

**Maryville Daily Forum
Thursday, Oct. 6, 2016**

Dr. John Jasinski, Northwest Missouri State University President

While our mission is focusing on student success – every student, every day – we include among our values at Northwest Missouri State University scholarship and life-long learning, intercultural competence, collaboration, strategic thinking and excellence. In surveying Northwest’s class of Dean’s Faculty Award recipients this fall we are awed by the ways they exemplify these values through their teaching, research and service to Northwest.

On Monday, we honored 15 faculty members – Dr. Casey Abington, Dr. Jerry Barnett, Dr. Joy Daggs, Allison Hoffmann, Dr. Ming-Chih Hung, Dr. Bayo Joachim, Dr. John Katsion, Dr. Stuart Robinson, Dr. Vicki Seeger, Dr. David Shadinger, Dr. Tiebing Shi, Richard Sonnenmoser, Brian Swafford, Dr. Nathan Wilson and Dr. Sue Wood – as our 2016 Dean’s Faculty Award winners. Dr. Shi, an assistant professor of marketing, will now represent Northwest as our 2017 recipient of the Governor’s Award for Excellence in Education.

Their examples of innovative teaching, collaboration and incorporating new technology and concepts into classrooms directly support our strategic plan – specifically Strategic Objective 1: Academic Programming and Strategic Enrollment and Strategic Objective 2: Learning and College Completion.

This year’s Dean’s Faculty Award recipients are examples of faculty who are focused on designing curriculum and helping students develop skills that not only prepare them for their career fields but enhance their lives. They are enhancing our course offerings – for example, by developing an online, competency-based master’s degree in strategic communication – and they are leading student support efforts – for example, through the development of a living and academic learning community. They are bringing change to their respective fields and Northwest.

This weekend also brings a significant example of our emphasis on partnering with regional agencies and like institutions when our Consortium for Humanitarian Service and Education hosts its fourth annual Missouri Hope Disaster Response Field Training Exercise. Missouri Hope is an intensive three-day domestic disaster relief training exercise at our Mozingo Outdoor Education Recreation Area.

The exercise is designed for students studying majors or minors in emergency disaster management but goes way beyond that purpose by serving as a practice ground for our numerous public safety agencies – from Maryville Public Safety, Nodaway and Buchanan County Emergency Management and the Nodaway County Ambulance District to the 1-129th Field Artillery Battalion Missouri Army National Guard and the 139th Airlift Wing of the Missouri National Guard. The exercise also draws students from colleges and universities throughout the country.

It is but one example of the many valued partnerships Northwest has forged with community, regional, state and national organizations in the name of student success. Missouri Hope is the only exercise of its kind in the United States, and it is indeed a privilege for all who participate.

We have so much more to celebrate as we closed out our first month of the academic year, including Ron Heller, who retired Friday after 44 years at the university. Ron earned his bachelor's degree from Northwest in 1969 and returned in 1972, serving as a painter, on the grounds crew, a warehouse supervisor and finally as a material handler. Ron was a friendly and accountable partner, providing his assistance to so many of our offices through the years. Just think of the changes Ron has seen and experienced since 1972 – and all with a positive, can-do attitude along the way.

Additionally, Northwest was recognized last weekend as a recipient of the Minority Access Inc. "Diversity Institution Award" at the 17th National Role Models Conference in Washington, D.C. At the same conference, University Police Chief Clarence Green was honored as a Minority Access National Role Model. We are thankful for Clarence and to all who are working to enhance our diversity, equity and inclusion practices.

October is a beautiful month and marks so many key moments in time: a change in seasons; midterms and our continued academic focus on the Northwest Core and profession-based learning; Board of Regents and Northwest Foundation Board meetings that help support and advance Northwest; our focus on employee health and wellness; and, of course, our Homecoming weekend Oct. 28-29 with all the grandeur, splendor and variety of events that help celebrate our grand institution.

We are so appreciative of the support we receive from you, our community, and, as I tell our campus community – keep learning, connecting, caring, practicing civility and showing pride as Bearcats do!

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