

**Maryville Daily Forum column**  
**Thursday, Aug. 2, 2012**  
**Dr. John Jasinski, Northwest Missouri State University President**

It has been a busy summer, and I am looking forward to the promise of a new academic year. During these last couple months, many of our students have spread across the globe, exploring new opportunities and developing their skills in a range of internships. Back here at home, we had more than 2,700 students enrolled in summer classes, and we welcomed more than 4,300 guests into the community and onto the campus for a variety of youth camps and conferences. All the while, our excellent facilities staff and grounds crew has ensured Northwest retains its status as one of the most beautiful campuses in this country.

This evening marks the end of our summer trimester as we celebrate the accomplishments of more than 250 Bearcats who will receive their degrees and certificates. The ceremony begins at 7 p.m. in Bearcat Arena and will feature David Davenport, the CEO of Second Harvest Community Food Bank in St. Joseph, giving the commencement address. As always, you're invited to watch a live stream of the ceremony on the Northwest website at [www.nwmissouri.edu/live](http://www.nwmissouri.edu/live).

Now, with the start of our fall trimester quickly approaching, students are beginning to trickle back to campus. Our international Missouri Academy students began arriving last week, and the campus will become more active as our athletics teams and student organizations return for training camps and fall preparation. Our annual Advantage week, which helps orient freshmen and new students to college life, starts Thursday, Aug. 23, and the fall trimester officially begins Monday, Aug. 27.

As you may recall, Northwest participated in an Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) Quality Checkup visit in late January. The review team's initial findings and recommendations were quite positive, and I'm happy to share that Northwest has received notification that the AQIP Review Panel on Reaffirmation of Accreditation recently reaffirmed Northwest's institutional accreditation.

In short, the review panel reaffirmed Northwest's reaccreditation for seven years. The panel found we have met all federal and Higher Learning Commission requirements regarding compliance and fulfilled all five of the criteria for accreditation. It recommended no follow-ups and reaffirmed Northwest's commitment to AQIP.

This is a total institutional team effort. On behalf of Northwest's provost and AQIP liaison Dr. Doug Dunham and the Northwest Leadership Team, I am appreciative of the efforts of everyone involved in our AQIP process. Of course, there is still much to be done this fall related to AQIP as we finalize our systems portfolio, select our next three AQIP action projects, ensure we retain our strengths yet focus on a critical few opportunities and continue refining our strategic plan, and ensure we continue to build a collaborative and engaging culture.

As we look forward to the new academic year, I am proud of Northwest's progress through defining times. While we should celebrate and respect our past, we also must embrace the fact that we will not be the same tomorrow as we were yesterday. Along with changes in the economic climate, expectations have changed, and the higher education model is being challenged.

Northwest's Board of Regents approved the Fiscal Year 2013 budget at its June 27 meeting. The budget appropriately supports our No. 1 resource – our people – as well as our aging infrastructure. Everyone across the institution has practiced strong stewardship of our budget, and the Northwest Leadership Team appreciates these efforts as well as the support we have received from the Maryville community and beyond.

As fiscal year 2013 begins, so does the implementation of several changes. We have reconfigured academic and non-academic departments. Our funding mechanisms are shifting. Performance funding and

key metrics of performance have been introduced at the state level, and we must continue to deliver strong performance across a variety of metrics such as retention and graduation rates.

We have been through a great deal, and I am confident our students will benefit from a seamless transition. Our institution will ultimately be stronger as we work across disciplines and departments in the name of delivering value to our students.

Northwest was founded on broad community commitment, and I ask for your continued support as we adapt to a changing environment. With your support, we will build on our collective successes and become a stronger university now entering its 108th year.

*Dr. John Jasinski is the 10th president of Northwest Missouri State University. For news and events at Northwest visit [www.nwmissouri.edu](http://www.nwmissouri.edu).*