

Local newspaper column
Thursday, April 18, 2019
Dr. John Jasinski, Northwest Missouri State University President

We have established a culture at Northwest Missouri State that is so dedicated to our mission and invested in student success – and Dr. Michael Rogers, an associate professor in the School of Computer Science and Information Systems, exemplifies that as our 2019 Governor’s Award of Excellence in Education recipient.

Michael, who was recognized April 4 in Jefferson City, joined our team in 2009 and is respected by his faculty peers as well as students for his innovation, teaching and the time he invests to ensure student success. He has implemented bleeding-edge technology in his courses and established a makerspace where students can practice using a variety of technology. He also has collaborated with colleagues and led efforts to provide online and face-to-face training for K-12 educators in the computer science field.

I posed a few questions to Michael to help us gain a better understanding of what drives him in his teaching as well as some of his other interests. Here is what he said.

What motivates you to better your teaching?

“My students. They came to Northwest to get a quality education, and I want to live up to their expectations. Beyond that, I seem to have inherited a strong work ethic from my parents, which drives me when an 8 a.m. class beckons and I did not get my full eight hours the night before.”

How do you stay current?

“Fortunately I am in such a great school that staying current is sometimes just a matter of talking to my colleagues down the hall – or if they are loudly discussing some new tech, merely listening closely without even getting out of my chair. Beyond that, I travel to several conferences a year and usually come away with a slew of ideas that I can’t wait to put into practice. I also subscribe to a variety of mailing lists, so that often all I need to do is read my email to find something worth exploring.”

What do you want your colleagues to know about you?

“Professionally, I am always looking for apps for my students to work on, especially in iOS for iPhone, iPad, etc., and IoT (Internet of Things). So, if you have an idea – or two, or 10 – please send a summary of your ideas my way, and there’s a good chance some students might try and implement them. Personally, I am hugely addicted to the New York Times crossword, so a conversation beginning with ‘Hey, what did you think of today’s puzzle?’ will probably last longer than you’d hope.”

What does the Governor’s Award mean to you?

“I work in a very sociable, collegial school, and any successes that I have had are really due in large part to my colleagues. While out of respect to the award I will not cut it up into 19 parts and give each person a piece, metaphorically I think that would be apt.”

Celebrating success is the norm at Northwest, and it is an especially good time to be a Bearcat. In recent weeks, we've watched Ben McCollum and our men's basketball team finish the season 38-0 to win their second NCAA Division II national championship. Our forensics team traveled to the Pi Kappa Delta Biennial March 20-24 in Hempstead, New York, and brought home 15 awards including an individual national championship by freshman Kevin Nguyen in prose interpretation.

It was a joy and honor to celebrate head tennis coach Mark Rosewell April 5 as we cut a ribbon to open the Mark Rosewell Tennis Center at the Frank Grube Courts. Gina McNeese, an instructor of health and physical education, was recognized during the Hy-Vee Kids Fit event April 12 at the Carl and Cheryl Hughes Fieldhouse for her 30 years of dedicated support and leadership related to the American Heart Association's Kids Heart Challenge program. Next week, we'll celebrate the retirements of Girija Chavala, Dr. Jerry Barnett, Cathy Dennis, Dr. Roger Neustadter and Dr. Tom Zweifel for their combined 127 years of service.

As these final weeks of the academic year pass on the calendar, we have many opportunities to engage with students and celebrate – from the International Student Organization Dinner, to our art students' Empty Cups event and art sale and the Celebration show choir's annual spring show, to Bearcat athletics events and our record-breaking commencement ceremonies May 3-4.

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