

Weekly Update, October 28 - November 3, 2018

The Week:

It was announced this week that the Orchard Foundation, a nonprofit local education fund and the education arm of The Rapides Foundation, has been awarded a \$4.48 million U.S. Department of Education Teacher Quality Partnership grant to recruit, train, support and retain effective math and science teachers in Central Louisiana middle schools. Through this grant, faculty from NSU's Gallaspy College of Education & Human Development and College of Business & Technology – Computer Information Systems will collaboratively prepare four cohorts of teachers in a 15-month program, culminating in both teacher certification and a master's degree. NSU will play a vital role in recruiting, retaining and supporting new highly qualified middle school math and science teachers in high-need schools in Central Louisiana. Thanks, and congratulations to our NSU faculty who worked so diligently on this grant project.

Also, we learned this week that all 79 of our Bachelor of Science in Nursing summer graduating class students passed their National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) on their first attempt! This group joins our Spring 2017 Associate of Science in Nursing graduates with perfect, 100 percent passage rates on their first attempt. I want to commend our Nursing faculty for their significant role in preparing our students for this rigorous examination. The 100 percent passage rate is an indicator of program quality and the work our faculty does in preparing students for a challenging healthcare career.

My Week:

Monday morning, I traveled to Many High School and addressed the senior class. Upon return, Dr. Marcus Jones, Dr. Greg Handel, Greg Burke, Jess Jobe, Anna Jobe and I visited with Comfenalco (Columbia) High School Administrators. We had an engaging visit about our current articulation and plans for future expansion.

Monday afternoon, the vice-presidents and I gathered to review our budget and other university matters. Afterwards, I met with Mayor Lee Posey, Parish President Rick Nowlin and Natchitoches Parish Head Start administrators to discuss Head Start initiatives in our parish.

Later, I met with Dr. Gentry, Pat Jones, Rita Graves, Cathy Trichel, and Frank Hall to discuss how to best leverage the Budget Enhancement Process for Budget Year 2019-2020. I remain committed to our new participatory budgeting process. Although we are not yet in the position to fully leverage the entire process, we can, like last year, use the Budgeting Enhancement Process to focus on enhancements recommended directly from faculty, staff, and administrators for non-recurring requirements which make a meaningful impact on the mission of our University. This inclusive approach emphasizes a high level of transparency in concert with the principles of our Strategic Plan. While it does not appear that we will be able to match the funding at the same levels we applied last year, I am committed to providing the maximum amount of funding possible in concert with our financial capabilities. I encourage your participation.

Tuesday morning, I left early for a trip to Fort Polk to join Brigadier General Patrick Frank, Commanding General JRTC and Fort Polk, and soldiers from 1st Battalion, 509th Infantry for Army Physical Fitness Training. I struggled through physical fitness exercises and a three-mile run (I am used to jogging in the

mornings, but their training was at much higher levels!) I did complete the training but just a little further back from the soldiers!

Afterwards, Dr. Vickie Gentry, Martha Koury, Denise Jackson, Linda Nichols and I spent the morning at Fort Polk where we re-emphasized NSU's commitment to bringing quality higher educational opportunities to soldiers and their families. Our morning included breakfast with NSU-Fort Polk students, a briefing with the Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Office, a meeting with Education Center administrators and a meeting with Col. Maria Ferguson, Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital Commander.

At noon, Jennifer and I hosted lunch for our faculty and staff at our NSU-Leesville/Fort Polk campus. Tuesday evening, I attended the NSU Basketball Tip-Off event at Prather Coliseum.

Wednesday morning, I traveled to Alexandria to attend the press conference announcing the \$4.48 million U.S. Department of Education Teacher Quality Partnership Grant to the Orchard Foundation. As mentioned earlier, our Gallaspy College of Education & Human Development and College of Business & Technology – Computer Information Systems played an integral role in securing the grant. Also attending the press conference from NSU were Dr. Vickie Gentry, Dr. Kim McAlister, Dr. Margaret Kilcoyne, Dr. Begona Perez-Mira, Curtis Penrod, Ramona Wynder and Leah Jackson.

Wednesday afternoon, I met for evaluation sessions with several administrators. Wednesday evening, I attended the Halloween Carnival on campus and then a reception with the Ports Association of Louisiana statewide officials who were in Natchitoches for their quarterly board meeting.

Thursday morning, I met with Frances Conine on Student Experience matters and later with community leaders advocating for a community indoor swimming pool. Afterwards, Jennifer and I hosted brunch for our Scholars' College faculty at Morrison Hall. Later, Jerry Pierce, Tori Thompson, LTC Wendell Bender, Sid Hall, Christie Price and I met about logistics for our upcoming Military Appreciation Football game.

At noon, I visited with students and staff at the "Thank a Donor Day" event hosted in the Orville Hanchey Art Gallery where NSU Foundation and Demons Unlimited Foundation staff assisted student volunteers in writing and sending thank you notes to our generous university donors.

Thursday afternoon, Dr. Vickie Gentry and I met on several academic matters. Then I attended a meeting with Bill Brent, Loletta Wynder, Dr. Susan Dollar and several community leaders concerning a community enrichment initiative.

Thursday evening, I joined Engineering Technology faculty and recruiting staff at the Advanced Manufacturing Technician (AMT) Open House at the Central Louisiana Technical Community College – Natchitoches campus. Afterwards, I attended the Department of English, Foreign Languages, and Cultural Studies Fall Read at Orville Hanchey Art Gallery. I concluded the evening by attending an outstanding Wind Symphony Concert, conducted by Dr. Jeff Mathews, at Magale Recital Hall.

Friday morning, I addressed students attending the 45th annual Journalism Day program hosted by our Department of New Media, Journalism and Communication Arts. ULS President Dr. Jim Henderson served as keynote speaker, and there were several outstanding presentations by NSU faculty, students,

alumni and area journalism professionals. Afterwards, Mayor Lee Posey and I videotaped a greeting from Natchitoches and Northwestern.

At noon, Drake Owens and I had lunch to review upcoming NSU Foundation and Alumni Association events. Friday afternoon, I attended a larger NSU/Community meeting concerning the community enrichment initiative.

Saturday morning, I attended the Scholars' Preview Day program at the Student Union Ballroom, and afterwards I met with a prospective student-athlete and her family.

Saturday afternoon, I watched our NSU Lady Demon Volleyball team defeat Texas A&M University Corpus Christi in a pivotal Southland Conference match at Prather Coliseum. Afterwards, I attended a reception honoring our graduating senior volleyball players and their families.

I ended the day at the 30th Annual NSU Classic on the Cane, Marching Band Contest where I sat for an interview that was streamed nationwide and enjoyed several of the performances. Many thanks to our band faculty for an amazing job organizing the competition that featured 32 high school bands and brought thousands of students and spectators to campus. Of course, the event ended that evening as the "Spirit of Northwestern" Demon Marching Band brought the crowd to its feet with another extraordinary performance!

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

Fork 'em Demons,

Chris