



A MESSAGE FROM
PRESIDENT JAMES T. GENOVESE

June 14, 2026

Dear Faculty and Staff,

As we continue through a busy and productive summer, Northwestern State University remains focused on the priorities that drive our mission: student success, enrollment growth, academic excellence, and meaningful engagement with our communities and alumni. This past week provided several opportunities to celebrate student achievement, review our progress toward institutional goals, and showcase the many ways Northwestern continues to make a difference across Louisiana and beyond.

Enrollment Update

On Tuesday, I received an encouraging enrollment update as we continue preparations for the Fall 2026 semester. With two Freshman Connection sessions completed and five additional sessions scheduled throughout the summer, we are tracking steadily year over year with positive indicators in both new freshman and transfer student recruitment.

While there is still important work ahead, these early trends are strong indicators of long-term institutional stability and reflect the efforts of faculty, staff, alumni, and community partners who help tell Northwestern's story every day. We are also seeing growth in our dual enrollment population as we continue to strengthen relationships with high school students across the state and create pathways that encourage them to choose Northwestern after graduation.

Recruiting students is only the first step. Retaining them and helping them succeed remains equally important. I encourage all faculty and staff to continue investing in our students, building meaningful relationships, and connecting them with the resources they need to thrive. Student retention remains one of the most important factors in our continued success.

Cheer Camp Lunch

Later on Tuesday, we hosted senior participants from the first of three summer cheer camps for lunch at our new Alost Academic Center. Cheer Camp is more than a longstanding Northwestern tradition. It also serves as an important recruitment opportunity that allows prospective students to experience our campus, interact with our

students and staff, and learn more about the Northwestern experience. I enjoyed visiting with these talented and enthusiastic young people and hearing about their future goals and aspirations. Martha and I look forward to welcoming participants from the remaining camp sessions later this summer. As I have mentioned before, our summer camps provide an excellent opportunity to showcase Northwestern State University while introducing participants to our academic programs, student life opportunities, athletic facilities, and the welcoming community that makes NSU special. These experiences often leave a lasting impression and help prospective students see themselves as part of the Northwestern State University community.

Lady of the Bracelet Sendoff

On Wednesday, Martha and I were honored to host a sendoff reception for Miss Northwestern Lady of the Bracelet, Nilah Pollard of Shreveport, who will represent Northwestern State University at the Miss Louisiana Competition next week. Nilah, a senior social work major, is an exceptional student leader who serves as Speaker of the Student Government Association Senate, secretary of the National Pan-Hellenic Council, a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., and a mentor through the President's Leadership Program. She is also active in numerous honor societies and campus organizations. Nilah has represented Northwestern with distinction throughout her year as Lady of the Bracelet, and we were honored to celebrate her accomplishments and wish her success as she prepares to compete on the state stage. We are proud of the leadership, service, and professionalism she brings to every endeavor and look forward to

cheering her on as she represents Northwestern State University at Miss Louisiana.

Strategic Planning Team Meeting

On Wednesday afternoon, I met with the Strategic Planning Team to review the status of Assessment Cycle 2025-2026, *Leading the Way*. This marks the third comprehensive, data-informed evaluation of our five-year Strategic Plan 2023-2028, *Providing Education of Enduring Value*. The assessment process encompasses all five of the University's Strategic Focus Areas: Student Experience, Academic Excellence, Market Responsiveness, Community Enrichment, and Athletic Prominence. The University is currently advancing 23 institutional objectives supported by more than 100 measurable metrics across 170 academic programs, administrative units, and core competency areas. These efforts form the foundation of our annual institutional effectiveness process and help ensure we remain focused on continuous improvement.

Theatre and Dance Students Achieve Professional Success

I am proud to recognize the outstanding accomplishments of our students in the Department of Theatre and Dance. More than 20 Northwestern students are spending their summer working in professional theatre and dance positions across the United States or preparing to begin graduate study programs. These students have secured opportunities with professional theatre companies, production organizations, amusement parks, arts institutions, and training programs in 11 different states. They are performing, designing,

managing productions, and gaining valuable real-world experience that will help prepare them for successful careers in the performing arts. These experiences provide students with opportunities to apply their classroom training in professional environments while building industry connections and developing the skills employers seek. The fact that so many of our students continue to earn these competitive opportunities speaks volumes about both their talent and the quality of instruction they receive at Northwestern. Congratulations to these students and the faculty who have helped prepare them for success. Their accomplishments reflect positively on the University and demonstrate the strength of our nationally recognized Theatre and Dance program.

Supporting Demon Athletics

As we continue to look for innovative ways to support our student-athletes, I encourage everyone to take advantage of two exciting opportunities that directly benefit Northwestern State Athletics. The [Rhodes Properties & Development Demon Dream Home Giveaway](#) offers participants the chance to win a brand-new home valued at \$265,000 with the purchase of a \$100 raffle ticket. Proceeds support Northwestern Athletics through the Demons Unlimited Foundation and help provide resources that enhance the student-athlete experience across all 14 athletic programs. In addition, tickets are on sale for the [Top of the Boot Music Festival](#), North Louisiana's premier music festival, which will take place October 16-17, and bring nationally recognized artists and visitors from throughout the region to our campus this fall. Both initiatives showcase the creativity and community support that continue to strengthen Northwestern Athletics while generating excitement for the University.

Athletics Update

Congratulations to Northwestern's All-America track and field athletes Kason Jones, Charlie Bartholomew, Will Achee, and Desmond Duncan. The Demons' 4x400-meter relay team earned Second-Team All-America honors Wednesday night with a 16th-place finish at the NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships. Finishing behind Northwestern in the 24-team field of national qualifiers were eight teams from Power Four conferences, including USC, Houston, Baylor, Ohio State, and Texas.

Northwestern's other two national championship qualifiers also earned All-America recognition. Long jumper Roy Morris placed 19th nationally, while Rushana Dwyer finished 18th in the women's 400-meter dash, with both receiving Honorable Mention All-America honors.

Two members of the All-America relay team, Will Achee and Charlie Bartholomew, also earned Academic All-Southland Conference recognition last week. They were joined by fellow male student-athletes Kalen Beavers, Tarajh Hudson, and Seth Smith, along with Lady Demons Sileena Farrell, Margaret Mannering, Thea Ring, Teodora Samac, and Eliska Zahradnickova. How about that Northwestern Demon track team!!! Both the men and the women continue to excel, both on the state and the national level.

Five Northwestern softball student-athletes also earned Academic All-Southland Conference honors announced Thursday: Mattison Buster,

Brynn Daniel, Aly Delafield, Makynlie Jones, and Riley Schwisow. Academic All-SLC honorees must maintain at least a 3.25 cumulative GPA while making significant contributions to their team during the season.

Congratulations to all of our All-America and Academic All-Conference Demons for their outstanding achievements in the classroom and in competition.

Looking Ahead

The Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame Induction Celebration will take place June 25-27 right here in Natchitoches. We are especially proud that Coach Mike McConathy and Coach Dewain Strother will be inducted as members of the 2026 class. Both NSU alumni exemplify excellence, leadership, and service, and we congratulate them on this well-deserved honor. We are fortunate to have the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame located here in Natchitoches and encourage everyone to take advantage of the opportunity to participate in some of the seven induction events (schedule at LaSportsHall.com) and celebrate Louisiana's rich sports history.

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

As summer progresses, I continue to be grateful for the dedication and commitment demonstrated by our faculty and staff. I am honored and blessed to serve you. Whether you are recruiting future students,

supporting current students, advancing academic programs, preparing for accreditation reviews, hosting camps and conferences, or representing Northwestern in your communities, your efforts make a meaningful difference. Please go tell our story. If you are old enough to remember Peter, Paul, and Mary: "Go Tell It on a Mountain." Thank you for all you do to move Northwestern State University forward.

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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