

The Week:

As I visited around campus this week, it was evident that our students were gearing up for their Spring Break! It has also been nice to see university rowing teams from other universities make Natchitoches a spring break destination and training ground. Over the past few weeks, teams from LSU, Texas, Wichita State, Oklahoma City and Central Oklahoma have spent time in Natchitoches taking advantage of the 36-mile-long Cane River Lake. Thanks to NSU Rowing Coach Jason Stelly for marketing our university and town to other universities <http://news.nsula.edu/home/rowing-teams-return-to-cane-river-natchitoches/>.

Registration for the 2017 summer and fall semesters began this week. Monday, I emailed students encouraging them to secure their classes before leaving for spring break. Thanks to our faculty who continue to work with their advisees to assist with the registration process.

As we work on our *Response to the Visiting Committee's Report*, we want to keep the University community apprised of the process. On Tuesday, Frank Hall and Roni Biscoe met with the President and Vice-Presidents to discuss the accelerated timeline that will be used to guide the response to Core Requirement 2.5. This standard involves the strategic plan and associated assessment process at the University level. Wednesday, Frank and Roni met with the University Assessment Committee (UAC) to discuss the same topic and focused on assessment processes at the unit level. This includes academic, academic-support, and non-academic units as they relate to Comprehensive Standard 3.3. As stated in last week's update, both of these standards are critical in our reaffirmation process.

My Week:

Sunday evening, I attended the Phi Beta Delta Honor Society for International Scholars Induction Ceremony. It is with great pride that I join this prestigious society as an honorary member. Congratulations to our faculty, staff and student inductees, and thanks to Chapter President Dr. Sharon Joy for organizing and hosting the event and to Dr. Ali Ahmad for his informative presentation.

Monday, I had several individual meetings on campus, including a planning session for the upcoming 78th Annual Conference of Louisiana Colleges and Universities that we will host on our campus on April 6. That evening, I travelled to Mansfield to attend the DeSoto Parish School Board Elite Scholars' Dinner where the top high school seniors from the parish were recognized for their academic achievement. The highlight of the event was to hear many of the elite scholars announce that they were attending Northwestern State University this fall!

Tuesday morning, the Vice Presidents and I gathered. Frank Hall and Roni Biscoe presented to us the accelerated timeline that will be used to guide the response to Core Requirement 2.5. This standard involves the strategic plan and associated assessment process at the University level. They have done an outstanding job in formulating our response plan, and I want to thank all of those who are involved in implementation.

Afterwards, Jennifer and I walked over to the Alumni Plaza where we "traveled" from country to country sampling cuisines and enjoying music at the International Festival of Cultures and Cuisines hosted by our Hospitality Management & Tourism and Culinary Arts Students. This was a magnificent and culturally

enriching event. If you were not able to attend this year, make sure you mark your calendar to attend next year. You will be glad you did.

That afternoon, I joined many others from NSU, the Natchitoches Police Department, the Natchitoches Sheriff's department and hundreds of others who attended the funeral services for long-time NSU employee Sergeant Kerry Anderson. His passing is such a loss for our NSU family, and we will always remember his dedicated service to Northwestern State University.

Later that afternoon, Jill Bankston and I had a lengthy but productive phone call with a prospective donor to NSU. Jill, as she has done so many previous times, did a phenomenal job with research, preparation and delivery of a proposal to support NSU. Because of her hard work, we hope to announce another endowment to NSU soon.

Afterwards, I met with Dr. Darlene Williams, Dr. Vickie Gentry, Ron Wright, Tracy Brown and Daphne Sampite to continue to review our position in the on-line market.

Wednesday morning, I traveled to Alexandria and joined Dr. Darlene Williams, Jason Parks, Carolyn Hartt and Ann Deshotels at the Central Louisiana Healthcare Sector Partnership meeting at St. Frances Cabrini Hospital. Our team did a great job of letting the advisory group know the significant impact Northwestern State University and our College of Nursing and Allied Health is making in Central Louisiana. I applaud our CONAH leadership and the faculty for their great work in this sector.

After returning to campus, I met with Dr. Paula Christensen and graduate assistant Damian Glover to review his internship progress this semester. I hope you have had the opportunity to meet Damian. With young, outstanding students like Damian, our future is bright in the Student Affairs field.

Later in the day, I met with Mike Wolff, a longtime leader in manufacturing in Louisiana. Mike has served as vice-president for Economic Development for the Natchitoches Community Alliance and has been a strong advocate for Northwestern State University and our Engineering Technology program. Recently, he was named as the next director of the Manufacturing Extension Partnership of Louisiana (MEPOL). We look forward to working closely with Mike in his new statewide role.

That evening, I attended a presentation about transgender issues as part of our "It's On Us" week sponsored by our Title IX Office.

Thursday morning, I gathered at the Alumni Plaza Fountain for a photo with six outstanding student representatives at NSU. Stephanie Parker, Miss Natchitoches; Emily Jackson, Miss Greater Baton Rouge; Maria Rome, Miss Northwestern Lady of the Bracelet; Hanna Teutsch, Miss Port City; Erika Jarlock, Miss Benton, and Payton Curry, Miss Bossier City, are all NSU students who will be competing later this summer in the Miss Louisiana pageant.

Afterwards, I met with Dr. Marcus Jones, Director of Residential Life Stephanie Dyjack, Campus Living Villages Chief Executive Officer Gary Clarke and Campus Living Villages Vice-President for Capital Projects Rob Archibald to discuss future housing projects on campus.

Later, I joined over one hundred faculty, staff and students for the Varnado Hall Renovation Commencement Ceremony, <http://news.nsula.edu/home/varnado-renovation-underway/>. When complete, this \$8 million dollar renovation project will transform this 1939 historical building into a

modern living/learning residential college for students in the School of Creative and Performing Arts. This project will greatly enhance opportunities for our students in the Arts.

I then met with American Red Cross Disaster program specialists Craig Ryan and Katie Sullivan about future collaborations between NSU and the American Red Cross.

My afternoon was filled with meetings across campus, including some productive time with Faculty Senate President Dr. Marcia Hardy and another valuable meeting with NSU Scholarship Coordinator Carolyn Jones, Financial Aid Director Lauren Jackson, Director of Admissions Jana Lucky and Assistant Vice President for External Affairs Drake Owens.

I spent Friday morning moving across campus visiting with several students and departments. I was able to spend about an hour in Business Affairs visiting with staff about their area. Consistent with all of our areas on campus, the staff shared some enthusiastic ideas and suggestions to make NSU an even better place. I really appreciate their feedback.

Friday afternoon, Cole Gentry stopped by to videotape some marketing footage.

Saturday morning, I attended the visitation and Celebration of Life of Dr. Tom Burns, former NSU Provost-Vice President for Academic Affairs and long-time faculty member. Dr. Burns was an outstanding leader and dedicated member of our faculty for many years, and was such an influential mentor to me.

Afterwards, Cole Gentry and I got back together to finish videotaping a spot to promote the *Flavor of Louisiana* Fundraising event on April 7.

Later that afternoon, I drove to Toledo Bend for the weigh-in of the second Annual Dylan Kyle Poche Memorial Bass Tournament. Dylan was an NSU student and member of our bass fishing team who was tragically killed last January. Proceeds from the tournament go toward a scholarship at Northwestern State University.

As always, please contact me with any questions, comments or concerns.

Fork 'em Demons,

Chris