



Northeastern University

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Aoun: Students must take charge of destiny



President Joseph Aoun and his top administrators answered student questions about relations with Northeastern's neighbors, enhancing experiential education and expanding the diversity of students and faculty during a forum Tuesday night.

"I am here to have a dialogue about the university and how to move the university forward," Aoun told hundreds of students who packed the Curry Student Center ballroom.

"Fifteen to 20 years from now ... you will still be associated with this university. You will be owners of this university, as alumni," he said. "It is not my university. It is not your university. It is our university." [More>](#)

New library search tool will speed, focus research

University Libraries has acquired the leading citation-analysis tool Web of Science for faculty, students and staff, providing access to 8,700 of the world's most highly regarded, high-impact journals in all academic fields. [More>](#)

Faculty turn up HEAT at global warming panel

Several faculty members spoke at the "Focus the Nation" forum on global warming, organized by the student group Husky Energy Action Team. [More>](#)

[Watch the video](#) on Northeastern's new YouTube channel.

Students flock to Mardi Gras celebration

More than 1,000 students collected beads and filled up on the tastes of New Orleans to the sounds of Dixieland jazz at the president's annual Mardi Gras celebration. [More>](#)



University eyes opportunity in Mass. initiative

As Washington continues to debate federal research funding levels, Northeastern is attempting to make hay by positioning itself to capitalize on a \$1 billion life sciences initiative proposed by Gov. Deval Patrick. [More>](#)



Faculty in the news

- Sri Sridhar, vice provost for research and chair of physics, [talks with Discovery](#) about building nanowires from DNA.
- William Mayer, associate professor of political science, is quoted by National Public Radio in a [story about post-Super Tuesday presidential campaigning](#).

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Aoun: Students must take charge of destiny

Joseph Aoun said he hopes the legacy of his Northeastern presidency will be the empowerment of the university's academic units — and of the students themselves.



"I feel that people here in our community are beginning to realize that not everything starts with the president and not everything ends with the president," he told students during a question-and-answer session sponsored by the Council for University Programs.

"That's a healthy shift," said Aoun, who assumed the presidency in 2006. "You are seeing the schools, the deans, the faculty take charge of their destiny — the same way I am asking you to take charge of your destiny as students.

"We are not there yet," Aoun said, "but I see signs."

The president and his top administrators spent an hour answering student questions about relations with Northeastern's neighbors, about enhancing experiential education and about expanding the diversity of students and faculty.

"I am here to have a dialogue about the university and how to move the university forward," Aoun told hundreds of students who packed the Curry Student Center ballroom Tuesday night.

"Fifteen to 20 years from now ... you will still be associated with this university. You will be owners of this university, as alumni," he said. "It is not my university. It is not your university. It is our university."

Asked about Northeastern's place in the city, Aoun noted the "dozens and dozens and dozens" of programs in Boston that students, faculty and staff volunteer for.

Jeff Doggett, director of government relations, explained that the university has worked the city's formal processes, involving many neighbors, to build new residence halls. "Not everyone will ever be happy on any given issue," he said, but "we do a lot of very good things in the neighborhoods.

"Last academic year, Northeastern students (contributed) almost 120,000 community-service hours (in Boston)," Doggett said, in addition to the scholarships Northeastern awards, the businesses it supports and the jobs it provides to local residents. "You should all be proud of that. We're a great neighbor — not only someone who lists, but adjusts."

Aoun reminded students that, while he visits local residents when he can, "the students are in the community. The university in the

neighborhoods is you."

On other issues:

- On experiential education, Aoun said Northeastern wants its students to become "citizens of the world" by taking advantage of international co-op, work-study or study-abroad possibilities, immersing themselves in other cultures, languages and traditions.
- On diversity, Aoun said, he objects to the term "tolerance." "That means positioning yourself as the center and you are telling others 'I am going to tolerate you,'" he said. "Everyone is the center." Senior Vice President Philomena Mantella said the numbers of students of color and international students are on the rise, and Susan Powers-Lee, executive vice provost, said the university "aggressively recruit(s)" for a diverse faculty.
- Vice President Vincent Lembo said an announcement will be made soon on future plans for the athletics program. "If you are really attached to athletics, we want you to go there and show your support for the athletes," Aoun said. "If you really care for the sports, and I hope you do, be there."

(Photo: President Aoun speaks to students during the CUP forum
Tuesday night. / Craig Bailey)

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New library search tool will speed, focus research

By Susan Salk

Take a subject like "global warming" and plug it into Google. The result is about 20,000 hits, and no real way of gauging the credibility of all the articles floating on the Web.

This inability to sift through the topsoil to get to the academic paydirt is a predicament that has somewhat stymied investigators in the past. Now it's evaporating with the arrival of the latest search tool to be added to Northeastern's computing environment.

University Libraries has acquired the leading citation-analysis tool Web of Science for faculty, students and staff, providing access to 8,700 of the world's most highly regarded, high-impact journals in all academic fields.

The tool makes it possible for a researcher to determine the validity of published material by gauging how frequently the work is cited in other research, and also allows for a narrower, more focused search.

"This is really great news," said assistant professor of English David Kellogg. "In academic research publishing, the most important thing is what happens to the article after it's published — who else cites it?"

Unlike a general Google search, this tool allows a researcher to more easily track articles based on citations. If there's a particular piece of research already known to the investigator, the Web allows easy access to other journals and publications crediting that same article.

"If you think of the Web literally like a spider web, which has a hub and spokes emanating off it, this image will help you visualize the capabilities of this tool," Kellogg said. "If you start with an article you already know about, you can spin a web out from there."

The ability to check bibliographies of articles is also a helpful tool to gauge the impact of a particular article, he noted.

Jeremy Long, a post-doctoral research fellow with the Marine Science Center in Nahant, said the Web of Science would help him become a more productive researcher.

"It will make writing papers so much easier. I'll be able to be more productive because I'll spend less time researching" the data, Long said. "I hope a lot of people will use this tool, and that their use will encourage the library to go back further than 1993."

The Web will provide access to three citation indexes: the Science Citation Index, the Social Sciences Citation Index and the Arts and Humanities Citation Index. All will be searchable by title, author, subject and date, according to University Libraries.

"This is a really big deal for the university," said Maria Carpenter,

advancement and communications officer for the libraries.

She noted that quality measurement methodologies, such as the Hirsch or H-index would be available through the search tool, which was funded through the provost's office.

To view the database, visit

www.lib.neu.edu/online_research/articles/web_of_science.

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Watch video at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4touLiJBVhE>

As Northeastern joined more than 1,700 institutions spending part of Thursday focused on the environment, one professor wanted students to think about the future.

Specifically, about their retirement plans.

Because of global warming, by the end of this century, said associate professor Daniel Faber, there'll be no need to retire down south. "Florida will have moved to us," he said. "We will have the current climate of South Carolina."

Faber was one of several faculty members who spoke at the "Focus the Nation" forum on Jan. 31, organized by the student group Husky Energy Action Team (HEAT).

On average, Faber said, the northeastern United States has about 10 to 15 days a year when the temperature surpasses 90 degrees Fahrenheit. By 2100, he said, there will be 60 days a year at that temperature, with "14 to 28 above 100."

That will affect glacial melt, which provides drinking water to "millions and millions of people," he said.

Richard Goettle, a lecturer in finance and insurance, said global warming is "one of those really interesting public policy questions" that can be solved only "if nations cooperate."

Warming presents serious economic issues, Goettle argued. "In fact, there's some evidence that climate change will actually help the United States economically in the short run," he noted — but "there's some countries that will disappear."

Stephen Bird, a political-science lecturer at Boston University, said there has been "movement" on automobile mileage standards and on regional cooperation within the United States for environmental change. What the country needs, though, is "a Manhattan Project" on environmental technology, to "make the United States a leader in ... carbon reduction."

Daniel Douglass, a lecturer in earth and environmental science, said the United States needs a "government ... willing to engage in negotiations with other countries and undertake its fair share of responsibility in reducing global warming."

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Students flock to tastes, sounds of Mardi Gras

More than 1,000 students joined the "Fat Tuesday" revelry in Stetson East during the president's annual Mardi Gras breakfast.

The party, in its sixth year, featured music, games, piles of beads and student competitions for cash prizes.



President Joseph Aoun and other officials greeted students at the door with beads and leis; dining caterer Chartwells estimated an average six strings of beads landed on every student who showed up.

The Hot Tamale Band, a Fenway Park favorite, provided the evening's score, as students vied for top honors in a Froot Loop stacking contest, a cereal-eating contest and a race to find M&Ms buried inside whipped-cream pies. Aoun arrived to present the sometimes-messy winners with their winnings.

More than 70 volunteers from Northeastern and dining caterer Chartwells staffed the party.

(Photo: Celebrating Mardi Gras, from left, are sophomores Miya Bassarath, Kristin Jones, Ayana Blue, Jasmine Hicks, Naica Labbe and Michaelle Larracuenta. / Craig Bailey)

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As Washington continues to debate federal research funding levels, Northeastern is attempting to make hay by positioning itself to capitalize on a \$1 billion life sciences initiative proposed by Gov. Deval Patrick.



University officials anticipate "real opportunities" to emerge, which could offset any possible federal research constraints, said Sri Sridhar, vice provost for research.

"There are many opportunities for Northeastern University in the Patrick plan that will help boost our own life sciences research at a time when federal funding (may be) flattening," he said.

The university recently participated in a "talent survey" aimed at categorizing the myriad educational and workforce training programs offered here, which relate to life sciences, and participated in planning meetings and discussion forums with the governor's office to help develop the initiative, Sridhar said.

The goal is to help position the university as a major player in life sciences research through a collaborative role leading to funding opportunities in three grant areas: cooperative research with industry, new faculty starting grants and junior investigator grants, Sridhar said.

Cooperative research grants would assist faculty with startup companies; new faculty grants would stream in funding to make new hires in life sciences; and junior faculty grants would be available to newer professors for research efforts, he explained.

"The key point is that we hope that our involvement with the life sciences initiative helps Northeastern continue to make its mark in this promising growth area," Sridhar said.

The Patrick initiative is aimed at forging ties between industry, academic research hospitals, public and private colleges and universities in a coordinate effort to develop new research opportunities, according to a press release. "Now is the time for us to invest in the talent and bring together the resources of our unparalleled research universities," Patrick said in the release.

A goal of the initiative is to help offset any flat research funding in Washington, the press release stated.

Earlier this year, the flow of federal dollars toward new research was at question after the National Science Foundation and other research agencies received less in the federal budget than researchers had hoped, Sridhar explained.

"Although funding wasn't cut and current research funding was assured,

they size of the budgets devoted to research did not grow at the rate previously anticipated," Sridhar said.

While Washington continues to fine tune budget proposals — President Bush announced Monday that physical science research would get a boost in his latest budget — Sridhar was optimistic that Northeastern would continue to make great strides in its research endeavors, both through federal funding, and through opportunities developed through the Patrick initiative.

"The Patrick initiative could help compensate for any flat funding in Washington," Sridhar said, noting that he expects future research funding to go well for the university. "This is actually very good news," he said.

(Photo: Vice Provost Sri Sridhar)

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