

The Week:

This week, I and more than 30 other faculty and staff members from NSU had the pleasure of attending the inaugural University of Louisiana System *For Our Future* Conference in Hammond. The conference set the tone for implementation of the strategic framework that we have developed for our system.

All in attendance can attest that it was a positive two days. The strength of our system is growing, and Northwestern State University is a vital part to the future success of higher education in Louisiana. I want to thank ULS President Dr. Jim Henderson for his vision and for engaging all of us as we unify as a system to use our collective strength in moving our state forward.

I also want to thank the entire NSU group for their participation and acknowledge the following for their outstanding presentations at the conference:

- LeahAnn Young and Rebecca Weston: Light Their Fire: Faculty Increasing Real Engagement
- Dr. Darlene Williams (and Dr. Luke Dowden, ULL): Online Learning: Current Challenges & Future Opportunities
- Dr. John Dollar, Dr. Valerie Salter and Ramona Wynder: Experiential Education: The Future Is Now!
- Connie Hale: Community Partnership to Enhance Mental Health Care
- Dr. Lindsay Porter and Dr. Fran Lemoine: Pushing Students to New Academic Heights Using Active-Learning in a Fluid Classroom
- Dr. Nabin Sapkota and Dr. Marcia Hardy: Assessing Safety Culture in the Manufacturing Arena: A Structured Equation Modeling Approach
- Dr. Thomas Reynolds, Jamie Flanagan and ULS Management and Leadership Institute Group: Access, Progress, and Success: Expressing the DNA of the ULS Strategic Framework

My Week

After a week away from campus, I spent Monday playing “catch up” and taking time to get out on campus visiting with students. Throughout the day, I had several individual meetings with students and a phone conference exploring a potential student retention opportunity for the university. Late Monday afternoon, I met with Athletic Director Greg Burke and Vice-President Jerry Pierce on athletic matters.

Tuesday morning, I met with BPCC@NSU Coordinator Connie McConathy, and we discussed ways to enhance our processes to ensure that our concurrently enrolled and transfer students are able to matriculate easier to the university. Afterwards, I met with Vice-President Carl Jones to review our current year’s budget and projections for 2018-2019.

Late that morning, Dean Greg Handel, Department Head Dr. Fran Lemoine and I had a conference call with Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium for Research and Education Executive Director Dr. Craig McClain to advance talks for research opportunities for our faculty and students. Afterwards, I had a phone conference to discuss the feasibility of commissioning an economic impact study to review NSU’s impact on our region.

Tuesday afternoon, I met with the NSU Vice-Presidents to review our current year’s budget and ongoing capital projects. **Later that afternoon, I attended a Strategic Planning Team briefing led by Frank Hall.**

That evening, I attended the McCutcheon Honors Recital in the Magale Recital Hall. Recital winners were chosen by the applied music faculty in their respective areas as the most outstanding based on their fall juries. Special thanks to the faculty coordinators of the McCutcheon Honors Recital: Professor Leah Forsyth, Professor D’Nissa Hester, and Dr. Marcy McKee. I want to congratulate our performers for their selection and recognize their teachers. Addison Pellegrin, student of Ken Green and Oliver Molina; Ronald Rodriguez Herrera, student of Dr. Francis Yang; Jenson Wall, student of Michael Rorex; Oni Melendez Carrillo, student of Dr. Dennette McDermott; Celia Corrales, student of Dr. Andrew Kurti; Sebastian Alfaro-Fontalvo, student of Galindo Rodriguez, and a special thank you to Chialing Hsieh for accompanying several of the student performances.

Wednesday morning, I met with Vice-President Marcus Jones, Police Chief Craig Vercher and Director of University Safety and Compliance Jon Caliste to review safety protocols on campus. Afterwards, I met with Blayne Henson, Kelsey Claspill and David Horton about the possibility of expanding eSports on our campus.

Later, Vice-President Marcus Jones, Director of Development Jill Bankston and I had breakfast with Clean Harbors Senior Vice-President Phillip Retallick and Senior Vice-President of Facilities Operations Mike Foley. After breakfast, we joined students, faculty and administrators for a check presentation by Clean Harbors announcing the establishment of student scholarships in the areas of environmental science and engineering technology, <http://news.nsula.edu/home/clean-harbors-donation-supports-3-scholarships/>.

Afterwards, I met with Chief Information Officer Ron Wright for a university technology briefing before driving to Baton Rouge. That evening, I joined our recruiting team, NSU faculty, staff and alumni as we welcomed over 100 prospective students and parents at our Baton Rouge area recruiting reception.

As mentioned above, Thursday I joined over 30 NSU faculty and staff at the inaugural Universities of Louisiana Conference in Hammond. We enjoyed a full day of sessions, networking and collaboration with our peers from the other ULS universities. A highlight of the day was an address by Gov. John Bel Edwards when he again pledged support and stressed the importance of higher education in our state.

Friday, we concluded our participation at the conference, and I was honored to join Dr. Henderson and our other university system presidents on stage for the final session of the day.

Saturday morning, I met with two board members and site selectors for the Southern Region College Band Directors National Association. Dr. Jeff Matthews and others are leading our proposal to host the 2020 regional conference, which would be an amazing accomplishment for our university. Afterwards, I had breakfast with and had the opportunity to address our football recruits and their parents as they visited our campus and city on the final recruiting weekend prior to national signing day later this week.

That afternoon, I attended our NSU basketball games versus McNeese where I was able to do an on-air interview on ESPN 3 during halftime of our Lady Demons game. Highlighting the day was recognizing and honoring World War II veteran Dr. Lisso Simmons for his service to our country.

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

Fork ‘em Demons,
Chris