

Week of October 9

The Week

Monday morning, Chris Maggio, Jana Lucky, Taylor Whitehead, Steven Niette, and I visited with seniors at Natchitoches Central High School. The freshman class that started at NSU this semester includes 97 NCHS graduates.

Later Monday morning, student Robert Green interviewed me about my Homecoming experience as a student.

At noon, Connie Jones, Landon Amberg, Lynn Woods, and Valerie Salter hosted a reception for recipients of American Hotel & Lodging Educational Foundation scholarships. I am always taken by the sense of pride and appreciation evident on our students' faces at events like this. Thank you to our Hospitality Management & Tourism team for making a big deal out of a big deal.

Monday afternoon, Ali Ahmad and Mike Wolff met with me about our partnership with Alliance Compressor and other manufacturing entities.

Brett Garfinkle and Kirstin Rhiel visited with me about a potential Bachelor of Fine Arts in dance. Often, "industry" observers assume our students to be BFA students when they watch the students perform. That sentiment is a testament to the talent of the students we recruit and the amazing work of our dance faculty. Go see Young Frankenstein this afternoon for a taste of dance or go see Modern in Motion this week to see just how good our program is.

Rachel Kincaid, UL System Vice President for External Affairs, met with me regarding messaging around higher education public policy.

Tuesday, I attended the Department of Education meeting in Baton Rouge. Kim McAlister and Suzanne Williams were in attendance as well. The DoE/BESE agenda included consideration of the recommendations from the Committee on Educator Preparation. The review was to begin at noon with a vote by 1. They only missed that by about 4 hours...

Tuesday afternoon, I met with Commissioner of Higher Education Joe Rallo and Board of Regents Chair Richard Lipsey. We talked about the funding

formula, workforce needs, and the latest review of our higher education enterprise. We also discussed the need for open communications among the systems and the Regents. I just keep repeating to myself “opportunities, opportunities, opportunities...”

Wednesday morning, I participated in a conference call about a gender identity issue. A “Dear Colleague” letter from the US Department of Education clarifies expectations under Title IX for colleges and universities that receive federal funds:

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201605-title-ix-transgender.pdf>

Wednesday afternoon, during a grueling rehearsal session, we added the finishing touches to Young Frankenstein. Serious scholars of theater have written volumes about the societal import of the Hilltop character. The fraternity of elite artists who have effectively captured the character’s essence occupies a special place in the stage actors’ pantheon.

Wednesday evening, Tonia and I attended opening night of one of the best productions I have ever seen at NSU. The cast and crew of Young Frankenstein absolutely knocked it out of the park. Special thanks to our CAPA faculty for challenging, nurturing, and teaching these amazingly talented students and helping them realize their potential.

Thursday, Jana, Taylor, Steven, and I visited with seniors at Pineville High School. NSU and Spirit of Northwestern Alum Dr. Karl Carpenter and his team at PHS have created a thriving culture at the school that is reflected in the students. These are some impressive kids...

Back in Natchitoches, Current Sauce News Editor Jacob Farnsley dropped by the office for an interview.

Later Thursday morning, Vickie Gentry and Roni Biscoe met with me on our strategic planning efforts. Thursday afternoon, Frank Hall and I enjoyed a conversation also about our strategic plan.

Jake Bennett, Emily Ryan, and a few of their student partners interviewed me for their faith-based podcast.

Friday, it was back to Baton Rouge for a meeting with Interim ULS President Dan Reneau. We then, accompanied by several ULS staff members, met with a legislative committee. Representative John Schroder from Covington organized the meeting to help orient newer members of the legislature regarding the higher education issues in the state budget crisis. We gave them a few data points for consideration:

In 2008, ULS institutions received \$517,740,920 in state funds and graduated 14,828 students. In 2015, those same institutions received \$234,118,808 in state funds and graduated 16,240. Most business enterprises would never dream of achieving such an increase in efficiency. We also pointed out that the last four years of graduates earn a collective \$1.1 billion in income. That, my friends, is perhaps the greatest investment our state could make.

Saturday, Tonia and I traveled to Beaumont for one of the most painful sports-related moments I have ever experienced. I have never seen a team that deserved victory more. A football is an oblong sphere that bounces in unpredictable ways. One would think it would bounce our way on occasion. Mercy.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or comments.