

Maryville Daily Forum
Thursday, Aug. 6, 2015
Dr. John Jasinski, Northwest Missouri State University President

The fall trimester officially begins Aug. 31, and it is with unabashed enthusiasm that I look forward to the 2015-2016 academic year. We've had a productive summer at Northwest Missouri State as our progress and growth continue as they relate not only to the campus landscape we see every day, but to our academic and institutional landscape.

That includes changes that may be coming to our mathematics curriculum after a state committee appointed by the Missouri Department of Higher Education (MDHE), and chaired by Northwest's own Dr. Mary Shepherd, submitted recommendations for revising policies and courses related to mathematics curriculum.

MDHE hosted a Missouri Mathematics Summit last September to engage faculty and administrators from the state's public and private institutions in a discussion about developing alternative math pathways for students. A taskforce of 26 mathematics faculty and department chairs was established, and they met seven times between October and May.

From those meetings, the taskforce determined college algebra, while it is designed to prepare students for calculus, may not be the best pathway for all students. Instead, students may benefit from an alternate mathematics course that includes a mix of algebra and other areas such as statistics and geometry.

The series of recommendations the taskforce made to the Coordinating Board for Higher Education (CBHE) and MDHE included establishing articulation agreements for alternative pathway mathematics courses, collaboration with K-12 to align mathematics courses at the high school level with entry-level college courses, and creating college-level mathematics courses that serve as alternates to the college algebra course and are aligned to targeted programs of study.

The taskforce's report has garnered some good press recently, and you may review the report by visiting <http://dhe.mo.gov/>. Mary's leadership at the state level is quite evident, and we are thankful she is helping Northwest stay at the forefront at the campus level.

Looking across the campus landscape, buildings have come down along the Ninth Street area of campus. Northwest Facility Services has consolidated its grounds zone and transportation shops into the former Support Services building, and the area occupied by the former grounds and transportation buildings will become green space.

The Foster Fitness Center is close to opening. The transfer of staff, furniture and equipment, to coincide with the arrival of new fitness equipment, is underway in anticipation of opening the facility on the first day of fall classes. We'll celebrate the building's opening Thursday, Sept. 10, in conjunction with that afternoon's Board of Regents meeting, and that night's home-opening football game at Bearcat Stadium.

Northwest also will launch its School of Health Science and Wellness, which is designed to prepare students for graduate studies in health sciences as well as careers in preventative

health and wellness care and services. A grand opening event is being planned for Tuesday Sept. 1, and more details about it will be provided in coming weeks.

Additionally, changes are happening in Wells Hall. KXCV-KRNW is getting a makeover this summer to provide students in the School of Communications and Mass Media with more opportunities to learn firsthand on state-of-the-art equipment. The radio station's three production studios are being remodeled with modern design and colors, new carpet, new studio furniture, new broadcast equipment and lots of glass with the goal of creating a more open, visible and creative work environment.

We are pleased to have Charles Mayfield joining us as our new director of financial assistance to succeed Del Morley, who retires this month after 21 years, and Rob Thomas as our new vice president of information technology. We also welcome our newest Board of Regents members, Dr. Marilou Joyner and Richard Smith – both of whom have strong connections to Northwest and are valued proponents of education.

Our enrollment is trending somewhere just below or flat from last fall with a projected headcount of more than 6,600, but we expect to see a strong increase in our freshman headcount at more than 1,400. Our counts at this point also show that 71 percent of our fall 2014 freshmen are enrolled.

Student leaders and athletes will be on campus shortly. We will continue seeing parking lots prepped and areas landscaped. Economic activity will increase. And we will be ready to launch the 111th year of preparing Bearcats for meaningful lives.

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