

Biography: Dr. Randall J. Webb

Dr. Randall J. Webb stated when he became Northwestern State University's 17th president in July of 1996 that his primary objective would be to help make his Alma Mater the best institution it could be. It is apparent after 10 years in the presidency that Webb is achieving that admirable goal.

Under his leadership, Northwestern became the first public college or university in Louisiana to achieve 100 percent national accreditation of all eligible academic programs.

Enrollment has reached record levels during Webb's tenure as president and exceeded 10,000 for the first time in history in 2002. Webb has also been at the forefront in recent years of moving the university toward higher admission standards, which has resulted in some enrollment declines but in the enrollment of students with greater academic potential and aptitude.

Retention has increased at the university, the average ACT score of students has gone up, and high school student leaders are enrolling in Northwestern in record numbers. There has been a substantial increase in the number of high school valedictorians and salutatorians among first-time freshmen at the university.

External funding for NSU has also increased dramatically under Webb's leadership. In the first capital campaign in its history, the university received more than \$27 million to far exceed its goal of \$18.84 million. That funding included the establishment of numerous endowed chairs and professorships to enhance academic programs at the university. In addition to the private funding, Northwestern has received more grant monies in recent years from state and federal agencies and private foundations than at any time in its 122-year history.

Webb has also expanded the university's outreach by spearheading the development at NSU of the largest electronic education and distance learning network of any university in Louisiana. NSU offers courses and degree programs to students across the nation and world through Internet and compressed video.

Millions of dollars have been obtained during Webb's presidency for new and renovated facilities. A new \$6.9 million Wellness, Recreation and Activity Center opened on the campus in 2005, and Morrison Hall and the Family and Consumer Sciences Building have been completely renovated and restored. Funding has also been obtained to renovate and rebuild the Williamson Hall classroom building and East and West Caspari Halls. The 380-bed University Place residential complex also opened in the past year.

Northwestern academic programs and athletic teams continue to receive positive national recognition. The College of Business Computer Information Systems program, for example, won five consecutive national championships in academic competition in systems analysis, and the NSU men's basketball team defeated Iowa in the NCAA national championship tournament.

A former center on the Northwestern football team, Webb is an avid supporter of the university's athletic programs and has held positions of leadership at the national level in intercollegiate

athletics. He has served as chair of the board of directors of the Southland Conference and has been a member of the prestigious NCAA Executive Council that oversees all major policy decisions by the governing body for major college sports.

A 1965 graduate of Northwestern in mathematics and business education, Webb earned a master of sciences degree in mathematics from NSU in 1966. He received a doctorate in education from the University of Southern Mississippi in 1971 with a concentration in mathematics and research.

Webb was a member of the faculty of Longwood College in Farmville, Va., from 1966 until 1974. He served as Director of Higher Education and Teacher Certification in the Louisiana Department of Education from 1974 through 1976. He moved to Southeastern Louisiana University in 1976 and in 13 years there held positions as director of institutional research, EEO officer, registrar and a member of the mathematics faculty.

He became Dean of Instruction and Graduate Studies and professor of mathematics at Northwestern in 1989. In that position, he was responsible for campus-wide policy development, planning, advancement and review of both graduate and undergraduate programs. While Webb was in that position, graduate enrollment increased by 35 percent, and internal funding for faculty research increased by 200 percent.

As dean, Webb proposed the concept for NSU's successful Freshman Connection Program and served as a member of the writing team for a grant proposal that resulted in a five year, \$1.7 million Title III grant to improve student retention. He also chaired the steering committee for NSU's Self Study for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

He has been active in the community as a member of the board of directors of the Natchitoches Chamber of Commerce and as a member of the Association for the Preservation of Historic Natchitoches, the Natchitoches Historic Foundation, the Natchitoches-Northwestern Symphony Society, Rotary Club and the First Baptist Church.

Webb and his wife Brenda have two daughters, both honor graduates of Northwestern. Tamara and her husband, former NSU All-America baseball pitcher Reggie Gatewood live in Easton, Pa., with their children Tyler and Ava. Lauren is married to former NSU baseball player Nick Simokaitis, and they live in St. Louis, Mo., with their sons Nicholas and Benjamin.