

III | NORTHWESTERN STATE



A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT JAMES T. GENOVESE

June 28, 2026

Dear Faculty and Staff,

As we prepare to close another productive month, I continue to be encouraged by the many ways Northwestern State University is strengthening our impact across Louisiana. Whether welcoming future students to campus, recognizing alumni whose accomplishments inspire us, developing partnerships that support economic growth, or investing in tomorrow's leaders, our work continues to reflect the enduring strength of our university and the people who make it possible. Thank you for your dedication and commitment to our students and our mission.

Long Purple Line Inductees Announced

I am proud to announce that Northwestern State University will welcome six distinguished alumni into the Long Purple Line during Homecoming, October 22-24. The Long Purple Line is the highest honor bestowed upon our alumni, recognizing individuals whose professional accomplishments, service, and commitment to Northwestern have brought distinction to themselves and our university. Since its establishment, only 165 alumni have received this prestigious recognition. This year's inductees are Bryan David Arceneaux of Larose, Edwin Dunahoe, Billy Joe Harrington and Dr. Ron Owen McBride of Natchitoches, Trey Hill of Baton Rouge, and Brenda Williams Webb of Shreveport. The inductees will be honored during the annual Long Purple Line Luncheon on Friday, October 23, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Natchitoches Events Center. Congratulations to each of these outstanding alumni. We look forward to celebrating their remarkable achievements during Homecoming.

NSU Engages in Workforce Discussions with Applied Digital

Earlier this week, Northwestern State University's Office of Economic Development joined higher education partners for an informational meeting with Applied Digital Corporation to discuss the company's new artificial intelligence focused data center campus under development in Boyce. The meeting provided an opportunity to learn more about Applied Digital's Delta Forge 1 campus, a \$3.6 billion investment in Rapides Parish that is expected to support advanced artificial intelligence and cloud computing operations. The project is anticipated to create approximately 200 permanent full-time positions,

more than 1,000 construction jobs during peak development, and additional indirect employment opportunities throughout the region, with initial operations expected to begin in 2027. As one of the largest economic development projects in Central Louisiana, this investment has tremendous potential to strengthen our regional economy while creating new workforce and educational opportunities. Northwestern looks forward to continuing conversations with Applied Digital and exploring ways to align our academic programs, workforce development initiatives, and industry partnerships to meet the evolving talent needs of this transformative project. We look forward to sharing additional updates as these discussions progress.

University of Louisiana System Board Meeting

On Thursday, I attended the University of Louisiana System Board of Supervisors meeting in Baton Rouge. One of the highlights of the meeting was the presentations by participants in the 2025-26 Management and Leadership Institute, a year-long professional development program that prepares future leaders across the University of Louisiana System. We are especially proud of Northwestern's participants, Dr. Jerry Brunson and Dr. Liz Pursell, who represented our university exceptionally well during their capstone presentations. Congratulations to both of them on completing this outstanding leadership program and for their continued commitment to advancing Northwestern State University.

Leadership Natchitoches Explores Innovation

The Office of Economic Development welcomed Cohort 7 of Leadership Natchitoches to campus Thursday evening for a look at how Northwestern is helping shape the future of innovation in our region. Participants learned about the university's Innovation Park project and the opportunities it will create for entrepreneurship, workforce development, and business growth. The evening concluded with a friendly pitch competition that challenged participants to think creatively, collaborate as teams, and experience the spirit of innovation firsthand. We appreciate our continued partnership with the Natchitoches Area Chamber of Commerce and its leadership in hosting the Leadership Natchitoches program. Together, we are investing in the people who will lead and strengthen our community for generations to come.

Freshman Connection Continues Across the State

Our Freshman Connection events continued this past week with sessions in Central Louisiana, Leesville, and Shreveport, welcoming hundreds of future Demons and their families as they prepare for the fall semester. These events provide students with an opportunity to meet faculty and staff, register for classes, connect with fellow students, and become familiar with the many resources available to support their success. Enrollment continues to trend positively as students complete registration through these sessions, and we are encouraged by the enthusiasm we are seeing from our newest class. I want to extend a special thank you to our Student Experience team, including our Enrollment Management and Recruiting staff, along with our academic advisors, faculty, and the many staff members and

student ambassadors whose hard work and hospitality make each Freshman Connection a welcoming and successful experience.

Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame Weekend

This weekend, Natchitoches once again welcomed visitors from across Louisiana for the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame Induction Celebration. The induction ceremony was televised live statewide on Louisiana Public Broadcasting, with beautiful features highlighting Natchitoches woven throughout the broadcast. Beyond celebrating the remarkable accomplishments of this year's inductees, the weekend provides a tremendous economic and cultural benefit to our community.

Northwestern State University is proud to be a longtime partner of the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame, and we appreciate the continued collaboration of the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame Foundation, the Louisiana Sports Writers Association, and the Louisiana State Museum. Congratulations once again to Coach Dewain Strother and Coach Mike McConathy on their well-deserved induction into the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame. Their lasting contributions to athletics and to Northwestern State University continue to inspire generations of student-athletes.

Athletics Update

For the third consecutive year, Northwestern's student-athletes earned increased representation on the Southland Conference Commissioner's Spring Honor Roll. The honor roll recognizes student-athletes who achieve a 3.0 grade point average or higher during their semester of competition. NSU's honorees represented seven

programs: baseball, men's and women's basketball, softball, tennis, and men's and women's track and field.

Northwestern placed 130 of its 180 spring student-athletes on the honor roll, a 72.2 percent rate and an increase of nearly 1.5 percentage points over 2025. Since 2023, the Demons have increased their representation on the honor roll each year. More than one-quarter of this year's honorees earned a perfect 4.0 GPA during the spring semester, while an additional 85 student-athletes maintained at least a 3.5 GPA while competing.

Congratulations also to our Sports Information Office, which earned eight awards in the annual Louisiana Sports Writers Association Sports Information/Communications Contest. The results were announced Sunday. Assistant Sports Information Director Brad Welborn led the department with four awards, while Associate Athletic Director for Media Relations Jason Pugh received two honors. Assistant Director of Communications Jonathon Zenk and University Director of Photography Chris Reich each earned one award.

Looking ahead, there are several exciting opportunities to support Northwestern Athletics. The [Rhodes Properties & Development Demon Dream Home Giveaway](#) offers an innovative way to invest in our student-athletes while giving participants the chance to win a brand-new home valued at \$265,000 with the purchase of a \$100 raffle ticket. Proceeds benefit the Demons Unlimited Foundation and help provide resources that enhance the student-athlete experience across all 14 athletic programs.

Tickets are also on sale for the [Top of the Boot Music Festival](#), which will take place October 16-17 on the Northwestern campus. As North Louisiana's premier music festival, the event will bring nationally recognized artists and visitors from throughout the region to Natchitoches, creating opportunities to showcase both our university and our community to a broad audience.

As we look ahead to the month of July, our campus remains active with orientation programs, summer camps, strategic planning, and preparations for another successful academic year. Every milestone we achieve is made possible through your commitment to our students and to the mission of Northwestern State University. Thank you for everything you do to make Northwestern a place where students thrive, partnerships grow, and excellence continues to define our future.

Fork 'Em Demons,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James T. Genovese". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

James T. "Jimmy" Genovese
President
Northwestern State University

Northwestern **Now**

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