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## NU TRACK STARS GIVE A GOOD RUN AT NAIA INDOOR NATIONALS

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By Kelly Grant



Seven Northwest University students traveled to Geneva, Ohio last week to compete for three days in the NAIA Indoor National Track and Field Championships.

Robi Long, Sarah Estabrook, Michelle Perez and Meagan Governor represented NU as a 4×800 meter relay team – clocking a time of 9:52.27 and taking 26<sup>th</sup> place out of 29 teams in the preliminary round. Three of the athletes came away with new personal records, including Long who broke the previous NU record by five seconds by running the first leg of the relay in 2:19.

Junior Jonathan Ferguson competed in the mile, placing 11<sup>th</sup> out of 17 competitors in the preliminary round with a time of 4:20.33. Ferguson barely missed qualifying for the finals as only the top 10 moved on. He was a second-and-a-half behind the 10<sup>th</sup> place runner.

"There is no better experience than to be at the national meet and to figure out the competition at the highest level," said Ferguson. "It gives you an edge going into outdoor season because you've already experienced the top competition."

Senior Charmie Dondrea competed in the high jump and scratched out at the first height. Dondrea said although she was momentarily disappointed in her performance, she is grateful for the opportunity to travel to the national meet to represent her team and God.

"A good performance in the high jump for me is more than just getting a [personal record] or winning. It is being able to carry on a great attitude regardless of what happens at a meet," Dondrea said. "And I'm really thankful to be on a team that carries that same mentality."

Sophomore Cassidy Brown placed 16<sup>th</sup> out of 23 runners in the preliminary round of the women's mile with a time of 5:11.21. She was the fourth member of the qualifying 4×800 meter relay team along with Long, Estabrook and Governor. Perez took her place at the national meet when Brown decided to compete in the mile.

"[Nationals] was one of the most life-changing trips as an athlete for me," Dondrea said. "It was so great to be able to be on a trip where track was our main focus and we didn't have to think about anything else at the moment, but to just appreciate and grow in our passion for the sport."