

Week of October 18

## The Week

Monday, I participated in the Delta Research Consortium at the University of Memphis. In attendance were presidents or senior leaders from two dozen universities in the greater Mississippi River Delta. XXXXXXXX participated in the initial brainstorming work last spring. The focus of the group will be collaborative research that drives economic, community, and human development. I believe we have an important role to play in this work.

Tuesday, State Superintendent John White and I talked on the phone about AP and dual enrollment policy. One key area of our discussion centered on assessment of learning outcomes. Intuitively, validation of AP classes is easy to understand because of the standardized AP test. We talked about the importance of faculty qualifications in those instances where an external validation instrument is not present.

Side note here: Northwestern has long been a leader in ensuring the quality of dual enrollment courses. Others (even more selective universities) in Louisiana have been far less rigorous, seemingly choosing enrollment over quality. We are not the only state with the challenge. A recent article in InsideHigherEd discussed the new policy stance of the Higher Learning Commission (the largest regional accreditor) on faculty qualifications for dual enrollment. It will be interesting to see if SACSCOC follows suit.

[https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/10/20/colleges-and-states-scramble-meet-higher-learning-commissions-faculty-requirements?utm\\_source=Inside+Higher+Ed&utm\\_campaign=ae28736057-DNU201510020&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_1fcbc04421-ae28736057-198598317](https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/10/20/colleges-and-states-scramble-meet-higher-learning-commissions-faculty-requirements?utm_source=Inside+Higher+Ed&utm_campaign=ae28736057-DNU201510020&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1fcbc04421-ae28736057-198598317)

Later Tuesday, Cole Gentry and Kara Scouten helped me record a Homecoming “thank you” video to send to NSU alumni:

<https://vimeo.com/143071441>

The quarterly updates from the vice presidents continued Tuesday morning with Marcus Jones and his team. We discussed the amazing amount of

facilities work completed over the past several months and received a status update on pending projects. Over 300 of the 380 defective street lights have been replaced. Org. Row lighting is currently being installed. The pavers to repair the brick crosswalks are in (work will take place over Thanksgiving break). Bids are in for the repair and accessibility upgrade to the Student Union Bridge. We still have at least \$14 million in deferred maintenance needs and plenty of opportunities for continued cleanup, but the progress is obvious.

We also discussed the work performed and underway relative to security and continuation of operations planning. University Police will be conducting a campaign on active shooter response in the next two weeks. We talked about the importance of combining prevention with response, and constant coordination with our threat assessment team.

Finally, Marcus provided an update on the establishment of an international students' resource center.

Chris Maggio and his team from Student Experience were next. The team provided updates on the implementation of the strategic framework, including the development of service standards. We talked at length about our environment of inclusion. We also talked about ensuring interventions or efforts to improve climate or service are tailored to our circumstances as opposed to more general national discussions. Finally, we talked about the importance of retention efforts with emphasis on the Fall 2015 freshman class.

At lunch, I enjoyed the special treat of a student recital in Magale.

After lunch, Carl Jones and the Finance team provided their quarterly update. The conversation centered on the continuing Banner implementation. The finance module was fully implemented July 1. The human resources module will be implemented January 1. That module continues to be ahead of schedule, but the implementation is complicated. The goal is to have implementation to a point where three parallel payrolls can be executed with our legacy system at the close of this year to ensure the transition is flawless when we go live in January.

Later Tuesday, Jerry Pierce, Marcus Jones, and Gil Gilson joined me for a meeting with Senator Gerald Long on Capital Outlay. Senator Long has been instrumental in garnering support for our efforts in this area.

Tuesday evening, Coach Jay Thomas and the Demon football team surprised me with an autographed game ball from their homecoming victory over Lamar.

Wednesday morning, Wade Tyler stopped by to update me on a follow up item from the highly successful Social Work accreditation visit. Afterwards, Jeff Matthews helped me record a welcome message for the coming high school marching band competition. Finally, Cole and Kara re-recorded the message part of the “thank you” message. Evidently, the video was great, but the on-camera guy was pretty bad on the original take...

The afternoon was devoted to UL System meetings in Baton Rouge. I met with Dr. Woodley for a review of the past year. We followed that with a meeting of the ULS Presidents’ Council, where we discussed the ongoing state higher education policy work. We also discussed our advocacy approach for the coming year. Finally, the community college chancellors and ULS presidents enjoyed a dinner discussion (sponsored by Dr. Woodley and LCTCS President Monty Sullivan) on the importance of effective and efficient transfer options for students. The ULS Board of Supervisors met Thursday morning.

Back in Natchitoches Thursday afternoon, I enjoyed a conversation with James and Carolyn Holly. Dr. and Mrs. Holly graduated from NSU in 1965. This past spring, they established the “Marie Cobb Bellue Scholarship in Teaching and Learning” and the “Irene Woodruff Holly Scholarship in Health Care Education” in honor of their mothers. In addition, Dr. Holly surprised Mrs. Holly with the establishment of the “Carolyn Bellue Holly Distinguished Professorship in Teaching and Learning.” That evening, Dr. Holly and Dr. Fran Lemoine hosted a dinner and movie followed by a Q&A session in Bienvenu Hall. The movie was a 1938 picture entitled The Citadel. For details: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0029995/>

Meanwhile, the Demon Tipoff Event took place in Prather Coliseum. Students, supporters, and other fans got a first look at 2015-16 Demons and Lady Demons Basketball. A lowlight of the event was the rematch of

my HORSE match with the incomparable Jalan West. This time, phenomenal Lady Demon point guard Janelle Perez joined the action. To give me a fighting chance, I was given four lifelines to “phone a friend.” I phoned Zeke Woodley, Keisha Lee, Lady Demons Coach Brooke Stoehr, and Demons Coach Mike McConathy. I will spare you the details, but I will be looking for better friends... Folks, this will be one exciting season of basketball. We have great coaches who have built great programs. The student athletes they coach play with great intensity, passion, skill, and class. I for one cannot wait.

Friday morning, Pineville High School Principal Dr. Karl Carpenter (NSU and SoN alumnus) welcomed Jana Lucky, Steven Niette, Christina Lake, Taylor Whitehead, and me to his high performing high school. We spoke to 600+ seniors and juniors about the importance of attending a university that will prepare them to think critically, solve problems, and communicate effectively. By 2030, some futurists have suggested two billion jobs currently filled will no longer exist. That provides an unprecedented opportunity for those students who choose the right university. We gently suggested Northwestern State would be the ideal choice.

Friday afternoon, Delgado Chancellor Joan Davis and Dean of the Charity School of Nursing Cheryl Myers joined Vicki Wissing and me at an articulation agreement signing event at Rapides Regional Medical Center. A huge thank you to Carolyn Hartt and Jason Parks for coordinating the event and ensuring a great audience of NSU nursing students and RRMC nurses. Carolyn has earned tremendous respect in the CenLA healthcare sector and is an invaluable resource to our students. Thanks also to Leah Jackson and Davey Antilley for their excellent work with imagery and storytelling.

Please contact me with any questions, comments, or concerns.