

Maryville Daily Forum column
Thursday, Jan. 5, 2012
Dr. John Jasinski, Northwest Missouri State University President

I hope today's column finds all of you well and recharged for 2012. The Jasinski family rested, spent great family time together, exercised and brought in the new year quietly, but with great anticipation.

Although classes don't resume until Monday, we got a head start yesterday with our semi-annual All-Employee Meeting. We were pleased to have Dr. David Russell, commissioner of the Missouri Coordinating Board for Higher Education, with us to address the state of higher education in Missouri and answer questions of our faculty and staff.

Last month, of course, we capped a successful fall with our winter commencement ceremony, which was streamed on the internet for the first time and attracted more than 800 viewers; it remains available to watch at www.nwmissouri.edu/live. In all, we awarded diplomas to 436 students, who now become Northwest Missouri State alumni. Let me give you a snapshot of our most recent graduating class:

- We had 236 female graduates and 200 males.
- They ranged in age from 20 to 60.
- The top three undergraduate majors were elementary education, business management and accounting.
- The top graduate degree was applied computer science.
- There were 345 undergraduates, 79 graduates receiving master's degrees and 12 specialist candidates.
- Our graduates included 290 Missouri residents.
- Four different countries were represented in the class, including Brazil, India and the Peoples Republic of China.

Each of our graduates excelled in so many areas and grew into the kinds of leaders that will enable them to succeed in a variety of professional careers. Certainly your community support makes an impact on them as they begin the next chapter of their lives, start to put down roots of their own and become engaged citizens in their communities.

With the new year, we turn our attention to the spring legislative session and budget discussions in Jefferson City. Projections are that the state will face a deficit somewhere between \$500 million and \$700 million, and we are awaiting more details on how that may impact higher education. Collectively as higher education leaders, we are concerned with student aid and operating funding, and we are working together to address these issues.

Last month, Northwest Provost Dr. Doug Dunham and I were in Jefferson City for a work session with the Coordinating Board for Higher Education and Missouri Department of Higher Education senior staff, and performance-based funding was among the major topics on the agenda. There have been no adjustments in base funding tied to items such as differential enrollment increases, changes in programming or inflationary costs. Although the state has a history of allocating additional resources on a performance basis through the Funding for Results program, CBHE, citing national trends, has said current funding levels

for Missouri public institutions are inadequate, and the Coordinating Board has made it a priority to advocate for increased appropriations.

Last August, during a summit for higher education, Gov. Jay Nixon addressed performance funding and asked the public higher education sector to submit specific performance measures by the end of the calendar year. At our December meeting, the CBHE approved a set of five performance indicators for four-year public institutions that consist of student success and progress, increased degree attainment, quality of student learning, financial responsibility and efficiency, and a measure that is specific to each institution. We have some time before this model takes effect, however, as FY13 has been identified for collecting data and pilot testing, with the first round of possible performance-based funding in the FY14 budget.

Maryville and the rest of northwest Missouri always are well-represented at the capitol and we are grateful for the support of Sen. Brad Lager, Rep. Mike Thomson and so many others. Joining them this spring at the capitol will be three more Bearcats who were selected as our 2012 legislative interns. Erin Klassen (interning with Rep. Thomson), Doug Porter (with Rep. Sheila Solon) and Paul Wilson (with Sen. Lager) are participating in Northwest's legislative internship program, and I look forward to conversing with them when I travel to Jefferson City later this month for the legislative session. Additionally, Northwest student Serena Euler is working as an intern this spring at Congressman Sam Graves' office in Washington, D.C.

As we look back on 2011, we have much for which to be proud at Northwest Missouri State University and within our community. On behalf of the Northwest Leadership Team and the entire Bearcat family, I wish you a joyous and fruitful 2012! It is my sincere hope that we can have collaborative discussions on how to continue to adapt a learning community and grow together in meeting those who we serve.

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