

## **The Week:**

I have had the opportunity over the past several weeks to share our vision with external groups including prospective students and families, alumni, business and community leaders and others. Consistently, every constituent group expresses excitement at our progress and support for our vision to become the nation's premier regional university.

Because of you, Northwestern's positive image and reputation continues to grow. Thank you so much for all that you do for NSU!

This week, we lost a valued former NSU employee and friend. Coach Gene Knecht died peacefully in his residence on Wednesday, Oct. 11. Coach Knecht was a member of our NSU staff for 28 years and remained an avid and loyal Demon fan and supporter until his death. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family, including members of our NSU family, son Brett, Business Affairs, and daughter-in-law Liz, internal auditor.

## **My Week:**

Monday morning, Jennifer and I hosted the Leadership team for breakfast and our monthly meeting. The minutes of the meeting are attached.

Afterwards, I met with a prospective student and family. Following that meeting, Dr. Darlene Williams, Carl Jones, Jason Parks and I reviewed the budgets for our NSU-CENLA campus.

Monday afternoon, I had several personnel meetings and met with Drake Owens and Louie Bernard on fundraising activities.

Tuesday morning, I set aside time to meet with several people on campus who had requested time to visit. That afternoon, I met with another prospective student and his family. The student that I visited with is a typical high school senior, very interested in NSU but weighing his college choice options. He and his family were impressed by the personal interaction that he received on his tour from our faculty and staff and were complimentary of the communication he has received from our recruiting office. We will work hard over the next 10 months to stay in contact with him and other prospective students, letting them know the benefits of attending NSU.

Later that afternoon, I had coffee at Café DeMon with Faculty Senate President Thomas Reynolds. Dr. Reynolds continues to do a great job sharing Faculty Senate concerns and ideas. That evening, I stopped by Turpin Stadium to support our NSU Middle Lab School as they played in the Natchitoches Parish Junior High School league championship games.

Wednesday morning, Dr. Darlene Williams and I traveled to Bossier City for a series of meetings. First, we met with the leadership of the Bossier Chamber of Commerce. We shared the NSU vision and our diverse programming at the university. It would be an understatement to report that the meeting was productive. Dr. Williams did a tremendous job presenting our academic offerings, diverse course delivery platforms and our willingness to collaborate in providing higher education opportunities in the region.

Afterwards, we stopped by Bossier Parish Community College to visit with NSU alumna and BPCC Director of Student Life Marjoree Harper. Each year, we collaborate with Ms. Harper on several initiatives to introduce BPCC students to the offerings at NSU.

Later, we stopped by the Career and Benefits Fair at the Bossier Civic Center. We had an information booth set up at the event, and I was so excited to see our second level clinical students administering flu vaccinations for participants.

Upon returning to campus that afternoon, I met with Dr. Gentry on several academic matters, had a lengthy phone conference with Dr. Henderson and later Ms. Conine updated me on several student matters.

Wednesday evening, I attended the University Jazz Orchestra Concert at Magale Recital Hall. I want to compliment Dr. Galindo Rodriguez, Dr. Malena McLaren and our students for an outstanding performance.

Thursday morning, I had the honor of speaking to approximately 60 Natchitoches Business Leaders. I want to thank Exchange Bank and Trust Company for hosting the breakfast get-together that focused on Northwestern State University. This event provided me the opportunity to share our strategic vision, provide an update on NSU and thank community leaders for their continued support. We are truly fortunate to have a strong relationship with our city and business leaders.

Afterwards, Carl Jones, Frank Hall and I met to talk about the strategic budgeting process. As many of you know, we continue to build an inclusive and transparent budgeting process. Mr. Jones and Mr. Hall have done an exceptional job leading this initiative. Over the next month, we will introduce and present the strategic budgeting process and associated budget guidance.

At noon, Jennifer and I hosted the Financial Aid office staff for lunch at the President's Residence. Our financial office staff continues to play a vital role in the success of our university. This fall, the office has awarded over \$108,426,330 in student aid to 5,862 students, and has completed verification on 1646 students. They continue to work with 398 enrolled students who have not submitted the required verification items needed. You can see from these numbers the magnitude of our financial aid office operation.

Friday morning, I traveled to the Port of Shreveport as LSU Professor Emeritus in Economics Loren Scott provided our group with his Louisiana Economic Outlook for 2018 and 2019. His forecast is positive. He summarized that "Louisiana is finally emerging from a 20-month recession due to a dramatic downturn in the state's oil patch. Recovery will be muted by the completion of several large industrial projects and a slight delay in the startup of new ones. The good news is the recovery will be bolstered by a slightly growing national economy, low inflation, and only a slight increase in interest rates." He projects that after almost a decade of decline, the Shreveport-Bossier area will begin two years of moderate growth. We are certainly positioned to assist the region in this growth!

Upon returning to Natchitoches, I joined Dr. Gentry, Tom Whitehead and Diny Nolan Landon for lunch at Maglieaux's Restaurant. We discussed the Cherokee Plantation Foundation and potential collaboration with our faculty and students.

That afternoon, I joined Taylor Whitehead for a recruiting visit to St. Mary's School. Taylor did a magnificent job presenting our academic programs and services to these high school seniors. Afterwards, I sat down for an interview with NSU student Chase Slater.

Saturday morning, I visited the Farmer's Market downtown. I mention this because out of that visit and discussions with local vendors, we may have a potential new marketing and branding opportunity. Afterwards, I attended the funeral of Coach Gene Knecht.

Saturday afternoon, I attended the Wings over Natchitoches Air Show, caught a couple of innings at our NSU Softball game versus LSUE and our baseball scrimmage. That evening, I attended a gathering with the Nolan family at Cherokee Plantation.

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

Fork 'em Demons,

Chris