

## **Update: Friday, August 21, 2020**

We completed today our first week of classes for the Fall 2020 semester, and I want to thank you for your hard work and preparation that resulted in such a successful opening. I would also appreciate your patience, understanding and flexibility as we continue to adapt as necessary to the pandemic.

I have received many compliments acknowledging our students' adherence to policy and our faculty and staff's preparation for the semester and empathy and understanding in working with our students. Attached is a copy of a resolution from the Northwestern State University Student Government Association expressing appreciation to the faculty, staff, and administration for your dedicated work in ensuring the safe return to campus for the Fall 2020 semester.

Also, thank you for your tireless work in modifying course delivery options for our students with their health and safety in mind. Our last report shows that 502 students are taking their courses completely face-to-face, 4,969 students have a mixed face-to-face and internet model, and 4,931 students are taking courses completely online. Through these numbers and other data, you can see the complexity of the work that you did to make these difficult adjustments.

All of our faculty and staff are to be commended for your tireless and dedicated efforts over the past several weeks in preparing our campuses for the fall semester and for your expertise and compassion in addressing the many needs and questions of our students. Your empathy and professionalism continue to foster a responsive, caring environment for our NSU community.

We were notified this week of two outstanding achievements by our university. These, and other, recent accolades continue to enhance our university's reputation and prestige for academic excellence and support services.

First, it was announced that Northwestern State University received the Excellence in Assessment designation. We are one of just 12 universities nationally to achieve this prestigious designation, <https://www.nsula.edu/nsu-one-of-12-schools-to-earn-excellence-in-assessment-designation/>. The award recognizes institutions that successfully integrate assessment practices across the institution, provide evidence of student learning, and use assessment results to guide institutional decision-making and improve student performances.

This recognition validates all the hard work you have devoted to our assessment process. We are fortunate to have Frank Hall leading our assessment efforts, and this designation is a tribute to our faculty and staff for the time, effort, and dedication they have put into this process in support of student learning.

Also, I am proud to announce that we have received a five-year Title IV grant of \$2.3 million from the U.S. Department of Education to support our Student Support Services, federal TRIO program. Our SSS program works to support first-generation, low-income students or students with disabilities. I would like to thank and congratulate NSU Program Director Frances Welch and our Student Support Services team for their effective work in the grant application process and the continued success of the program.

Thanks to everyone who has expressed interest in the two leadership development programs that we have recently initiated. Our NSU LeAds began in late July and is an intensive leadership training program designed to facilitate the transition of recently positioned campus leaders into their new roles through

interactive and educational experiences, mentor partnerships and collaborative engagement with leaders from across the University.

Our IGNiTE, Improve, Grow, and Nurture your Talents to Excel, program begins later this month and is a two-semester program for early and mid-career faculty and staff interested in broadening their understanding of our university's vision, mission, and goals and in developing their academic, professional, or administrative leadership skills to support those principles. The program will immerse participants in the strategic framework of the University to maximize their understanding of how these core ideals drive our operation and initiatives. Participants will develop a greater understanding of effective leadership fundamentals in higher education and learn how to recognize and cultivate those competencies in themselves and their colleagues.

Finally, we mourn the loss this week of prominent NSU alumnus Major General Erbon Wise (Retired). MG Wise earned his bachelor's degree from NSU in 1941 and was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters in 2004. He is a member of the university's Long Purple Line Hall of Distinction and served on the NSU Foundation Board of Directors since its inception in 1960. In 2002, MG Wise and his wife Marie donated funds to establish the Erbon W. and Marie Wise Endowed Chair in Journalism, the first \$1 million endowed chair at NSU. We acknowledge and thank MG Wise for his generous contributions to our university and offer our deepest condolences and sympathy to his family.

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

Fork 'em Demons,

Chris



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