

Update, Sept. 18, 2020

We received our fall registration numbers this week, and it is a pleasure to announce that the university has a record enrollment of 11,447 students. Highlights include increases in the number of graduate students and freshmen retention. Graduate School registration this fall is 1,150, a 7.8 percent increase over last year. The retention rate for full-time first-year students increased from 70 percent to 74 percent. For the fourth consecutive year, entering freshmen enrollment has been over 1,500 students.

I want to commend Jana Lucky and our enrollment management team and thank you all for your recruiting and retention efforts that made this possible. So many of you worked tirelessly to promote your programs and support enrollment efforts to make this happen during an extremely difficult time. I truly appreciate your dedication to Northwestern State University and our students!

Also, congratulations to our College of Nursing faculty, staff, administration, and students on an outstanding virtual site review. After spending three days in a review of our programs, the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) review team found NSU's BSN, MSN, PMC and DNP programs to be in compliance with all four CCNE National Accreditation Standards with no compliance concerns. Although the final accreditation decision will not be rendered until next spring after review by the CCNE ARC and CCNE Board, this is outstanding news. I want to commend College of Nursing and School of Allied Health Dean Dr. Dana Clawson for her leadership and thank everyone who participated in the onsite virtual review.

The University Strategic Planning Team and key staff briefed me on the results of the Assessment Cycle 2019-2020. We focused on identifying areas of excellence and innovation, areas needing improvement, and areas for future focus. The briefing included updates and discussion on the strategic planning-assessment process; the University's new mission, vision, and core values; Strategic Focus Areas, academic program and administrative unit assessments; research, general education competencies, quality enhancement plan, community/public service, our capital outlay outlook, technology, and updates from each College on areas of success, innovation, and concern. We also welcomed Dr. Snowden to the process as he presented an excellent snapshot of priorities and plans in diversity and inclusion.

The briefing was powerful in its reflection of the tremendous progress made this past year. Establishing a predictable period of reflection is essential and motivating in that we recognize and can honestly discuss the challenges we face moving into 2020-2021. You have done a tremendous job in increasing our services and offerings to best support our increased enrollment. As you know, and as we discussed, with growth and success come challenges in balancing workload and the competition for resources. We all must continue to work together to develop innovative solutions in meeting these unprecedented challenges. We must continue to push the boundaries of innovation and how we can continuously improve. Be proud of how you faced the challenges and adversity of 2019-2020 without ever wavering in the care and support of our students. The University's excellent reputation is a testament to your hard work, and I sincerely thank each of you for driving our University closer to securing our vision.

Next week, we will begin Free COVID-19 testing on campus at the LSMSA gymnasium. Testing will be available daily from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The free testing is being made available by the Louisiana National Guard in cooperation with the Louisiana Department of Health, <https://www.nsula.edu/free-covid-testing-will-be-available-at-lsmsa-gym-starting-monday-sept-21/>.

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

Fork 'em Demons!

Chris



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