

III | NORTHWESTERN STATE



A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT JAMES T. GENOVESE

May 31, 2026

Dear Faculty and Staff,

As we conclude the month of May and prepare for a busy summer, I want to thank each of you for the dedication and commitment you continue to demonstrate on behalf of our students and university. Even as the spring semester has ended, our campuses remain active with orientation programs, academic initiatives, student success efforts, athletics, and community engagement activities that continue to advance Northwestern State University's mission. This past week provided several examples of the momentum we are building as we prepare for the upcoming academic year.

Freshman Connection

This past week we welcomed another outstanding group of incoming students and their families during our second Freshman Connection session. The enthusiasm and excitement displayed by these future Demons serves as a reminder of the important role we all play in helping students begin their Northwestern journey with confidence and a sense of belonging. Freshman Connection continues to provide students with a seamless transition to university life through academic advising, course registration, and introductions to the many support services available across our campuses. Early participation and attendance numbers remain encouraging and reflect strong interest from students preparing to enroll this fall.

Lauren Vaughn Memorial Scholarship

On Tuesday, I joined representatives from the College of Nursing and School of Allied Health and the Office of Alumni and Development for a special presentation recognizing the continued impact of the Lauren Vaughn Memorial Scholarship. This year's scholarship recipient is Alexander Guillory of Natchitoches, a student in Northwestern State University's accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing program at the Cenla campus. Alexander previously earned a degree from Northwestern and spent five years teaching before pursuing a career in nursing. A 4.0 student, he plans to work in critical care or cardiovascular nursing after graduation.

The scholarship honors the memory of Lauren Vaughn, who was enrolled in NSU's accelerated nursing program and scheduled to graduate in 2023 before her life was tragically cut short when she was

killed in an automobile accident caused by a drunk and impaired driver. Through the generosity of the Vaughn family and the Lauren Vaughn Foundation, the scholarship continues to support future nursing professionals while promoting awareness about the dangers of impaired driving. This year, the foundation contributed an additional \$30,000 to the scholarship endowment through proceeds from the annual LV5K. The event not only raises scholarship funds but also supports educational outreach efforts led by Lauren's mother, Bridget Vaughn, who shares Lauren's story with high school students through the Louisiana State Police Sudden Impact Program. I want to thank Bridget Vaughn, the Vaughn family, and everyone involved with the Lauren Vaughn Foundation for transforming tragedy into a lasting legacy that supports students and promotes safer communities. Their commitment is making a meaningful difference in the lives of future healthcare professionals.

The American Revolution, Natchitoches, and Your Ancestry

As part of the nationwide America 250 commemoration, Northwestern State University's Creole Heritage Center will host "Galvez & The American Revolution: Natchitoches' Connection" on Saturday, June 6, in Kyser Hall. This free community event will explore Louisiana's role in the American Revolution and highlight resources available to individuals interested in learning more about their family history. Participants will have an opportunity to learn from representatives of the Cammie G. Henry Research Center, Fort St. Jean Baptiste State Historic Site, the Natchitoches Genealogical and Historical Association, and the Daughters of the American Revolution Cane River Chapter. The event will also include opportunities for

visitors to explore the Williamson Museum and Creole Heritage Center, visit with historians and genealogists, and utilize a free scanning station to preserve family photographs and documents. I would like to thank Dr. Kent Peacock and the staff of the Creole Heritage Center for organizing this unique program. Special thanks as well to Louisiana Public Broadcasting, NSU's School of Social Sciences and Applied Programs, and the Natchitoches Area Convention and Visitors Bureau for their partnership and support.

Rhodes Properties & Development Demon Dream Home Giveaway

NSU Athletics recently announced an exciting new partnership with Rhodes Properties & Development through the Demon Dream Home Giveaway. With the purchase of a \$100 raffle ticket, participants have the opportunity to win a brand-new home valued at \$265,000. Proceeds from the fundraiser will support Northwestern State Athletics through the Demons Unlimited Foundation, providing resources that help strengthen each of our 14 athletic programs and enhance the student-athlete experience. I would like to thank Rhodes Properties & Development for this incredible commitment to Northwestern State University Athletics and KSLA for serving as the official media partner for the campaign. Tickets are available through November 3 at demondreamhome.com.

Top of the Boot Music Festival

Tickets are now on sale for the Top of the Boot Music Festival, North Louisiana's premier music festival. This exciting two-day event will feature performances by headliners Lee Brice, Dylan Scott, and

Flatland Cavalry, along with Ian Munsick, Rodney Atkins, Bottomland, and many more artists. The festival will be held on Festival Field, located adjacent to the NSU Soccer Complex on Tarlton Drive in Natchitoches. Two-day VIP and General Admission passes are available now, and a limited number of premium suites remain available for purchase. To inquire about suite availability, contact Kevin Bostian at 318-663-5630. To purchase tickets, visit topofthebootmusicfest.com. Be sure to follow Top of the Boot Music Festival on social media for artist announcements, festival updates, and other exciting news.

Rodeo Team Continues to Build Momentum

Northwestern State University's new Rodeo Team continues to gain momentum with the signing of its first two student-athletes. Sydnie Romero of Welsh will transfer to NSU from Texas A&M Commerce and compete in breakaway roping while pursuing a degree in psychology. Alyssa Culpepper, a graduate of Lakeside High School, has signed to compete in barrel racing, goat tying, and breakaway roping while majoring in veterinary technology. The team will be coached by 14-time National Finals Rodeo qualifier Cody DeMoss and will compete through the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association against programs throughout the Southern Region and across the nation. We are excited about the opportunities this new program creates for student-athletes who wish to continue their rodeo careers while earning a college degree. We look forward to following the team's growth and success in the years ahead.

Athletics Update

Northwestern had an impressive showing at the NCAA East Region Outdoor Track and Field Championships in Lexington, Kentucky, as six student-athletes qualified for the NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships, which will be held June 10-13 in Eugene, Oregon. The national championship field includes 24 competitors in each event, with the top 16 earning All-America honors.

Roy Morris, an All-American as a freshman last year, posted a lifetime-best long jump of 25-7½ to finish sixth in the East Region. The men's 4x400-meter relay team of Desmond Duncan, Kason Jones, Charlie Bartholomew, and Will Achee broke the school record for the second time this spring with a time of 3:02.73, finishing 11th in the region and becoming the first Demon 4x400 relay team to qualify for the national championships since 2003. Rushana Dwyer also delivered a remarkable performance, lowering the Lady Demon record in the 400-meter dash in Thursday's preliminary round before breaking it again Saturday with a time of 50.81, the eighth-fastest mark among the 48 East Region qualifiers.

Congratulations as well to nine student-athletes who earned recognition last week for their excellence in the classroom and in competition. Academic All-Southland Conference honors were awarded to women's basketball players Tiara Abron, Vernell Atamah, Carla Celaya, Clarence Djuela, and Joceline Geara. Softball student-athletes Sister Arnold, Britt Bourgoyne, Mattison Buster, and Brynn Daniel were selected to the College Sports Communicators Academic All-District Team.

Athletics Director Kevin Bostian is leading the search for our next head softball coach following the departure of Jenny Fuller and associate head coach Brad Fuller, who accepted assistant coaching positions at Baylor. The opportunity was especially meaningful for the Fullers, as Jenny pitched for Baylor in 2008-09, grew up nearby, and Brad is a Waco native. During their two years at Northwestern, they made a tremendous impact by quickly restoring our softball program to a highly competitive level within the state and the Southland Conference. I am grateful for their contributions and wish them continued success in this next chapter.

Looking Ahead

While many think of summer as a quieter time on campus, Northwestern remains active with academic programs, orientation sessions, camps, and student support services operating throughout the season. Our 11-week summer term began May 29, and our 4-week and 8-week summer sessions will begin June 4. These terms provide valuable opportunities for students to stay on track toward graduation, accelerate degree completion, and continue making progress toward their academic goals.

With additional Freshman Connection sessions, summer camps, conferences, and academic programming scheduled throughout June and July, our campuses will remain vibrant and engaged. For more information on upcoming events and activities, please visit our What's Happening at NSU webpage by clicking [here](#).

Thank you for your continued commitment to serving our students and advancing the mission of Northwestern State University.

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

Northwestern Now

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