

**Maryville Daily Forum
Thursday, Oct. 5, 2017**

Dr. John Jasinski, Northwest Missouri State University President

I offer warm greetings to you as we conclude our first month of classes and the fall trimester is in full gear. Our campus has been buzzing in recent weeks as we've welcomed families and alumni, as well as prospective students and visitors, for a variety of activities, including our annual Family Weekend – and our Homecoming weekend is approaching in two weeks.

We have much to celebrate and, as I look across the spectrum of our academic programs, there are many great things happening – from continuing program redesigns to significant and voluminous curriculum changes, spurred by input from professional advisory boards and being responsive to changing industry needs in the name of student success.

I want to draw special attention this month to the innovation happening in the School of Education. Recently, the School hosted a special event, coinciding with a screening of the powerful documentary "Most Likely to Succeed," to celebrate its newly redesigned educator preparation programs.

Our Board of Regents in spring 2016 approved a historic curricular redesign of our Bachelor of Science in Education degree programs in elementary, special education, and the middle, secondary and elementary-secondary levels, as well as approving the addition of a bachelor's degree in early childhood. The revisions align our education programs to new state requirements for educator preparation and include innovative, competency-driven modules that ensure Northwest educators have extraordinary preparation.

Like so many of our programs, this redesign also puts a focus on profession-based learning and preparing students to be career-ready, day one. In addition to their coursework, practicum experiences at the Horace Mann Laboratory School and the Phyllis and Richard Leet Center embed students within field experiences from their first weeks on our campus. Additional experiences in rural, urban and suburban public schools comprise more than 500 hours to help students hone their craft of teaching.

Our School of Education's celebration event of its redesigned curriculum sparked an enthusiasm and passion for teacher education and our programs that is so important. We were pleased to have Rep. Allen Andrews in attendance along with representatives from Sen. Claire McCaskill's and Rep. Sam Graves' offices. The superintendents from Maryville, Independence and North Kansas City participated, along with 90 advisory board members, teachers and administrators from area schools.

Our School of Education is focused on meeting the needs of the 21st century learner, and it has been proactive in its evolution to not only meet changing standards, but to ensure teacher candidates receive the kind of education that is required to teach in a 21st century school.

I extend my thanks and congratulations to Dr. Tim Wall, dean of the School of Education, and Dr. Sue Wood, assistant professor of professional education, and the entire faculty and staff within the School for focusing on relevance and innovation.

In the meantime, we continue to receive some tremendous accolades.

Our University Advancement staff received a 2017 Educational Fundraising Award from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education in acknowledgement of "superior fundraising programs" throughout the country. We are proud of this honor, knowing how our team has built an infrastructure, robust processes and a sustainable campaign culture. And this comes on the heels of our announcement that the Northwest Foundation achieved historic fundraising levels in Fiscal Year 2017.

U.S. News and World Report has ranked Northwest as the top moderately selective regional university in Missouri on its list of "2018 Best Colleges." You may recall we were atop this list in 2015 and 2016 as well and we are quite proud of this honor. Rankings of this sort are by no means perfect or even best practice measures, but they do provide indicators of success.

Northwest was recognized by a pair of websites comparing colleges and universities by affordability. CollegeAffordabilityGuide.org, ranks Northwest as the most affordable school in Missouri. The other, AffordableColleges.com, ranks Northwest No. 36 nationally among most affordable public schools for out-of-state students, No. 39 for most affordable online MBA programs and No. 40 for most affordable in-state public universities.

Last month, the city of Maryville was named one of the "Safest College Towns in America" for the third consecutive year. Maryville is No. 22 on the list, up from 28 last year, and it is the only Missouri college town on the list.

All of these are significant accolades to go with our AACSCU Award for Excellence and Innovation in Sustainability and Sustainable Development that we will receive this month.

Thank you for being our partners in advancing our University and community.

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