

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

As we reach the pinnacle of the 2011-2012 academic year at Northwest Missouri State, there are reminders everywhere of achievements by our students, faculty and staff. Their successes exemplify our mission of focusing on student success – every student, every day – and our values, which include scholarship, life-long learning, intercultural competence and collaboration.

During the last few months, students in our art department, under the guidance of art faculty Dr. Martha Breckenridge and Glenn Williams, have done an outstanding job of exemplifying those values.

Last fall, one of our MBA students and a Kashmir native, Adil Sheikh, brought to Dr. Breckenridge the idea of a cultural exchange with art students at the University of Kashmir in Srinagar, Kashmir. The idea was for the students in both countries to learn about each other's cultures as well as the ways they go about creating and exploring their art. The idea flourished into what is now known as the Kashmir Crossover, and it's become a very special and meaningful initiative for the participants.

As students took hold of the idea, Adil shared his own experiences of growing up in Kashmir and the challenges the citizens of that country live with every day. For decades, the country has suffered through poverty and conflict with militants fighting in the streets; Adil's mother was injured in an explosion and his uncle was killed by a bomb blast. The country has no public art galleries and those students who are interested in pursuing art as a trade can barely afford paint brushes and other basic supplies.

While about 40 Northwest and Kashmiri students have worked on the project, communicating via Skype and Facebook, students in Northwest's honorary art fraternity, Kappa Pi, made the Kashmir Crossover their philanthropy and took it upon themselves to raise money for Kashmiri art students. They are raising awareness about the conflict impacting Kashmir, and in just a few months, their efforts have raised nearly \$700 that will fund art supplies and a full year's tuition to the Kashmir Art School for three students.

That is just one example of the good things happening at Northwest during the last month. Consider also:

- Dr. Carol Spradling received the Governor's Award for Excellence in Education Wednesday during a ceremony in Columbia.
- The Students In Free Enterprise (SIFE) team won its regional competition Friday and has qualified for the national contest for the third consecutive year.
- Men's basketball head coach Ben McCollum was named the 2012 Clarence "Big House" Gaines National Coach of the Year in Division II during an awards banquet Friday in New Orleans.

- Tennis coach Mark Rosewell notched his 900th career win Saturday as the Bearcats swept three matches in Tulsa, Okla.
- Our Enrollment Management team, led by Dean of Enrollment Management Bev Schenkel, recently received the 2012 ShowMe Award, which recognizes a secondary or postsecondary institution that addresses student needs in exemplary ways and improves learning through innovative uses of ACT programs and services.
- The Tower Yearbook staff, under Director of Student Publications Laura Widmer, was recently honored in New York City with a Silver Crown Award from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association, which represents the top 2 percent of college yearbooks in the country, as well as two second-place Apple Awards for the 2011 Tower's student life and cover designs.
- The Northwest wrestling club, led by Dr. Tim Crowley, finished as the national runner-up at the National Collegiate Wrestling Association Division II National Championship March 10.

And there's more to come. Today, some of our students are competing in the first Northwest Business Plan Competition, which is yet another opportunity for them to gain real world experience in entrepreneurship and small business. They will receive valuable feedback from successful entrepreneurs and experienced professionals in the community, distinguished Northwest alumnus Melvin D. Booth will be the keynote speaker.

Next week, we celebrate Northwest Week – a week that is loaded with performances, academic activities and recognition ceremonies. To name a few events, the Symphony Orchestra performs a special concert at 8 p.m. Tuesday in the Charles Johnson Theater that will feature Dr. Ernest Kramer playing a Baroque-era replica harpsichord; we will honor six retiring faculty members for their combined 230 years of service during a ceremony at 3 p.m. next Thursday in the Student Union Ballroom; the Spirit & Truth Gospel Choir performs at 7 p.m. next Friday at the First United Methodist Church; and Saturday, April 14, features an afternoon of athletics events with the Bearcat softball team playing a doubleheader, beginning at noon, and the annual spring football game kicks off at 5 p.m. at Bearcat Stadium.

The Bearcat pride runs deep in the excellent students, faculty and staff who work so hard and help make Northwest a university that is known for excellence in this region and beyond. We are so proud of their accomplishments, and we are grateful for the community support you provide to help them succeed.

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.