

**Maryville Daily Forum  
Thursday, Oct. 1, 2015**

**Dr. John Jasinski, Northwest Missouri State University President**

The first month of classes is under our belt and what an outstanding and historic beginning we have had to the academic year.

U.S. News and World Report released its annual rankings of top colleges and universities with Northwest ranked as the state's top moderately-selective regional university for the second consecutive year. Also, the consumer website Nerdwallet ranked our School of Business among the top 100 in the nation. And Maryville is one of the 50 Safest College Towns, according to a report by Safewise.

We also celebrated the opening of our new School of Health Science and Wellness. That is a win for our students, prospective students, alumni, employers throughout our region and for the communities of northwest Missouri.

We celebrated our faculty during this year's Dean's Faculty Award winners. Congratulations to this year's recipients – Karen From, Pat Immel, Dr. David Kiene, Dr. Chi Lo Lim, Jason Offut, José Palacios, Dr. Linda Sterling, Brian Swafford and Dr. Tiebing Shi – and to Diana Linville, an instructor in our Department of Mathematics Computer Science and Information Systems, who is our 2016 recipient of the Governor's Award for Excellence in Education.

We honored the legacy of Dr. Robert and Virginia Foster during what was a truly memorable grand-opening ceremony at our new Robert and Virginia Foster Fitness Center. Dr. Foster and Mrs. Foster were very special people, and I was so pleased one of their sons, Doug, his wife, Lisa, and their children, Avery and Grant, could be with us.

Part of the Foster legacy was their ability to build strong partnerships, and Northwest continues embracing the ways we partner with local, state, regional and national organizations. These relationships remain as important as ever to ensure we can continue to do what we do at Northwest Missouri State.

We've enhanced our partnerships in recent years with the likes of the city of Maryville, seven north Kansas City school districts, Metro Community College and numerous business partners through Northwest's role in the Northland Center for Advanced Professional Studies program. We maintain dozens of articulation agreements and continue to vet others. We also are proud to have strong partnerships with so many excellent foundations and corporations and appreciate their desire to support and hire Bearcats.

A shining example of Northwest's robust and deep partnerships was visible a couple weekends ago as the university hosted the third annual Missouri Hope training exercise at the Mazingo Outdoor Education Recreation Area.

The exercise challenges students – 49 participated this year, coming from across the country – to overcome fears and build their skills as emergency responders. The exercise involves our professional first responders and provides them with valuable practice, too. Partner agencies participating in the training included Maryville Public Safety, Nodaway

County Emergency Management, Nodaway County Ambulance District, LifeFlight and LifeNet Air Ambulances and the 1-129th Field Artillery Battalion Missouri Army National Guard.

I had a chance to visit the training grounds during the exercise and visited with Dr. Clemson Turregano, who has vast experience in leadership, training executives throughout the globe and via his military service. Dr. Turregano called Missouri Hope the only true immersion, behavioral-based experience in the nation – if not the world. That classification is representative of the pride we take in our focus on student success and providing students with valuable profession-based experiences.

Yesterday, we celebrated Northwest's long-lasting relationship with North Central Community College in Trenton with a roundtable on our campus. North Central and Northwest faculty and staff discussed the positive outcomes of our partnership, explored new opportunities for programming and services, and reviewed existing articulation agreements.

Coming Tuesday, the Missouri Mathematics and Science Coalition, in partnership with the Carnegie Science Center and Northwest, hosts a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Excellence Workshop. School district leaders, principals, curriculum design professionals and STEM educators from throughout the state will convene at Northwest to discuss ways to enhance STEM education.

We hope you, too, take time to connect with Northwest this fall. Homecoming Week is Oct. 18-25, in addition to numerous lectures, performing arts events, and all of the celebration and economic impact – \$1 million in new income generated through visitor spending last year – they bring to our region.

It's these partnerships and the support of our surrounding communities that help us set our academic vision and continue to seek growth opportunities that separate us from the field.

*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).*