

III | NORTHWESTERN STATE



A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT JAMES T. GENOVESE

July 19, 2026

Dear Faculty and Staff,

I hope you have had a productive week. As we continue preparing for the start of a new academic year, I want to share several updates that highlight the partnerships, planning, and opportunities that continue to move Northwestern State University forward.

Meeting with Rapides Parish Superintendent Jeff Powell

On Monday, I had the opportunity to meet with Rapides Parish Superintendent Jeff Powell to discuss the many advantages of attending Northwestern State University. Our conversation focused on the outstanding academic programs we offer, the scholarships

available to students, and the welcoming, family atmosphere that makes Northwestern such a special place. Rapides Parish represents one of Northwestern State's largest student populations, making our partnership with the Rapides Parish School System especially important. As a proud NSU alumnus, Superintendent Powell understands the value of a Northwestern education, and I appreciate his continued advocacy for our university and the opportunities we provide for students throughout Central Louisiana.

Expanding Health Services for Online Students

As we continue to enhance the student experience, I am pleased that Northwestern State is expanding health services for our online students through the addition of telehealth services. On Tuesday, I met with Natchitoches Regional Medical Center CEO Kirk Soileau and Allison Wilkerson to amend our partnership agreement to include these expanded services. This important enhancement reflects our shared commitment to supporting student success by improving access to quality healthcare regardless of where our students are located. I want to thank Kirk Soileau and the Natchitoches Regional Medical Center for its continued partnership and investment in the well-being of our students.

Academic Planning and Growth

On Wednesday, I met with Executive Vice President and Provost Dr. Greg Handel, for an update on our annual academic planning review that is a three-year planning process to be presented to the Board of Regents. Dr. Handel provided a comprehensive status report on our

academic programs, including enrollment trends, mission alignment, and opportunities for future growth. I am especially excited about our plans to introduce, in the first year, both a Master of Science in STEM, and Master of Business Administration. Likewise, Dr. Handel noted that we are also developing a proposal for a Master of Healthcare Administration, and several other Master's and Bachelor's programs that will expand opportunities for students, address workforce needs across our region, and support our mission as a regional-serving institution. In addition to adding these key programs, in his review, Dr. Handel also proposed eliminating certain outdated, non-performing, and non-productive programs. This is necessary in order to continue fine-tuning our university programs. I appreciate Dr. Handel's leadership and the thoughtful work taking place across our academic divisions as we continue positioning NSU for long-term success.

Summer Dinner Theatre Showcases Outstanding Talent

On Wednesday evening, Martha and I had the pleasure of attending the NSU Summer Dinner Theatre production of *Country Summer Nights*. It was a wonderful evening of entertainment featuring an outstanding selection of country music classics and contemporary favorites performed by our talented students. I want to extend my sincere appreciation to Director Pia Wyatt and Musical Director Jason Thomas for their leadership in bringing this production to the stage. Their dedication, along with the hard work of the cast, crew, and everyone involved, resulted in another exceptional Summer Dinner Theatre performance that highlights the creativity and talent found at Northwestern State University. Thank you to our faculty, staff, students, and patrons who continue to support the performing arts at

Northwestern. Productions like this are an important part of the vibrant campus experience that makes our university so special. Unquestionably, Northwestern has the finest CAPA department anywhere around.

Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival Provides Entertaining Weekend for Thousands

Congratulations to Dr. Shane Rasmussen and the many faculty, staff, and volunteers involved in hosting the 46th Annual Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival during a 24-hour celebration from Friday evening through Saturday night. Centered on a curated showcase of Louisiana folk musicians, food vendors, and traditional craftspeople, this year's festival celebrated our nation's 250th birthday with the theme "America the Beautiful." The event featured an array of traditional American music, including blues, gospel, Cajun, Celtic, country, bluegrass, and zydeco, performed across three stages and in Magale Recital Hall. Food vendors served traditional Louisiana cuisine, while outdoor activities included demonstrations of blacksmithing, Dutch oven cooking, and a child-friendly, hands-on presentation of a 19th-century wash day. A Native American dance exhibition opened the festivities Friday evening at the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame and Northwest Louisiana History Museum, and thousands of visitors came to our campus Saturday for the festival headquartered in Prather Coliseum. Thank you to everyone whose hard work made the festival a success.

CHRISTUS Health Expands Tuition-Free Cohort Program to NSU Cenla

I am excited to share that CHRISTUS St. Frances Cabrini Health System has expanded its tuition-free cohort program to include nursing students at the NSU Cenla Campus beginning this fall. The program provides selected students with up to \$25,000 in tuition assistance, along with specialized training, certification preparation, and additional academic resources. Upon graduation and licensure, participants are guaranteed employment with CHRISTUS St. Frances Cabrini Health System, creating a direct pathway from education to a rewarding healthcare career. This partnership represents another significant investment in our students while helping strengthen the healthcare workforce across Central Louisiana. We are grateful to CHRISTUS Health for recognizing the quality of Northwestern's nursing program and for providing this outstanding opportunity for our students.

Athletics Update

This past Friday, Northwestern's baseball pitcher and recent graduate J.C. Acosta was named the male recipient of the Southland Conference F.L. McDonald Postgraduate Scholarship. The award is presented annually to the graduating male and female student-athletes with the highest cumulative grade point averages in the conference. The \$5,000 scholarship must be applied toward graduate study. Acosta, whose parents are proud NSU alumni, earned bachelor's degrees in biology and applied microbiology in December 2025, graduating summa cum laude with a 4.0 GPA in both majors. After the Demons concluded their 2026 baseball season in mid-May, he began the next chapter of his academic career at LSU Health Sciences Center

in New Orleans, where he recently completed his first summer session. Congratulations to J.C. on this prestigious recognition and his continued academic success.

Tickets are now on sale for the annual NSU/Independence Bowl Kickoff Luncheon, sponsored by NSU alumni John and Lynne Manno. A Shreveport tradition since the early 1990s, this year's luncheon will be held during the Independence Bowl's 50th anniversary year. The event will take place Aug. 20 in Ballroom B at Superior's Steakhouse, located at 855 Pierremont Avenue in Shreveport. Tickets are \$25, and reservations may be made by contacting the Radiance Technologies Independence Bowl office at 318-221-0721. In addition to previewing the upcoming football season, we will recognize the faculty and staff at our Shreveport nursing campus and highlight the progress taking place throughout our university.

Thank you for your continued dedication to our students and to Northwestern State University. Together, we are creating new opportunities, strengthening partnerships, and building an even brighter future for our 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, stylized initial 'J'.

James T. "Jimmy" Genovese
President
Northwestern State University

Northwestern **Now**

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