

THE CURRENT SAUCE

VOL. 125 , NO. 9

THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF NORTHWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA



Construction on NSU's campus soon to add new buildings to the map

Photo by Madelyn Murphy
Ninel Kovacs (left) and Dale Wohletz (right) pose in front of Alost Hall as it undergoes construction.

By Victoria Rodrigue
Reporter

After months of crews working near the Kyser Hall parking lot and the Athletic Fieldhouse, construction at Northwestern State University of Louisiana is still underway. The new Rob-

ert Alost Hall and the David and Sherry Morgan Health Performance Center are set to finish construction this year.

Since breaking ground in March 2023, construction on Alost remains active. Construction is anticipated to be completed by the end of the semester, and the building to be fully operational in the fall, according to Dale Wohletz, physical plant director.

As the director of the physical plant, Wohletz oversees the construction of all buildings on campus. "Once they get started, it doesn't take them long to put it all together," Wohletz said. "Once we start doing the exterior, the landscaping and grass, you'll see more improvement."

The building will replace Kyser as NSU's main academic building. Departments including Nursing, Social Work, Mathematics, and English, Language and Cultural Studies will move into Alost for Fall 2025.

Alost will feature event space, student lounge areas, laboratory training centers, classrooms and offices for deans, department heads and other administration. Café Demon will also be relocated from Watson Memorial Library to Alost.

Thomas Reynolds, department head of English, Language and Cultural Studies, and other department faculty went on a tour of Alost in November.

"We got to see where the new depart-

ment offices will be housed on the second floor," Reynolds said. "We are moving most classes to Alost Hall in the fall and people are excited."

After almost a decade of planning and fundraising, the Health Performance Center groundbreaking ceremony was held in December 2023.

Martin Iddon, assistant athletic director for facilities and game operations, said this new addition to student-athletes will provide them with competitive training equipment and more resources to keep them healthy. "There's going to be fully equipped weight rooms with updated equipment, a turf sprinting area, a nutrition center and also some additional

offices for our strength and conditioning staff."

NSU athletics partnered with Natchitoches Regional Medical Center to equip the new athletic training room and add a doctor's office in the building. Iddon explained that this not only allows treatment for student-athletes but also allows the public to be seen by NSU's NRMC employees as well.

Construction for the Health Performance Center is anticipated to be completed in December 2025. After the finalization, further plans to redevelop the interior of the Athletic Fieldhouse will begin with an expected completion by May 2026.



Photo by Madelyn Murphy
Construction workers mix paint as they work in Alost Hall.

01 News	Construction on NSU's campus soon to add new buildings to the map
02 Arts & Living	Six CAPA students honored for their talent at McCutcheon Honors Recital
03 Sports	Men's and women's basketball seasons have high hopes as SLC Championship nears
04-05 Viewpoints	TikTok: The social media app everyone wants including the government Letter from the Editor: New semester, new goals

Six CAPA students honored for their talent at McCutcheon Honors Recital

By Isabel Juarez Rubio
Arts and Living Editor

The murmur of anticipation filled Northwestern State University of Louisiana's Magale Recital Hall as the lights dimmed. Six different talents all gather one night once a year to perform their own unique talent.

Each year new students are selected to perform in the McCutcheon Honors Recital. The recital was renamed in 2002 in honor of Jim McCutcheon, a retired band teacher who repaired instruments at NSU. McCutcheon began to offer a financial price to students who performed in the recital.

After his death, his wife, Jo Lapeyrouse chose to continue this tradition and founded a scholarship in his name

awarding six different students each year.

Participants are chosen by their own applied faculty based on their respective areas as the most outstanding based on their fall juries.

Stephen Clark assistant professor of flute at Northwestern State University and chair of committee for the McCutcheon Honors Recital said, "at the end of every semester all of the music majors don't matter what degree they are getting as long as they're majoring in music they all have to sit and essentially do an end of semester playing exam which we call juries."

This year voice, trumpet, percussion, violin, saxophone and piano were the talents heard.

The recital began with Mario Gomez piece Suite for Piano, Op. 14 by Bela Bartok. Gomez is a previous winner for the McCutcheon Honors Recital in 2022 and now in 2025. He is a Honduran pianist, a collaborative artist based in Natchitoches and a student at NSU. He also forms part of various ensembles on campus and is a piano instructor at the NSU music academy.

The Recital was then followed by Dorcia Gillam. Singing two songs starting with "Les Cygnes" by Armand Renoud and "Steal Me Sweet Thief" by Gian Carlo Menotti. Gillam is a sophomore music education major and is a part of the Chamber Choir.

"I'm glad they noticed some improvement because especially for voice people, it's really hard to tell whether you've improved. So this was kind of like, okay so I am actually doing better than I was," Gillam said.

The sounds of a trumpet were then heard playing Concerto in Eb by Johann Baptist Neruda. Performed by trumpet player Ever Naun Galeas who is a graduate student from Victoriano Lopez Music School in San Pedro Sula, Honduras.

"This performance I am dedicating to God and my family," said Oscar Caballo, a junior music business major. His piece titled Concerto in D Minor Op. 22 by Henry Wieniawski was the fourth piece of the show. Caballo is originally from San Pedro Sula, Honduras and is cur-

rently an international student at NSU.

"It's an honor to be selected to participate in this recital. It is a high caliber performance from all of us," Caballo said.

Ronald Turizo Bueno was the fifth talent to perform with a piece titled Concerto for Saxophone in E flat by Alexander Glazunov. Turizo is currently pursuing a degree in music performance and is part of the NSU Wind Symphony. He hopes to achieve his dream of becoming one of the greatest saxophonists of his generation.

"Encantada" by Nathan Daughtrey and "Squal" by Benjamin Holmes were the closing tunes of the show. Performed by Mason Windham a percussion player and junior music business major at NSU, he forms part of the Percussion Studio, Steel Band, marching band, pep band and Wind Symphony.

Each of the six participants gets a small scholarship for their studies and the opportunity to perform their own unique talent. As well as having their name engraved on a plaque placed at the entrance of Magale Recital Hall.



Photo by Isabel Juarez Rubio.

(L-R) Ever Naun Galeas, Mario Gomez, Oscar Caballo, Ronald Turizo Bueno, Dorcia Gillam and Mason Windham are winners of this year's McCutcheon Honors recital.

Men's and women's basketball seasons have high hopes as SLC Championship nears

By Kallie Bourgeois
Copy Editor

With a little over a month left to go in their seasons before championships, the Northwestern State University of Louisiana men's and women's basketball teams push through the new year expectations.

The Demons hold an overall record of 9-11 and a conference record of 6-4, ranking seventh out of 12 teams in the Southland Conference (SLC) men's basketball standings. The Lady Demons hold an overall record of 9-10 and a conference record of 6-4, ranking sixth out of 12 teams in the SLC women's basketball standings.

Rick Cabrera, men's head basketball coach, believes there is room for improvement on both the offensive and defensive side of the ball.

"We just have to establish more consistency. Defensively, I think we've been solid, but not the way that we have to be to win a championship. But we got time,

you know. I'll be honest, not much time, but we just have to be a little bit more consistent on both ends of the floor," Cabrera said.

Cabrera explained that the team's biggest challenge so far this year is playing two good halves of a game.

"You know, like we get caught up in having a bad half and then playing catch up in the second half. Sometimes it has worked in our favor, sometimes it hasn't," Cabrera said. "But it doesn't have to be two perfect halves, right? Because that's hard to do with any team, any good team. But we have to put two good halves together to give ourselves a chance to win."

He praised the team's chemistry this year on the court. He explained, "we have no issues externally, internally, and that's one good thing about our team having success so far."

JT Warren, senior business major and



Photo by Madelyn Murphy.
Coach Rick Cabrera watches his team play at the basketball game on Jan. 20, 2025.

forward for the men's team, shared how the team has been feeling since the start of the season until now.

"Early on, I think coming into this summer, everybody was excited. It was a learning experience. We had to get to learn from each other," Warren said. "From then until now, everybody's together. I think everybody's bought in. We're excited to win a championship."

Warren explained that there hasn't been a standout game for him this season. He believes that the most memorable was going up against the higher level teams.

"We had a tough, tough schedule. Playing on that level is amazing to me. That's a good memory to me," Warren said.

Anna Nimz, women's head basketball coach, believes the team of 11 new players are growing and learning together on both sides of the ball, offensively and defensively.

"Our group is top in the nation defensively and within our conference. They have great team defense and work hard to execute the defensive philosophy of the program," Nimz said.

For Nimz, every game is a memorable one. She explained that discovering something new about one another each game is leading them to success. This group is fun, quirky and shows tremen-

dous love for one another," Nimz said.

Sharna Ayres, graduate assistant studying health and human performance and shoot guard for the women's team, shared that the team's mindset has changed since the beginning of the season.

"The team has been focused and determined. Our mindset has been to work hard in practice, emphasizing teamwork, and maintaining a positive attitude. Our mindset revolves around continuous improvement, resilience and staying motivated and together through both wins and losses," Ayres said. "The understanding of being the league's underdogs has made our dedication to our team goals and helped build strong chemistry."

Ayres has high hopes that this will be the team's ring season. "I'm speaking that into existence early, because I truly believe it. This has been one of the tightest, hard working groups we have had. And together I know our determination can take us all the way, no matter who is against us," she said.

The Lady Demons will compete against the Texas A&M University-Commerce Lady Lions on Saturday, Feb. 1 at 12 p.m. in Texas. Following their game the Demons will take on the Lions at 2:15 p.m. in Texas.



Photo by Madelyn Murphy.
The NSU Demons men's basketball team is currently ranked seventh in the Southland Conference, and the Lady Demons are ranked sixth in the Southland Conference.



Photo by Madelyn Murphy.
Students return to Prather Coliseum to support the men's and women's basketball teams.

TikTok: The social media app everyone wants including the government

By Nina Ovalle
Viewpoints Editor

As the years pass, the conversation among United States government officials continues to debate if the beloved social media platform known as TikTok will be allowed to continue operation in the U.S.

The trial against TikTok began in 2019 following a federal charge against ByteDance, an internet technology company based in Beijing and TikTok's parent company, for violating U.S. child-privacy laws, according to AP News. ByteDance agreed to pay a \$5.7 million fine as settlement, however this charge was only the beginning of what the U.S. government has named to be a significant data security threat to the nation. Later in 2019, the U.S. government initiated a federal investigation of TikTok's creation which ultimately sparked the demand that ByteDance must sell TikTok in order to continue its operation in the U.S.

Essentially, the U.S. threatened that if ByteDance does not find a new buyer, the app will be banned on all devices under a U.S. IP address.

ByteDance has not agreed, in any pretense, to sell. Instead, the U.S. has consistently offered time extensions for ByteDance to find a buyer. Therefore, the ban has yet to come to full fruition leading many of the app's users to believe that a ban may never come. However, in recent weeks the debate has become more real than ever following a 12-hour ban which took place on the night of Jan. 18 into the morning hours of Jan. 19.

As conversation surrounding the ban takes flight, the question of motive arises with it: Does the U.S. government have a genuine concern for data privacy and the well-being of their nation or do they simply wish to use the world's largest propaganda tool, social media, solely for their gain?

Students at Northwestern State University of Louisiana share their opinions regarding the TikTok ban.

Claire Parent, sophomore vocal performance major, believes the TikTok ban should not be of primary focus.

"It's been blown out of proportion and the government has way more important issues that they need to spend time on besides an app," Parent said.

In fact, she does not think the ban will happen at all.

"I think the ban felt a little set up," Parent said. "I don't think TikTok will ever actually be banned, but I think it'll eventually be bought by someone else and might change a bit."

Personally, I'd like to consider this from the point of view of the parent company.

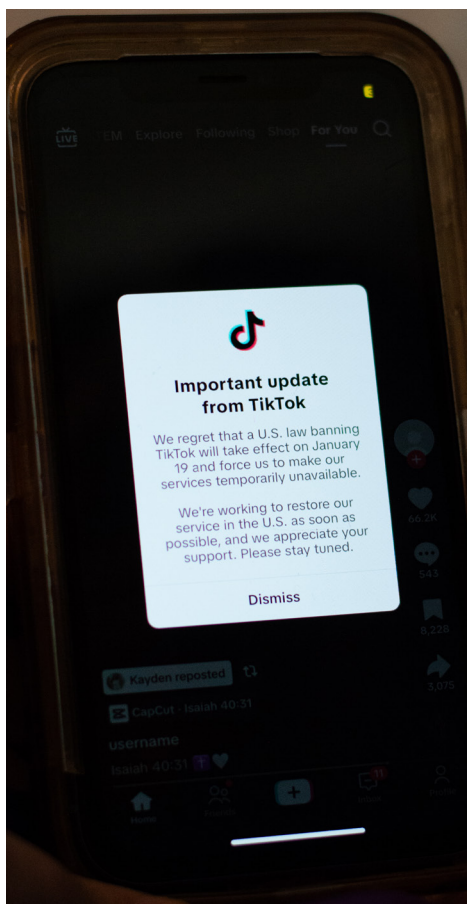


Photo by Madelyn Murphy
On Jan. 19, 2025, people nationwide discovered they no longer had access to TikTok.

ByteDance purchased a dying company, which formerly managed the social media app Musically, in 2017 and built it up to be one of the world's most beloved social media platforms just to be told that to keep the app thriving they must sell it to a "non-chinese buyer." Call me crazy but I think that's discrimination in some way or another?

For argument's sake, let's say the U.S. government isn't being racist, and a Chinese owner does pose a threat to U.S. users, therefore the U.S. government is not being racist but instead is speaking on behalf of a nation of users and their safety. To that I say, who are they to say that we feel our safety is threatened?

Lynsey Plunkett, sophomore English major, prefers to keep TikTok even if it means having her information taken.

"I don't care who has my information. What do you wanna see? My TikTok ed-its?" Plunkett said.

How can they speak on behalf of the nation whose wishes they so blatantly ignore? This in itself seems to be a violation of

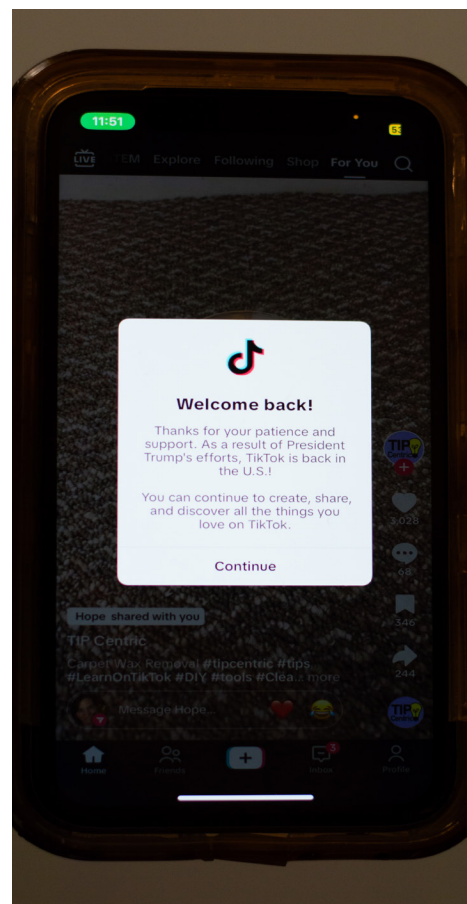


Photo by Madelyn Murphy
Less than 24 hours after banning TikTok in the U.S., users were able to fully access their accounts once again.

the First Amendment's promise of freedom of speech.

Teldrick Cooper, junior communication major, hopes to keep the app for as long as possible.

"As long as I have TikTok, I don't have a problem with what's going on with who, who owns what, as long as my algorithm is good and I do what I need to do, I'm good," Cooper said. "As long as I want it, we should have it."

While keeping TikTok running in the U.S. is the priority to most users, myself included, I feel it is also important to consider the possibility that there may be a threat.

According to Harvard Law forum, a large factor in the country's trial against ByteDance is Article 7 of the national Chinese intelligence law which states that "all organizations and citizens shall support, assist, and cooperate with national intelligence efforts in accordance with law, and shall protect national intelligence work secrets they are aware of."

Perhaps, this law truly does pose a threat

to our safety as users of TikTok. Maybe it is as dangerous as the U.S. government believes it to be. After all, we never truly know what goes on behind the scenes.

It is this factor of mystery which leads the public into further questioning and theorizing. Jeanette Bentancourt, senior veterinary technology major, shares her theory regarding the TikTok ban in relation to President Donald Trump, recently inaugurated 47th president of the U.S.

"I think it was a conspiracy. They did it, they banned it for 12 hours just so Trump can have the gen Z vote," Bentancourt said.

Lyle Harriman, junior instrumental and vocal education major, also believes that Trump's involvement is rather suspicious.

"I don't personally use the app much, so I didn't care about it that much, but it did get me thinking about the other motives behind doing such a thing," Harriman said. "It was most likely a one-time thing to try and gain popularity by claiming to fix a problem that Trump started in the first place and trying to look good doing so."

Conversation surrounding Trump's closely timed inauguration and his role in instating the most recent 90-day extension has led many to believe in an ulterior motive. I suppose this theory would support that the U.S. government is after the power which social media propaganda supplies.

In an attempt to justify the government's case, for instance, many may have seen a viral video where Republican Sen. Tom Cotton of Arkansas questions Shou Zi Chew, Chief Executive Officer of TikTok, on his citizenship during trial. To this questioning, Chew repeatedly insists that he is a citizen of Singapore. This video alone led thousands of commenters to believe that because the Chew is Singaporean, then there must be no correlation of TikTok to China. Many of these comments dissed Cotton for his "lack of intelligence" and offered sympathy to Chew.

While I am in no way defending Cotton's actions, I believe this in itself is propaganda on behalf of TikTok. By shedding light on one small clip of Chew, many viewers' attention was led away from the fact that the issue the U.S. government proposes is with the parent company and not the CEO.

This is the power of propaganda: it works both ways. But at the end of the day, no one knows what goes on behind closed doors. So, does the U.S. government have a genuine concern for data privacy and the well-being of their nation or do they simply wish to use the world's largest propaganda tool solely for their gain?

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The Current Sauce is the official student-run newspaper for Northwestern State University. The content and stories within the paper may not necessarily reflect the views of administration, faculty and staff.

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Join The Current Sauce's weekly newsletter: Dose of Sauce. Each Friday at 1 p.m., the newsletter will feature the stories posted in the past week and highlight photos and things happening around campus. Use the link below to sign up or use the link on our Instagram bio!

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Letter from the Editor: New semester, new goals

By Lia Portillo
Editor-in-Chief

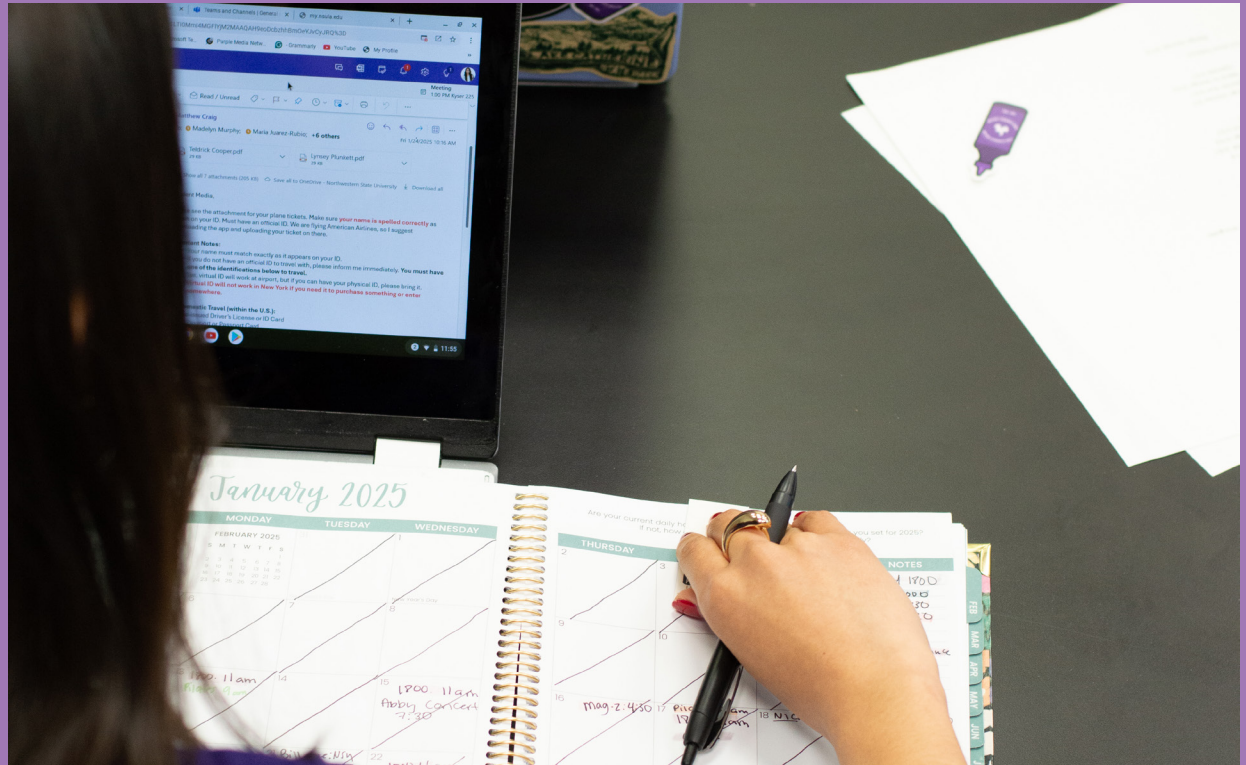


Photo by Madelyn Murphy. Editors plan out dates for editions to be published in the semester.

Two weeks into the start of classes and a snow closure later, The Current Sauce welcomes you to the spring semester. We are so excited to be back and deliver the latest News, Arts and Living, Sports and Viewpoints articles to you all.

For those of you who do not know, The Current Sauce is NSU's student newspaper and we publish it on our website (purplemedianetwork.com) daily. We also print monthly special editions to distribute around campus and the Natchitoches community.

We will start our first print issue of the semester in February with the theme of Black History Month. In March, we will be doing an edition on Women's History Month. In April, we will switch things up by introducing a new theme which will be graduation. With the edition, we will focus on stories recognizing graduates and recent alumni as well as providing

a bridge of stories for those approaching the end goal that we all aim toward: graduation. To conclude the semester and welcome the summer, we will be doing our Freshman Connection edition. Where we hope to give incoming freshmen an inside look before they officially become NSU Demons.

Our goal this semester is to hear from you. If there is a story you'd like us to cover or a tip you'd like to submit to us we want to invite you to do so. We have added a "Submit Story Ideas" form within The Current Sauce page that leads to a google form where you can tell us exactly what you think we should cover. If you'd rather send an email feel free to send it to thecurrentsauce@gmail.com, my school email (lportillocanta317865@nsula.edu) or DM us on social media if that is better for you!

There is no newspaper without readers, and we want our readers to know that

we are committed to telling stories that interest you. As I enter my last semester as Editor-in-Chief of this wonderful organization that I love so much, I want to make every last effort, every last story mean something to you.

My goal before I pass on this publication is to put the readers at the center of our stories. As students what would you like to be clarified, who would you like to see featured?

Now I can't promise to write every story idea submitted, after all there are only a few of us, but we will make all the effort when possible to research and write ideas submitted. If you'd like a printed issue stop by Kyser 225 and grab a copy or two or four, we'd love for you to read our work. Thank you for reading our articles, and I hope you come back to read more.



Photo by Madelyn Murphy. The Current Sauce staff meets for the beginning of the semester.



Photo by Madelyn Murphy. Current Sauce editors plan out the week.