

III | NORTHWESTERN STATE



A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT JAMES T. GENOVESE

August 9, 2026

Dear Faculty and Staff,

As we prepare for the beginning of the fall semester, Northwestern's campuses are once again filled with activity and anticipation. This week's events and accomplishments reflect the many ways our faculty and staff advance the University's mission through recruitment, community engagement, professional development, and service. Thank you for the energy and dedication you continue to bring to this important work.

Rapides Parish Opening of Schools Meeting

On Monday morning, I attended the Rapides Parish “Opening of Schools” meeting, where more than 2,400 educators, school leaders, elected officials, and district personnel gathered to celebrate accomplishments and establish goals for the year ahead. The event provided an excellent opportunity to share information about Northwestern and connect with educators and community leaders who can help us recruit and support the next generation of Demons.

Marksville Chamber of Commerce Legislative Update Luncheon

On Tuesday, representatives from Northwestern State University’s Central Louisiana and Marksville instructional sites attended the Legislative Update Luncheon hosted by the Marksville Chamber of Commerce. The event provided a valuable opportunity to reaffirm Northwestern’s steadfast commitment to rural communities and the residents of Avoyelles Parish. The Marksville Instructional Site continues to strengthen regional partnerships by working with organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and collaborating directly with local Tribal members to support enrollment and expand access to higher education, a cornerstone of regional vitality. Through personalized advising, proactive outreach, and student-centered service, we seek to remove barriers to higher education and ensure that every student begins the semester with confidence. By combining strong local partnerships with dedicated academic support, Northwestern remains committed to empowering Louisiana’s rural parishes and contributing to economic growth throughout the region.

Student Experience In-Service

The Student Experience team is ready to begin a great fall semester. On Thursday, 55 members of the division participated in an in-service focused on unreasonable hospitality and creating exceptional experiences for our students. NSU alumnus Wes Breeden, a 2003 graduate, challenged staff to think boldly about how we welcome, serve and support students. SGA President Kieler Soape joined the group for lunch and emphasized the importance of their work to student success. Look for Student Experience staff at Opening Convocation tomorrow, where they will distribute “How May I Assist You?” buttons as a reminder that every interaction can make a difference. Recruiting and retention are everyone’s responsibility, and the Student Experience team is ready for the new academic year.

On-Call Week Professional Development

Faculty and staff are invited to participate in nine professional development sessions offered during [On-Call Week 2026](#). Sessions will be available in person on the Natchitoches campus in Room 006 of Alost Hall and broadcast to Room 121 of Building 550, Center C, in Leesville; Room 1018 of Building B in Alexandria; and Room 221 of the LB Building in Shreveport. Breakfast will be served at all four campuses during the professional development days. Registration, materials, activities, recordings, and certificates will be provided through the [On-Call Week Moodle Course](#). Faculty and staff must register themselves in the Moodle course to access the sessions and related materials. The Moodle course will remain available through December 31, 2026, allowing those who cannot attend during On-Call Week to access recordings, complete activities and obtain certificates.

I encourage everyone to participate and take advantage of these valuable professional development opportunities.

Kinesiology Receives \$182,009 Healthy Living Grant

I am pleased to share that Northwestern's School of Kinesiology has received a \$182,009 Healthy Eating, Active Living Program grant from The Rapides Foundation. The three-year grant will expand access to nutrition education and physical activity for older adults in Natchitoches Parish and surrounding communities. The initiative will include student-led nutrition and cooking classes, grocery shopping trips, strength and mobility programs, screenings and health assessments. Through partnerships with the City of Natchitoches, the Natchitoches Council on Aging and other community organizations, the program will promote healthy aging while providing NSU students with valuable practical experience. Congratulations to Dr. Tara Tietjen-Smith, project director, and everyone who helped secure this grant. And a special thanks to the Rapides Foundation for investing in the health and well-being of the communities we serve.

Fun and Fitness Camp Continues a Summer Tradition

More than 100 children stayed active, learned new games and built friendships through Northwestern's Fun & Fitness Camp at the WRAC. Offered in three sessions during July and August, the camp combines sports, games, arts and crafts and other recreational activities for children ages 5 through 12. A summer tradition since the 1980s, the program continues to welcome generations of returning families. The camp also provides NSU student counselors with valuable leadership

experience. I thank Dr. Jason Stelly, our WRAC staff, and student counselors for creating another safe, engaging, and enjoyable summer for children throughout our community.

Athletics Update

The Demon football team's first extended preseason scrimmage was the centerpiece of Demon Fan Fest Saturday morning in Turpin Stadium. The competition lasted more than two hours and featured highlights from both the offensive and defensive units. Afterward, T-Johnny's served a jambalaya and pork chop lunch as season tickets were distributed and NSU promotional items were given away. Coach Blaine McCorkle is pleased with his players' progress and the increased competition for starting positions.

Our defending Southland Conference champion soccer team played its second exhibition game Saturday night at home, controlling play against LSU Eunice. The regular season begins with four road games over the next two weeks, starting Wednesday night at Oklahoma, followed by a visit to LSU next Sunday at 6:00 p.m. Coach Ian Brophy believes this year's team is positioned for another outstanding season.

Tickets remain available for the Demons Unlimited Foundation [Dream Home Giveaway](#). The winner will be drawn November 6 and receive a new home valued at approximately \$265,000. Tickets are \$100, with proceeds supporting Northwestern Athletics through the Demons Unlimited Foundation. This exciting initiative allows our supporters to win a beautiful new home while investing in the success of Demon student-athletes.

The [Top of the Boot Music Festival](#) will bring two days of outstanding live music to Natchitoches October 16 and 17. Held on the field adjacent to the Northwestern soccer complex, the festival will feature Lee Brice, Dylan Scott, Flatland Cavalry, Ian Munsick, Rodney Atkins, Bottomland and other performers. The weekend will also feature our home football game against McNeese at noon Saturday, October 17, providing a full slate of entertainment on campus. I encourage members of the Northwestern family to make plans to attend and help us welcome music fans from across the region to our campus and community.

Looking Ahead

The beginning of the fall semester is just around the corner. Faculty and Staff On-Call Week begins this week, with breakfast available tomorrow morning at 8:30 a.m. in A.A. Fredericks Auditorium. Opening Convocation will begin at 9:00 a.m., followed by the Faculty and Staff Luncheon at 11:30 a.m. in Iberville Dining Hall. A full schedule of On-Call Week events, including professional development sessions for faculty and staff is available [here](#).

New Student Convocation will be held next Sunday at 5:00 p.m. in A.A. Fredericks Auditorium. I hope you will join us in welcoming our incoming freshman class to the Northwestern family. Classes begin Monday, August 17, and Demon football opens its season at home Thursday, August 27, at 7:00 p.m. against Louisiana Christian University. Please make plans to come out and support the team!

Thank you for your continued commitment to our students and Northwestern's mission. I look forward to seeing many of you at the upcoming events as we begin another successful academic year. For more information on upcoming events and activities, please visit our [What's Happening at NSU](#) page.

Fork 'Em Demons,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James T. Genovese". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "James" and last name "Genovese" clearly legible.

James T. "Jimmy" Genovese
President
Northwestern State University

Northwestern Now

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