

Maryville Daily Forum
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Dr. John Jasinski, Northwest Missouri State University President

We are addressing a mid-year, 7 percent state budget cut at Northwest Missouri State University and working to close the year with a balanced budget while impacting core operations as less as possible. That said, the budget build for Fiscal Year 2018 is a significant lift based on three key factors: (1) a proposed 9 percent appropriations decrease – that would bring us back to funding levels of around 2000, (2) enrollment challenges and (3) mandatory – such as health care and retirement – and other expenses.

Mission critical priorities are serving as our guide as we work through our process and know the balancing act of addressing them will be challenging. Balancing expense reductions and reallocations with revenues and investments will help us selectively let go of the past, optimize for today and build for the future.

In essence, we are working to create a position of relative advantage across a continuously changing landscape that is being redefined daily, it seems. Nonetheless, our current budget modeling includes potential budget reductions around 6.4 percent and an increase to attend Northwest, but we are committed to access and affordability for our students.

We are reviewing, understanding, discussing and debating the budget decisions from a holistic sense of what is being considered and why. As we address the FY18 budget and our budgets into FY19 and beyond, knowing risks always abound, we are being intentional and vigilant with respect to culture and climate.

Still, as we continue selectively building for the future, it is important to take a look at projects in play and at various phases. These are tied to our Campus Master Plan and various strategies, and we are leveraging different sources of revenue – some with restrictions, such as our Education and General budget, Auxiliary budget, Northwest Foundation, state deferred maintenance funding, grants and outside foundations – to help fund various projects.

Our window replacement project at the Administration Building is moving rapidly as crews have taken advantage of the mild weather, and about 75 percent of the new windows are installed. Funding was passed by the General Assembly in 2015 and designated for such within last year's state appropriations.

Work also began last week in preparation for an addition to the Northwest Alumni House, which will become the Michael L. Faust Center for Alumni & Friends. The project is funded by a generous gift from the Suzanne and Walter Scott Foundation of Omaha in honor of Mike's loyalty as an alumnus and longtime Foundation Board member. When finished, the nearly 3,000 square-foot, single-story addition on the south portion of the property will include offices and a conference room designed to match the interior of the Alumni House.

Regarding the Northwest Multipurpose Center, we are continuing down the planning path. This came from 2012 campus-wide comprehensive campaign readiness assessment sessions as a top priority, and we are grateful for the community support we received last fall when

Maryville residents approved a transient guest tax that will assist with the construction and operation of the complex. I'm also happy to report that our Founding 50 group – supporters at the \$50,000 or more level – is at 44 and rising, and this project has accorded significant donor interest that bodes well for this and future projects.

We also are making progress on a move of the School of Agricultural Sciences to the Dean L. Hubbard Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, in time for fall 2017, to create additional opportunities for instruction and research while fostering the agriculture program's continued growth. We are working diligently to uncover various sources to help fund upgrades at the R. T Wright Farm, including a recent grant award from the Missouri Agricultural Foundation, and for the planned Agricultural Learning Center.

As stated previously, we will approach 2017 and beyond as a set of opportunities that we'll embrace with grit and resilience. We'll use these opportunities as part of our strategy to make Northwest a better, stronger university for the future.

As I write this, we have surpassed midterm exams and are rolling toward spring break. We also anticipate Northwest will host its first-ever NCAA D-II basketball regional tournament – an opportunity for our community to shine and benefit!

Northwest is impactful. Keep learning. Connect with our students, each other, alumni and employers. Care for others and continue building personal relationships. Practice and model civility. Show pride in Northwest. Thank you as community members for supporting these Bearcat ideals.

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