

Maryville Daily Forum column
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Dr. John Jasinski, Northwest Missouri State University President

The warm feelings of achieved goals, the camaraderie of students and mentors, and the pride that we take in each day spent at Northwest Missouri State are rarely absent on the campus. And those characteristics are probably most evident each time we welcome another graduating class into our alumni ranks.

Saturday was Commencement Day at Northwest, and what a celebratory day it was. The occasion represents the fruit of our labor as 705 students received their Northwest degrees – the largest number of graduates Northwest has ever had for a Commencement Day.

As always, this graduating class was a diverse one filled with unique stories and backgrounds. Graduates in this spring's class ranged in age from 20 to 55 years old and they represented nine different countries. The top undergraduate majors of the spring class included business management, elementary education, psychology, agricultural business and public relations. The top graduate degree was applied consumer science.

All of our graduates, though, have shown the kind of commitment, perseverance, collaboration, citizenship and hard work we value at Northwest. You can read just a small sampling of our graduates' successes by visiting the Northwest homepage this month at www.nwmissouri.edu. It features Ian Stanek, Jennifer Evans and Jessica Walter, all of whom are representative of the comprehensive, hands-on experience students can receive at Northwest.

In addition, much of the success that students achieve at Northwest is a result of the tremendous instruction that faculty and staff provide to our students every day.

It's the kind of instruction offered by Dr. Carol Spradling, associate professor of computer science and information systems, who was a recipient last month of the 2012 Governor's Award for Excellence in Education as well as the Outstanding Service Award presented by the Association of Computer Machinery's Special Interest Group on Computers and Society.

It's the kind of instruction offered by Allison Hoffmann, instructor in the Department of Marketing and Management, who next month will receive the 2012 Teaching Excellence Award from the Midwestern Council of Business Schools and Programs. In October, Allison also will receive the Outstanding Advising Award for Faculty Academic Advising, which is presented annually by the National Academic Advising Association.

It's the kind of instruction offered by Dr. Linda Sterling, assistant professor of psychology, sociology and counseling, who recently obtained the highest credential possible for sport psychologists, earning her certification as a sport psychologist consultant for the Association of Applied Sport Psychology. As just one of five certified sport psychologists in Missouri, Linda has unique insight to offer her students and help them better understand this growing field.

It's the legacy left behind by faculty who have passed through the University and the lasting impact they've had on their students. Recently we honored retiring faculty members Dr.

Mark Jelavich, Paul Jones, Dr. Bruce Litte, Dr. Phil Lucido, Dr. Dennis Padgitt and Dr. Ernest Woodruff, who tallied a combined 230 years at Northwest.

And Professor Emeritus Dr. William Trowbridge, who served as a member of Northwest's English faculty from 1971 to 1998, recently was appointed to a two-year term as the state's Poet Laureate. Bill has authored more than 340 published or forthcoming poems, and Gov. Jay Nixon, in his appointment of Bill, recognized him as "one of the country's outstanding poets."

Amid these successes and the completion of another school year at Northwest, our work does not stop. Indeed we are focused on student success at Northwest – every student, every day.

Classes will resume Monday as we begin our summer trimester. Additionally, many students are participating in summer internships to enhance and expand the skills they need to help them be successful after they complete their degrees. Faculty members are preparing their future courses, carrying out field immersion experiences and conducting research to expand their knowledge in their respective fields as well.

Thus, our campus will remain an active one with a variety of summer camps, student orientation sessions and other summer activities – like our popular summer movie series, for example – that we invite you, as our supportive community members, to attend. Last year, Northwest hosted well over 100 camps and enrichment programs that brought nearly 7,000 youth to the campus.

With more than 70,000 alumni and friends, our alumni and community engagement is at an all-time high. There was evidence of that this week as Northwest and a group of local investors forming Global Prospective Investment LLC announced a partnership in cooperation with the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship and Nodaway County Economic Development. This is a critical endeavor for the community that builds on the importance of public-private partnerships, promoting services, creating jobs and filling regional needs.

Your community support is part of what makes Northwest a special place, and graduates look forward not just to returning to the campus, but to Maryville, too. So as we celebrate another school year and look ahead to a new one, I thank you, community members, for being an important part of Northwest's success and our students' success!

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.