

Maryville Daily Forum
Thursday, March 6, 2014

Dr. John Jasinski, Northwest Missouri State University President

Last week Bearcat Nation lost a proud supporter when Dr. Jason White, an associate professor in the Department of Business, passed away unexpectedly. In addition to being a Bearcat alumnus, he was a student advocate – and I know he was proud of our students' success in and out of the classroom.

The impact of Northwest student success was evident again Feb. 22-23 when two members of our forensics team, freshmen Nick Van Ross and Maryville's own Emily Meyers, brought home a national championship from the Public Communication Speech and Debate League National Tournament at Simpson College in Iowa.

While the championship Emily and Nick earned is the third in four years by members of our forensics team, it is the 11th national title won by a Northwest academic or athletic team since the fall of 2009. Northwest's student-managed radio station KZLX, agricultural sciences students and the wrestling club have claimed national titles. The Bearcat football team has won two championships, and the Bearcat cheerleaders have earned three.

Speaking of football, I spent the last week of February traveling with head football coach Adam Dorrel, Director of Athletics Mel Tjeerdsma and Vice President of Advancement Mike Johnson on our Championship Trophy Tour. We made stops in St. Louis, St. Joseph, Omaha and Des Moines before wrapping up the tour in Kansas City at Sporting Park, which will host the 2014 NCAA Division II Football National Championship Game.

These types of events are tremendous opportunities for us to engage with alumni and friends about the exciting things happening at Northwest, both academically and athletically, and raise awareness about future goals and endeavors.

Any of the students and coaches or advisors who played a role in these championships will tell you they did not come easily, and it took a lot of hard work to earn them. They also came with a lot of assistance and support from community members like you. All of us have a role in these successes through our collaborative efforts to support students and each other.

That collaborative approach we value so highly at Northwest recently extended to the Maryville City Council's discussion of a comprehensive alcohol policy ordinance. I was pleased to visit the City Council last month – a visit, I might add, that Council members invited me to make – and suggest tabling the proposed ordinance to gather more input.

University Police also collaborated with the city's public safety leaders and city attorney to draft the comprehensive alcohol plan, and the City Council passed a memorandum of understanding between University Police and Maryville Public Safety to highlight our aligned law enforcement approaches.

This spring, a lengthy collaboration involving Northwest and the city of Maryville comes to fruition as we break ground on the Fourth Street Improvement Project. The refreshed landscape will greatly enhance the Fourth Street corridor that connects Maryville's

downtown with the main entrance to the University campus. The completed project will include decorative street lamps, a reconfiguration of the intersection with Dunn Street to improve vehicular and pedestrian safety, an overhead welcome truss at the intersection of Fourth and North Buchanan streets and an extension of the Missouri Arboretum located on the Northwest campus.

Northwest continues to work with the city on joint programming and promotion of the acclaimed Mozingo Lake Recreation Area and programming at the Mozingo Outdoor Education and Recreation Area, too.

Furthermore, we don't just collaborate as a silo of administrators or faculty leaders at Northwest, or even just with city leaders. The University also collaborates directly with its students on issues that affect them.

Last week, Northwest's Student Senate voted on six new student fees and voted in support of five of those fees, which included a fee designated for a new fitness center on the University campus. All of the fees passed by the Student Senate are important to providing the quality resources and learning environment our students expect, but the fitness center fee is a key step to remodeling the former Foster Aquatic Center into a first-class fitness center. The proposed renovation will greatly enhance Northwest students' access to wellness resources, including an upgraded human performance lab.

With our eyes on helping students be successful, we will continue to work together to build and sustain a campus and community that are safe and vibrant and resemble the pride of our region.

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