

Maryville Daily Forum
Thursday, Dec. 5, 2013

Dr. John Jasinski, Northwest Missouri State University President

The holiday season is upon us, and it is always an exciting time of year at Northwest Missouri State University. Especially at this time of year, I enjoy reflecting on all we've accomplished at Northwest, and the positive impacts we have on students, on our community, on our region and each other – each and every day.

Northwest is home to so many skilled students, faculty and staff who are advancing ideas, educating and contributing to our society. We are strong, resilient and loyal, and we are proud of the role we play in Maryville and beyond.

As I reflect on our accomplishments at Northwest during the last year, I think of the scholarly contributions our faculty have achieved. Dr. Jenni Wall and Dr. Michael Rogers, both assistant professors in the Department of Mathematics, Computer Science and Information Systems, created the Fruit Plate Math iPad app to enhance the learning of elementary students. Three prints created by Professor of Art Philip Laber were accepted to national or international exhibitions. And Dr. Richard Toomey, an associate professor in the Department of Natural Sciences, was named a 2014 Governor's Award for Excellence in Education recipient for his innovative teaching methods.

Students have accomplished much in and out of the classroom, too. Cara Fordyce, an agriculture business major, was named one of 20 national collegiate agriculture ambassadors for the FFA. Trevor Adams, a senior zoology and chiropractic major and the starting quarterback of our Bearcat football team, is one of 16 student-athletes throughout the nation to be named a National Scholar-Athlete by the National Football Foundation. Northwest's student-led television and radio stations were finalists this fall in six award categories presented by two national student media associations, and our student radio station, KZLX, was named the 2013 Pinnacle Station of the Year.

Students also continue to give back generously to the community. This fall, student groups at Northwest have collected thousands of pounds of canned goods and household items for the Maryville Ministry Center. Student groups continuously support and raise awareness of philanthropies such as St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and the Robbie Page Memorial Fund. Students donated blood during the annual Student Senate blood drive, and they cleaned and striped city parking lots during our annual BRUSH campaign.

Our community collaborations are strong as Northwest is partnering with the city of Maryville to enhance the Fourth Street corridor from downtown to Northwest's main campus entrance. Our growing emergency and disaster management program hosted its first-ever disaster training exercise in October at Mozingo Lake Recreation Area in collaboration with Nodaway County and state public safety agencies. We continue to strengthen the University's focus on safety and emergency preparedness, which includes a renewed partnership with the Midland Empire Chapter of the American Red Cross. In September, Northwest was named a 2014 Military Friendly School for the second consecutive year in recognition of its commitment to embracing military service members, veterans and their family members and ensuring their success on campus.

These are just a few accomplishments from the fall, and the list, of course, could go on and on. Even as we close the trimester, several holiday-themed events offer you an opportunity to experience our students' unique skills and hard work. Northwest's Department of Fine and Performing Arts completes its successful run this weekend of "The Nutcracker" puppet show with performances at 7:30 p.m. Thursday through Saturday and a Sunday matinee at 2 p.m. in the Studio Theater at the Ron Houston Center for the Performing Arts. Also, the 40th Annual Yuletide Feaste, featuring the award-winning Madraliers, takes place Friday and Saturday night in the J.W. Jones Student Union Ballroom.

In just over a week, on Dec. 13, we will celebrate the latest class of Northwest students to earn their college degrees as some 350 undergraduate students will receive bachelor's degrees and more than 100 additional students will receive master's degrees and specialist degrees through the University's graduate school. We also are pleased to welcome Dr. John N. Gardner, the co-founder and president of the John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education, to give our commencement address.

Throughout this holiday season, it is my hope that we all enjoy time with loved ones and take some time to reflect on the blessings in our lives. On behalf of the Jasinski family and Northwest Missouri State, I wish you a very happy, safe and relaxing holiday season.

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