

January 01, 2003

Access Northeastern: Winter 2003

Northeastern University - Access Programs

Recommended Citation

Northeastern University - Access Programs, "Access Northeastern: Winter 2003" (2003). *Access Northeastern*. Paper 4.
<http://hdl.handle.net/2047/d10002716>

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Brown Steps Down as Head of University Access Programs

Leonard Brown, Northeastern's first Associate Vice Provost for Academic Opportunity, stepped down in December to resume teaching in the music and African American studies departments. Brown, a professional jazz saxophonist, also plans to devote more energy to performing and writing projects.

Interim Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education Mal Hill is overseeing the University's Access and Academic Assistance programs while a replacement is sought for Brown. Provost Ahmed Abdelal plans to recruit a tenured Northeastern faculty member to fill the position half time while maintaining a part-time teaching or research load.

"My philosophy about faculty in academic management is to have the faculty members continue to practice their professional expertise," Abdelal explained in the December 10, 2002 issue of *The Northeastern Voice*. "For academics, you want to ensure maximal mobility from one set of responsibilities to another — not take a faculty member completely out of teaching and research."



Former Associate Vice President Leonard Brown with Associate Dean Ella Roberston. Photo by Craig Bailey.

Office of Affirmative Action and Diversity

The mission of the Office of Affirmative Action and Diversity is to lead and promote the University's commitment to equal opportunity, affirmative action, diversity, social justice and a climate of inclusion on and beyond campus. They further this mission through compliance with state and federal laws, development of programs and policies, outreach to external organizations and services to students, faculty, staff and community. Staff advises and assists the President, senior administrators and the campus community to implement leadership strategies that advance diversity and contribute to the University's Aspiration.

The office also provides training on affirmative action, recruitment, retention, race relations, intergroup relations, diversity and prevention of sexual harassment and discrimination. The office works with

students, faculty and administrators to resolve complaints of discrimination and harassment and to manage conflict and also provides resources for hiring managers.

The office's programs and events include the Diversity Recognition Awards Program, Diversity Grant Program, President's Advisory Groups on Diversity and Ellen Jackson Minority Mixer.

For more information, contact 617-373-2133 or visit www.aa.neu.edu

The Academic Assistance Guide

Undergraduate day students can find out where to go for math tutoring, career counseling, help with writing assignments and more in the Academic Assistance Guide. It is available in brochure form at locations around campus or on the Web at www.academicguide.neu.edu. Contact academic-assistance@neu.edu for more information.

DUBOIS PROGRAM SETS OUT TO HELP THE OLDER GET WISER

By Bill Kirtz, *Globe* Correspondent and Northeastern Associate Professor of Journalism
Originally appeared in the *Boston Globe*, 1/26/03. Reprinted with permission.

The topics bounce from Socrates to Thoreau to political satirist Jimmy Tingle - from slavery to taxation to civil disobedience. On a frosty Wednesday night, conversation and fluorescent lights crackle in a stark fourth floor Roxbury Community College classroom. There, 14 adult learners eagerly debate issues of leadership, conscience and expediency.

"Um-hum!" one exclaims, as a philosophy teacher defends Thoreau's refusal to pay taxes. "Too bad he's not here today," another interjects.

In one student's words, they're jump-starting their brain in the W.E.B. DuBois Program in the Humanities, which Northeastern University began in October with a three-year, \$150,000 U.S. Department of Education grant.

The eight-month courses in philosophy, literature, writing, art history and history, run in partnership with R.C.C. and New York state's Bard College. Their goal: to bring the humanities to residents of low-income communities. Their only requirement: English literacy, commitment to completing the program, and demonstrated low household income. They get free tuition, books, transportation and child care and can earn up to six college credits. Many attend Tuesday writing workshops beside the two-hour Monday and Wednesday sessions.

Dianne (cq) Richardson, a 44-year-old Jamaica Plain resident and medical records staffer, enrolled "just for my enjoyment" so she could get back into the habit of reading and writing. Bantering easily with



Administrative Co-Director Sally Solomon explains the program to prospective students. Photo by Craig Bailey.

Northeastern philosophy professor William DeAngelis about 17th Century philosopher Thomas Hobbes' stark conclusions, she says the courses have "meant a lot to my life. I can see where certain ideas come from, what slavery meant to Thoreau."

DeAngelis, co-director of the DuBois program, says students can use this "as a springboard for college, although it can be an end in itself." He applauds their "tremendous level of enthusiasm that you'd expect from the best university students. The very best would be stars" at Northeastern.

R.C.C. literature professor David Coleman finds his classes absorb ideas "like a sponge," and do extensive research into his

assignments to consider blues, jazz and hip-hop lyrics as poetry.

Marlene Johns, 42, of Jamaica Plain, likes "getting my feet wet" after 15 years away from college. She finds "the hardest part is constructing sentences. I like to read (but grasping it is a little difficult."

To help her and her classmates, four of DeAngelis's Northeastern student volunteers scrutinize their essays, suggesting that they "find a good spot for a period," and read their prose out loud. Tutoring doesn't mean coddling: one student is told that while her first draft "might be a mess, it's going to be good" with revision.

Sharing that optimism is Darren Rustin, a 34-year-old Mattapan resident and Violence Prevention Program volunteer. He says he gets spiritual insight and mediation tips from the philosophy courses. Now unemployed, he hopes to use the DuBois program as a stepping stone to go back to school.

Her 14-year-old son pushed Janice Gesse into the program. The 54-year-old Dorchester resident, a nursing assistant at Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital hadn't been in a classroom for 35 years. "I knew it would be a challenge but that if I got in, I'd try my best to stick it out." So she's shrugged off a head cold and showed up because "I don't want to miss anything. I love it. I love tough assignments. I'm getting into it." She says she may take more college credit courses in social work.

Continued on Page 6

SGS PEER TUTORS EARN CERTIFICATION

The School of General Studies Peer Tutoring Program recently was awarded certification by the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA). They are the only Northeastern peer tutoring group to have earned the distinction.



Pictured: (left to right) Director Tina Kondopoulos, Melody Johanson, Patrick Sweeney, Denise Devlin

CRLA certification is a nationally recognized standard for tutor training. Tutors must complete 10 hours of training and 25 hours of tutoring time to earn certification. CRLA, an organization made up of professionals in the fields of reading, learning assistance, developmental education and tutorial services at the college/adult level, promotes innovative strategies to enhance student learning.

The SGS Peer Tutoring Program brings successful former SGS students, currently attending NU, back to SGS to work as peer tutors. "SGS is like a family," said Patrick Sweeney, a senior majoring in Criminal Justice. "We stick with the program because we enjoy it."

Peer tutors provide individualized support to current SGS students, helping them identify their learning style, develop effective study skills, work on specific SGS assignments, prepare for exams, strengthen writing

and build their confidence. Tutors must maintain a 3.0 GPA to stay in the program. "They excel and help others excel," said Director Tina Kondopoulos. There are currently 20 peer tutors in the program.

Tutoring is provided free of charge, and is available for most SGS subjects. Most tutoring sessions are one-on-one. Students can request appointments in advance or come in during walk-in hours. Peer tutors also work with study groups and provide supplemental in-class instruction. All tutoring sessions are confidential.

Hiroko Ohara, a junior in international business marketing, volunteered to become a peer tutor "because I enjoy this kind of work, and I wanted to help students." Peer tutors serve as positive role models who can sympathize with the students. "We know how hard it is for students to finish the program," said Ohara. She went to see a tutor regularly for help with history when she was in SGS. "English is not my first language, so it helped to have someone read my papers," she said.

Melody Johanson, a middler Human Services major, finds the most challenging aspect of the job to be "motivating students who don't want to be motivated. They expect us to do their work." She often encounters this problem with students whom a professor has required to see a peer tutor. In this situation, Johanson's approach is to "try to interact with them one-on-one and figure out what will get their attention."

"The teachers in SGS are more like guidance counselors," said Sweeney. "They do everything they can to help you progress. A

lot of students in the program didn't do so well in high school and didn't take school seriously, so college is a big wake up call." Johanson added, "We help them understand that this is all worth it."

Elizabeth Breesman, a senior psychology major and peer tutor, utilized the program when she was in SGS and found it beneficial. "We help with the transition to the other colleges," she said, adding that students often ask her questions that are unrelated to coursework. "They want to know what it's going to be like. I wind up giving them a lot of advice," she said.

The skills learned in SGS give students a strong foundation for success when they enter their chosen major. "In my class in CJ, the students who went through SGS have a higher QPA and better retention than those who did not," said Sweeney.

Peer tutors help foster community among SGS students, faculty and staff. They sponsor workshops for all SGS students on topics including effective writing and time management, in addition to special events such as canned food drives for the homeless. This past December, the peer tutors collected books for Project Read, and also decorated a ginger bread house they had decorated to the organization. Later this quarter, they will attend workshop on cultural diversity, which will include a potluck of food from around the world.

"We have a multitasking relationship," said Kondopoulos. "The tutors gain professional skills and give back to the SGS and wider communities. The program gives them an avenue to bond, helps them relate to the SGS faculty and staff on a personal level and learn that relating to the students they are tutoring in a positive way will bring success."

Programs Strive for Equity and Access to Higher Education

The following programs were highlighted in the 1999 Access Task Force report to the Provost's Office. Their efforts, along with those of other equally important programs at Northeastern, illustrate a commitment to making higher education accessible for historically underrepresented populations.

Balfour Academy – Carla Oblas, director: 617-373-2328

Boston Housing Authority Scholarship – Admissions (for new students only): 617-373-2200

Disability Resource Center (DRC) – Ruth Bork, director: 617-373-2675

Health Careers Academy (HCA) – Al Holland, headmaster: 617-373-8576

Legacy 2000 Mentoring/Retention Program – Ella Robertson, director: 617-373-2787

Northeastern Multicultural Engineering (NUME) – Richard Harris, director: 617-373-2152

School of General Studies (SGS) – George Atkinson, director: 617-373-4434

Tobin Scholars – Veronica Whycoff, coordinator: 617-373-8603

Ujima Scholars Program – Carrie Boykin, coordinator: 617-373-4912

The SemEstimator is now available to help current undergraduate day students estimate their costs and financial aid on Northeastern's semester calendar. Visit www.customerservice.neu.edu/semestimator/semestimator.html.

Anu Meacham Hired as Coordinator of Northeast Alliance for Minority Participation

By Ann Comer

Anu Meacham holds a bachelor's degree in mathematics and a master's degree in engineering, but when she looks back on her college and graduate school experience, she does not recall receiving much support as an African-American in a field dominated by whites and Asians. "That made life difficult at times," she says, "but it also made me realize that [improving the academic experience for students of color] was something I wanted to be a part of."

In November, Northeastern University hired Meacham to coordinate the Northeast Alliance for Minority Participation in Undergraduate Education in Science, Mathematics, Engineering and Technology, a five-college collaborative funded by a five-year National Science Foundation grant. She will coordinate the efforts of Northeastern University, the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, University of Connecticut, University of Rhode Island and Worcester Polytechnic Institute in attempting to double the number of under-represented students of color majoring in mathematics, science,

engineering and technology disciplines at these institutions.

Meacham will set up the AMP resource center at Northeastern and create a website for the program. "My role is to provide support for the students who are here now, helping them to access the resources they need to be successful. I'm also here to provide insight on how to recruit and keep students of color in these fields," she explains.

She will be working closely with the Bouvé College of Health Sciences and Colleges of Engineering, Computer Science, and Arts and Sciences to help promote undergraduate research, mentoring and academic support services for students of color. Before coming to Northeastern, Meacham worked for the National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering, which provides scholarships to students of color pursuing engineering majors and supports efforts to increase the students of color in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics by working closely with industry and academia.

Alum Richard Harris returns to COE as Director of Northeastern Multicultural Engineering

Richard Harris' return to Northeastern has found him coming full circle in more ways than one. A 1989 graduate with a degree in Industrial Engineering, Harris recently has taken over the position of director of Northeastern's Multicultural Engineering program (NUME). His return to the northeast also happens to coincide with one of Massachusetts' worst winters in years. "I moved to Virginia in 1995 during New Hampshire's worst winter, so I'm coming back the same way that I left," Harris says with a smile.

Harris' ability to see the connections in life, and his deep commitment to giving back to the community, was forged at a young age. He grew up in the tough Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood of Brooklyn, New York; while many of his classmates wound up in prison, Harris had the opportunity to follow a different path through a college prep program for gifted students. "The program expanded and broadened our focus," he said. "They took an interest in us and acknowledged us intellectually." He was deeply influenced by a book he received from one of his teachers at age thirteen, *The Prophet* by Khalil Gibran, a book of poetic essays about the meaning of life. "He saw something in me and knew that I would be nourished by it," Harris said. "It helped me see the world in a much broader view."

As an undergraduate, Harris was active on campus in the Black Engineering Student Society (BESS) and the student movement against apartheid. "It was important to me to improve the quality of life while pursuing my education," he said.

Harris went on to a successful career in industry, and has several patents in his name. He managed the Ozone Depleting Chemical Elimination Project for M/A-COM in Lowell, Massachusetts, a position which gave

him the opportunity to travel to every state in the country, in addition to Ireland and Canada. He then worked as a supervising process engineer for Mitsubishi Chemical America in Chesapeake, Virginia, where the company's grounding in Japanese culture further expanded his cross-cultural awareness.

Harris believes that Engineering is a valuable major even for students who don't pursue it as a career. "Engineering is a vehicle and a tool that allows for options. It brings analytical skills to the table, and teaches you to look at things in a more insightful way," he said.

Throughout his career, Harris has devoted himself to being a positive role model for kids. He has been actively involved in getting more minority students interested and involved in math and science, and also served as a flag football coach for 6 years. Harris and his wife have three sons: Idriys, 14; Elijah, 12; and Joshua, 10. His daughter from a previous marriage, Crystal Jasmine, is graduating from Princeton this year.

Harris found out about the NUME job through a mailer promoting the position to College of Engineering alumni. His wife Pamela, also a COE alum, "told me, 'Richard, this is you,'" he said. Harris, who had just turned forty, felt that the time was right to take the next step.

Harris has big plans for NUME. Established in 1976, the program works to recruit and support minority students in pursuing an undergraduate degree in engineering. The program has assisted over 1000 students of color in reaching their educational goals. It offers academic services along with financial support and solutions to help minority students prepare for challenging and rewarding careers. The program strives to strengthen first year students' mathematics

and physics skills; and to give personal attention to students' academic, financial, or personal problems. NUME also aims to educate the university community on the benefits of promoting diversity within the College of Engineering, and establish that students of color can be successful in engineering at Northeastern.

Harris' top priority right now is establishing relationships with students. He serves as an advisor to BESS and the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE), and also is reaching out to other student groups. "I try not to be too invasive," he said. "I assist in an advisory capacity and provide a historical perspective, but I give them space to develop their own leadership skills."

He plans to tie into the resources of national organizations like the National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering (NACME), and will work to recruit more minority students to COE. Dedicated to the importance of encouraging students in math and science early on, Harris has already hosted a science enrichment field trip for students from Woodrow Wilson middle school in Dorchester.

Harris feels that his work is especially important now, in light of the current affirmative action Supreme Court case. "The premise is statistically validated that students of color are underrepresented in science and engineering," he said. "The numbers don't support the argument that it's now an equal playing field. As a nation, we have great resources in our youth. How can we move forward if these resources are not developed?"

For the students in NUME, Harris says, "I plan to do whatever I can to help them succeed."

Continued from DuBois Program

Thirty-five-year old Julie Joseph, a patient service coordinator at Massachusetts Eye & Ear Infirmary, enrolled because “I wanted to jump start my brain again. I’m trying to learn how to write English.” Loving literature, poetry and playwrights, she hopes to transfer the DuBois program’s college credits to a university nearer her Lynn home.

Her ambition isn’t unusual. Nationally, the seven-year-old Bard program has sparked many participants’ entry into higher education. Bard reports that 603 of 1090 students have completed the program, with 450 of them attending or planning to attend college.

To make this happen in the Boston area, DeAngelis hopes donations will finance additional college courses for graduates.

But even if they go no further, the program indeed seems to have jump-started its participants. As DeAngelis outlined the history of non-violence, one woman became fascinated by John Locke, the 17th century philosopher who refuted the divine right of kings and argued that all men are born free and have equal rights.

“I like Locke!” she exclaimed to the woman at the next desk.

Enrollment Management Walk-in Hours

Senior Vice President of Enrollment Management & Student Affairs Philomena Mantella announced her Winter Quarter walk-in hours:

1st & 3rd Monday of the month: 5:00-6:00 pm.
2nd & 4th Thursday of the month: 12:00-1:00 p.m.

Her office is located at 137 Richards Hall. 617-373-4810.

LACLA SCHOLARSHIP PROMOTES ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE



(back row from left to right:) Jorel Fermin (class 2005, Computer Science), Noosheen Khalil-Naji (class 2005, Electrical Engineering), Yahaira Nuñez (class 2005, International Affairs), Jorge Sanchez (class 2004, Pharmacy), Ulises Mones (class 2006, International Business).

(center row, left to right:) Claudia Ortiz (class 2003, Modern Languages), Ali Hargett (class 2003, Computer Technology), Alejandra Lombardo (liaison for the LaCLA scholarship and a LaCLA Scholar alum, class of 2002, Modern Languages (French and Spanish))

(kneeling) Adam Avila (class 2006, Marketing)

In 1992, a group of Latino/a students at Northeastern University developed the La Comunidad Latin en Acción (LaCLA) Scholarship as a way to increase the retention of Latino/a students at NU. Funded by the University, the scholarship is centered on promoting academic excellence and community service.

The scholarship is open to NU students of Latino/a descent who are enrolled in a full-time undergraduate program for at least three quarters, have at least a 3.0 GPA and participated in community service. Eight full tuition scholarships (minus and federal and/or state grants and not including room and board) are awarded each year to four men and four women. Awards are renewable annually for recipients who maintain a 2.75 GPA and satisfactorily complete 120 hours of non-paid, non-academic credit community service per academic year. Students participate in workshops, special events and meetings throughout the year.

Alejandra Lombardo, Assistant Director of the Latino/a Student Cultural Center, coordinates the scholarship. Lombardo graduated in June 2002 with a BA in Modern Languages. She had a dual major French and Spanish, with a double minor in Latino, Latin American & Caribbean Studies (LLACS) and Cultural Anthropology. She was a member of the Latin American Student Organization, serving as vice president in the 1999 school year. Her community service included acting as a mentor for Legacy 2000 mentor and

LEAD (Linking Education and Diversity); volunteering for Project SHINE, the elderly program la Alianza Hispana, the Atrévete youth conference and the Give Kids The World program in Orlando, Florida, which helps less fortunate kids have a chance to live their dream of going to Disney World. Lombardo also was Chair of the 10th and 12th Latino/a Senior Banquet and a volunteer at the Latino/a Student Cultural Center.

Lombardo is enthusiastic about the program. When I asked why she chose to return after graduation, she said, “The Latino/a Student Cultural Center has been my home away from home since my freshmen year (1997) which is when the center opened up. The staff at the center gave me support, warmth, and motivation. The center and everyone in it gave me hope and we became a family. I was fortunate to become a LaCLA Scholar. This scholarship got me through and I am ever so thankful for having the opportunity to study at a private university. The community did a lot for me, even before getting to NU. I used to work for a non-profit community center called Roca Inc., for which I am now a member of the Board of Directors, and it was thanks to the Executive Director, Molly Baldwin that I was able to apply to college. She taught me how to be a leader and what a community is all about. As graduation was approaching, I kept asking myself how I could possibly give back to all those people who believed in me and helped me obtain my degree. This opportunity presented itself and here I am.”

STUDENT PROFILE

AYAN AHMED

Ayan Ahmed immigrated to the United States from Somalia in 1996. A sophomore computer science major, she’s interested in pursuing a career in Information Sciences. She said that she would like to work on projects such as developing individualized databases for companies, adding, “I don’t like to just sit in front of a computer and program. I like interacting with people.”

She entered Northeastern in the College of Arts and Sciences, but transferred to Computer Science this year. Her change in major has led to some long days. “Most of my work is on the computer,” she said. “I have a computer at home, but I can’t use it for a lot of my work because I don’t have Ethernet.” She commutes from East Boston for class at 8:00, often working in the computer lab until after midnight

Ahmed is used to working hard under difficult circumstances. She and her mother became homeless while Ahmed was in high school. “It seems bad from the outside, but it’s not as bad as it looks,” she said. “The worst is when we were at the shelter. My mother and I had to share a room with a woman we didn’t know.” They were then moved to a hotel in Lynn for two weeks, a long way from Ahmed’s high school in Boston’s



Copley Square. “It was hard being in the shelter in my senior year, while I was waiting to find out about whether I got into school. It was hard to get my work done when I had to worry about getting back to the shelter by 8:00.” Despite the difficulty, Ahmed was her class valedictorian.

Ahmed and her mother moved into a Boston Housing Authority apartment shortly after she entered Northeastern. She did not get much financial aid her first year, and had to take out a lot of loans. Unfortunately, she was not able to qualify for a Boston Housing Authority scholarship since she didn’t move into a BHA property until after she was admitted; however, former Associate Vice Provost Leonard Brown was able to advo-

cate for an increase in her financial aid. “I’m so grateful to him,” Ahmed said. “It wasn’t even about the money. It was that he listened and was willing to go beyond his job to help me.” Ahmed recently received some good news from the Financial Aid office. She was told that if she keeps her GPA up, she would qualify to have half of her tuition covered.

Ahmed said that her experience at Northeastern has been “really good so far;” however, she wishes she could live on campus. “If you live on campus, you get the whole package of going here,” she said.

She works as an usher in Blackman Auditorium, and as a Community Receptionist in a freshmen dorm on Fridays and Saturdays, a job that she especially enjoys. “I see a lot of people that I met last summer when I was an Orientation Leader, and get to meet a lot of other people that I wouldn’t meet in my classes,” she said.

Ahmed is looking forward to going on her first co-op this summer. She said that the chance to gain real work experience as an undergraduate was what attracted her to Northeastern. “Imagine graduating from college and then realizing that your major was not what you wanted to do,” she said.

Northeastern files amicus brief in support of University of Michigan's affirmative action policies

On February 14, Northeastern submitted an amicus brief to the U.S. Supreme Court in support of the affirmative action policies of the University of Michigan in a case to appear before the court this spring. In it, President Richard M. Freeland made public his strong support of the University of Michigan and his belief in affirmative action as a vital and inextricable part of the mission of higher education. "Northeastern has defined its mission as a world leader in practice-oriented education and has determined that diversity is essential to that mission. Northeastern must not lose the ability to select its student body bearing in mind this educational mission," the brief says.

The full brief can be downloaded from the University Communications and Public Relations Office Web site: www.nupr.neu.edu/2-03/amicus.html.

International Student Support Group

A support group for international students is meeting Wednesdays 4:00-5:00 in the International Student and Scholar Institute, 403 Ell. For more information, call the Center for Counseling and Student Development at 617-373-2142.

Interpreting Fund

A centralized interpreting fund for recognized Northeastern student organizations has been established. For more information, contact Tony Bajdek, Associate Dean for Administration and Operations, 104 Ell, 616-373-4384. a.bajdek@neu.edu, or visit www.curry.neu.edu/stuact/forms/CIFpolicy.asp.

Access Northeastern is published three times a year by the Associate Vice Provost for Academic Opportunity.
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