



A MESSAGE FROM  
**PRESIDENT JAMES T. GENOVESE**

June 7, 2026

Dear Faculty and Staff,

As we move into the heart of summer, Northwestern State University continues to build momentum across every aspect of our mission. From legislative victories that strengthen our ability to serve students and communities to innovative educational initiatives and the generosity of supporters who invest in future generations, this past week highlighted the many ways Northwestern is helping shape Louisiana's future.

**2026 Regular Legislative Session Wrap-Up**

As the 2026 Regular Legislative Session concluded this week, lawmakers approved several measures that will have important implications for higher education, workforce development, and Louisiana's long-term economic competitiveness. A major focus of the session was strengthening the state's workforce pipeline in response to unprecedented economic development investments and growing demand for skilled talent. Legislation approved this year creates new statewide workforce coordination structures, expands training opportunities, and increases support for work-based learning, apprenticeships, internships, and non-credit workforce programs.

Several measures will directly affect higher education institutions. Most notably, colleges and universities were granted greater flexibility to adjust tuition and fees, with authority to increase program costs by up to 10 percent annually. Lawmakers also approved legislation requiring the Board of Regents to develop policies that would allow institutions to pursue alternative accrediting agencies recognized by the U.S. Department of Education while maintaining academic quality and accountability standards. Higher education institutions also received an additional \$56 million through the state's higher education funding formula, resulting in approximately \$2.54 million in additional funding for Northwestern State University.

The Legislature also enacted measures designed to improve student success and workforce alignment. These include streamlining dual enrollment through a uniform statewide application process and tuition structure, creating a career opportunity clearinghouse to better connect college students with high-demand occupations, and establishing studies and task forces to examine higher education

funding formulas, financial aid programs, career advising, and workforce training effectiveness. Legislation was also approved to strengthen campus safety and student conduct policies, including provisions addressing the misuse of artificial intelligence-generated deepfakes and enhancing universities' ability to hold individuals and organizations accountable for severe hazing incidents.

Taken together, these actions represent one of the most comprehensive workforce and higher education policy efforts in recent years. As Louisiana continues to attract major economic investments, the Legislature's focus on workforce development, student pathways, and postsecondary education positions institutions such as Northwestern State University to play an even greater role in preparing the workforce needed to support our state's future growth and prosperity.

Northwestern State University also secured significant investments through this year's capital outlay bill. The university received \$6.5 million in Priority 1 funding to complete the Alost Hall project and \$7 million in Priority 1 funding to begin renovations to the Nursing Education Center at Warrington Place in Shreveport, with an additional \$10.52 million in Priority 5 funding acknowledged for future phases of the project. NSU and LSMSA also received \$6.9 million in Priority 1 funding for Innovation Park construction, with an additional \$6.9 million in Priority 5 funding acknowledged for next year.

Northwestern will further benefit from \$500,000 in funding allocated to the Natchitoches Economic Development Alliance for the Top of the Boot Music Festival, which will be hosted by the Demons

Unlimited Foundation on NSU's campus October 16-17. 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. To purchase tickets, visit [topofthebootmusicfest.com](https://topofthebootmusicfest.com).

These investments reflect the confidence our state leaders have in Northwestern's mission and our role in advancing workforce development, innovation, and economic growth across north Louisiana. We are grateful to our legislative delegation and state leaders for their continued support of Northwestern State University during this session and throughout many previous legislative sessions.

### **Southland Conference Board of Directors Meeting**

On Wednesday and Thursday, Athletics Director Kevin Bostian and I joined our counterparts from across the Southland Conference for the annual spring meetings of the Conference Board of Directors in Horseshoe Bay, Texas. These meetings provide an important opportunity for university presidents and athletics leaders to discuss the strategic direction of the conference and ensure that our institutions remain aligned on key priorities.

The Board reviewed the Southland Conference's strong financial position, including the proposed 2026-27 operating budget, investment performance, and routine governance matters. We also received updates on NCAA governmental affairs and national issues affecting intercollegiate athletics, along with reports from the Advisory Council and Student-Athlete Advisory Committee. Discussions

focused on positioning the conference for continued success while supporting the academic and athletic experiences of our student-athletes.

I would like to recognize Commissioner Chris Grant for his outstanding leadership and vision. Under his guidance, the Southland Conference continues to strengthen its competitive standing, financial stability, and commitment to student-athlete success. We are proud of Northwestern State's role within the conference and look forward to another successful year ahead.

### **Ribbon Cutting for Redesigned CDC Learning Center**

This week, Northwestern State University's Marie Shaw Dunn Child Development Center and the Natchitoches Area Chamber of Commerce celebrated the reopening of the center's newly redesigned learning environment with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Developed in partnership with the NSU Child and Family Network, the redesigned center serves as a model for early childhood programs throughout our region. The Child Development Center serves an important dual purpose. In addition to providing high-quality early childhood education, it functions as a teacher training site where Northwestern education majors gain valuable classroom experience while applying research-based best practices. The project also highlights the impact of the NSU Child and Family Network, which provides resources and support to early learning programs across northwest and central Louisiana. Through this initiative, childcare centers throughout Natchitoches Parish have opportunities to transform their learning environments into innovative, developmentally appropriate spaces

that better serve children and families. This work reflects Northwestern's ongoing leadership in strengthening early childhood education and workforce development throughout our region.

### **11th Annual Johnny Antoon Memorial Scholarship Golf Tournament**

On Saturday, 24 teams joined the Antoon family and friends at Northwestern Hills Golf Course for the 11th Annual Johnny Antoon Memorial Scholarship Golf Tournament, celebrating Johnny Antoon's enduring legacy of generosity, service, and support for Northwestern State University. The tournament continues to serve as a meaningful tribute while raising support for the Johnny Antoon Scholarship Fund. Established in 2008, the scholarship reflects Johnny's lifelong commitment to helping students pursue their educational goals and achieve success through higher education. Thanks to the generosity of participants, sponsors, volunteers, and the Antoon family, the scholarship fund has awarded more than \$124,000 to Northwestern State students since its inception. The continued success of this annual event ensures that Johnny's legacy of service, generosity, and belief in the power of education will continue to impact future generations of Demons.

### **Athletics Update**

I am pleased to report that one of college softball's most accomplished coaches, Jason Anderson of Southern Arkansas, has been named the new leader of our softball program. Anderson brings an impressive record that includes two NCAA Division II World Series appearances and 796 career victories, the second-most among active NCAA

Division II head coaches and the 16th-most among active head coaches across all NCAA divisions.

Over 19 seasons as a head coach, Anderson has compiled a remarkable 796-233 record (.774), building championship-caliber programs at every stop in his career. His accomplishments include being named Hero Sports Division II National Coach of the Year and NFCA Central Region Coach of the Year in 2016. He also led the NFCA Central Region Coaching Staff of the Year in both 2016 and 2018.

Please join me in welcoming Coach Anderson to Northwestern State. I also want to thank NSU's Athletics Director Kevin Bostian and everyone involved in the efficient search process following the departure of Jenny Fuller and Associate Head Coach Brad Fuller. After two successful seasons at Northwestern, the Fullers resigned last week to accept assistant coaching positions at Baylor University, Jenny's alma mater, in Brad's hometown of Waco, Texas.

Northwestern has seven track and field student-athletes competing this week at the NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships in Eugene, Oregon, with the opportunity to earn All-America honors by finishing among the top 16 in their events. Only the top 24 competitors from the NCAA East and West Regional Championships qualified for the national meet. Among Louisiana institutions, in addition to Northwestern, only LSU and Southeastern are represented, while Stephen F. Austin and Southeastern are the only other Southland Conference schools with qualifiers.

Roy Morris will attempt to repeat as an All-American in the long jump Wednesday evening at 8:40 p.m. CT. Our men's 4x400-meter relay team of Will Achee, Charlie Bartholomew, Desmond Duncan, and Kason Jones will compete in semifinal Heat 1 at 10:36 p.m.

Wednesday. Elijah Rowe serves as the relay alternate. On Thursday at 8:41 p.m., Rushana Dwyer will compete in Heat 1 of the women's 400-meter semifinals, with the top nine finishers advancing to the final. The men's 4x400-meter relay final is scheduled for Friday at 9:21 p.m., while the women's 400-meter final will take place Saturday at 8:02 p.m. ESPN2 will provide coverage each day.

Congratulations to three Northwestern baseball student-athletes who were recognized last week on the College Sports Communicators Academic All-District Team. Junior outfielder Brooks Leonard and sophomore pitchers Jacob LeBlanc and Carter White earned the honor. To be eligible for consideration, student-athletes must be at least sophomores academically and athletically, maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher, and either appear in at least 90 percent of their team's contests or start at least 66 percent of games.

The accomplishments highlighted this week demonstrate the strength of Northwestern State University and the impact of our faculty, staff, students, alumni, supporters, and partners. Whether advancing workforce development through legislative initiatives, creating innovative learning environments for children and future educators, or providing scholarship support that changes students' lives, each of these efforts contributes to a brighter future for our university and our state. Thank you for your continued dedication to our students and

our mission. We are “moving the needle.” I hope each of you has a productive and enjoyable week ahead.

For information on upcoming events and activities, please visit our What’s Happening at NSU webpage by clicking [here](#).

Fork 'Em Demons,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James T. Genovese". The signature is written in a cursive style with a loop at the end of the last name.

James T. "Jimmy" Genovese  
President  
Northwestern State University

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**Northwestern Now**

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