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Address to the Northeastern University Corporation

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Address to the Northeastern Corporation May 3, 2000 Ritz-Carlton Hotel

Good morning. This is the fourth time I have come before Northeastern's annual meeting to review our progress. Each of my reports has stressed a single, paramount theme: the urgent need to raise our level of achievement and recognition and truly become, both in reality and in perception, the better university envisioned in the "smaller/better" formula. This year I will make our challenge even more concrete: Northeastern should aspire to recognition among the top 100 national research universities in the United States within this decade. That is where our aspirations should place us. That is where our competitive position requires us to be. And that is what we intend to accomplish.

To achieve recognition in the top 100 is an ambitious goal for Northeastern. That would place us solidly in the second tier in the U.S. News annual rankings of national research universities. Currently we stand almost a third of the way down in the third tier, the highest position we have held since the rankings began in the 1980s and a big jump up from last year. But our position has fluctuated over the past 10 years in a narrow range between our current position and our low point in the upper part of the fourth tier in the early 1990s. We are on an upward trajectory, but we have a long way to go to the top 100, and the path gets steeper, the competition stiffer, as we climb higher.

This year, however, we had a wonderful achievement that should make us all believers that our institutional ambitions can be realized.

It was rooted in a decision taken nearly two decades ago within our College of Business Administration. In 1982 dean Phil MacDonald decided that Northeastern should create a new theme within our MBA offerings focused on the management of innovation in a high-tech environment. Planned in collaboration with the Mass High Tech council, Northeastern's High Tech MBA attained impressive success from the beginning under the leadership of Frank Spital and Sam Rabino. By the mid-1990s, however, the fast moving world of technological innovation had changed to the point that our still young program was already in need of a makeover. So dean Ira Weiss charged two of our most talented professors, Dan McCarthy and Marc Meyer, to redesign the High Tech MBA in light of current conditions. Dan, Marc and their colleagues reworked every course, forged stronger links between classroom and workplace, and intensified our marketing efforts to the corporate community. Fast forward to the fall of 1999, when ComputerWorld magazine polled a thousand campus recruiters in its annual "Top Techno MBA Survey" and found out what Northeastern insiders already knew, that Dan and Marc had taken an already excellent program and made it the best in the county. ComputerWorld told its readers that, "The cream of the business school crop is no match for schools such as Northeastern University when it comes to producing graduates with 21st century business and information technology skills." We were number one. The magazine's headline conveyed the delicious news: "Harvard, MIT, Stanford and Berkeley trumped by Northeastern." The heroes of this story are with us this morning and I'd like to invite them to take a bow: dean Ira Weiss, professors Dan McCarthy and Marc Meyer: Will you stand and be recognized?

It is important that we think for a moment about the moral of the story I have just reported -- a triumph in education. The point is not that we are suddenly, magically, a better university than all the other fine institutions that compete against us in these arenas. The point is that if we pick our spots carefully, if

we concentrate our resources in a limited number of areas, and if we stick to our guns over time, we can match wits at the national level with the best universities in the nation. If we can do it in the hotly contested area of business, we can do it in other fields as well. That is how we will achieve the ambitious goals we have set for ourselves.

I have already mentioned a few of the individuals who are contributing to our progress and, before continuing my report, I would like to recognize several others. Heading the list, of course, is the chair of our Board [of Trustees], Neal Finnegan, who is completing his second year in office and who is providing both inspired and conscientious leadership. As much as any other member of the Northeastern family, Neal has deeply understood the importance of bringing Northeastern to a new level of achievement, and he gives generously of his time, energy and remarkable intelligence to help us achieve that goal. Neal's efforts are supported by a board that shares both his passion for Northeastern and his willingness to work on behalf of the university, and by a Board of Overseers that actively participates in the life of the campus. To Neal Finnegan and to our trustees and overseers, from president to chairman and governing boards, my thanks and the thanks of the Northeastern campus community for all you do for us.

This past year, we added strength to our senior administration, including new deans of our School of Law, Roger Abrams, and our College of Criminal Justice, Jack Greene. In sponsored projects administration, Imeh Ebong is heading up our department of research development; in development Ron Schiller is our director for alumni and friends and Steve Calvert is our director for alumni relations. There were key internal promotions as well: Coleen Pantalone became our executive vice provost and Gilda Barabino our vice provost for undergraduate education; Jim Fraser was appointed dean of our new School of Education; Janet Hookailo was appointed interim director of University Relations; and Jennifer Doherty joined us as the director of our Center for Community Service. Several of these new colleagues are with us this morning, and I would ask you to join me in a welcoming round of applause.

Several members of the university's leadership are stepping down this year after long records of service. Vice president for enrollment management Jean Eddy; director of planning and research Edna Seaman; vice provost for undergraduate education Wendy Smith; and football coach Barry Gallup. Please join me in acknowledging the work of these important contributors.

II: The Year in Review

Let me turn now to the record of the past 12 months. The most important way in which we strengthen Northeastern is by adding talent to the faculty. We hired our second trustee professor this year, Harry Lane, in international business, and we are seeking to fill nearly 40 faculty vacancies, mostly at the junior level. I am pleased to report that, with the 25 appointments made so far, we have not only attracted exceptional talent but we have made great progress also in increasing the diversity of our professorate.

As we bring in the stars of the future, the stars of the present add to their luster. Two senior scholars -- Barry Karger and Ya Fang Liu -- won external grant support in the half-million-dollar range this past year; three more -- Andy Sum, Carey Rappaport, and Steve Reucroft -- attracted approximately three-quarters of a million dollars; and Al Sacco won over \$1.3 million in external support. On the publication side, beyond the dozens of scholarly books and articles published this year, William Mayer and Robert Gilbert published lead op-ed pieces in the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal. Barry Bluestone's book on economic growth was hailed by Robert Heilbroner as an achievement of historic significance. Harlan Platt was recognized among the nation's 12 most distinguished experts on bankruptcy, while Joe Ayers' work in robotics was discussed in a cover story in Science Magazine. Tony Pirri's arrival as head of our new tech transfer department produced a glowing profile in the Mass High Tech Journal under the headline "Pushing Northeastern into the Big Leagues"--a headline that got it just right.

As we build our strength as a research university, we never

forget that our first commitment is to students. We are proud that Rick Scranton of engineering will head the education activities committee of the American Society of Civil Engineers, and that Eileen Zungolo will lead the National League of Nursing, and we were thrilled when the year 2000 edition of the Newsweek/Kaplan college catalog included us, along with places like Middlebury and Amherst, among campuses that are particularly noteworthy for the quality of attention paid to individual students.

We are strengthening the environment for students outside the classroom as well, most visibly through the continuing improvement of the campus. Between the fall of 1999 and the fall of 2002, four separate construction projects in West Village and Davenport Commons will add nearly 2,000 beds to our residential facilities, enabling us to house almost 50 percent of our undergraduates on campus. Next fall we will break ground on a spectacular new facility for instruction in the health sciences, the Behrakis Health Science Building, named in recognition of the generosity of trustee George Behrakis. This summer we will turn a portion of the first floor of Snell Library into a new computer lab to assure our students access to the latest information technology in an attractive and modern setting.

As we strengthen Northeastern in all these ways, the world is noticing. Our law school was recognized this year as the nation's leading program in public interest law by the student division of the American Bar Association, and U.S. News ranked us 13th among all law schools in the quality of our clinical training. Our College of Business jumped 19 places in the overall rankings of graduate business schools and placed two programs --management information systems and the part-time MBA, in the top 35 nationally.

The popular press is noticing us also. Over the past five years references to Northeastern in the print media have grown by nearly a third, and this year we crossed a significant threshold with over half these references occurring outside the New York/New England region. A good example was provided by our construction program, which was the subject of numerous

articles not only in the Globe and the Herald, but in the New York Times, the Washington Post, the L.A. Times, and the AP wire service. Education Week, the most important national publication in K-12 education, ran a prominent feature on our new School of Education, while the Economist included us in a recent story on urban outreach by American universities. This Friday the PBS program "Washington Week in Review" will be broadcast from Blackman Auditorium, and a national television audience will see the NU banner and hear Northeastern students question a distinguished panel of journalists.

Talented faculty, improved programs, new facilities and greater recognition are bringing us better prepared students from a widening geographic area. This past fall we had 16,400 applicants for 2,800 freshman places, a ratio of six applicants for every seat. The average SATs of freshman admitted to degree programs rose this year to 1125, the highest in anyone's memory, while the diversity of the class held steady and the proportion from outside Massachusetts rose to about 60 percent and the number from outside New England to 35 percent. There were striking increases in selectivity at the graduate level as well. Our College of Business increased its national ranking in admissions selectivity by 18 places; our College of Engineering increased its position by 37 places; and our School of Law by 18 places.

And these students are doing wonderful things. We had our first Marshall Scholar this past year, and two Northeastern students also won Fulbright Awards. For the third year in four, a team from our College of Business coached by Ray Kinnunen won the Boston area case competition Beanpot, while our law school team won the ABA's regional moot court competition and our team of civil engineers won top honors at the New England Regional Steel Bridge contest held by the American Society of Civil Engineers. On the athletic field two of our teams, women's swimming and men's indoor track, won America East Championships, and four of our student athletes were named academic All-Americans.

I want to thank all the members of the campus community -- especially our three senior vice presidents who I rely so heavily:

David Hall, Larry Mucciolo, and Dick Meyer -- and all faculty, students and staff, some of them represented here today, whose hard work has led to a record of solid accomplishment during the current academic year. Thanks to all.

III: Heightened Challenges

I said earlier that important challenges came into sharper focus this year. At the top of this list is our effort to strengthen cooperative education. I don't need to tell this audience of the significance of co-op to Northeastern. It has been our defining characteristic for decades, and it remains the basis of our claim to national recognition. I speak often of the importance of asserting leadership in practice-oriented education because, to take Northeastern to the next level, we must project excellence in both classroom and workplace. But all of us in the current leadership are clear that co-op is the foundation on which we are building. National leadership in practice-oriented education depends upon being the best co-op institution in the country.

But co-op can't stand still, anymore than can our High Tech MBA. Conditions have changed. It no longer makes sense to attend Northeastern because co-op earnings will pay the bills. They won't. The primary reason for doing co-op today is because it is a powerful form of learning. To attract top students we must convince them that our unique blend of classroom and workplace experience will enable them to learn more and grow more than they would in a traditional academic setting.

Of course we have always known that co-op has educational benefits. But we have not been very precise about what students learned on co-op, and we have done little to actually measure that learning. To maximize the educational benefits of co-op we need to do more, and that is the central impulse behind a policy document named the Call to Action on Cooperative Education.

The most important idea in the Call to Action is the "integrated learning model," an educational approach in which classroom work and co-op assignments are viewed as two parallel, interactive and coordinated streams of experience contributing to the total education of our students.

We have asked each of our colleges to develop integrated learning models for the disciplines they represent. To do this each college faculty must specify the qualities and competencies their graduates must master. With these outcomes defined, our classroom faculties and co-op coordinators, working together, can identify the respective contributions that academic studies and co-op can make to the desired student outcomes. This exercise, which has been a major focus of our work this year, will enable the colleges not only to revise their courses to meet contemporary needs but to be much more definitive about what we expect students to accomplish from each co-op assignment.

Programmatic change requires organizational change. We cannot achieve heightened educational goals for co-op with structures put in place when co-op's primary purpose was to help students finance their studies. So this year we have brought the co-op coordinators into the structures of the colleges. We have revised reporting lines so that the coordinators are accountable to the college deans and department chairs, who have primary responsibility for organizing our students' educational experiences. We have located offices in each of the colleges where the coordinators are expected to spend a substantial amount of time each week. These organizational changes are intended to intensify the interaction between co-op coordinators, classroom faculty, academic advisors and individual students in order to maximize the learning of each Northeastern undergraduate.

I have to tell you that not everyone is happy with these changes. Some would rather keep doing things the way we have done them for years, and we have had some bumpy moments over the past 12 months. But I am convinced that change in co-op holds the key to our institutional ambitions, and I want to thank provost Hall, [co-op] vice president [Richard] Porter, and the deans of the colleges for their leadership in implementing the Call to Action. I want also to thank the members of the trustees' Special Committee on Cooperative Education, chaired by Mike Cronin, for continuing their thoughtful and supportive work in this area.

There is one other challenge facing the university that deserves attention this morning. That challenge is represented by our planning for a new capital campaign. Next month the Board of Trustees will formally consider committing the university to raising \$200 million in private giving by the year 2004. This is nearly double the amount of private support we achieved during the Centennial Campaign. And yet we must reach for it. We have much ground to gain -- in support for faculty, in funded professorships, in endowed scholarships, in program support and in facilities -- if we are to break into the top 100 universities in the nation. Our competitors are not standing still. BC [Boston College] has announced a campaign for \$400 million over the next five years. BU [Boston University] is currently planning a campaign that will be in the \$750 million to \$1 billion range.

The goal of recognition among the top 100 universities in the country is not just a matter of aspiring to excellence. We are one of 81 private research universities in the United States. Of these 81, most are already in the top 100, and for very good reason. Private universities must return the highest possible value in the reputation of their degrees if they are to compete with public institutions, many of them quite excellent, that charge a small fraction of private sector rates. So despite the quality of what we do, despite the special advantages of co-op, despite the progress of the recent past, a Northeastern University in the third tier of the U.S. News rankings is in a vulnerable place. Getting into the top 100 is not just an inspiring goal; it is a strategic imperative.

In higher education, there is a close relationship between levels of institutional expenditure and perceptions of institutional quality. Tier I institutions spend more per student than do Tier II institutions; Tier II more than Tier III; and so on. While correlations between institutional reputation and expenditure levels are far from perfect, we cannot ignore the fact that our outlays per student are well below the median for private universities in Tier II, and even below the median for Tier III. These comparisons are made more worrisome by the fact that many of our enrollments are in high cost fields such as engineering, science and the health professions, and that we must bear the considerable costs of maintaining a co-op

program that most institutions don't even try to emulate.

So we need to build the endowment; we need to increase expendable dollars year-by-year; and we need to keep enhancing our facilities. That is what the leadership campaign is all about. In this area, of course, we are particularly dependent upon our alumni, friends and supporters, including many people in this room. Key members of our governing boards have already taken the lead. I am grateful to Ron Rossetti for agreeing to chair this campaign, and for increasing his campaign commitment to \$1 million. Arthur Pappas is serving as vice chair and has raised his total commitment level to \$400,000. Bill Cotter will chair the corporators committee and has committed a total of \$100,000 to the new campaign. Other supporters have also come forward jump-start the leadership campaign. Corporator Marvin Haas has agreed to support a Presidential Scholarship at \$300,000; corporator Larry Cetrulo has committed \$225,000 to establish a scholarship and support his law school reunion. Trustee Kevin Fitzgerald has committed \$147,000 in new gifts to increase his endowment funds; trustee emeritus Chet Krentzman has added \$100,000 to his giving; and corporator designate Len Perham has also committed \$100,000. Bob Marini has committed \$50,000 to the new campaign. We had wonderful news yesterday when I learned that a friend of Northeastern will contribute \$1.5 million anonymously to keep us moving. I want to formally acknowledge this year what I could only hint at last May: the Raytheon Corporation has committed \$1.5 million to fund a trustee professorship in honor of Dennis Picard.

Finally, three members of our Board of Trustees have stepped forward with particularly generous gifts to make sure the leadership campaign gets off on the right foot. Henry Nassella has committed \$500,000 and will chair the campaign's trustee committee. Our chairman Neal Finnegan has pledged \$1 million in new giving to support scholarships in honor of his parents, and will also chair the campaign's leadership committee. And Jean Tempel has committed \$3 million dollars to Northeastern University, \$1.5 to support a chair in the name of Neal Finnegan, and an additional \$1.5 million to support a second chair.

So we are moving. We are moving academically, we are moving organizationally and we are moving financially. I have spoken at length about the competitive context in which we operate and why that context makes our progress imperative. But there is a second, in many ways more important, imperative that should energize our efforts. We stand for important things at Northeastern. We stand for opportunity, especially the opportunity of young people from all backgrounds, to obtain an outstanding education. We stand for the proposition that higher education should be attentive to the needs of society. We stand for excellence in our professional work as teachers and scholars. We stand for engagement with the urban community. And we stand above all for an educational idea of great significance -- the principle that many students will develop best in a learning environment that includes both classroom study and practical experience and that provides them with liberal learning as well as professional education.

In asserting national leadership in practice-oriented education, we take on a responsibility, not just to students at Northeastern but to all young people who would flourish in the form of education that we are defining. We know that if we are to fulfill this responsibility, we need to work harder and better and smarter and that we cannot settle for less than the best from every part of our university. We have seen, in the space of the last 12 months, that our best efforts are competitive at the highest level of academic work in this country. So we know that our goal is within reach. We will stay the course until that goal is achieved. And with your help, we shall succeed.

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