

Maryville Daily Forum
Thursday, July 2, 2015
Dr. John Jasinski, Northwest Missouri State University President

Disrupting from a position of strength has been our mantra at Northwest Missouri State University during the last several months. That means we are performing, demonstrating progress and putting plans in place that are aligned with strategic objectives.

With that in mind, Northwest's Board of Regents on June 26 took the historic step of approving a proposal to launch a School of Health Science and Wellness at Northwest this fall – a multidisciplinary structure that will help Northwest strengthen its robust health and wellness programming by consolidating existing programs and adding new and innovative programming in the months ahead that map to regional and national needs.

Our strategic plan – inclusive of numerous discussions with health-related partners and analyses of state and national needs – focuses us on meeting the needs of our students, region and a new emerging national health care system. We have a solid foundation in place with established programs in pre-professional health and wellness, and the School of Health Science and Wellness will further enhance those programs.

This new school will prepare students to manage and provide health and wellness care and services to individuals, enabling them to live more productive, independent and meaningful lives. It will follow a community-health model where frontline healthcare and wellness professionals serve and build individual and community capacity by increasing health knowledge and self-sufficiency.

Graduates of the school will work in a wide variety of health science and wellness-related fields, including health communication, health coaching, nutrition and dietetics, health information management, athletic training, patient advocacy, sport psychology and therapeutic recreation. The school also will provide pre-professional opportunities to serve clinical programs and professional schools for healthcare practitioners including doctors, nurses and medical technologists.

Dr. Matt Symonds, a member of our recreation faculty since 1996, will serve as director of the School of Health Science and Wellness. We are planning a ribbon-cutting to celebrate the launch of the new school in mid-August. Without a doubt, this is an exciting time of academic growth at Northwest, and I extend my sincere thanks to Provost Dr. Timothy Mottet for his bold leadership and guidance as we embark on this path.

During the Board meeting, Dr. Pat Harr and Mr. Francis "Gene" Dorrel were elected chair and vice chair, respectively. Each is scheduled to serve a two-year term.

At the same time, it seems there is no slowdown of activity at Northwest, even during the summer months. Our faculty continue to actively teach courses and lead trips founded on our model of profession-based education. For example, Dr. Sue Myllykangas, associate professor of recreation, led her annual Exploring Recreation Resources course to Colorado, allowing students to explore professional opportunities in the recreation field.

Like faculty, our support staff and administrative staff also are busy, refining processes and making preparations for the coming academic year. That includes our annual Summer Orientation Advisement and Registration sessions, better known as SOAR, which concluded yesterday and provide first-year students with a clearer vision of what to expect when they arrive at Northwest in August to begin their university experience. With SOAR sessions complete, we are projecting our freshman class enrollment to increase between five and seven percent compared to last year at this time.

Summer camps, meanwhile, continue to bring youth and their families to the campus and surrounding communities. About 2,850 individuals have attended Northwest summer camps so far this summer, and we project that total to be around 6,700 when the summer camp season ends. During the spring, we touted our third-party economic impact study and these numbers support that impact. The off-campus expenditures of visitors to the region generated a net impact of \$1 million in new income for the regional economy during fiscal year 2014.

As the summer continues, there is still time to enjoy our free Summer Movie Series. Movies are shown at 7 and 9 p.m. each Tuesday night through July 28 at the Ron Houston Center for the Performing Arts.

The Northwest Alumni Association is sponsoring a Northwest day at Kansas City's Worlds of Fun and Oceans of Fun on Saturday, July 11. For more information, contact the alumni association at alumni@nwmissouri.edu or 660.562.1248.

Before we know it, August will be here and another academic year begins. Fall classes start Aug. 31.

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