

Maryville Daily Forum
Thursday, Nov. 5, 2015

Dr. John Jasinski, Northwest Missouri State University President

November greetings as we head into the home stretch of our fall trimester at Northwest Missouri State University. The academic year is in full swing. Our enrollment is strong. We continue to overhaul and enhance our classroom environments. We are engaging with our surrounding community.

It starts with our students and our focus on their success. Last month, we completed our annual census count, reporting an enrollment head count of nearly 6,600 students, which is bolstered this fall by a 2.3 percent increase in undergraduate students and an 11 percent increase in first-time freshmen.

So many factors go into the shaping of a student body and student success across recruitment strategies, actual enrollment, retention, graduation and placement. Our first three strategic objectives – Innovative Enrollment Growth, Improving College Completion, and Diversity and Inclusion – are guiding our work on these fronts.

We are pleased with the undergraduate growth – especially in terms of the 11 percent growth in first-time freshmen. Graduate enrollment decreases were planned and expected, and we also forecasted growth in the domestic underrepresented and international populations.

At the same time, we continue to review facility needs and carefully consider improvements that foster student success and help to maintain our beautiful and historic campus.

Recently, our Board of Regents authorized Northwest to move forward on deferred maintenance projects, supported by \$6.9 million appropriated to Northwest last spring with the passing of House Bill 19. The bill provides Northwest with much-needed funding for life safety and energy efficiency upgrades, including complete window replacements in four buildings.

In addition several classroom enhancements occurred recently that are drawing positive reviews. We have added classrooms in the Robert and Virginia Foster Fitness Center. We have a model classroom in Colden Hall that features modern amenities to enhance students' learning. Also, the new outdoor classroom continues to take shape for students connected to the Horace Mann Laboratory School and the Phyllis and Richard Leet Center for Children and Families.

Most recently, on our Oct. 23 Walkout Day, we dedicated our new Michael L. Faust Media Lab in Wells Hall. Michael joined Northwest last spring as our visiting dean of the Melvin D. and Valorie G. Booth College of Business and Professional Studies, but he also is a 1974 alumnus of the University and a passionate supporter of scholarships and academic programs. We are appreciative of his gift to fund the much-needed classroom upgrade for students as well as faculty in the School of Communication and Mass Media.

Speaking of engaged alumni, our fall Career Day Oct. 20 brought about 140 employers – including 80 alumni – to Bearcat Arena to actively seek our students. That number is a

tribute to our employment partners, who know Northwest students are well-prepared and skilled to enter their fields because of the profession-based education we provide. We also welcomed Al Tunis, the interim superintendent and chief financial officer for Kansas City Public Schools, one of our key partners, for our fall Ploghoft Diversity Lecture, and he shared his insight about working in the urban setting.

We are engaged with the community and our partners. In the last month, we've hosted workshops with North Central Missouri College faculty and staff and for area K-12 educators to discuss education focused on the science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields. We also hosted a Health Science and Wellness Summit with community leaders in health care and recreation.

We hosted Sen. Dan Hegeman and Sen. Jill Schupp on campus and shared excellent conversation about Northwest's proud past, our performance and progress and how we are disrupting from a position of strength. Sen. Hegeman and Rep. Allen Andrews addressed our Northwest Foundation Board a few weeks back and, as usual, provided such excellent support for Northwest. Tuesday, we hosted Janie Dunning, the Missouri state director for the United States Department of Agriculture, to discuss our vision for Northwest's School of Agricultural Sciences, and we host "Celebrate Agriculture" Day activities on campus Saturday – in conjunction with the Bearcat football team's nationally televised game, which kicks off at 6 p.m. at Bearcat Stadium.

We are making progress on our strategic plan and upgrading our learning environment. All of you who are part of our community help make the difference, as our relationships and intentional actions focused on strategy – and ultimately, student success – spur progress.

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