heard from nationally recognized workforce expert Mark C. Perna, who emphasized the importance of helping students connect education to purpose, career pathways, and long-term success in an evolving workforce landscape. Northwestern's participation reflects the university's continued commitment to aligning education, workforce development, and regional economic growth through strategic partnerships and community engagement.

## **DNP Student Receives Oncology Nursing Foundation Scholarship**

Northwestern State University College of Nursing and School of Allied Health student Rae Gardiner, MSN, RN, OCN, MEDSURG-BC, AMB-BC, NEA-BC, has been selected by the Oncology Nursing Foundation as a recipient of the Clinical Doctoral Academic Scholarship for the 2026-2027 academic year. Gardiner is pursuing her Doctor of Nursing Practice degree at Northwestern State University with a concentration in Executive Leadership and currently serves as a Nursing Director in Oncology. The \$7,500 scholarship recognizes nurses who demonstrate academic achievement, commitment to oncology nursing, and meaningful contributions to the profession. Congratulations to Rae Gardiner on this outstanding achievement and recognition.

## **Alicia Book Named 2026 Nurse of the Year**

Northwestern State University's College of Nursing and School of Allied Health is proud to recognize Alicia Book, MSN, RN, CENLA Campus CONSAH Director, as the 2026 Nurse of the Year. Book is being honored for her leadership, commitment to student success, and contributions to nursing education and the nursing profession. Since joining Northwestern nearly 10 years ago, she has served as an educator, mentor, and leader while supporting students, faculty, and academic programs across the CENLA campus. A proud Northwestern alumna, Book earned both her Bachelor of Science in Nursing and Master of Science in Nursing degrees from the university and is currently pursuing a Doctor of Education in Adult Learning and Development at Northwestern State University. In accepting the recognition, she expressed heartfelt gratitude and reflected on the colleagues, leaders, and team members who have supported and influenced her growth as an educator, nurse, and leader. Congratulations to Alicia Book on this well-deserved recognition.

## **Athletics Update**

We are extremely proud of our track and field program following an outstanding performance at the Southland Conference Outdoor Championships. The women's team captured its third consecutive conference outdoor title Saturday night, while the men's team earned a runner-up finish in the 12-team standings. Northwestern's student-athletes delivered exceptional performances throughout the meet, with numerous individual and relay champions along with several other

top finishers. Congratulations to coaches Mike Heimerman, Adam Pennington, their staff, and most importantly our remarkable student-athletes for their dedication and accomplishments. A large contingent of Demons will now advance to NCAA East Regional competition in two weeks with the opportunity to qualify for the NCAA National Championships in June.

Our baseball season concluded Saturday at the Southland Conference Tournament following a highly competitive and successful four-month season. The Demons remained in contention for the Southland Conference regular-season title until the final weekend of conference play and represented Northwestern with determination and resilience throughout the year. Congratulations to first-team All-Southland Conference selections Dylan Marionneaux and Brody Trosclair, along with second-team all-conference honorees Brooks Leonard and Thomas Marsala III. Trosclair was also named Southland Conference Freshman of the Year, marking the first time since 2014 that a Northwestern student-athlete has earned that recognition.

### **Looking Ahead**

Congratulations to all of you on wrapping up another successful semester. As we transition into the summer months, we look forward to welcoming new students and their families during our Freshman Connection sessions, which begin this week. We will also continue working closely with academic units to assess needs and finalize our strategic enrollment goals for the coming year. Summer provides an important opportunity for planning, preparation, and continued progress as we build on the momentum of this academic year. Thank

you for the many ways you support our students, strengthen our campus community, and advance the mission of Northwestern State University.

Thank you again for your hard work and dedication throughout this semester. The accomplishments we celebrate each week are possible because of the commitment and passion of our faculty and staff. I hope each of you has an opportunity to enjoy a productive and rewarding summer as we continue moving Northwestern forward together.

Fork 'Em Demons,



James T. "Jimmy" Genovese  
President  
Northwestern State University

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