

The Week:

Northwestern's week began on an extremely high note as we announced our official enrollment count for the Fall semester of 10,572 students, <http://news.nsula.edu/home/nsu-sets-enrollment-record-of-10-572/>! I want to thank you all so much for your recruiting and retention efforts that made this possible. Recruiting Director Jana Lucky and her team again "hit a home run" with their recruitment efforts to attract traditional and transfer students. Dr. Darlene Williams and her team continue to bring large numbers of non-traditional and on-line students to NSU, and so many more of you worked tirelessly to promote your programs that make Northwestern so attractive to prospective students. In addition, I am extremely grateful to everyone for your efforts in retention. You will see that our retention rates have improved dramatically, and that is a tribute to the entire faculty and staff. This sustained, continual growth will allow us to maintain financial stability and reach our ultimate goal of becoming the nation's premier regional university.

Finally, I want to sincerely thank you for your support and encouragement for my family and me over this past week. I am truly honored to serve you as president and will work every day to make our university a better place. Friday was a historic day for our NSU family. Investiture Day created a groundswell of positive attention in our community and statewide. It allowed us to highlight our university and share the Northwestern story with thousands of friends and constituents. People across the state and nation now have a better appreciation of our phenomenal university after visiting with or hearing about our talented faculty, staff and students. Thank you for your participation in Investiture events and your support for me, my family and Northwestern as we highlighted our great university. We are still gathering market research on media exposure from this past week but can tell you that preliminary numbers indicate that it is "off the charts."

My Week:

Monday morning, I began the day at a ceremony for Patriot Day, a National Day of Service and Remembrance. Many faculty, staff and students gathered at the flagpoles in the center of campus in a poignant ceremony. Members of our ROTC, police and fire departments lowered the flags to half-mast in memory of the people killed in the September 11, 2001 attacks.

Afterwards, our leadership team met for our monthly meeting. I apologize that all of the activities of the week made it impossible for me to get the minutes ready for this report. I will include them in next week's update. Most of the remainder of the day was spent in meetings with staff members, students and prospective students.

That evening, I attended *New Faces 2017*, an amazing production by our Theatre Department. Approximately 50 new theatre and dance students entertained a boisterous audience of faculty, upperclassmen and guests with some outstanding performances. The event was another indication that our future is bright!

Tuesday morning, Dr. Marcus Jones, Gil Gilson, Dale Wohletz and I met with Mayor Posey and others about possible future use of the former Natchitoches Magnet School that sits at the edge of our campus. We will be exploring strategic options and potential use for the buildings and grounds that fit into our long-term strategic plans. Later that morning, Dr. Margaret Kilcoyne, Dr. Carmella Parker, Dr. Darlene Williams, Curtis Penrod and I met to explore initiating an Economic and Community Impact Study and Economic Summit.

I then attended a check presentation ceremony where the Dunahoe Law Firm and ULS Board member Lola Dunahoe presented us a generous donation and sponsorship for the Investiture weekend. At noon, longtime friend and NSU alumnus Tod Klotzbach stopped by for a visit. Tod, a former SGA President as a student at NSU, has enjoyed a successful career with State Farm and was very influential in establishing our relationship with State Farm and our CIS department. He also facilitated a large gift of computers to NSU a few years back. It was great to catch up with him.

That afternoon, Jennifer and I traveled to Baton Rouge to attend a beautiful reception at the Governor's Mansion honoring the late Rose Landry Long. Over \$75,000 was raised for the Rose Landry Long first-generation scholarship at Northwestern State University.

Wednesday morning, I sat in on the investiture planning committee meeting. I use the term "sat in" because that is exactly what I did. I sat, observed and listened as this amazing group of faculty and staff went over every detail in final preparations for this wonderful university celebration. Afterwards, Dr. Rania Salman, Dr. Karen Walker and Jacque Horton stopped by to update me on our Child and Family Studies program. Later that morning, Ron Wright and I met with Ellucian, Higher Education Software Solutions and Services representatives.

At noon, I attended the NSU Quarterback Luncheon where Coach Thomas provided some insight on how our Demons were going to defeat Lamar University this weekend. Afterwards, I headed over to A.A. Fredericks Auditorium as Investiture Co-chairs meticulously walked me through the investiture program.

Later that afternoon, I gathered with the Strategic Planning Team. Our Director of Institutional Effectiveness Frank Hall led a very productive meeting where we reviewed the Institutional Effectiveness Model Planning Calendar and mid-year assessment and thoroughly discussed comprehensive and transparent methodology on the recommendations and proposed decisions presented in the 2016-2017 Assessment Cycle. It is important that we follow a collaborative decision-making process and will utilize the Strategic Planning team as the entity to monitor our strategic planning process.

Thursday morning, we had an Investiture rehearsal and sound check. That afternoon, I visited a Food Science class in our Hospitality, Management and Tourism Department. Professor Connie Jones' students were learning how to make meat pies, and unexpectedly, they taught me how to prepare a meat pie. Although mine did not look quite as edible as theirs did, I was quite proud of my first attempt at preparing this Natchitoches delicacy.

Thursday evening, I joined over a thousand students at the Inferno practice, pep rally and Molly Ringwalds concert. Our Student Experience team did a phenomenal job planning this enjoyable event that reflected our school spirit. For a few hours, I thought I was "back in the 80's" as our students had a great time at the program that focused on the 1980s.

Friday, like so many of you, I spent the day at the Investiture events. Again, I want to thank all of you for your participation. Your expressions of kindness and support have been overwhelming. That morning, my family and I attended the Investiture Mass, followed by media interviews and the beautiful ceremony. Afterwards, we joined over 500 people at the President's residence for the community reception where we enjoyed great food and the sounds of the NSU Jazz orchestra and other student musical groups. We ended the day at the Freedom Tree for a moving POW/MIA ceremony hosted by our ROTC department.

Saturday, I paused from the investiture weekend to attend the Celebration of Life services as we remembered our dear friend and colleague Dr. Stan Chadick, Professor Emeritus of Mathematics at NSU. Dr. Chadick lost a valiant battle with cancer, but we will long remember his legacy and the positive mark he left on our university.

That afternoon, I spent a festive time at tailgating activities. Jennifer and a cadre of student volunteers and staff from Watson Library collected over 2,000 books in the Forks Up for Literacy campaign. The atmosphere was electric around Turpin Stadium as students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends gathered for the big game. That evening, I led our freshman in the INFERNO RUN as we ran across Turpin Stadium for the introduction of our Class of 2021 to everyone in attendance and those watching on television. I spent the next three hours enjoying our football victory against Lamar!

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

Fork 'em Demons,

Chris



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