

Maryville Daily Forum
Thursday, Feb. 2, 2017

Dr. John Jasinski, Northwest Missouri State University President

We are in our fourth week of the spring trimester at Northwest Missouri State University. January was productive and we are rolling into February, intent on keeping our positive momentum.

As you may have heard, in an effort to balance the state budget, Gov. Eric Greitens announced a plan to withhold about \$146 million from the current fiscal year's budget. Last week, the Northwest Leadership Team and I met with leaders across the University as well as our Board of Regents to share measures we are taking to reduce expenses in light of the funding being withheld from higher education institutions. At the time of this writing, we are anticipating the governor's budget and an appropriations decrease.

We have been anticipating a shortfall and – make no mistake – cuts of these types will hurt. It will have impacts across all programs and operations. However, we will continue to address short- and long-term actions related to our strategy, and we will continue to lead proactively and from a positive approach.

We are empowering campus leaders to manage expenses and asking everyone to do their part to ensure we end the fiscal year on as strong financial footing as possible.

As I've messaged previously, at Northwest we focus on student success – every student, every day. Bearcats learn. Bearcats connect. Bearcats care. Bearcats practice civility. Bearcats show pride. We will continue to do these things while being resourceful.

Bearcats learn. We will pilot a Pathway Partnership Program next fall with Metropolitan Community College (MCC) to meet a joint goal of increasing the number of students completing associate and bachelor's degrees in an accelerated format. The majority of students enrolling in our completion programs at Northwest-Kansas City come from MCC, and the Pathway Partnership Program will allow us to develop a more seamless transfer process while removing challenges that add time and costs to degree completion.

Bearcats connect. Last month, we announced our first-ever endowed professorship with the help of a cash gift to establish the Dennis C. Dau Endowed Professorship in Instrumental Music. We are so very proud of our fine and performing arts programs, and we are grateful to Dennis for his service and dedication to enhancing instrumental music. We also are pleased to have received additional funding from the Goppert Foundation of Kansas City to support our School of Agricultural Sciences and a planned Agricultural Learning Center at our R.T. Wright Farm.

Bearcats care. As Northwest offers a series of Black History Month events throughout this month, we are honored to have U.S. Congressman and former Kansas City, Missouri, Mayor Emanuel Cleaver joining us Tuesday, Feb. 21, for the annual Soul Food Dinner. Additionally, the Northwest Alumni Association in partnership with our office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion will welcome the Black Alumni & Friends Chapter as our 22nd alumni chapter Saturday, Feb. 25, in conjunction with that day's Bearcat basketball games. Furthermore, Northwest's Association of Black Employees (ABE), a group formed two years ago to

empower black employees and provide support for our marginalized students, will host its inaugural scholarship banquet March 10.

Bearcats practice civility. We work to ensure Northwest is a university where every member of our community feels safe, respected and welcome. We share a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. We prepare our students to live and work in a diverse and inclusive environment. As a public educational institution, we treat each other in a civil manner where all voices are heard, represented and valued.

Bearcats show pride. We are proud of the continued success of our No. 1-ranked men's basketball team, and the men's and women's teams will host their annual Pink Zone games to support breast cancer awareness and research on Wednesday, Feb. 8. Also, join members of our Bearcat football team Sunday, Feb. 12, for a celebration of our 2016 national championship team that will include an autograph session at 1:30 p.m. and awards ceremony at about 3 p.m.

The beginning of 2017 certainly has started with some critical issues related to higher education, our role in economic development and talent growth. Yet, we are reminded continuously of why our focus on values, core competencies, philosophy on diversity and overall strategy focused on the long-term is more important now than any time in recent memory.

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