



1997 Award Winner

Northwest Missouri State University

Founded in 1905 as a normal school to train teachers for 19 counties in northwest Missouri, Northwest Missouri State University (Northwest) has evolved into a comprehensive, coeducational, publicly supported, regional university. Northwest's mission is to be a moderately selective, learner-centered institution offering a focused range of undergraduate and graduate programs mainly in the areas of agriculture, business and education. The mission also commits Northwest to provide students with a strong general education core preparing them for a changing world.

Northwest is located in Maryville, a rural community of 11,000 with an unusually robust economic base sustained by small- and mid-sized industries, along with St. Francis Hospital & Health Services – a 1996 recipient of the Missouri Quality Award. The campus is situated on a 210-acre campus designated as a state arboretum and has 32 major buildings and a 720-acre research farm. Serving 5,200 undergraduate and 1,000 graduate students, Northwest grants 98 undergraduate degrees, 26 masters degrees and four educational specialist degrees and participates in a cooperative doctoral program in educational leadership.



“Traditional” students make up the primary base of Northwest’s student body, as 90% are undergraduates, 50% live in on-campus housing, the median age is 19 and 50% are first-generation students. An excellent, committed and caring workforce is comprised of 230 faculty, 256 staff, 123 professional staff and 30 administrators – all of whom work in an empowered, team-based and continuous improvement driven environment.

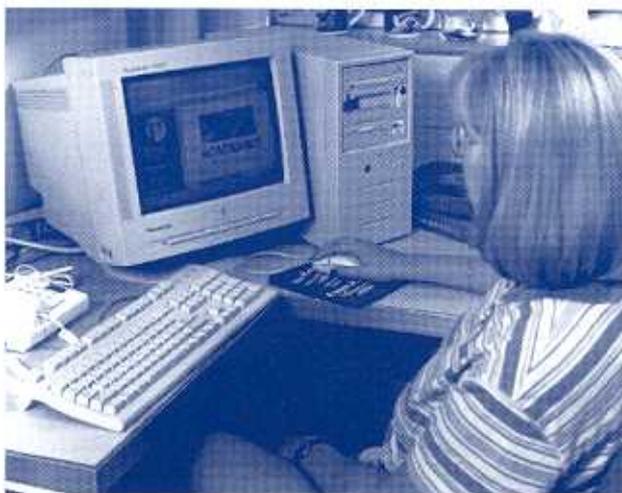
Northwest’s nationally recognized Electronic Campus includes networked PCs in every residence hall room and faculty/administrative office. Applying information technology to leverage student learning is part of the University’s mission and is exemplified by such projects as CD-ROM-based learning tools, internet-based classes and distance learning classes. Northwest seeks to expand and improve access to learning and to promote applied research designed to address regional and state issues. Besides regional high schools serving as major suppliers of students, Northwest has well-established partnerships on campus with ARAMARK (food service), ServiceMaster (custodial, grounds, maintenance and power plant,) Gould Evans Goodman (architects), CPMI (construction managers) and Barnes and Noble (bookstore). Several off-campus partnerships serve to address regional organization and community needs.

Northwest’s focus on continuous quality improvement was initiated by President Dean Hubbard upon his arrival on campus in 1984. Northwest unveiled its student-centered “Culture of Quality” master plan in 1987, designed to revitalize undergraduate education. Identified within the plan were 42 best practices which resulted in specific action plans to improve campus processes.

The Culture of Quality has evolved into a shared set of University community values, including exceeding student and stakeholder expectations and striving for continuous learning and improvement at all levels. Systematic thinking about organizational improvement and excellence was further advanced when Northwest adopted the Baldrige Criteria in 1992 as an institution-wide planning, management and assessment focus.

The designation of University core values, vision and an enhanced statewide mission has provided a context for planning and decision making. Further, the University's critical success factors build from these statements and are utilized as a template by which to collect and analyze performance results from across all institutional units. The critical success factors also function as agenda drivers for the Board of Regents, the President's Cabinet and within the University's cross-functional consensus planning approach. The critical success factors are:

- * A focus on embedded continuous improvement efforts
- * An enriched living/learning environment
- * A safe and orderly, healthy, well-functioning and attractive campus
- * Financial flexibility
- * A symbiotic relationship with the northwest Missouri area.



Northwest's Seven-Step Planning Process is utilized at all levels and focuses on key quality indicators (KQIs). KQIs are few and focused (key), address excellence as defined by the customer (quality) and are measurable (measures and indicators). At the broad level, Northwest has Educational KQIs focusing on the general education program and Service KQIs focusing on overall staff functions. Additionally, all areas within both the academic and support function sides have unit-specific KQIs.

A deep sense of commitment to students and stakeholders provides the foundation by which the University operates and comes alive within the University's mission statement:

Northwest will have a student-centered "culture of quality" dedicated to the continual development of all individuals associated with the University community. Interactive resources – human and technological – will be utilized to provide seamless learning opportunities to diverse populations in a variety of settings.

Fast-approaching its centennial, Northwest is comprised of highly dedicated and skilled faculty, staff and administrators who focus upon continuous improvement efforts. The Missouri Quality Award is an honor of historic institutional proportions, yet the University will keep striving for improved performance excellence to meet and exceed expectations of current and future students and stakeholders.

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