



## COEHD will host retirement reception May 4

The Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development will host a retirement reception for several faculty members from 3:30-5 p.m. Tuesday, May 4 in the Teacher Education Center Commons Area.

Those honored will be **Dr. John Dollar**, professor and department head, Health and Human Performance; **Dr. Barbara Duchardt**, professor, School of Education; **Dr. Chris Maggio**, president and associate professor, Health and Human Performance; **Dr. Linda Morris**, assistant professor, School of Education; **Dr. Bill Morrison**, associate professor and coordinator of Ed.D., School of Education; **Dr. Steve Westbrook**, assistant professor, School of Education, and **Dr. Marty Young**, assistant professor, School of Education.

## Maggio will retire June 30

Northwestern State president **Dr. Chris Maggio** announced April 16 that he will retire from the university effective July 1, 2021. He has served as president since January of 2017 and has been a member of NSU's faculty, staff and administration for 33 years.

"This is a decision that was made during prayerful deliberation with my family and was based entirely on considerations of our family's future plans and aspirations. There has been no pressure or even the slightest nudge from anyone for me to step down from the presidency," Maggio stated.

He said, "As gratifying as it has been to work over the years in athletics, recruitment and enrollment management, alumni and development, student affairs and as a vice-president and president, those

responsibilities have necessitated extensive time away from my family."

He said retirement from the university "will allow me to spend more time with family and friends and to explore new opportunities for serving others in education or related areas."

Dr. Jim Henderson, president of the University of Louisiana System that governs NSU, said, "Dr. Maggio has served Northwestern passionately over the

*Continued on page 2*



**Maggio**

## Jones will return as interim president while search is ongoing

**Marcus Jones** will serve as interim president of Northwestern State University effective July 1 while a search for the university's 20<sup>th</sup> president gets underway. The appointment was approved by



**Jones**

the Board of Supervisors for the University of Louisiana System Thursday. NSU President **Chris Maggio** announced his retirement effective June 30, 2021. Information about a presidential search

is forthcoming.

"I am honored to have been selected to serve Northwestern during this transitional period," Jones said. "I look forward to returning to the university I have called home for so many years and working with Dr. Maggio and university leaders to continue executing our mission."

Jones has an extensive academic, business and legal background, having served as executive vice president and chief operating officer for the University of Louisiana System for the past year, where oversaw the areas of business finance, internal/external audit function, EEO and IT for the System and handled matters of system level importance on behalf

*Continued on Page 3*

## *Maggio ... Continued from Page 1*

past four years, and the progress and accomplishments of the school reflect his effective leadership and dedication to his alma mater and mine.”

Henderson, who preceded Maggio as president of NSU, stated, “All of us who care deeply about Northwestern are indebted to Chris for his major contributions to the university, especially in such a difficult period, and we wish him well in retirement and the next phase of his life.”

The University of Louisiana System Board of Supervisors “will begin immediately developing the process to assure a successful transition of leadership at NSU in the weeks ahead,” Henderson said.

Northwestern reached a record enrollment of 11,447 last fall under Maggio’s leadership to become the third largest university in the nine-school University of Louisiana System.

The four highest enrollments in NSU history have been during Maggio’s tenure as president, and the university’s economic impact on the region has climbed to an all-time high of \$428 million.

Academic offerings have been enhanced and expanded during his presidency, private funding is the highest in history, facilities and infrastructure have been upgraded, and the university has provided increased support for student services and activities, athletics, creative and performing arts and other programs.

Maggio guided Northwestern through one of the most challenging periods in its 137-year history when the school transitioned last spring to predominantly online classes

and academic programs early in the COVID-19 pandemic. NSU has returned to in-person classes and more normal operations but continues to serve students through online and hybrid class delivery.

Maggio expressed appreciation “to an incomparable, world class faculty and staff for the growth, stability and success of the university in recent years. Northwestern is fortunate to have such highly qualified and effective professors and staff members. They are the very heart and soul of the university.”

Northwestern has received during Maggio’s presidency initial funding for a major new \$35 million academic building to replace Kyser Hall. There have also been substantial renovations to the A.A. Fredericks Fine Arts Building lobby and auditorium.

The Student Union has been refurbished and now includes new meeting areas, a state-of-the-art esports venue and a Steak ‘n Shake Restaurant.

Maggio provided the momentum for a new Campus Marketplace adjacent to the campus that includes an expanded university bookstore and a Chick-fil-A Restaurant.

There have been numerous other improvements to buildings, roads and other facilities at NSU campuses in Natchitoches, Shreveport, Leesville and Alexandria during Maggio’s tenure.

Expanded academic programs include the master’s degree in Computer Information Systems, a concentration in Nurse Anesthesia in the Doctor of Nursing Practice Program

that is awaiting final approval and a certificate program in remote systems science and technology.

NSU has also established in the past four years a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree in Dance and a Computer Information Sciences concentration in Cyber Security.

To help meet the critical shortage of nurses and health care personnel, the university established the BS to BSN accelerated program in nursing and the Military Medic-Paramedic to ASN program. NSU has also established a Nursing Clinical program on the Natchitoches campus to accommodate students involved in band, athletics and other activities.

Maggio helped instate the Co-Requisite Math Course Enrollment Requirement that has enhanced student retention rates. Special tuition rates supported by Maggio have attracted students to alternate teacher certification and nursing programs.

Private support for the university has increased substantially since Maggio has been president. Endowments have grown from \$30 million to \$45 million with 25 new endowed professorships and first generation scholarships. Contributions to the NSU Foundation have exceeded \$22 million since 2016. Revenues for grant programs and private support for athletics have also grown over the past four years.

During his term as president, Maggio worked to establish mutually beneficial partnerships with governmental

*Continued on Page 3*

entities, private foundations, schools and educational organizations and other groups.

The Flavor of Louisiana partnership with the lieutenant governor's office and Louisiana Seafood Board created a showcase for culinary arts and hospitality students and generated more than \$200,000 in revenues for scholarships and other programs.

A partnership with the Entrepreneurial Accelerator Program at the Biomedical Research Foundation helped create the Inferno Pitch entrepreneurial and business competition for students at the university.

NSU has cooperated with community colleges in the region and area manufacturers to help address regional

workforce needs and continues to host Boys and Girls State programs on campus in cooperation with the American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary.

Northwestern's 19th president, Maggio earned a bachelor's degree from NSU in 1985 and a master's degree from the university in 1991. He received a doctorate degree from Grambling State University in 2002.

A lifelong resident of Natchitoches, he taught and coached for two years at St. Mary's Catholic School in Natchitoches before becoming an assistant track and field and cross country coach at Northwestern in 1988.

Over the years, Maggio served NSU as Head Women's

Track and Field and Cross Country Coach, Assistant Athletic Director, Director of Admissions, Director of Enrollment Services, Director of Alumni and Development, Dean of Students and Assistant Provost, Assistant Vice-President for External Affairs and Vice-President for the Student Experience.

Maggio stated in a retirement message to faculty, staff, students and alumni, "My career at Northwestern has been much more pleasure than work. The memories of student achievements, faculty and staff accomplishments, athletic success and alumni philanthropy and support will make these years at Northwestern forever meaningful."

### *Jones ... Continued from Page 1*

of the UL System president. He also oversaw management of budgets, administration, policies and procedures and international relations and acted as the legal liaison for the System.

Jones served as NSU's executive vice president for university and business affairs from 2017-2020 where he was a key administrator in the planning, operation and management of the University.

He oversaw University Police, the Environmental Health and Safety office, Grounds Department and the Physical Plant and was responsible for construction, maintenance, custodial and general upkeep of all University facilities and grounds. He also reviewed and executed University leases and cooperative agreements and oversaw the environmental health and safety officer. He was NSU's vice president for university affairs from 2007 to 2017.

Jones holds a bachelor's degree in business administration and finance from Northwestern State, a master's in international trade and finance from Grambling State University and a law degree from Southern University Law Center where he was managing editor of the Southern Law Review. He also studied international business and finance at the University of

Plymouth in Plymouth, England.

Jones has been a member of Northwestern's faculty since 1994 as an instructor of business, assistant professor of business law and international business, associate professor of business law and international business and has held the Ben D. Johnson Endowed Professorship since 1999. Proficient in Spanish and French, he led the university's international recruiting efforts, which substantially increased the number of students at NSU from outside the U.S.

Jones has also been treasurer and a consultant to the Ben D. Johnson Educational Foundation and finance/accounts manager and consultant for the Ben D. Johnson Construction and Finance Co. In his role with the construction and finance company, Jones supervised subcontractors at construction sites, managed the company's operating budget, provided financial oversight and worked in economic development. He has also served as treasurer and consultant of the Northwest Louisiana Athletic League and has served in several capacities including co-editor of "Callaloo," a literary magazine based at Texas A&M.

He is a member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Inc., the American Bar Association and the Louisiana State Bar Association.



## ULS approves Snowden appointment as VP of Diversity, Inclusion

**Dr. Michael Snowden's** appointment as vice president for Diversity and Inclusion at Northwestern State University was approved by the Board of Supervisors for the University of Louisiana System. Snowden was named interim vice president in June 2020. The appointment will be effective May 1.

A veteran administrator and student advocate in higher education with over 20 years of professional experience, Snowden has a leadership role in creating and coordinating programs and initiatives that will lead to intensified recruitment of African American employees in prominent positions on the faculty and staff and minority students to provide expanded participation and leadership in student organizations and activities at the university.

Since arriving at NSU last summer, Snowden has made several professional presentations and participated in campus events aimed at moving the needle in diversity, equity and inclusion and has attended meetings of local civic engagement organizations. He is developing a five-year



**Snowden**

Inclusive Excellence Strategic Plan and plans to offer inclusive coaching sessions, training and workshops for students, faculty and staff. He also plans to develop a speaker series focused on diversity, equity and inclusion and host an NSU Inclusive Excellence conference, among other ongoing efforts.

Snowden came to NSU from McNeese State University, where he served as chief diversity officer, ADA coordinator, Title IX coordinator and director of Office of Inclusive Excellence since 2011. In that role, he was responsible for establishing a strategic plan of operation for cultivating a campus culture that embraces diversity, enables

inclusion and provides equity to all campus constituents. At McNeese Snowden managed the development and implementation of the affirmative action plan, provided leadership of the university's equity and inclusion policies for employees with disabilities, anti-bullying, prohibition against retaliation, the Vets 100 report and other requirements related to Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) policies.

At McNeese, Snowden also managed Title IX administration and compliance with federal and state regulations, served as a diversity trainer for the campus, investigated complaints of discrimination and provided counsel to the president and upper administration. During his tenure he initiated a name change from Office of Equal Opportunity to Office of Inclusive Excellence and established equity and inclusion initiatives such as the Black Faculty Staff Council, Foundations Accounts for Black Faculty Staff Council Initiative, training partnership with DiversityEdu and Bias Incident Report Mechanism.



## SGA honors Broussard with Roy Award

**Brittany Broussard**, director of the Center for Inclusion and Diversity, received the V.L. Roy Faculty/Staff Award from the Student Government Association during the SGA's annual inaugural program. The V.L. Roy Faculty/Staff Award for a faculty or staff member who has shown dedication and service to the SGA or the university at large.

# Mathews stepping down as director of bands, passing baton to McDonald

**Dr. Jeffrey C. Mathews** will step down as director of bands at Northwestern State University effective May 3. Mathews, an associate professor of music, will teach full-time and direct the NSU Wind Symphony and Chamber Winds in the 2021-22 academic year.



**Mathews**

Associate Director of Bands **Dan McDonald** has been named interim director of bands while a search for a permanent director takes place.

Mathews has served as director since 2013, enhancing the reputation of the program built by his predecessor Bill Brent. In that time, Mathews worked to build the overall band program by raising the profile of the concert band program which includes the NSU Wind Symphony.

Under his direction, the Wind Symphony was invited to perform at the 2019 World Association of Symphonic Bands and Ensembles Convention in Buñol, Spain. Northwestern State hosted the 2020 College Band Directors Southern Division Conference at which NSU's band had record setting recruiting classes in 2016 with 111 freshmen and in 120 in 2017. That led to the Spirit of Northwestern becoming the state's largest marching band in 2019.

Mathews, a 1990 graduate of Northwestern State, was among the students recruited by Brent as he began increasing the size of the band. Mathews returned to NSU as assistant director of bands in 1998.

Mathews was also director of student activities and organizations from 2004-08. He held the Magale Endowed Professorship on

multiple occasions.

Mathews earned a Bachelor of Music Education at Northwestern State, a Master of Music Education at the University of North Texas and a Doctor of Musical Arts in conducting pedagogy at the University of Southern Mississippi.

McDonald, an assistant professor of music, has directed the Spirit of Northwestern Marching Band, "Purple Haze" Basketball Band, Wind Ensemble, Magale Concert Band and teaches courses in student leadership, music education and conducting.

He is pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in instrumental conducting at the University of Washington with Timothy Salzman. He earned a B.A. in Music (Saxophone) and a M.M. in Instrumental Conducting from the University of Connecticut.

McDonald has conducted and directed ensembles that have performed at the 2019 WASBE Conference (Buñol, Spain), 2020 CBDNA Southern Division Conference and around the world. He serves on the national Athletic Bands Committee and is chair of the Louisiana chapter of College Band Directors National Association.



**McDonald**

McDonald said the band has begun preparing for the fall semester with faculty and staff members Dr. Oliver Molina, Dr. Estelle Murr, Jena Elfer, René Oates and Michael Lomeka and members of the band.

For more information on band programs at Northwestern State, go to <https://capa.nsula>.



## Spring commencement will be celebrated in six ceremonies May 5-7, no armbands required, no capacity limitations

Northwestern State University will relax restrictions planned for spring commencement exercises, following Governor John Bel Edwards' announcement Tuesday that large public buildings can open to 100 percent occupancy if all individuals are wearing masks.

Ceremonies will take place at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Wednesday, May 5-Friday, May 7. The ceremonies will be live streamed at [www.nsula.edu](http://www.nsula.edu).

Armbands will not be required to attend any of the six commencement ceremonies and graduates will not be limited to the number of guests in attendance. Everyone

must wear a mask to enter the building. Guests will be directed to their seats and families who wish to sit together must enter the building together. Saving seats will not be allowed. Guests are asked to remain seated for the duration of the ceremony if possible.

Graduates will enter the main door of the Coliseum and will be escorted to their seats. There will be no graduate procession.

Guests for graduates with last names beginning with A-L should use entrance and exits on the east side of Prather Coliseum, the side facing the tennis courts.

Guests for graduates with last names beginning with M-Z

should use entrance and exits on the west side of Prather Coliseum, the side facing the Kappa Sigma House. ADA accessibility entrance is on the West side.

Graduates and guests should plan to arrive at least 30 minutes prior to each ceremony.

"We are pleased that our graduates will be able to share their special day with family, but we do ask that everyone attending commencement ceremonies continue to wear masks indoors and be courteous to others in attendance," said NSU President **Dr. Chris Maggio**.

More details are available at [www.nsula.edu/graduation](http://www.nsula.edu/graduation).





Natchitoches Regional Medical Center Foundation awarded a grant to NSU’s Center for Positivity, Well-Being & Hope that will be used to fund holistic health workshops open to the Natchitoches community. From left are Neeru Deep, who organized the Center; Yonna Pasch, director of Student Activities and Organizations, and Danielle Cobb representing the NSU Foundation.

## Center for Positivity, Well-Being and Hope gets NRMC grant

Northwestern State University’s Center for Positivity, Well-Being, & Hope received a grant of \$6,000 from the Natchitoches Regional Medical Center Foundation for health-related projects in Natchitoches Parish.

The grant will fund workshops to be held during the 21-22 academic year, “Achieving Holistic Wellness without Stressing Out” and “The Power of Positivity.” The workshops will be open to NSU faculty, staff and students as well as the Natchitoches community. Organizers are hoping that the workshops will be held face-to-face.

NSU’s Center for Positivity, Well-Being and Hope was launched last year to promote positive thinking, enhance well-being and instill resilience and hope so that individuals can enhance their lives, transform communities and positively impact the world, according to **Neeru Deep**, an instructor of psychology who spearheaded the initiative.

Deep was made aware of the grant

opportunity by **Dr. Yonna Pasch**, NSU’s director of Student Activities and Organizations and Deep’s mentor in the IGNiTE program, a faculty/staff development program for early and mid-career professionals and newly positioned campus leaders.

Together they developed these workshops, and both are excited to join efforts to bring this initiative to the campus and Natchitoches community.

“We all hear that health is wealth, but sometimes we think health only in term of physical health and ignore all the other aspects of health such as mental health, spiritual health and even social health,” Deep said. “The Positivity and Wellness Workshop Series will bring awareness about holistic wellness and the NRMC grant will help us reach out to the NSU family and the Natchitoches community.”

Information on the Center for Positivity, Well-being and Hope is available at [www.nsula.edu/positivity](http://www.nsula.edu/positivity).



NSU SGA President Nicholas Hopkins and artist Edgar Cano Lopez unveiled a portrait of Lucile Mertz Hendrick that will hang outside the newly dedicated Lucile M. Hendrick Room, a multipurpose meeting and event space on the first floor of the Friedman Student Union. A dedication program took place April 20 with many friends of the long-time Dean of Women present.

## Hendrick Room named for long-time administrator

Northwestern State University formally named a new multipurpose meeting space in the Friedman Student Union after long-time administrator Lucile Mertz Hendrick (1909-2003) and unveiled a portrait of Hendrick created by NSU graduate student Edgar Cano Lopez that will hang outside the room. The space, Room 121, is the site of the former campus bookstore and has quickly become a popular meeting space for campus groups, according to Student Government Association President Nick Hopkins, who welcomed guests on behalf of the student body.

Hendrick was assistant dean of women at Northwestern from 1959 until 1963 and was dean of women from 1963 until her retirement in 1974. A 1929 graduate of Louisiana State Normal, Hendrick was a charter member of Sigma Sigma Sigma Sorority and

remained active until her death. During her tenure as a college administrator, she was named Outstanding Dean of Women for Louisiana. In 1998, she was named to Northwestern's Long Purple Line, the highest honor bestowed on a Northwestern alumna.

Hendrick was awarded citations from several NSU student organizations, including the SGA, Purple Jackets and Panhellenic Council, who created the Lucile Mertz Hendrick Panhellenic Foundation Scholarship in her honor. Sigma Sigma Sigma Sorority also created the Lucile Mertz Hendrick Outstanding Alumna Award in her honor.

Lopez, the artist who created the finely detailed portrait of Hendrick, is earning a Master of Arts degree in Art. He was born in Isla, Veracruz, Mexico, and grew up in Santiago Tuxtla, a small

city in the Los Tuxtlas region of southern Veracruz. He studied in the fine arts program at the Universidad Veracruzana in Xalapa, initially focused on creating set designs for campus theatre and working part-time jobs outside of art.

NSU President **Dr.**

**Chris Maggio** commented on the numerous friends and community members who knew "Miss Cissy" and her impact on many generations in the Natchitoches and NSU communities.

A dedication program for the Seven Oaks Stage at Iberville Green, originally scheduled for April 23, has been postponed to the fall semester due to anticipated inclement weather. The Seven Oaks Stage will be named to honor the first seven Black students to attend Northwestern State. Details on the rescheduling will be announced as plans are finalized.



April 2021

# Kiwanis®

Louisiana-Mississippi-West Tennessee District News

Natchitoches Promotes Literacy



Improving the world one child at a time

## CLUB NEWS

### Natchitoches Reads on the River

LOUISIANA-MISSISSIPPI-WEST TENNESSEE DISTRICT OF KIWANIS

It was a beautiful Saturday on the riverbank of Historic Downtown Natchitoches, Louisiana and the *Cat in the Hat* was ready to bring smiles to the faces of hundreds of local children. The Kiwanis Club of Natchitoches was participating in the annual Reading on the River event that is hosted by a local organization, the Service League of Natchitoches. This event has leaders in the community read children's books, vendors supply activities or giveaways, and new and used books are given to every single child that attends. Each vendor has a theme, and the Kiwanis Club of Natchitoches chose *The Cat in the Hat* as theirs. To prepare, many hours were spent creating Dr. Seuss's Truffula trees, hot giving book-marks for the kids to decorate with stickers and markers, making a Thing 1 and Thing 2 photo booth, and stuffing bags with as many *Cat in the Hat* books as the Kiwanians could get their hands on. Many smiles were passed around as children stood in line, patiently waiting to have their book autographed by *Cat* himself.

President Craig Caskey's mother is a local elementary school teacher who loves to put a smile on kid's faces every year by dressing up as *Cat in the Hat*. She huggled, high fived, and encouraged hundreds of local children to read. More than 65 *Cat in the Hat* books were signed and given away, bookmarks were made, and children (and a few adventurous adults) giggled as they pretended to be Thing 1 and Thing 2. It was a day that made a positive impact on the children in a local community of a small town in Central Louisiana. "Don't give up! I believe in you all! A small!" - Dr. Seuss



### Denham Springs W. Livingston Kiwanis Provide Water Crisis Relief

On March 13, 2021, the Denham Springs West Livingston Kiwanis Club donated 4 pallets of bottled water to the people in Jackson, MS for some relief due to the water crisis. Each pallet included 48 cases with 40 bottles per case - that's 7,680 bottles of water! The water was picked up by Pastor Henry Allen of Mt. Olive BC and Pastor Jerry Mannery of We Are One UMC, both in Jackson, MS.

*Pictured left to right: Fred Banks, Past Gov.; Jeff Perkins, Pastor Conference, Committee Member; Pastor Allen; and Elroy LeBlanc, President.*



## Hamm article featured in Kiwanis regional publication

The NSU WRAC's Assistant Director of Wellness **Kaitlyn Hamm**, vice president of the Natchitoches Kiwanis Club, participated in and wrote an article on Reading on the River, a community literacy event for children and families in which every child who attends receives a free book. The article was the cover story and featured in the Kiwanis Club regional

magazine.

Reading on the River is a downtown event in which numerous educational and service organizations, including several from Northwestern State, participate.

Kiwanis of Natchitoches hosted a Dr. Seuss-themed booth with Truffula trees, bookmarks and stickers and a Thing 1 and Thing 2 photo booth.

## NSU Art Camp will return this summer

Northwestern State University's Department of Fine and Graphic Art will present Art Camp 2021 this summer.

Dates are June 7-11 for ages 5-11, June 14-18 for ages 5-11 and June 21-25 for ages 12-18.

For details email **Corbin Covher** at [covherc@nsula.edu](mailto:covherc@nsula.edu). Updates will be posted on social media @NSUARTCAMP.





MSG Blakely was congratulated by NSU President Dr. Chris Maggio

## Blakely recognized by NSU Athletics as military honoree

In continuing the Northwestern State University's long-held tradition of recognizing military service at home athletic events, the university welcomed **Master Sergeant Michael R. Blakely** and his family to Natchitoches April and honored his service to the nation prior to the NSU-Sam Houston football game.

Blakely is an Infantryman with over 19 years of active service in the U.S. Army. He brings a wealth of experience to NSU as the ROTC Senior Military Instructor. Most recently, he was the Brigade Operations Noncommissioned Officer for Operations Group, Joint Readiness Training Center, Fort Polk. Through Operations Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom, and Inherent Resolve, Master Sergeant Blakely has served 57 months in combat.

His military education includes the Basic Leader Course, Advanced Leader Course, Senior Leader Course, Basic Airborne School, Jumpmaster School, Infantry Mortar Leader Course and the US Army Drill Sergeant Academy.

Blakely's awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal with four Oak Leaf Clusters, Army Achievement Medal with five Oak Leaf Clusters, Valorous Unit Award, Meritorious Unit Citation, Army Good Conduct Medal with five knots, National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal with three Service Stars, Iraq Campaign Medal with two Service Stars, Global War on Terror Expeditionary Medal with three Service Stars, Global War on Terror Service Medal, NCO Professional Development Ribbon with 3 Numeral, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon with 4 Numeral, and the NATO Medal. Additionally, he has earned the Drill Sergeant Identification Badge, Combat Infantryman Badge, Expert Infantryman Badge, and Parachutist Badge.

Master Sergeant Blakely hails from Vashon Island, Washington. He and his wife Jennifer have three children, Michael, Kaelyn and newborn Emily Gael.



## ADVANCE program will return to campus this July

Northwestern State University will host the 33rd session of the ADVANCE Program for Young Scholars (ADVANCE) July 4 – 24. ADVANCE is a three-week residential program that academically challenges and socially engages gifted, honors or talented students who are currently in 7-11th grades. ADVANCE will be held on campus and will follow COVID-19 protocols throughout the program.

All applicants must provide a copy of their most recent report card and state standardized test scores. If scores have been misplaced, many schools provide that information on school transcripts, and transcripts may be submitted to ADVANCE. If applicants have taken an ACT or

SAT, those scores may be submitted with their applications.

Course offerings include humanities, mathematics, natural sciences with laboratory components, and computer programming. By working with carefully selected instructors and teaching assistants (TAs), and limiting class enrollment to 15 students, each student is given the opportunity to attain maximum academic growth.

While the academic program at ADVANCE is top-notch, the residential program sets ADVANCE apart from other similar summer programs. For further information visit <http://advance.nsula.edu/>, call (318) 357-4500, or email [palmerh@nsula.edu](mailto:palmerh@nsula.edu).

## IP Foundation continues support of Cradle to College initiative

Northwestern State University was awarded \$1,000 from International Paper's Campti Mill and the International Paper Foundation to support the Cradle to College initiative, a project that seeks to remap the path for at-risk youngsters by providing early literacy activities and support to children and families with limited resources so that children can engage in literacy activities at home with their parents.

Kelly Trumbo, communications coordinator at International Paper's Red River Mill, presented the donation to **Dr. Michelle Fazio Brunson**, professor of early childhood education at Northwestern State.

The Cradle to College initiative is an on-going project in which NSU students and faculty collect supplies and purchase materials to make family literacy bags for preschool and kindergarten students in Natchitoches Parish. Brunson began the project as a way to provide extra support to children who live below the poverty line before they begin

falling behind in school.

The International Paper Foundation is one of the ways International Paper strives to reach its vision to be among the most successful, sustainable and responsible companies in the world. Started in 1952, the foundation annually provides millions in grants to 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations to address critical needs in the communities where its

employees live and work.

Funding priority is given to programs related to its signature causes: education, hunger, health & wellness, disaster relief, and initiatives that improve the planet. For more information, visit [ipgiving.com](http://ipgiving.com).

Brunson said donations of school supplies and books are always needed. To make a contribution, contact her at [faziom@nsula.edu](mailto:faziom@nsula.edu).



Janna Maggio, preschool teacher at L.P. Vaughan Early Learning Center, helped distribute family literacy bags to all preschool and kindergarten children at the school. Dr. Michelle Fazio Brunson, director of Graduate Programs in Early Childhood Education at Northwestern State University, spearheads the project, which is intended to provide extra support to children before they fall behind in school.

## Living Library focuses on LGBTQIA+ experiences



Northwestern State University's Eugene P. Watson Library hosted the Spring 2021 edition of Watson's Living Library Collection: Everyone Has a Story with panelists sharing their deeply personal experiences as individuals or parents of individuals who identify as LGBTQIA+. From left are moderator Dr. Greg Handel and panelists Claire Prymus, Samuel Wright, Krislyn Mardis, Dr. Frank Serio, Maggie Welch, Brett Garfinkel, Sharon Wolff, Andy and Christine Ferrell, Emily Adams and Lee Whitney. The Living Library showcases the diversity of communities by validating life experiences of individuals via round table discussions, interviews, question and answer panels, live recordings, speakers and panel events. The Living Library's educational impact is in using a social approach to educate students, breaking down silos on campus via multi-disciplinary presentation, enhancing the library collections and creating an inclusive environment to accept diverse communities.

## Louisiana Studies Conference issues call for proposals

The 13th Annual Louisiana Studies Conference will be held September 24-25, 2021 at Northwestern State University in Natchitoches, Louisiana. The 2021 conference will be held in a virtual delivery format via Microsoft Teams.

The conference committee is now accepting presentation

proposals for the upcoming conference. Presentation proposals on any aspect of the 2021 conference theme "Heroes, Saints, and Outlaws," as well as creative texts by, about, and/or for Louisiana and Louisianans, are sought for this year's conference.

The deadline for

submissions is May 31, 2021. Accepted presenters will be notified via e-mail by June 15, 2021 if not before.

Abstracts (300 words max.) for scholarly proposals and creative writing should be sent as e-mail attachments to **Dr. Shane Rasmussen**, [rasmussens@nsula.edu](mailto:rasmussens@nsula.edu).