

History of NSU

Northwestern State University of Louisiana stands on ground that has been dedicated to learning for well over a hundred years. Prior to the Civil War a portion of the present campus was the property of the Bullard family of Natchitoches. As early as 1856 the Bullard mansion was in use as a convent by the Religious of the Society of the Sacred Heart. The following year a school building was erected at the convent, and in 1884 the property was purchased by the town and parish of Natchitoches. Three of the four great white columns that once supported the east gable of the Bullard mansion still stand on “The Hill” and often serve as the unofficial symbol of the University.

The State Legislature by Act 51 of 1884 created a Louisiana State Normal School for the preparation of teachers. A member of the Legislature, Leopold Caspari, offered the convent site as a campus for the School with the anticipated approval of the citizens of Natchitoches. The offer was accepted, and from 1885 to 1918 the Normal School offered two years of study for the training of teachers. Baccalaureate programs were then inaugurated, and the State Constitution adopted in 1921 changed the name of the school to Louisiana State Normal College.

The resources and curricula of “Normal” grew steadily to meet the increasingly diverse requirements of Louisiana’s expanding population. In 1944 the institution’s excellent service in its broader role was accorded formal recognition in Act 326 of the Legislature, which changed its name to Northwestern State College of Louisiana.

Northwestern maintained and strengthened its long tradition of leadership in public service and academic endeavor and became, in 1954, the first college under the

jurisdiction of the Louisiana State Board of Education to offer the Master's degree. The Educational Specialist degree was first offered in 1966.

On June 18, 1970, Governor John J. McKeithen signed the legislative act which brought the old school its greatest distinction by changing its title to Northwestern State University of Louisiana.

In 1980 the old campus quadrangle where the columns stand was entered into the National Register of Historic Places under the title "Normal Hill Historic District."

In 1984 Northwestern State University celebrated its Centennial with lectures, concerts, social events, and an effective fund raising effort that established the Centennial Development Fund. In addition to the main campus in Natchitoches, the present University has permanent facilities located in Leesville and Shreveport and offers instruction at other centers in central Louisiana.