

Week of March 2

Budget

I do not have a lot of new information to share with you on the budget. The ball is currently in the legislature's court. We will be working on several fronts (independently, with ULS, with the higher education community, and with external stakeholders) to ensure the decision makers have a full appreciation of our community's needs and an understanding of the impact of the various budget scenarios.

Attached to this week's email is a presentation developed by the UL System that explains some of the current budget situation. If you have any questions on the information in the presentation, please do not hesitate to email me directly. Some of it can be a bit confusing if you do not work with these numbers frequently.

As you know, we have kept a positive outlook throughout this discussion. During this week's forum, a faculty member asked me if I was suggesting we not be worried about the budget discussion. I do not think this is the time to be worried. Other adjectives I would use would be vigilant and conversant. Vigilant: we need to be paying close attention to budgetary happenings and ready to respond aggressively if needed to ensure all stakeholders understand the stakes. Conversant: we need to speak about the situation now in our own circles of influence. In addition to the information provided over the past several weeks and the information in the attached presentation, here are a few key bullets that may help with those conversations:

- Since 2009, \$700 million has been cut from higher education
- Appx. \$26 million (55% of state funding) has been cut from NSU
- The worst-case scenario means an additional \$12 million from NSU, an 80% cut since 2009
- Legislators and others are searching for solutions
- NSU is focused on growth, service, and quality

Even with that draconian, worst-case cut, there are things we can do to help ourselves:

If we remain focused on recruiting, serving, educating, and retaining students, we will be just fine. Growth and retention are paramount. We control our own destiny!

The Week

Sunday, the Beta Beta Beta Biological Honors Society inducted 32 new members. These types of events are always a treat to attend. Thank you to the faculty and student leadership for celebrating the accomplishments of our students. A special thank you to Fran Lemoine for the timely reminder email...

Monday morning, the Leadership Team met for the third monthly meeting. In addition to going over the “visioning framework” presentation, the members updated the team on operational matters. Just a few highlights:

- Pre-construction planning is underway for the Prather Coliseum parking area
- Four concepts for replacing the bridge to the Freidman Student Union are being evaluated
- ECE is executing its growth initiative with substantial involvement from a number of departments (2500 additional students would be a game changer)
- College of Nursing is preparing for next week’s SACSCOC substantive change visit for the DNP program
- The alumni engagement effort is in full swing and has been well received
- The retention committee is finalizing a plan that will dramatically improve on this important aspect of our growth vision

Monday afternoon, Natchitoches Mayor Lee Posey and I drove to Monroe for a higher education summit that was sponsored by the chambers of commerce of Monroe, West Monroe, Ruston, and Natchitoches. The entire Northeast Louisiana legislative delegation was in attendance. All talked about the daunting magnitude of the budget crisis and each mentioned a variety of strategies to solve the challenge. Each member stated his/her

belief that higher education has endured enough and that all available options must be considered. A couple of members indicated various business lobbies may oppose some of the measures under consideration. The president of the Monroe Chamber stated her business members were willing to stand behind those legislators who supported higher education.

As an aside, four hours in a car allowed Mayor Posey and me to discuss a number of opportunities for partnership. While the relationship between Natchitoches and Northwestern has always been strong, we have the potential to redefine the concept of effective town/gown relations.

On Tuesday, Jerry Pierce and I attended a luncheon in Many at the office of Pete Abington. In addition to telling the Northwestern story, we were entertained with stories and jokes (none of which can be repeated here) and built relationships with some influential stakeholders.

Tuesday afternoon, Greg Burke, Jody Biscoe, and Carrie Greene updated me on the NCAA Accelerated Academic Support Program grant. While our scholar athletes have performed remarkably well in the classroom relative to our peers, we are also considered “low resource” institutions by the NCAA. The grant will enable our athletic leadership to improve on what is already an excellent academic support system.

Later Tuesday, I attended a QEP meeting in the Union. Curtis Penrod updated us on the QEP process and provided information regarding the development of QEP proposals. We will all have a stake in the development of the plan and its implementation.

Wednesday saw our first two faculty/staff forums in Natchitoches. We will have forums regularly where I will give 10-15 minute updates on events/initiatives/challenges and open the floor for questions. These first forums were devoted to the presentation of our strategic visioning framework. I greatly appreciate your attendance and participation. The input currently being provided on Moodle is exactly what I was hoping for. We will be visiting our other campuses very soon.

Wednesday morning, Steve Kauf and Greg Nestle of Sodexo met with me to discuss our satisfaction with the partnership and explore opportunities.

Thursday morning, my friend Bruce Wilson from United Way of Northwest Louisiana stopped by for a visit. I have served on the United Way board for several years. Bruce, despite his Tech education, is a great leader of a vital organization.

Later Thursday, LTC Underwood, Fred Terasa, Jerry Pierce, and I met about the coming Demon Regiment Military Ball. The event will take place March 14. Following that meeting, NcGai Wiltz and Ron Wright updated me on the Banner implementation. I am very pleased we remain on schedule and under budget on the remaining modules.

Thursday afternoon, Pete Gregory brought Laura Gates of the National Park Service to the office to discuss our partnership. While we have done many things together in the past, the vision they presented on a potential Collections Conservation Center was compelling.

Friday afternoon, I was pleased to join Demon Football's JeMarcus Marshall at St. Mary's to read to Leslie Heard's third graders in celebration of Dr. Seuss Day. I went with the old standard, *Green Eggs and Ham*. JeMarcus gave a stirring rendition of *One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish*.

Friday evening, Tonia and I were delighted to host the Senior Day reception at the Kilpatrick President's Home. We even had an interloper from the University of Dallas show up to help answer any final questions the future Demons in attendance might have. The recruiting team, our Ambassadors, and the NSU faculty and staff in attendance did their usual exemplary work representing us.

Saturday was Senior Day at NSU. I love it when we have to open the balcony in A.A. Fredericks for an overflow crowd! Thank you to Chris Maggio (who did double duty representing us at the Bassmasters Collegiate Fishing Championship), Jana Lucky, and the team they assembled for showcasing all that is great about our university. Another thank you to the students who helped with the production. Many of these students worked

the reception Friday night, performed early Saturday, then performed at the basketball double-header Saturday afternoon. These student leaders give so much to our university that sometimes goes unnoticed. They are in large part the essence of NSU.

Saturday night, Tonia, Reagan, and I dropped by DemonFest2015. KNWD did a marvelous job producing and promoting the event. This will grow into a highly anticipated annual event, I am sure.

Back to Bassmasters, congrats to the winners: NSU's John Ledet and Justin Cooper! <http://www.bassmaster.com/news/college-champs-change-win>

Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions, comments, or concerns.