



THE LONG RANGE PLAN 2010–2015

PUTTING THE ACADEMIC PLAN INTO ACTION

OUR MISSION

To educate students for a life of fulfillment and accomplishment.

To create and translate knowledge to meet global and societal needs.

OUR ACADEMIC PLAN

Enhance Student Outcomes through Experiential Learning.

Address Global and Societal Challenges through Interdisciplinary and Translational Research.

Enrich Intellectual Life and Creative Expression.

Strengthen Urban Engagement.

Embrace Global Opportunities.

THE ACADEMIC PLAN IN ACTION

Our Academic Plan, developed over the course of several months of University-wide discussion, study, review, and refinement, articulates a strategic vision for Northeastern University.

To translate that vision into action, we have developed this five-year Long Range Plan. It advances a new model for excellence in higher education, based on leadership in global experiential education and use-inspired research.

The plan covers four primary areas of focus—education, research, faculty, and the student experience—and is grounded in the Northeastern values of innovation and connection to the world.

In each of these sections, we outline a series of proposed goals and action steps, as well as selected metrics by which we will measure our progress. We conclude with a section outlining our estimate of the resources and infrastructure investments that will be necessary to achieve our goals.

Because the plan must be dynamic and evolve to meet future needs, we invite the Northeastern community to take the time to review these planning proposals and provide feedback—either by e-mail at lrp@neu.edu or at an upcoming Long Range Plan discussion session. You helped us develop our vision for Northeastern. Help us bring the vision to life.

EDUCATION

EXPANDING GLOBAL EXPERIENCE AND STUDY TO TRANSFORM LEARNING

Northeastern continuously evolves to meet the needs of succeeding generations of students. In today's changing educational and economic landscape, global understanding is critical to success, the master's degree is the new bachelor's, and adult learning is on the rise. Students expect greater choice, flexibility, and challenge, and they demand degree programs that prepare them for a lifetime of learning.

Under the Long Range Plan, we will build on our existing strengths in student-centered learning to transform education for talented students from around the world.

UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

GOALS

- Enrollment of high-talent students continues to rise
- High retention and graduation rates
- Broader range of innovative, flexible degree programs
- Global experience opportunities for every undergraduate
- Honors Program aligned with University strengths in global experiential learning and interdisciplinary, use-inspired research

ACTION STEPS

- Increase logistical support for global co-ops; launch the Presidential Global Scholars program to provide greater financial support
- Establish new interdisciplinary programs of study linked to emerging fields
- Redesign the Honors Program, aligning it with University research themes and priorities
- More closely integrate classroom studies and experiential learning
- Expand co-op by adding a formalized four-year option
- Continue to diversify the breadth of co-op, nationally and internationally

SELECTED METRICS

- Quality of applicants
- Quality of experiential placements and of completed experiential activities
- Outcomes-based assessment in capstone courses

- Recent graduates' assessment of career preparation
- Rankings of undergraduate programs

MASTER'S AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

GOALS

- Further increase in number of flexible, high-quality degree programs that align with emerging fields and new career opportunities
- More master's programs with experiential learning opportunities
- Greater options for online degrees and combined bachelor's/master's programs

ACTION STEPS

- Continue to develop new programs in interdisciplinary fields where we have a competitive advantage
- Expand options for online and hybrid delivery of educational offerings
- Develop a strategic approach for leadership in professional master's programs for working adults
- Streamline our application processes and evolve our graduate education management infrastructure

SELECTED METRICS

- Graduate applications, enrollments, and yields
- Number of master's programs with experiential learning components
- Quality of post-degree placements
- Licensure rates and national exam scores
- Rankings of programs

(EDUCATION CONTINUED)

DOCTORAL EDUCATION

GOALS

- New and revamped doctoral programs that support Northeastern's interdisciplinary research priorities
- Continued linking of programs to emerging fields of research, attracting more outstanding doctoral candidates and faculty
- Increased quality and quantity of PhD candidates

ACTION STEPS

- Align new programs with major research themes
- Take advantage of opportunities to establish research leadership in emerging and evolving fields
- Accelerate our initiative to recruit senior faculty with a strong interdisciplinary research focus

SELECTED METRICS

- Quality of applicants to PhD programs
- Number of publications by doctoral candidates
- Number of external fellowships awarded to students
- Post-degree placements of graduates
- Time-to-degree completion
- Rankings of programs

FACULTY

DEVELOPING FACULTY STRENGTHS TO POWER ACADEMIC INNOVATION

A wellspring of new ideas, Northeastern builds faculty strengths that align with today's national imperatives and tomorrow's global challenges. Today, new fields are emerging in response to an increasingly complex world, research is growing more collaborative, and talented undergraduates are seeking greater opportunities to work with faculty on knowledge creation. As a result, universities must approach faculty recruitment more strategically than ever before.

Under the Long Range Plan, we will cluster faculty expertise around current and emerging areas of strength at the intersection of disciplines, creating new knowledge and new fields for a changing world.

GOALS

- Depth of faculty expertise necessary to establish a broad base of interdisciplinary research programs
- Improved ratio of students to faculty and tenure-track faculty to full-time faculty
- Active mid-career faculty enter academic leadership pipeline and mentor early-career faculty
- Further increase in faculty honors, including membership in national academies
- Continued rising trend in numbers of outstanding young faculty attracted to Northeastern

ACTION STEPS

- Add 150 new tenured or tenure-track faculty positions, in addition to filling an estimated 150 openings caused by attrition
- Leverage the potential for partnerships with local, national, and global institutions
- Take advantage of opportunities to develop leadership in emerging fields through cluster hiring and other recruiting strategies
- Further align faculty recruitment with primary research themes of health, security, and sustainability, and continue to recruit faculty with an interdisciplinary focus

(FACULTY CONTINUED)

- Advance recruitment and mentoring of women faculty in STEM and social science fields, and continue to increase faculty diversity
- Improve faculty mentoring and leadership development
- Develop faculty recognition program, and actively promote faculty for membership in national academies and for highly prestigious fellowships

SELECTED METRICS

- Total number of tenured and tenure-track faculty members
- Student-faculty ratio and faculty diversity
- Early-career faculty recruited from leading PhD programs
- Number and range of citations of faculty work in scholarly publications and news media
- Faculty honors and awards

RESEARCH

LEADING INTERDISCIPLINARY PARTNERSHIPS TO ADDRESS GLOBAL CHALLENGES

Grounded in a tradition of engagement with the world, Northeastern is a leader in use-inspired research that addresses the critical issues facing society. In a shifting global landscape, discovering solutions to increasingly complex challenges will require the collaborative efforts of multidisciplinary research teams working in partnerships that span countries and continents.

Under the Long Range Plan, we will advance new faculty collaborations and expanded institutional partnerships around the world to cultivate groundbreaking discoveries, with particular emphasis on the themes of health, security, and sustainability.

GOALS

- Global, interdisciplinary research that attracts the best graduate students and invigorates the undergraduate curriculum
- Leadership in establishing interdisciplinary research programs aligned with our research priorities, advanced by faculty recruiting and leadership
- External funding at a level that sustains our research programs
- Continued integration of research with technology commercialization to produce high-value intellectual property that fulfills our research mission

ACTION STEPS

- Develop clusters of faculty expertise aligned with our research themes of health, security, and sustainability

- Advance our successful faculty hiring strategies in support of existing and emerging areas of research strength
- Strengthen technology transfer to boost the impact of discoveries
- Expand technology systems and resources to support faculty and student research
- Build new global research partnerships with government, industry, and other educational institutions
- Broaden undergraduate research opportunities
- Add new master's and PhD programs connected to emerging fields
- Reorganize the Office of Research Administration and Finance to provide the services required to facilitate research goals

(RESEARCH CONTINUED)

SELECTED METRICS

- Number of research awards
- Publications in high-profile journals
- Number of faculty members delivering invited and plenary talks at academic conferences
- Investigators serving on prominent national and international committees
- Invention disclosures and patents filed
- New companies formed

STUDENT EXPERIENCE

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY ON CAMPUS AND AROUND THE WORLD

Our dynamic approach to engaging with the world—through academic experience, research, service, campus culture, and expanded alumni outreach—grounds Northeastern’s sense of community. Globalization and technological change require universities to broaden their communities, developing new approaches to attract and retain diverse, talented students from the world over.

Under the Long Range Plan, we will continue to advance the vibrant, broad-based experience that engages our students with diverse communities on campus, in our neighborhoods, and around the world.

CAMPUS LIFE AND ATHLETICS

GOALS

- Continued rise in engagement and satisfaction levels among students, and high participation in out-of-classroom academic and service offerings
- Strong sense of undergraduate community, with deepened feeling for campus and community traditions
- Innovative campus programming that attracts students from around the world
- Distinctive, high-quality offerings that attract and build community among adult learners
- A competitive range of intercollegiate athletic programs, with high campus attendance and strong alumni engagement, that contribute to sense of community
- High retention rate for all University students
- Continuing strength of academic performance by scholar-athletes and strong overall athletics compliance record

- Leadership in popularity and competitiveness of intramural and club sports

ACTION STEPS

- Strengthen infrastructure to support broader extra- and co-curricular offerings
- Develop Living Learning Communities as the standard for freshman housing
- Redesign Co-op Connections to support students pursuing experiential learning opportunities
- Introduce new locations, course offerings, and modes of instruction for adult learners
- Build nationally excellent marquee athletic programs, generating excitement and sense of community
- Develop enhanced facilities for intercollegiate, club, and intramural programs, and retain coaching talent

(STUDENT EXPERIENCE CONTINUED)

SELECTED METRICS

- Freshman retention and student graduation rates
- Adult learner market share
- Athletic fundraising levels
- Academic performance and retention of scholar-athletes
- Size of club and intramural rosters
- Intercollegiate team results and post-conference play

ENROLLMENT

GOALS

- Continued increase in yield of high-talent students, driven by their affinity for the richness of our opportunities for global learning and research
- Highly diversified enrollment, with robust channels for international students
- Increased share of top applicants enrolled in our adult and master's degree programs

ACTION STEPS

- Broaden geographic base of applicants in the United States through recruiting, guidance counselor cultivation, and expanded visit and hosting programs
- Strengthen outreach to international students through distinctive preparation and pipeline programs and new partnerships
- Implement superior enrollment management strategies and practices, with a focus on student quality, retention, and affinity for our unique learning model
- Continue to enrich experiential opportunities through our four-year option
- Enhance career placement through a strong employer-relations strategy
- Contribute to scholarly research on the value of co-op and experiential learning

SELECTED METRICS

- Number and quality of applications relative to peer institutions

- Applications growth by region and by high schools
- International application numbers, quality, and diversity
- Yield, retention, and graduation rates
- Employer surveys and rankings

STUDENT SUPPORT AND UNIVERSITY SERVICES

GOALS

- Continued increase in the value of a Northeastern education, with correspondingly higher graduation rates
- Increase in international and out-of-region co-op and study programs
- Strengthened services for students on University-affiliated travel-study programs
- Enhanced infrastructure support to simplify University business processes and communications for students
- Expanded services for adult learners
- Continued leadership in career services

ACTION STEPS

- Increase support for talented students with financial need
- Elevate crisis response and technology use to advance student health and safety services
- Develop support-service infrastructure for students studying or engaged in experiential learning outside our region
- Enlarge services and financial support for students with learning disabilities
- Pursue Web 2.0 support and service initiatives, including a service evaluation campaign in social media

SELECTED METRICS

- Retention and graduation rates
- Key satisfaction survey benchmarks
- Conversations on college choice websites, blogs, message boards, and opinion sites

RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Achieving the goals outlined in this plan will require investments in people, programs, physical plant, and technology, as well as a new approach to management and budget processes. More and better-equipped spaces—from classrooms and laboratories to student housing and athletic facilities—will be required, along with the new staff, new systems, and increased financial resources to support academic and student life goals. New budget and management initiatives that promote efficiency and strong performance will give University leaders the necessary tools to gain maximum impact from these infrastructure investments.

FACILITIES

GOALS

- Laboratory space that empowers research goals
- More and better equipped learning facilities
- Housing, athletic, and recreational facilities that energize the campus community
- Faculty/support staff office needs are fully met
- Administrative staff and systems support academic and student life goals here and abroad

ACTION STEPS

- Address critical space needs for faculty and students
- Complete space study to assess long-term needs
- Develop Institutional Master Plan
- Improve efficiency of administrative and information systems

SELECTED METRICS

- Increase in available space for offices, laboratories, classrooms, student recreation, and student life initiatives
- Increase in resources available for infrastructure investment
- Improved flexibility to meet new demands for space

BUDGET/MANAGEMENT MODEL

GOALS

- Operating decisions are made closest to the point of implementation
- Annual budget is part of the rolling implementation of a longer-term strategic plan
- Budget provides incentives for effective performance
- Allocation of facilities and administrative service costs to the revenue centers to encourage efficient use

ACTION STEPS

- Implement hybrid budget model
- Train and/or add staff as needed
- Develop data warehouse to support new approaches
- Adjust annual budget/planning cycle as needed

SELECTED METRICS

- Growth in various revenue streams
- Greater customer satisfaction with central services
- Space efficiencies achieved