



**NORTHWEST**  
MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY  

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MARYVILLE | KANSAS CITY | ONLINE

## Application for Statewide Mission

**Institution Name:**

Northwest Missouri State University

**Requested Area(s) for Statewide Mission Designation:**

Educator Preparation, Agriculture, Emergency and Disaster Management, Profession-Based Learning

**Does any other public four-year institution have a statewide mission in the requested area(s)?**

No

**Does the institution understand that if a statewide mission is approved in the requested area(s), it will not prohibit other public four-year institutions from offering the same or similar programs?**

Yes

**Submission Date:**

April 16, 2020

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### **Section I. Institutional Background**

Northwest Missouri State University (Northwest) is a state-assisted, four-year regional public university that offers over 160 undergraduate and graduate degrees in a range of subjects and emphasis areas. The University, established in 1905 and headquartered in Maryville, Missouri, has been fully accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools since 1921. A nine-member Board of Regents serves as the governing body of the University, with all members nominated by the Missouri Governor and approved by the Missouri Senate. In fall 2019, 7,104 students were enrolled at Northwest. Of these students, 80% are categorized as undergraduate, 66% are Missouri residents, and 12% are domestic students of color. Our students represent 40 states and 40 countries. Northwest is classified by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education as “Master’s Colleges & Universities: Larger Programs,” has been designated as a Non-Land Grant College of Agriculture by the United States Department of Agriculture and a Military Friendly School by Victory Media. *Northwest Missouri State University focuses on student success – every student, every day.*

## **The Academic Experience**

Academic programs at Northwest Missouri State University are organized into six professional schools and one college, the College of Arts and Sciences, as detailed below.

### **College of Arts and Sciences**

The College of Arts and Sciences is comprised of five departments:

- The *Department of Fine and Performing Arts* provides an exciting combination of performance, classroom and internship opportunities for emerging professionals in the areas of art, music and theatre. All experiences are directed and/or mentored by highly respected and experienced faculty and guest artists. The department offers many majors in the areas of art, music, and theatre.
- The *Department of Humanities and Social Sciences* is home to culture, geography, history, law and government studies. The department provides a broad, liberal education that encourages students to be adaptable and flexible in their professional pursuits while training students to be responsible citizens. Discipline areas are housed in both the Valk Center with modern classrooms and convenient student gathering spaces, along with the state-of-the-art Garrett-Strong Science Building that provides students with some of the latest hardware and software technology.
- Programs in the *Department of Language, Literature and Writing* prepare students for meaningful lives as professionals in a global economy that demands innovative thinking, clear and effective writing, and cultural literacy. Our students and faculty form a close community of scholars who support each other's work, and who grow together in a rich and rigorous liberal arts curriculum. Students emerge from Language, Literature and Writing programs able to express themselves creatively and professionally, and engage with ideas critically and practically.
- Students in the *Department of Mathematics and Statistics* recognize, represent, and use patterns to creatively address problems in a variety of settings. Students see and explore the beauty and utility of mathematics with a diverse faculty of highly qualified and nationally recognized mathematicians. Upon graduation, students compete successfully for jobs in business, industry and government or continue in graduate studies.
- Students in the *Department of Natural Sciences* get experience in a lab during their first year. Classes and laboratories are housed in the Garrett-Strong Science Building and the award-winning, state-of-the-art Dean L. Hubbard Center for Innovation. The Hubbard Center features labs with more than \$3 million in state-of-the-art instruments and technology that undergraduate students may access to gain hands-on experience.

### **School of Agricultural Sciences**

As the need for feeding an ever-growing population expands, the School of Agricultural Sciences is poised to serve student interests and meet the needs of the agriculture, food and fiber industry today and in the future. Housed in the Dean L. Hubbard Center for Innovation, the School is close to demonstration plots on the campus' northern edge and its 448-acre R.T. Wright Farm, which is located two miles north of campus along U.S. Highway 71, and is home to beef, swine, dairy, and sheep enterprises as well as row and forage crops.

### **Melvin D. and Valorie G. Booth School of Business**

The mission of the Melvin D. and Valorie G. Booth School of Business is to advance knowledge through a balance of teaching, scholarly activity, and service. The School's faculty provide relevant and quality educational experiences for students that are intended to assist in lifelong learning. The School places great emphasis on developing each student's ability to think critically, to advance intellectually, and to communicate effectively. Students majoring in one of the academic options offered by the School have numerous opportunities and avenues to prepare for ethical participation in the global arena of business and/or organizational life.

### **School of Communication and Mass Media**

In the School of Communication and Mass Media, students get the opportunity to have hands-on, real-world experiences during their first year. They can be involved with the two radio stations, a television station, converged print and online newspaper, yearbook, online arts and entertainment magazine, and video and audio recording studios. The School is also comprised of faculty who have spent years in the professional world and are now dedicated to helping students prepare for rewarding communication careers.

### **School of Computer Science and Information Systems**

The School of Computer Science and Information Systems provides leadership and education impacting the direction of information technology (IT) for homes, businesses, educational institutions, industries, and individuals in the United States and throughout the world. Our highly qualified and collaborative faculty deliver curriculum that includes an appropriate mix of theory, practical applications and relevant educational experiences valued by industry allowing our students to reach their potential as future successful information technology leaders in a diverse and global society.

Northwest's School of Computer Science and Information Systems is committed to the personal and social development of its students by providing opportunities for students to develop their professional skills and interact with others in a successful, ethical way. We are focused on providing students who will meet the needs of the local, regional, and national IT workforce.

### **School of Education**

The mission of the School of Education is to prepare caring teachers who possess the highest level of professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to help all students learn in a diverse and ever-changing world. This principle serves as the guiding framework for the developmental learning opportunities afforded to teachers in training in the various programs offered through the School. Programs are fully nationally accredited (since 1954) through NCATE and plan to continue to seek national accreditation through the Council of Educator Preparation (CAEP) and the state of Missouri through its Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the office of Educator Quality for the state of Missouri. In 2016, Northwest was selected by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) for a case study and on-campus visit to chronicle the best uses of data and assessment systems to continually improve teacher education.

### **School of Health Science and Wellness**

As a multidisciplinary School, its mission is to facilitate the development of key knowledge, skills, and attitudes for students seeking careers in health and wellness-related fields. Professional areas of study available to students include health and wellness, nursing, recreation, physical education, foods and nutrition, psychology, human services, school counseling, and a variety of medicine-related fields. Our structure provides the opportunity to work collaboratively across campus, in the community and throughout the region to meet a growing need for health science and wellness professionals.

### **Northwest-Kansas City**

In addition to the six professional schools and the College of Arts and Sciences, Northwest operates one regional satellite campus in Gladstone, Missouri. Northwest-Kansas City serves students in the Kansas City metropolitan area by offering seven-week block undergraduate and graduate programs, and a doctorate in educational leadership program, as well as client-based training and professional development.

### **Northwest Online**

Northwest Online provides online coursework for select undergraduate and graduate programs, including business, education, geographic information systems, health science and wellness, and a RN-to-BSN nursing degree program.

### **The Student Experience**

The average class size at Northwest Missouri State University is 27 students, with 78% of classes enrolling 30 or fewer. Northwest student to faculty ratio is 20-to-1, and 100% of classes are taught by professional educators, not graduate students. Every Northwest student receives a laptop computer that is included in their tuition, and all undergraduate textbooks are available for a nominal rental fee of \$6 per credit hour.

More than 83% of the student body reports being involved in at least one of Northwest's 150 student organizations. Fourteen percent of students participate in Greek Life, and there are over 1,200 student employment opportunities on campus each year.

Northwest participates in NCAA Division II athletic programs. As a member of the Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association, Northwest fields teams in 14 different sports. Northwest's football and men's basketball programs in particular are winners of eight national championships since 1998.

### **Infrastructure and Physical Plant**

Northwest Missouri State University's primary campus is in Maryville, Missouri, located in far northwestern Missouri. The Maryville campus was founded in 1905 as the Fifth District Normal School, and was later known as Northwest Missouri State Teachers College, Northwest Missouri State College, and finally Northwest Missouri State University. The campus is located on 370 acres in the northwest quadrant of Maryville. The main campus, known for its beauty and variety of flora, houses 1,700 trees in 160 unique species, and in 1993 was designated as the official Missouri State Arboretum.

Northwest also owns and operates the R.T. Wright Farm, a 448-acre agricultural and educational complex located about two miles north of the main campus. This unique resource allows students to learn hands-

on skills within a variety of agriculture disciplines, including row crop production, cow-calf enterprise, and a farrow-to-finish swine operation.

Northwest maintains a number of educational and support buildings on its main campus, including the Administration Building, which was completed in 1910 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Other unique and noteworthy facilities include the B.D. Owens Library, J.W. Jones Student Union, Olive DeLuca Fine Arts Building, Ron Houston Center for the Performing Arts, and the Carl and Cheryl Hughes Fieldhouse, a 137,250 square-foot recreation and multipurpose facility finished in 2017 as the single largest private-public partnership in Northwest's history.

## Section II. Statutory Criteria

RSMo §173.030(9) states that institutions seeking a statewide mission "shall provide to the coordinating board that they have the capacity to discharge successfully such a mission," demonstrated by evidence to support the following:

1. The institution enrolls a representative cross-section of Missouri students.
2. The institution offers one or more programs of unusual strength, which respond to a specific statewide need.
3. The institution has a clearly articulated admission standard.
4. The institution is characterized by a focused academic environment, which identifies specific but limited areas of academic emphasis at the undergraduate or graduate level with a demonstrable capacity to provide significant public service.
5. The institution has adopted and maintains a program of continuous quality improvement, or the equivalent of such a program, and reports annual appropriate and verifiable measures of institutional accountability related to such programs.

In response, Northwest Missouri State University submits the following evidence demonstrating satisfaction with all criteria.

**1. The institution enrolls a representative cross-section of Missouri students.**

Sixty-six percent of Northwest's student population are Missouri residents, representing 97 of Missouri's 114 counties, or 85.1% (fall 2019 student census data). In addition, 1,892 of Northwest's 4,519 students (41.9%) in fall 2019 have a permanent address outside of the University's 19-county catchment area. These data demonstrate Northwest Missouri State University meets the first statutory criterion (enrolls a representative cross-section of Missouri students).

**2. The institution offers one or more programs of unusual strength, which respond to a specific statewide need.**

Educator Preparation

Northwest's educator preparation programs are of unusual strength because of the strong professional performance of its graduates, satisfaction by employers of recent graduates, and the

educator job placement rate. For the most recent assessment year (FY18), over 97% of pre-service teachers (221) scored in the top two tiers of the Missouri Educator Evaluation System, as assessed by cooperating teachers and supervisors. From 2013-2017, 311 principals of education school graduates were surveyed, and 99.39% responded that Northwest's program completers were "well prepared" or "very well prepared." Similarly, in a 2017-2018 survey of principals of 213 Northwest teacher preparation program completers, more than 90% "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that the teacher was prepared in his or her content area, was prepared to foster positive student relationships, and was prepared to promote respect for diverse cultures, genders, and physical and intellectual abilities. From the 2016-2017 school year, 100% of School of Education undergraduates and graduates were hired in positions for which they were prepared.

In December 2019, DESE submitted an annual report to the Missouri General Assembly detailing the status of the teacher workforce in the state. The report noted that, from SY18 to SY19, the total number of classroom teachers in the state decreased by 0.5%. Further, 49.9% of the teachers in the state have 10 or fewer years of experience, leading to concerns of under-qualification. A second report from DESE in the same time period, the Teacher Shortage Report for Missouri, noted pronounced shortages in Mild/Moderate Cross Categorical K-12, Elementary Education 1-6, and Early Childhood Special Education (B-3) and regular education (B-3). High school biology and middle school general science, mathematics, language arts, and earth science are all within the top 10 shortage areas for SY20 for the state. Furthermore, Northwest received the 2018 Christa McAuliffe Excellence in Teacher Education Award, making Northwest just the third institution in the nation to earn the award two times since its inception in 2002.

### Agriculture

Northwest's School of Agricultural Sciences is one of the largest in the Midwest, serving an annual average of 580 students in seven undergraduate and three graduate programs. The School is one of the top three degree-conveying programs at the University, and features unique resources and partnerships not regularly found at non-land grant universities. The key agricultural resource at Northwest is the R.T. Wright Farm, a fully-functioning 448-acre facility with a 100-plus cow-calf beef enterprise, farrow-to-finish swine operation, 70-plus cow herd dairy, and row crop production (corn, soybeans, small grains, hay, pasture, and cover crops), managed by professional agriculture specialists and agriculture faculty members. The R.T. Wright Farm provides a critical resource for hands-on, experiential learning for agricultural science students.

The 2018 Industry Concentrations report by the Missouri Department of Economic Development revealed several agriculture-related industries have a positive Location Quotient (LQ), suggesting that share of the state's economy is higher than its share of the national economy. These specific state needs are fulfilled by graduates of the Northwest School of Agricultural Sciences. In particular:

- Animal Food Manufacturing: LQ 4.23; Job Growth 5.4% (2017-2018)
- Dairy Product Manufacturing: LQ 1.99; Job Growth 0.8%
- Animal Slaughtering & Processing: LQ 1.86; Job Growth 1.5%

### Emergency and Disaster Management

Northwest's Emergency and Disaster Management (EDM) program is one of only two in the state, and it is the only program in the Midwest region to focus on both academic learning in the classroom and skills-based learning in the field. The program offers curriculum to roughly 400 students per year, including 65 students majoring and 10 minoring in EDM. Courses include topics such as disaster psychology, emergency planning, international humanitarian relief, and professional development in the field of EDM. The program emphasizes the importance of field experience, on-the-job training, and preparing for careers. The EDM program hosts the largest first responder exercise in Midwest. This exercise, known as Missouri Hope, brings together 25 agencies and 10 higher education institutions throughout the United States for a three-day event each fall. This opportunity allows students to get hands-on experience in careers such as emergency medical operations, urban search and rescue, military operations, dive team operations, water treatment and sanitation, and emergency operations center management.

The Talent for Tomorrow Labor Market Needs report produced by the Missouri Department of Higher Education, Missouri Department of Economic Development and the Hawthorn Foundation, notes aerospace and defense as a top opportunity cluster in Missouri, with a projected job growth rate of 8.6% between 2016 and 2026. This industry cluster most closely aligns with the Northwest EDM program, and many program completers go on to work within this field. Further, the U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics reports significant projected growth in EDM-related occupations 2016-2026, including information security analysts (28% growth), EMT/paramedic (+15%) and emergency management directors (+8%).

### Profession-Based Learning

In 2014, Northwest Missouri State University began the process to implement, evaluate, and document Profession-Based Learning. This initiative features a set of immersive, inquiry, and project-based learning experiences developed through disciplinary, industry, and community collaborations. Northwest began the process by building and evaluating students' career ready skills, the skills and outcomes Northwest values, and tying those to college completion goals. After integrating general education curriculum and co-curricular activities through highly effective and engaging learning experiences and profession-based skills development, the faculty participated in a self-study that resulted in a call to action to implement a profession-based curriculum across all programs. From this work, the institutional learning framework was created to connect curricular and co-curricular experiences. University learning outcomes, based on National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) standards and faculty consensus, were also established.

Programs at Northwest provide students opportunities to continue to develop their previously acquired skills while using situation-specific approaches to solving professional-level issues and overcoming obstacles they are likely to encounter. Examples of this approach can be seen throughout the University, with emphases placed on opportunities for students to design projects, seminars that work on the critical skills that students need to develop, and capstone courses in which students transition from "after-school" to career contexts.

**3. The institution has a clearly articulated admission standard.**

Northwest Missouri State University's clearly articulated admission standard is "moderately selective," as defined by RSMo §173.0052(6) and approved by CBHE in 1992.

**4. The institution is characterized by a focused academic environment, which identifies specific but limited areas of academic emphasis at the undergraduate or graduate level with a demonstrable capacity to provide significant public service.**

*Educator Preparation*

Northwest's School of Education programs are fully nationally accredited (since 1954) through the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). Missouri Educator Evaluation System data (MEES Standard #1) show that Northwest candidates for teaching score higher than the state average in "Content Knowledge" (2.85 versus 2.64 statewide), ranking third out of 37 Missouri providers. In 2016, Northwest was selected by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) for a case study and on-campus visit to chronicle the best uses of data and assessment systems to continually improve teacher education. The School of Education supports Horace Mann Laboratory School, an on-campus kindergarten through sixth grade laboratory school, and the Phyllis and Richard Leet Center for Children and Families, a laboratory pre-school with distinctly child-focused curriculum featuring mixed-age exploratory learning. In 2018, Northwest received the Christa McAuliffe Excellence in Teacher Education Award, in recognition of a faculty-led redesign of the curriculum and clinical field experiences offered by the School of Education.

*Agriculture*

The Talent for Tomorrow Labor Market Needs report notes industries in the state that would directly align to the workforce skills enhanced by the School of Agricultural Sciences. Specifically, agribusiness is noted as a top "opportunity cluster" in Missouri, with a projected job growth rate of 8.2% between 2016 and 2026. Despite 57,900 annual U.S. job openings in agriculture, only 35,400 students graduate each year to fill those opportunities. Northwest's heartland location, and 448-acre farm provides the prime opportunity to discuss and address agricultural production needs and the nationwide gap of qualified employees in agricultural fields. Located at the front door of the R.T. Wright Farm, is the soon-to-be Agricultural Learning Center. The 29,000 square-foot multiuse space will provide key classroom and laboratory space, in addition to a large exposition area that will allow for producers, consumers, and students to come together to discuss, learn, and strategize solutions for agriculture and the food system. Additionally, in 2017, Northwest's Dean L. Hubbard Center for Innovation underwent a transformation to accommodate the School of Agricultural Sciences' move to that building to enhance opportunities for instruction, research and Profession-Based Learning while fostering the agriculture program's continued growth.

*Emergency and Disaster Management*

By all measures the number of people impacted each year by disasters is increasing at a substantial rate (UNISDR, 2018). Also on the rise are the financial costs, death counts, and number of countries impacted by disasters (UNISDR 2018). This increase in hazard events can only be

properly addressed by providing well-trained and educated practitioners, working to reduce vulnerability and increase resiliency. The focus of the Northwest Emergency and Disaster Management program is in emergency management (preparation, mitigation, response and recovery), humanitarian relief in conjunction with homeland security and defense. Outside of the disaster focus, students develop skills in day-to-day organizational operations. Starting with Missouri Hope 2020, Northwest will partner with the Missouri Air National Guard Homeland Response Force (HRF), which will assist with the medical training components of the exercise. This partnership leverages the HRF's experience with disaster and tactical medicine to offer Northwest students a high-caliber experience rarely available outside of the military. Missouri Hope, which began in 2013 and is an annual intensive multi-day training exercise, takes place at the [Mozingo Outdoor Education Recreation Area](#) (MOERA), a 320-acre parcel of land located east of Maryville, which is operated by Northwest's School of Health Science and Wellness and provides a variety of outdoor education and recreation opportunities.

Fall 2020 will also see the opening of a fully functioning Emergency Operation Center on the Northwest campus, thanks to a recent grant funding approval.

#### Profession-Based Learning

The Talent for Tomorrow Labor Market Needs report notes a desire to align education requirements with actual job duties. Northwest shares this desire and, through the use of advisory boards across academic disciplines and an effort to establish one to two Profession-Based Learning elements in all coursework, as well as throughout co-curricular experiences, is ensuring academic coursework is "real life, real time" through partnerships with hundreds of businesses in northwest Missouri. Specific qualitative issues addressed by Profession-Based Learning include:

- *Availability of qualified employees:* Through increased collaboration with local employers, students have a greater understanding of the day-to-day workings of regional employers. Marketing of such endeavors will build additional partnerships, potential part-time job and internship opportunities, and students' career readiness. With the non-working age population increasing on an average of 1% a year from 2014 to 2017, focusing on growing the quality of the available workers in our region is a priority.
- *Increased soft skill attainment:* Lack of soft skills is a frequently mentioned comment among government and industry leaders. Northwest measures students on the following skills – communication, valuing; teamwork; leadership; managing information; critical thinking; and diversity, equity and inclusion. Measurement occurs through coursework and co-curricular experiences and documented in a method easily accessible to students and employers.

5. **The institution has adopted and maintains a program of continuous quality improvement, or the equivalent of such a program, and reports annual appropriate and verifiable measures of institutional accountability related to such programs.**

- The Northwest Performance System describes the institution's commitment to measuring, analyzing, reviewing, and improving performance. The measure and indicators are used to track specific areas that lead to student success, institutional mission, or targeted areas of

improvement. External validation is provided across the students' undergraduate degree attainment. (page 6) Please see:

<https://www.nwmissouri.edu/accreditation/hlc/pdf/NorthwestPerformanceSystem.pdf>.

- Seven Institutional learning outcomes are incorporated into individual courses, at the program level, and at the institution level. Also, some outcomes are used for co-curricular. Please see: <https://www.nwmissouri.edu/aboutus/PDF/InstitutionalLearningOutcomes.pdf>.
- All units use a continuous quality improvement tool, called the 4-UP (described in the NPS above) that is used to measure, track, and communicate performance. Updated quarterly, reported at least twice a year at the senior leadership level.
- Specific reporting:
  - Graduation rates: <https://www.nwmissouri.edu/services/ir/consumer/graduation.htm>.
  - Retention rates: <https://www.nwmissouri.edu/services/ir/consumer/retention.htm>.
  - Placement, including all undergraduate and graduate majors by year: <https://www.nwmissouri.edu/career/Post-Grad-Data.htm>.
  - Faculty credentials: <https://www.nwmissouri.edu/provost/pdf/FacultyCredentials.pdf>.

### Section III. Mission Implementation

Northwest Missouri State University will use the following strategic objectives and processes to document and measure the successful implementation of the proposed statewide mission.

- 1) Northwest will work to increase undergraduate and graduate enrollment in three statewide mission areas and the general University population. To wit, Northwest's FY20 overall enrollment goal is 7,500; an 18.3% increase over the FY17 enrollment. Further, Northwest will maintain undergraduate persistence rate (currently 93%), undergraduate placement rate (97%) and graduate placement rate (98%), which currently exceed the statewide average for each measure.
- 2) Northwest will continue to improve its educator preparation programs to remain the state leader in the field. As a part of the Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation (AAQEP) site visit during spring 2020, Northwest's Professional Education Unit (PEU) prepared an extensive self-study, culminating in action items for future excellence. Selected action items comprise the implementation of Northwest's statewide mission in educator preparation:
  - a. *Qualitative Student-Teacher Survey* - Northwest will begin a program asking student teachers to reflect during student teaching regarding what elements from their programs they found useful and which they think can be improved for future candidates.
  - b. *Revise PEU Standards and Program Outcomes* - Northwest desires to revisit, refine, and make better use of program learning outcomes for continuous quality improvement of Northwest's School of Education curriculum and programs.
  - c. *Emphasize Rich Clinical Practice in Diverse Settings* - The Professional Education Unit recognizes a strength of our program relates to consistently rich and excellent clinical experiences in diverse settings with diverse students. Northwest seeks to build upon the excellent, mutually-beneficial partnerships represented with the fruitful Grow-your-Own program with North Kansas City School District, the Independence Fellows Program for an accelerated master's degree in curriculum and instruction, and clinical partnerships in highly diverse settings with school partners.

- 3) The Northwest School of Agricultural Science notes three key issues that influence the future implementation of this statewide mission area: technology and emerging trends, interdisciplinary curriculum and active learning, and partnerships and profession-based learning. Those issues have informed three overarching goals for agriculture at Northwest:
  - a. Addressing issues of enrollment in the School of Agricultural Sciences and program growth, and the space implications of that growth;
  - b. Addressing infrastructure needs to support identified space needs, including academic facilities, farm production, and ancillary areas;
  - c. Provide facilities that facilitate innovation and partnerships, such as the new Agricultural Learning Center, that address best practices for the Northwest campus and the School of Agricultural Sciences.
  
- 4) Northwest will continue to integrate Profession-Based Learning across all programs at Northwest, with an emphasis on opportunities for students to design projects, seminars that work on critical skills, and capstone courses in which students transition from post-school to career contexts. These opportunities make up the implementation plan for Profession-Based Learning at Northwest:
  - a. *Profession-Based Curriculum*. A key component of the Profession-Based Learning curriculum is that all students will experience a profession-based, small-group problem-solving experience in their major, based on examples and needs from area employers
  - b. *Creativity, Innovation, and Design Thinking Curriculum*. Design Thinking is a methodology drawing upon logic, imagination, intuition, and systemic reasoning to solve complex problems. Coursework, as part of this curriculum, will be developed to teach students creativity, creative processes, and their applications to problem solving, using philosophies, strategies, and case studies from across disciplines.
  - c. *Capstone Experience*. Programs at Northwest are intended to lead toward a capstone experience that allows students to apply and integrate knowledge from their major into a summative project, such as an electronic and/or physical portfolio, many of which are then reviewed by unit advisory board members. Capstone experiences allow students to take the knowledge and skills they have developed during their course of study and apply them in a professional setting.

#### **Section IV. Conclusion**

Established in 1905, Northwest Missouri State University is focused on student success – every student, every day. Our faculty, staff, leadership, and Board of Regents are steadfast in adhering to that mission and strive every day to *bring it* – academically, organizationally, fiscally, and culturally. This attitude of excellence has allowed Northwest to develop well beyond its humble beginnings as a state teacher’s college and transform into a multidiscipline, broad-based institution of higher education serving the citizens of Missouri. As with any complex institution, Northwest excels in particular areas, benefitting the young people of our state at a rate greater than our academic programming as a whole. In these areas, Northwest seeks to establish a statewide mission, calling upon our proven successes and optimistic future to meet the needs of our regional and state workforce, better serving Missouri’s employer interests and ultimately the Missouri economy as a whole.

Statewide missions in Educator Preparation, Emergency and Disaster Management, Agriculture, and Profession-Based Learning would further elevate these programs at Northwest, allowing the University to capitalize on these unique areas of strength for the betterment of the Missouri educational landscape. Upon reviewing the statewide missions at institutions throughout the state, we are confident that the areas noted above do not conflict with their respective programmatic strengths and would allow Northwest to fill a gap in the highlighted post-secondary areas. Nonetheless, Northwest acknowledges that granting the requested statewide mission does not preclude other institutions from continuing to offer degree programs in these areas, and Northwest is not seeking additional appropriations to support this request.

Having provided evidence satisfying the requirements outlined in §173.030(9), Northwest Missouri State University respectfully requests the Coordinating Board for Higher Education to support statewide missions in Educator Preparation, Emergency Disaster Management, Agriculture, and Profession-Based Learning.