

Maryville Daily Forum column
Thursday, Aug. 11, 2011
Dr. John Jasinski, Northwest Missouri State University President

It has indeed been an eventful summer at Northwest Missouri State. Last month I wrote about the thousands of visitors our campus hosted during the last couple months, and last week we celebrated the transition of 301 individuals from Northwest students to alumni.

But in just a couple weeks, the campus and Maryville really comes alive again as we welcome back the members of our Bearcat family and get to know a whole new class.

Our student-athletes and other student leaders will be returning shortly along with our new faculty members, followed by our freshman class, which begins moving in to the residence halls Thursday, Aug. 25. We will formally welcome our faculty and staff back the day before with our annual all-employee meeting. Advantage and orientation activities will take place throughout that weekend, and then the fall trimester officially gets under way Monday, Aug. 29.

Indicators show we will have a strong freshman class this fall. We also are welcoming some wonderfully talented and motivated new employees to our team, and I am encouraged by the initiatives and planning that have taken place to prepare us for the new academic year and well beyond.

To ensure we not only stay on track as an institution, but continue to grow and develop, we will begin implementing a new strategic platform: "Northwest 2011-2014: Executing and Succeeding." We will continue to use our mission, vision and values – starting with our mission statement, "Northwest Missouri State University focuses on student success – every student, every day" – as our strategic bedrock.

The strategic work is the sum of a vast array of analysis and input over the last 24 months as well as the contributions of the Strategic Planning Leadership Team, the Organizational Success Task Force, the Northwest Leadership Team and the Board of Regents.

The platform consists of three strategic themes – enhancing academic programming, ensuring an engaging learning environment, and cultivating and contributing to vigorous community impacts – that will help us shape strategic and operational objectives; strategic action areas; and link with capital campaign planning, grant funding and legislative initiatives.

Our objectives over the next few years, to name just a few, include growing select science, technology and mathematics programs; addressing interdisciplinary and intercultural competence programming; enhancing our workforce focus and development; planning and launching a capital campaign; and addressing facility use and upgrades.

We will seek to maintain and grow our reputation as a proud regional institution, and we will engage our constituents and the community in a conversation about how to strategically grow select programs to serve students nationally and internationally. Budget management will be an emphasis area, as will driving economic development.

Other notes of interest

With the start of a new school year, we welcome a number of new faculty and staff members to the Northwest family. We are very pleased to be welcoming Mike Johnson and his family back to Northwest and the Maryville community; Mike joins us Aug. 15 as vice president of university advancement. Also, Dr. Matt Baker, who continues to play a key role at Northwest as an advocate for our students, recently was named vice president of student affairs. Additionally, among several changes in our athletics department, we welcomed Chad Bostwick to our football coaching staff.

In conjunction with the Bearcat football team's home opener, we'll honor Mel and Carol Tjeerdsma during a series of events. The two-day celebration begins Friday, Sept. 9, with a reception, dinner and tribute. The reception begins at 6 p.m. in the Lamkin Activity Center foyer; the dinner and tribute begins at 7 p.m. in Bearcat Arena. The cost for the Friday evening events is \$100 per person, or private reserved tables also are available. Proceeds benefit the Coach T Student-Athlete Success Program, which improves academic and life enrichment opportunities for Northwest student-athletes. Dress is casual, Bearcat attire. The registration deadline for the event is Wednesday, Aug. 17, and you can claim your spot by calling (660) 562-1248.

The Tjeerdsmas will also be honored Saturday, Sept 10, during events coinciding with the Bearcat football team's home opener against the University of Sioux Falls. At the Bearcat Zone, from 4 to 6 p.m. at College Park, we'll have free mini posters to be autographed by Coach T., collectible bobbleheads of Coach Tjeerdsma for purchase, tailgate food for purchase, and performances by the Bearcat Marching Band, Northwest Steppers and Cheer Squad. The Tjeerdsmas also will be recognized at the football game.

Also, we will honor the late Scott Bostwick during, appropriately, Family Day activities Saturday, Sept. 24, and details for that event will be announced soon.

Thank you, northwest Missouri, for your continued support of all our endeavors at Northwest Missouri State and for helping to make our students, both those who are coming to this community for the first time and those who are returning, such a valued part of it.

Dr. John Jasinski is the 10th president of Northwest Missouri State University. For news and events at Northwest, visit www.nwmissouri.edu.