

Good Morning and I want to wish all of our fathers a Happy Father's Day!

### **The Week:**

The Louisiana Legislature on Friday passed a final budget in which higher education did not receive any cuts and TOPS was fully funded. This is the best news we could have expected out of the session. I want to thank so many of you for your advocacy and our legislators for their support as we begin to reinvest in higher education in the state of Louisiana. Although we still trail our competitors in terms of resources per student, this year's budget provides a foundation upon which to expand our investment in higher education.

Now that we know what our state appropriations will be, we must continue to focus on things we can control, GROWTH AND RETENTION. Doing this will allow us even greater resources to display the benefits of our dynamic university. Our focus has been, and will continue to be, expanding and enhancing our academic offerings and providing a world-class student experience.

Our students continue to represent us in national and international settings. SGA President Tre Nelson was in Washington D.C. this week lobbying on Capitol Hill, <http://news.nsula.edu/home/sga-pres-lobbies-for-greek-issues/> and several Creative and Performing Arts students traveled to Cartagena, Columbia. Francisco Ballestas, Ronald Rodriguez, Alanna Benoit, Chelsey Goldsmith, Logan Terrell, Luis Osorio and Addison Pellegrino were in Columbia to teach high school students in music and dance and learn Columbian cultural dances and responsiveness to Columbian Musical Jazz styles. The trip was highlighted by a joint recital at the oldest theatre in Cartagena and attended by over 800 people. Dr. Greg Handel, who accompanied the students on the trip, said, "The theatre, crowd, and preparation defied every expectation I had going in. It was one of the most beautiful events of which I have ever been a part."

Finally, I want to acknowledge and express appreciation for the continued support of our generous alumni. This week, we announced a donation from the family of the late Allen and Mary Lee Posey. This latest gift, when matched by the Board of Regents support fund, creates a \$100,000 Distinguished Graduate Scholarship in Education, <http://news.nsula.edu/home/posey-family-fulfills-scholarship/>. This gift is so important in making scholarship dollars available to students pursuing advanced degrees at NSU.

### **My Week:**

Sunday afternoon, I stopped by Coach Jordan Dupuy's Lady Demon Basketball Elite camp. Over 70 campers from five states participated. Later, I visited the Northwestern State University Cheer Camp. Ashlee Hewitt, Northwestern State University Cheerleader Camp Coordinator, reports that over 300 students were on campus for cheer camp this week.

Monday morning, Dr. Marcus Jones, Jennifer Kelly and I met about student services in our residence facilities. Afterwards, Jerry Pierce and Greg Burke updated me on Demon Athletics and later I had lunch with Mid-South Bank Regional President J.J. Blake and City President Rhonda Jones.

Monday afternoon, Jana Lucky and I had a conference call with Educational Advisory Board Enrollment Management Forum representative Kyle Thomas. Afterwards, Dr. Vickie Gentry and I met on several personnel matters.

Tuesday morning, Dr. Marcus Jones and Jennifer Kelly joined me on a conference call with Campus Living Villages United States Chief Executive Officer Gary Clarke and Vice-President of Capital Projects Rob Archibald. At lunch, I had the honor of updating the Natchitoches Rotary Club on Northwestern State University.

Afterwards, the Vice Presidents and I gathered for an update on the special session in Baton Rouge and its impact on our budget for next fiscal year.

Wednesday morning, Dr. Greg Handel and Dr. Jeff Matthews stopped by to update me on the marching band and show me the design for new uniforms for the Spirit of Northwestern Marching Band. They will be working hard this next year to generate private funding to purchase new band uniforms for the 2018-19 school year.

Afterwards, I met with a student who is re-enrolling at NSU. I mention this because I appreciate all of you who work daily assisting our students. This student relayed to me how she recently decided to return to school after several years in the military. She stopped by to express how helpful our NSU faculty and staff have been in this process. She commended the admissions, registrar, financial aid and student accounting offices for their attention to her unique case and praised her advisors for their guidance in scheduling classes. It is this special attention and responsive to students needs that truly sets us apart from our peers.

At lunch and through the afternoon, I joined Dr. Margaret Kilcoyne, Dr. Carmella Parker, Curtis Penrod, Joe Morris, Dr. Vickie Gentry, Dr. Darlene Williams, Dr. Nabin Sapkota and Kim Gibson as we met with North Louisiana Economic Partnership (NLEP) Vice President Alberta Green.

Later that afternoon, Dr. Vickie Gentry and I met with a prospective faculty member in Psychology.

Thursday morning, I sat in on an initial meeting of the Presidential Investiture Planning Committee. The group included Dr. Greg Handel, Shayne Creppel, Reatha Cox, Van Erikson, Leah Jackson, Cole Gentry and Jennifer Maggio. Some amazing ideas were presented that will incorporate students, faculty, staff, alumni, community and guests for the event that is scheduled for September 15.

Later that day, I met with Marcus Jones and Jennifer Kelly for updates on Varnado Hall and other auxiliary projects. That evening, Jennifer and I attended a fabulous performance of *Nunsense II* by our talented students. I want to thank our CAPA faculty and all who contribute to staging these performances. Remember, one of our strategic goals is Community Enrichment, and the summer dinner theater is an excellent example of how we exceed this goal.

Friday morning, I met with Executive Vice President Marcus Jones on several items and later had a very positive meeting with Roni Biscoe, Maria Miranda, Yalanda Taylor and Dr. Vickie Gentry.

Friday afternoon, Dr. Vickie Gentry and I met on several items and then I spent some time visiting with high school coaches, administrators and students at our Demon Basketball High School Team camp. Head Coach Mike McConathy, assistant Coach Jeff Moore and our other coaches hosted 115 high school teams and over 2,500 students during this two-day camp. They do an amazing job organizing and scheduling over 500 games on seven courts that give students a meaningful experience they will remember for the rest of their lives.

Friday evening, Jennifer and I had an opportunity to entertain NSU alumnus Keith Poirrier and his wife Daniella as they were visiting Natchitoches.

On Saturday, I again spent time visiting with Louisiana High School Athletic Association representatives, high school personnel and students at the basketball camp.

As always, please let me know if you have any questions, comments or suggestions.

Fork 'em Demons

Chris