

The Week: 25 Feb – 3 Mar 2018

As we have mentioned over the past several weeks, the Louisiana Legislature convened a special session on Feb. 19, which must adjourn by this Wednesday, March 7. At this late hour of the session, legislators have not come to an agreement on how to address the looming fiscal cliff. If no accord is reached, funding for higher education and cuts to the TOPS scholarship will be an unfortunate reality. Essential for our state is that we must continue to realize that investing in higher education and fulfilling the TOPS promise to our students are our best ways to develop talent so that Louisiana can compete in the evolving economy.

You continue to do such a tremendous job preparing our students. We have come too far with our efforts to advance educational attainment and workforce competitive to go backwards. This afternoon, the Louisiana House of Representatives reconvenes at 5 pm. On the agenda will be House Bill 8 and House Bill 23. Both of these measures are essential to addressing the fiscal cliff. I will be monitoring their advancement today and cannot stress enough the importance of their passage to address the uncertainty surrounding TOPS and instability of support to universities. As a state, we must get this right.

On campus, I continue to be amazed at the vibrancy of our students, faculty and staff. With each visit with departments, every discussion with a faculty member or a stop by a classroom, I see your commitment to our mission as a responsive, student-oriented institution that is committed to the creation, dissemination, and acquisition of knowledge through teaching, research and service.

This week, I visited our President's Leadership Program class and witnessed our students finalizing their Community Impact Projects. These projects are a prime example of how we are implementing our strategic plan. The projects nurture a thriving town-gown relationship and expand community service involving NSU students. I applaud the work of Mrs. Reatha Cox's freshman leadership class that divided into groups of 8 -10 students, developed the following community impact projects and are implementing them over the next several weeks:

1. **Once Upon A Prom Dress** – NSU students collected over 140 prom dresses to distribute to high school girls in the surrounding parishes.
2. **The Awakening** – NSU students organized CAPA performances at Varnado Hall and collaborated with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Natchitoches – Appreciation of the Arts.
3. **Literacy – NSU, Dr. Seuss and You!** - NSU students are reading to kindergarten classes at Weaver Elementary and assisting with the Friends of the Natchitoches Parish Library Book Sale.
4. **Healthy Bodies for a Sharper Mind** – NSU students developed a Wellness and health education program for college students.
5. **Special Olympics of Louisiana** – the Red River Games – For the third year, NSU students will host the Special Olympics for over 100 athletes.
6. **Hope House of Shreveport**– NSU students are assisting with the home for families in transition.
7. **Boys and Girls Clubs of Natchitoches** – Leadership and Communication
8. **Veterans & A Day Out at the Ballgame** – NSU students are hosting area veterans for a NSU Demons Baseball games, grilling hot dogs and providing refreshments during the game.

This week, we completed our 14-city NSU recruiting reception tour throughout Louisiana and East Texas. I want to thank Director of Recruiting Jana Lucky and her amazing staff for coordinating these events and the many faculty and staff who represented NSU at each reception. Five hundred and fifty-

seven students attended the receptions, and I have no doubt that each student left knowing that our faculty and staff are committed to our students at NSU.

Please note that our Northwestern State University Police are hosting one-hour sessions, *Civilian Response to Active Shooter Event*, this Tuesday and Wednesday in the Student Union Ballroom. You can choose a session starting on the hour from 8:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. Faculty and staff can sign-in at the door to get credit for annual required Active Shooter training in-lieu-of online training.

My Week:

Monday morning, I joined our College of Education and Human Development faculty to welcome approximately 100 students from Rapides, DeSoto, Sabine, Natchitoches and Red River parishes at the *Educators Rising* conference that we hosted on campus. The conference, designed to encourage high school students to become teachers, was a huge success, and I want to thank our CoEHD faculty and administration for an outstanding job with this outreach.

Later that morning, Drake Owens and I met with Mayor Lee Posey and city officials for a briefing on the planned Natchitoches Sports Park and recreational area that will be located adjacent to our Recreation Complex. Plans will allow our NSU students and intramural and recreational sports to utilize the facilities.

At lunch, Jennifer and I hosted the library staff at the President's Residence.

Monday afternoon, Dr. Pete Gregory, Loletta Wynder, Cane River Creole National Historical Park Superintendent Carrie Mardorf, Dr. Marcus Jones and I met as they reviewed the Cane River Creole NHP 2017 accomplishments and plans for the future.

Monday evening, I traveled to Alexandria for the first of two CENLA recruiting receptions at Tunks Cypress Inn. Several faculty and staff members updated over 100 students and parents on our academic programs. Afterwards, I stopped by the visitation services for Mrs. Olla Rae Chicola, mother of past NSU Alumni President and Long Purple Line inductee Monty Chicola.

Early Tuesday morning, I sat down for an interview with Corey Poole with the *Natchitoches Parish Journal*. Later, I met with NSU student officers of the NSU Colleges against Cancer student organization as they updated me on the upcoming Relay for Life event.

Tuesday afternoon, I met with Dr. Vickie Gentry, Dr. Darlene Williams, Dr. Greg Handel, Jack Atherton, Joe Morris, Curtis Penrod and Suzette Hadden as they presented ideas for a possible new exciting academic program concentration.

That evening, I attended our second CENLA recruiting reception in Alexandria.

Wednesday morning, Dr. Marcus Jones and I met with Natchitoches Parish School Board Supervisor of Business Affairs Richard Foshee to initiate discussion about the transfer of the former site of the NSU Magnet School to NSU. Later that morning, I met with a prospective student and family and then with NSU SGA Commissioner Jacob Ellis.

Wednesday afternoon, I met with Dr. Darlene Williams, Dr. Vickie Gentry, Dr. Marcus Jones and Carl Jones about online education opportunities.

Afterwards, immediately following our Strategic Planning Team meeting, Dr. Gentry, Frank Hall, and Carl Jones presented the Strategic Planning and Budgeting Committee's recommended prioritization (1-N List) of Budget Enhancement Requests for the budget year 2018-2019. The committee received over 65 enhancement requests from various university organizations in Natchitoches, Shreveport, Alexandria and Leesville, totaling over \$2.1 million dollars. The detailed process the committee established was fair, transparent, and comprehensive. In fact, we are being prudently aggressive by identifying several enhancement requests for funding using this year's money. I will continue to work with my advisory team to determine how to best utilize the \$500,000 we have committed to this process. It will take some time to complete the process, but I will report on the plan when it is finalized. Thank you to all who participated in this grassroots effort. I appreciate your involvement, and you made a great difference!

That evening, NSU alumni Judge Desiree and Dan Dyess hosted our final recruiting reception of the semester at the historic Steel Magnolia House. Our marketing team developed a short video clip to give you a feel of the events that our recruiting staff have been coordinating over the past couple of months, <https://vimeo.com/258161333>.

Thursday morning, I met with Dr. Vickie Gentry on several academic matters. Later, NSU Fraternity and Sorority Advisor Shayne Creppel stopped by to share the executive summary of a Fraternity and Sorority Assessment Project recently conducted on campus by outside evaluators.

Later, Dr. Frances Yang and Dr. Marcus Jones brought Guest Piano artist Angelica Sanchez by the office for a visit as we initiated discussions for a possible memorandum of understanding between NSU and institutions in Ecuador. Afterwards, I dropped by a presentation at Watson Library on the Federal Depository Library Program by George Barnum and Joe Paskoski. Both gentlemen work for the Government Publishing Office in Washington D.C. and were on campus to visit our government documents collection and answer questions by library staff. Late that morning, Jerry Pierce, Doug Ireland, Natchitoches Community Alliance Chief Executive Officer Tony Davis and I met about several community collaboration opportunities.

At lunch, Jennifer and I hosted staff from the One Card Office, Office of Researched and Sponsored Programs, Academic Success, Student Union Life, Student Activities, Greek life and Health Services at the President's Residence for lunch.

That afternoon, Jennifer and I brought lunch to the Scholars' College and were able to spend time with our outstanding LSC faculty. That evening, I joined our colleagues from Central Louisiana Technical Community College and representatives from six manufacturing plants in central Louisiana as we interviewed students for placement in our next Advanced Manufacturing Technology cohort. We are encouraged with the student interest as this program continues to gain momentum.

Friday morning, I joined Dr. Darlene Williams and Suzette Hadden in Bossier City as we met with Cyber Innovation Center Executive Director/President Craig Spohn. He updated us on the amazing work happening at CIC and NSU's potential involvement with the Center. Afterwards, I met with Bossier Parish Community College Chancellor Rick Bateman where we had a great visit about our current collaborations and discussed opportunities for the future.

Friday afternoon, I took part in a Committee of 100 Legislative Special Session briefing and conference call. Afterwards, I took time to visit with prospective students and parents touring NSU, including NSU alumnus Carlos Jones and his son X'zavier. That evening, Jennifer and I hosted a reception at the President's Residence for high school students and their parents. Several from the university joined us in interacting with the students, and our Musical Theater students directed by Mr. Corey Trahan treated us all with amazing performances.

Saturday was a perfect day on the NSU campus, <https://vimeo.com/258448329>! We began the day early hosting over 1,000 prospective students and parents at NSide View Day. Our guests spent the day meeting with NSU faculty, staff and students who highlighted our programs and assisted with their questions. I want to thank all of you who took time out of your weekend to assist. I spent most of the beautiful Saturday afternoon between NSide View activities, the Dragon Boat races and the NSU softball games.

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

Fork 'em Demons,

Chris



Dr. Chris Maggio
President
maggioc@nsula.edu

Northwestern State University
Office: 318-357-6441
223 Caspari Hall
Natchitoches, LA 71497
www.nsula.edu

