

III | NORTHWESTERN STATE



A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT JAMES T. GENOVESE

July 12, 2026

Dear Faculty and Staff,

I hope you have had a wonderful week. As we move through the heart of summer, our campus continues to be filled with activity as we prepare for the start of a new academic year. From welcoming our newest students and strengthening our athletic programs to expanding alumni engagement and serving our communities, there is great momentum across Northwestern. Though it is too early to tell, the numbers are trending upward with the anticipation of a good fall enrollment. Thank you for the commitment and enthusiasm you bring to our university each day.

Demon Dream Home Groundbreaking

On Monday, I joined members of our athletics staff, Demons Unlimited Foundation board members, and Justin and James Rhodes of Rhodes Properties & Development for the official groundbreaking of the 2026 Demon Dream Home in the Hidden Oaks Court subdivision in Natchitoches. The three-bedroom, two-bath home, valued at \$265,000, represents an innovative partnership that helps support Northwestern Athletics in today's evolving collegiate athletics landscape, including Name, Image and Likeness opportunities for our student-athletes. The home will be raffled on November 6 at Riverside Reserve in Natchitoches. Tickets are available [here](#) for \$100, with the proceeds benefiting the Demons Unlimited Foundation and helping provide resources that enhance the student-athlete experience across all 14 athletic programs. This is an exciting opportunity to invest in Northwestern Athletics while also having the chance to win a beautiful new home.

Welcoming Our Incoming Student-Athletes

Later on Monday, I had the opportunity to speak with our incoming freshman student-athletes as they begin their Northwestern journey. It was a pleasure to welcome these young men and women to campus and to share with them the importance of academic success, leadership, service, and the representation of Northwestern with pride and integrity. Thank you to our coaches, athletics staff, faculty, and student support personnel who are committed to helping our student-athletes succeed both in competition and in the classroom. We look forward to seeing this outstanding group make an impact on our campus.

Faculty Athletics Representative Update

On Tuesday morning, I met with our Faculty Athletics Representative, Dr. Tara Tietjen-Smith, to discuss several important initiatives that continue to strengthen the relationship between academics and athletics. Among the topics discussed were potential NCAA legislative changes concerning student-athlete eligibility. If approved, these changes could make it easier for institutions to retain student-athletes while reducing reliance on the transfer portal. We also discussed the creation of a new Faculty Athletics Ambassador Program consisting of 14 faculty members representing departments across campus. These ambassadors will serve as liaisons between academics and athletics, helping foster communication, encourage faculty engagement with student-athletes, promote academic integrity, and connect student-athletes with academic opportunities. The program is designed to strengthen relationships across campus while supporting the overall student-athlete experience.

Additionally, we reviewed plans to rename the current Health & Human Performance Building as the Kinesiology Building, reflecting the School of Kinesiology's identity while distinguishing it from the new David and Sherry Morgan Health Performance Building. The School of Kinesiology launch is planned for the first home football game on August 27. Finally, we discussed the continued growth of club sports at Northwestern, including expanding participation in Club Powerlifting and our Rodeo Team. We are excited about the future of club sports and the opportunities these programs provide for student engagement.

Scholars' College Service Recognized

Northwestern recently received a thoughtful letter from alumna Bayli Brossette, a 2021 graduate who serves as curator of Briarwood, the historic home and preserve of Caroline Dormon. In her letter, Bayli expressed her appreciation for the education and opportunities she received at Northwestern while recognizing the outstanding service of Dr. Betsy Cochran and students from the Louisiana Scholars' College. For years, Dr. Cochran has encouraged Scholars' College students to volunteer at Briarwood, where they have assisted with trail maintenance, gardening, special events, and preservation projects. Bayli noted that their dedication and willingness to serve have made a meaningful difference in preserving Caroline Dormon's legacy while helping complete projects that otherwise would have taken much longer to accomplish. We are grateful to Bayli for taking the time to recognize our students and faculty. Her letter is a reminder that the Northwestern experience extends far beyond the classroom as our students continue making a positive impact through service, stewardship, and engagement in communities across Louisiana.

Walk for Lives Event

The Department of Psychology and Addiction Studies and the Demons for Recovery program welcomed more than 150 state and community leaders to campus on Saturday for the Walk for Lives event. The event raised awareness about the devastating impact of fentanyl while honoring the lives affected by opioid-related tragedies. It served as a powerful reminder that behind every statistic is a person, a family, a

friend, and a story that matters. Thank you to Dr. Charles King, chair of the Department of Psychology and Addiction Studies, Sarah Ebarb, Demons for Recovery coordinator, and Dr. Patrice Moulton, professor of psychology and addiction studies, for their leadership and dedication in making this meaningful event such a success.

Freshman Connection Wraps Up Successful Summer

Freshman Connection concluded this week after welcoming more than 1,000 incoming students through seven orientation sessions held in Natchitoches, Shreveport, Alexandria/Cenla, and Leesville/Fort Polk. Designed to prepare students for a successful transition to college, Freshman Connection allowed incoming students to meet with academic advisors, register for classes, become familiar with campus resources, and begin building relationships with faculty, staff, classmates, and our outstanding Freshman Connectors.

Coordinated by Northwestern's Office of First Year Experience and Student Engagement, Freshman Connection would not be possible without the dedication of faculty, staff, and student leaders from across the university. I especially want to thank the 24 student leaders who served as Freshman Connectors this summer. These are amazing and talented young individuals. Their enthusiasm, guidance, and willingness to share their Northwestern experiences helped make each session welcoming and informative for our newest students and their families. Registration for the fall semester continues through August 16, and we look forward to welcoming the Class of 2030 to campus in just a few weeks.

Supporting Growth Through Strategic Alignment

As Northwestern State University continues to grow, we are refining the way we serve our students, alumni, donors, and community partners. To better support these efforts, the university has aligned its organizational structure to provide dedicated leadership for both alumni engagement and university advancement. The Office of Alumni Affairs is focused on strengthening lifelong relationships with our alumni through communications, events, reunions, chapters, membership, and ongoing engagement with Northwestern. The university's fundraising and development operations are led through the Office of Economic Development & University Advancement, providing dedicated leadership for the NSU Foundation and all philanthropic activities while strengthening donor relationships and advancing the university's mission.

This transition also provides dedicated leadership for both areas. Jill Bankston leads the Office of Alumni Affairs and serves as Executive Director of the Northwestern State University Alumni Association. Jill Leo serves as Director of Development & Corporate Relations, overseeing the university's fundraising and development efforts in support of the NSU Foundation. Working in close partnership, these offices have distinct but complementary responsibilities that strengthen alumni engagement, philanthropic support, and institutional advancement. This organizational alignment positions each area to better serve its respective audiences while advancing Northwestern's mission and long-term success.

Athletics Update

After an outstanding 2026 season with Demon Baseball, right-handed pitcher Dylan Marionneaux was selected in the Major League Baseball First-Year Player Draft on Saturday when the Chicago Cubs chose him in the fourth round with the 126th overall pick. Dylan is the highest Northwestern draft selection since Mason Melotakis was chosen by the Minnesota Twins in the second round of the 2012 draft. He also becomes the fourth-highest draft pick in program history, joining Bobby Hrapmann (Cardinals, 1974), Brandon Emanuel (Angels, 1998), and Melotakis, all second-round selections.

Also on Saturday, Marionneaux was named to the All-Louisiana Baseball Team along with fellow Demon pitcher, left-hander Brody Trosclair. Both south Louisiana natives were second-team picks. Dylan, a native of Zachary, was a first-team All-Southland Conference selection in May, while Brody, from Thibodaux, was named Southland Conference Freshman of the Year before transferring to the University of Tennessee.

We congratulate Dylan on this tremendous achievement and thank both Dylan and Brody for their outstanding contributions to Northwestern Baseball. I also want to congratulate Coach Chris Bertrand and pitching coach Dan Hlad for the outstanding work they continue to do in developing student-athletes both on and off the field.

On Tuesday evening, I had the pleasure of meeting with the Demon Football Leadership Council. Their excitement for the upcoming season, confidence in the future of our program, and pride in

Northwestern were truly impressive. I look forward to supporting these young men throughout the season and beyond.

Looking Ahead

Join us on Saturday, July 18, for the [46th Annual Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival](#). Held in Prather Coliseum, this family-friendly event will feature more than 100 craftspeople, authentic Louisiana folk foods, KidFest activities, live music, free Cajun and Zydeco dance lessons, the Louisiana State Fiddle Championship, and the ever-popular Gumbo Cookoff. It is a wonderful opportunity to experience the rich culture and traditions that make Louisiana so special while welcoming visitors from across the region to our campus.

Thank you for all you do each day to make Northwestern State University a place where students learn, grow, and succeed. As we continue preparing for the start of the fall semester, I appreciate your dedication to our students and your commitment to our mission. Together, we are building momentum that will benefit our university for years to come.

Fork 'Em Demons,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "James T. Genovese". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "J" and "G".

James T. "Jimmy" Genovese
President
Northwestern State University

Northwestern **Now**

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