

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

Our Board of Regents on June 23 approved Northwest's Fiscal Year 2018 budget. Our path to this point was both a challenge and an opportunity to which we all answered the call and deserve thanks. The Board's measure effectively puts our budget to bed for the next fiscal year.

To recap, I asked the Northwest Leadership Team this past spring to trim approximately \$6 million total in light of a 6.6 percent decrease in state appropriations – on top of a 7 percent mid-year cut, and we've been told we could face another tough budget process next year.

A primary goal of our annual budgeting process is to compile and align our multi-year strategic plan objectives, campus master plan and Forever Green campaign initiatives with a focus on growing revenues and gaining operational efficiencies into an overall financial plan.

Our budgeting process took a holistic approach. We focused on balancing expense reductions and reallocations with revenues and investments while selectively letting go of the past, optimizing for today and building for the future.

We shared information and gathered input from a variety of stakeholders – including our Extended Leadership Team and Leadership Roundtable as well as our Faculty Senate, Staff Council and Student Senate – with the intent to address strategic investments, revenues, reallocations and expense reductions based on five mission critical priorities: deliver high-quality learning experiences, protect access and affordability, value our faculty and staff, preserve long-term viability and build for the future.

Make no mistake, we made difficult decisions. While we protected high-quality learning experiences across our core program offerings, we will close the Missouri Academy of Science, Mathematics and Computing at the conclusion of the upcoming academic year. We are closing Northwest-St. Joseph and moving the facility's remaining academic programming to our Maryville and Kansas City campuses. We are discontinuing the English as a Second Language (ESL) program. At the same time, we are investing in profession-based learning experiences, online programming and a host of other strategic enrollment, retention and completion actions.

Further, we have maintained our focus on access and affordability for students and worked with our Student Senate to implement a slight tuition increase and fees while continuing our significant investment in scholarships. Through our collective efforts to reallocate funding and create efficiencies, Northwest is shouldering about 75 percent of our budget cuts and reallocations, while students are absorbing about 25 percent through tuition and fees.

We pledged to value employees throughout the process. We worked hard to preserve as many jobs as possible, protect total compensation and involve our faculty and staff leaders along the way. We are losing 17 employees through reductions while eliminating an additional 25 vacant positions. The University offered a voluntary retirement incentive program in the spring, which supported a key suggestion from our Faculty Senate and Staff

Council; 25 faculty and staff members participated in the program and allowed Northwest to realize savings of approximately \$770,000.

Building for the future and aligned to our strategic objectives, we are investing in profession-based learning, Northwest Online through our work with Academic Partnerships, competency-based education, our FastTracks co-enrollment program with Metropolitan Community College, our academic advising model and co-curricular learning experiences, and creating a diversity, equity and inclusion council.

We also are investing in organizational viability and building for the future by aligning actions with our campus master plan. As such, construction is underway on the Hughes Family Center as well as the Michael L. Faust Center for Alumni and Friends. We are aligning discussions with agricultural sciences and moving that school to our Dean L. Hubbard Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship in addition to work on a master plan for Residential Life and Auxiliary Services.

All told, we're saving taxpayer dollars and investing in strategic objectives through expense reductions and reallocations. We've tried to find synergies and efficiencies to do our work better. We have already saved some \$66 million over the last four years in cost containment and efficiency measures.

We are living in a time when there are a lot of tough decisions to be made and a great deal of noise, but good things are happening, too. I believe a positive outlook will help us continue to thrive. We know core competencies – being safe, trusted, invested, resourceful – that our peers cannot replicate. We are building on these competencies to move toward profession-based learning and separating 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.