Students learn through travel in Colorado and Panama
President Jasinski era begins at Northwest

Northwest students presented school supplies to the Panamanian teachers during their service-learning trip in July.
**Student Spotlight**

**Alumna on “Target” with career in retail management**

Only one year after graduation, Northwest alumna Robyn Thomas is on the fast-track to corporate success. Since receiving her degree from Northwest in 2008, Thomas has worked as executive team leader at the Super Target store in Liberty. She manages personnel, delegates tasks, works with human resources and generally makes sure things keep running efficiently. Thomas says there are a lot of things she enjoys about her job, but that the people she works with are her top priority. “I love working with people. I’m in charge of 250 employees in this store, so I get to deal with people all the time, whether it’s personal or work-related,” she said.

Thomas has already gained respect from colleagues beyond her own store. In addition to her responsibilities in Liberty, she also trains future executive team leaders for other Targets in the district.

Like many college seniors, Thomas was nervous about finding a job after graduation, and, after talking with a Target representative at a campus Career Day event, she began to look more deeply into opportunities with the national retail chain.

“I was impressed with the company in general,” she said. “I did some research on how long they’ve been in existence, as well as their sales and economic growth, and I know they were going to be around for a while. I was impressed with the people they hire as well — everyone is really positive, and it’s fun to come to work. Target also has a great track record of letting you develop at your own pace. You can take your time, or you can work hard and start moving up the ladder quickly.”

Thomas credits Northwest with preparing her for professional success. As a former public relations major, she is especially grateful for the instruction and hands-on experience she received as a student in the University’s Department of Communication, Theatre, and Languages.

“In any job setting you’re going to have to be able to communicate to succeed,” Thomas said. “The experience of getting up in front of people in class, giving presentations and putting what I had learned into practice was a huge help.”

**Grad credits Northwest faculty for K.C. Board of Trade career**

Smithville native Keath Coleman, who attended Northwest in 2008 to play college baseball, but he ended up finding his most valuable success in the classroom, not on the diamond. After his first season Coleman decided baseball wasn’t for him, and he began to wonder if he’d made the right decision in becoming a Bearcat. After a semester at a community college, however, he realized that Northwest was the place he belonged.

Upon returning to Maryville, Coleman was feeling restless and grew uncomfortable with his choice of a major field of study. After bouncing around a bit between various academic options, he finally settled on management information systems and never looked back. Earning his degree in May, Coleman is now an up-and-coming employee with the Kansas City Board of Trade.

“I was hired by KCBT as a Systems Administrator,” Coleman said. “I implement and maintain the technical architecture that supports our core business functions.”

“Land[ing] a job with a company as well known as KCBT straight out of college is quite an accomplishment, especially in tough economic times, and Coleman said he owes a debt of gratitude to Northwest for helping him prepare for this success.

**Student Spotlight**

**Grad combines high-tech skills with love of farming**

Growing up in the rural north Missouri town of Skidmore, Kandi Jenkins always felt connected to farming and farm life. Now, just six months after graduating from Northwest, she is working at the forefront of agriculture technology.

Jenkins’ initially chose Northwest because of its location and size. Growing up in a small town left her with little desire to attend a big college in a big city, and she didn’t want to get too far away from home. Northwest was always a strong possibility, she said, but it wasn’t until settling firmly on a career path that she made the final decision.

“Northwest’s agriculture program is pretty well-known,” she said. “When I decided I wanted to major in ag, I knew it was a good place for me.”

Jenkins’ decision to attend Northwest was, in large part, based on the hands-on experience she knew she would receive at the R.T. Wright University Farm. The North Farm, as it is often called, is a 750-acre spread where students and agriculture faculty maintain a beef herd, produce market lamb and conduct a farrow-to-finish swine operation. North Farm crops include corn, soybeans and hay, and the site also provides opportunities for students to perform soil analysis and global positioning research.

Actual farm experience coupled with the opportunity to plan her academic and professional future with the help of a caring, qualified advisor are two big reasons for her success at Northwest and beyond, Jenkins said.

“I had a really good advisor while attending Northwest,” she said. “Having someone to advise, mentor and give direction was great.”

Part of Jenkins’ college experience included a course in managerial communications, during which she worked on a project that focused on job and career Web sites. Jenkins set up accounts on a variety of sites and, during her research, discovered a recruiting company called Volt Technical Resources.

Through Volt, Jenkins landed a job as a customer support representative with John Deere Ag Management Solutions. A December 2008 graduate of Northwest, she now spends her days working with John Deere customers, dealers and farmers to discover how technology can help them maximize efficiency and profits.

“The GreenStar system provides precision farming products that optimize efficiency in our customers’ farming operations,” Jenkins said. “Our products include displays, aids for guidance, accuracy and section/rate control, and software. These components are designed as an integrated part of John Deere equipment and can be moved from machine to machine to get the most out of your investment.”

Jenkins’ journey to the forefront of agriculture technology was long and demanding, and she credits Northwest Missouri State University for providing the educational opportunities that made it possible.

“I love the products that John Deere Intelligent Vehicle Systems has come out with. It’s amazing what they can do with technology, and I really enjoy being a part of it.”

**Coleman**

“Due to the current economic conditions, it was very challenging to have a job lined up prior to graduation. However, I was one of the lucky ones. The company contacted a Northwest faculty member for a recommendation,” Coleman said.

“I stress to current students that it is very important to establish a relationship with instructors, because you never know when one of them might get that call, and when they do, you want your name to stand out.”

More than anything, Coleman said, it was the expertise and dedication of Northwest’s faculty that allowed him to jumpstart his career after graduation.

“Northwest taught me how to learn, how to think and how to solve problems,” he said. “I appreciate the faculty and staff and their willingness to help. I cannot express how much I appreciated my instructors throughout my career at Northwest. My hat goes off to them.”

**Northwest’s agriculture program is pretty well-known. When I decided I wanted to major in ag, I knew it was a good place for me.” — KANDI JENKINS**

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Service learning in Panama and Colorado

Panama experience is ‘life-changing’ for Northwest psychology students

A recent trip by a group of Northwest students and faculty to a Panama City, Panama, school for at-risk students was a life-changing experience, according to Dr. Carla Edwards, chair of the Department of Psychology, Sociology and Counseling.

Edwards, who was one of the four faculty members and four undergraduate psychology majors to make the trip during the first part of July, said the hopes future service-learning initiatives will continue to offer hope, help and new opportunities for students, families and teachers from both the United States and Panama.

While in the Central American country’s capital city, the Northwest group worked with grade school and high school students and parents from socially and economically challenged backgrounds. Activities included self-esteem-building and motivational exercises plus conversations focusing on challenges posed by poverty and lack of educational resources.

“It was really an eye-opener, just a life-changing thing,” she said. “Watching the students’ eyes open as they started realizing what reality is like for some thing,” she said. “Watching the students’ eyes open as they started realizing what reality is like for some thing,” she said. “Watching the students’ eyes open as they started realizing what reality is like for some thing,” she said. “Watching the students’ eyes open as they started realizing what reality is like for some thing,” she said. “Watching the students’ eyes open as they started realizing what reality is like for some thing,” she said. “Watching the students’ eyes open as they started realizing what reality is like for some thing,” she said.

“We gave the parents presentations on how to motivate their child to study and also on listening,” said Edwards, who explained that perhaps the most serious issue observed by the group was a lack of communication between parents and teachers.

“The group’s work with parents hobbled by poverty, difficult family circumstances and limited education was perhaps its “major contribution” during the trip, Edwards said. However, she believes that insights gained by the Northwest students will, in the long run, lead to far-reaching results that cannot yet be measured.

“It was really an eye-opener, just a life-changing thing,” she said. “Watching the students’ eyes open as they started realizing what reality is like for some people was pretty amazing.”

One of the most notable differences between the school in Panama and an American school was the lack of equipment and resources, Edwards said.

“We actually took some school supplies to them, which made the teachers cry, and that shocked us,” she said, adding that the entire Northwest group returned to Maryville with a greater sensitivity to the needs of Central American children and families forced to live in difficult circumstances.

“Our students became very aware of the privilege we have in the U.S. related to education,” Edwards said. “Another of the big things that we all got out of it was a commitment to community. I know that all four students have talked about, and are very excited about, doing something further, not only with this Panama project but in our own community. I think they’ve come to truly recognize the importance of philanthropy and community service.”

Edwards is already working to push the Panama service-learning initiative forward and wants to organize fundraisers later this year through various University organizations. The proceeds, she said, will go for books and school supplies. In addition, depending on funding, Edwards wants to expand next year’s trip to include more students, who would spend up to two weeks in Panama engaged in service-learning activities and research.

This summer’s trip was funded through a Northwestern Culture of Quality grant from the Office of the Provost and four $500 student research grants from the University’s College of Education and Human Services.

Organizational assistance was provided by the Pro-Ed Foundation, founded by Panamanian philanthropist Alex Psychoyos. The foundation is led by Psychoyos’ daughter, Debbie Psychoyos, who was Northwest’s 2008 Ploghoft Lecturer and is currently an Ed.D. candidate in Northwest’s cooperative doctorate program offered through the University of Missouri-Columbia.

Participating students included: Kristin Stewart, senior, St. Joseph, Michael Webster, sophomore, Nevada, Iowa; Miranda Oehler, senior, Maryville, and Jera Archer, senior, Riverside.

Recreation students learn by doing during trip to Colorado

Northwest students studying parks and recreation management, corporate recreation, and wellness and therapeutic recreation recently spent 12 days touring various recreation agencies and facilities in Colorado as part of an elective course offered by the University’s Department of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance.

The three-credit-hour, experience-based course is designed to give students opportunities to observe firsthand the kinds of events and services they will lead and administer after completing their degrees.

A total of 14 students took the course, which involved networking with professionals in order to discuss possible internships and other field experience opportunities.

Students studying recreation often are experiential learners,” said Dr. Sue Myllykangas, who taught the course. “Taking the students into the field allows them to observe the concepts as they are applied.

The exploring recreation resources course has been offered at Northwest for the past three summers and has given nearly 40 students the chance to observe such facilities as the Craig Rehabilitation Hospital, the Coors Employee Wellness Center, Red Rocks Amphitheatre, Rocky Mountain National Park, YMCA Camp of the Rockies and the Children’s Museum of Denver.

Future recreation professionals taking the course also participate in a day-long whitewater raft trip on the Arkansas River designed to offer insights into teamwork and leadership styles.

Some of the other facilities and events visited by this summer’s class included the Rocky Mountain Senior Games in Greeley; Sports Made Possible, a recreational facility in Centennial, Colo., that operates a baseball park adapted to the needs of young people with disabilities; and the King Adult Day Activity Program, which is part of the Multiple Sclerosis Center of Colorado.

Evaluations at the end of the course show that participants demonstrate a marked increase in their knowledge of core recreation concepts and a fuller understanding of national certification competencies.

Northwest recreation majors Heather Becker, left, a senior from York, Neb., and Kelly Corbett, right, a senior from Pottsville, were a participant in Sports Made Possible, a recreational facility in Centennial, Colo., that operates a baseball park adapted to the needs of young people with disabilities. 
It’s official: President Jasinski era begins at Northwest

President Jasinski said he is reaching out to the Northwest community and listening to their ideas.

“Northwest is a great institution,” said Jasinski, the University of Missouri System Board of Regents’ president. “I am looking out for campus and community success alike. Part of what motivates Northwest Missouri State University to be special is the strong relationship between the academic and local community. As I meet with the Northwest Leadership Team, local officials and civic and business leaders in our region, I plan to do what I can to make Northwest Missouri State University a great place to work, learn and live. These collaborations do not exist without the vision for the future. I want to make sure that Northwest has the right size, the right climate, the right people and the right communities to work together. In the coming months, you’ll see the University and the community and I’ll be using my strengths to reinforce that vision.

Northwest mascot Bobby Bearcat worked the crowd, and the entrance leading into the Administration Building was decorated with a green carpet and a large banner reading, “Welcome Dr. Jasinski.”

While First Lady Denise Jasinski, accompanied by children Matt, Joe, Leah and Lucas, mingled and shook hands, President Jasinski spoke a brief word of gratitude in front of the Circle Drive fountain.

“I want to offer my warmest congratulations to Heather for her achievement in being awarded a scholarship from this prestigious organization,” said Dr. Tom Bilbrough, Booth College dean. “Her continuing University career reflects the high standards and expectations that the Northwest students and faculty—as well as the companies that hire our graduates—have come to value and expect. ■

University begins countdown to smoke-free campus in 2010

It’s official: President Jasinski era begins at Northwest

Northwest is going smoke free, but students, faculty, and staff and others are looking to grab a quick nicotine fix while on campus have just under a year to get used to the notion of lighting up somewhere else, or, better yet, kicking the habit altogether.

The University already bars smoking inside campus buildings, but the practice is still OK at a limited number of outdoor locations. As of Aug. 1, 2010, however, the no-smoking rule will be expanded to include all university-owned or leased property and all university vehicles.

16 international students to attend Missouri Academy

Sixteen international students will attend the University’s Missouri Academy of Science, Mathematics and Computing this fall.

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Sacred Heart major in northwest's school of business.

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Bearcat Productions to create diabetes video for children, parents

Bearcat Productions, a semi-independent multi-media production company staffed by Northwest students and organized through the Department of Mass Communication, is teaming with St. Francis Hospital and Health Services to produce a DVD designed to educate children and their families about diabetes.

Financial support for the DVD project is provided by St. Francis Hospital and Health Services, the St. Francis Hospital Foundation, the Heartland Foundation, Heartland Health and North Kansas City Hospital through the Healthy Partnerships program.

St. Francis diabetes instructor Debra Hull, RN, BSN, said the video focuses on Type 2 Diabetes, which she said is associated with obesity, physical inactivity, family history, impaired glucose metabolism, gestational diabetes and race/ethnicity. The video will be offered during the 2010-2011 school year to third- through sixth-graders in Holt and Worth counties.

Formerly known as “adult onset” diabetes, Type 2 is increasingly common among children, said Hull, who cites Centers for Disease Control and Prevention statistics showing that one in three children in the United States can be expected to develop diabetes in their lifetime if current trends continue.

“Type 2 diabetes is a complex, dynamic and progressive disease, but a person can significantly lower their risk of developing this disease through exercise and moderate weight loss,” she said.

Calendar of Events

September
4-5 Volleyball Comfort InnVitational
7 Labor Day: no classes
8 Faculty Recital: Dr. William Richardson, trumpet
10 Soccer vs. Truman State
Encore: “Intersection”
12 Northwest Cross Country Invitational
14 DeLuce Gallery: Stephen Goldblatt animation exhibit opening and lecture
15 Second installment due
16 Volleyball vs. Washburn
18-20 Family Weekend
18 SAC Family Weekend: hypnotist Kevin Hurley
19 Northwest Athletic Training
5K Run/Walk Roll
Football vs. Nebraska-Omaha
Soccer vs. Southwest Baptist
24 Exploring Majors and Minors
24-25 Theatre: “The Good Doctor”
25 Volleyball vs. Pittsburg State
26 Football vs. Truman State
Volleyball vs. Southwest Baptist
30 Mock Interview Day
Ploghott Lecture: Erin Gruwell

October
1-2 Bearcat Women’s Golf Classic
1 Soccer vs. Central Missouri
2-3 Theatre: “Fugue”
3 Northwest PowWow

4 Wind Symphony concert
7 Volleyball vs. Nebraska-Omaha
8 Soccer vs. Washburn
9-10 Theatre: “An Evening of Ives”
10 Soccer vs. Emporia State
12-16 Mid-term examinations
12 Studio Jazz Ensemble concert
14 Fall Career Day
16 Volleyball vs. Missouri Western
Encore: “I Love A Piano”
15 Third installment due
16 First block ends
Theatre: “Ride”
17 Volleyball vs. Missouri Southern
Theatre: “Ride”
19 Second block begins
DeLuce Gallery: Mark Zimetbaum drawing/sculpture exhibit opening and lecture
Homecoming Variety Show and Royalty Crowning
Walkout Day
Homecoming Variety Show
Volleyball vs. Fort Hays State
24 Homecoming
Soccer vs. Nebraska-Omaha
Football vs. Washburn
Volleyball vs. Emporia State
26 Preregistration for spring 2010 begins
29-31 Theatre: “Night of the Living Dead”
31 Fall Green and White Visit Day
Soccer vs. Missouri Southern

For an up-to-date calendar, go to www.nwmissouri.edu/calendar

Hull added that 31 percent of Missouri children aged 10-17 are overweight, according to a report by the Trust for America’s Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. She added that one in six overweight adolescents have a condition known as prediabetes, which can lead to full onset of the disease.

The DVD project grew out of a series of live presentations Hull made to Nodaway County schoolchildren titled “A Journey with Joe into Diabetes.”

“The response was overwhelmingly positive,” Hull said. “Requests have been rolling in to get this information to more children and to the public, and this led us to Bearcat Productions and the idea of creating a DVD.”

In addition to viewing the video in classrooms, youngsters will be given a copy to take home and watch with their families. Hull also plans to continue offering live presentations in Nodaway County during the coming school year, this time to high school students.

The ultimate goal, she said, is to come up with a finished product that will both educate and motivate youngsters and their parents to make healthy lifestyles changes and choices.

“Education is a key component to managing this disease,” Hull said, “but motivation ranks a high second.”