

### **Northeastern University**

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# Students to explore what makes Boston Boston



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#### More students apply themselves — to Northeastern

With days to go before the deadline, undergraduate applications are already up 20 percent over last year.

"This is going to be a great admissions year," said Philomena Mantella, senior vice president for enrollment management. "We have more than 30,000 applications already and we're still four days away from the deadline." More>



#### Hotel, jobs proposal pleases Roxbury task force

A hotel plan that would create 60 new permanent jobs on Northeastern-owned land in Lower Roxbury moved forward with the developer's recent presentation to the community.

Newcastle Hotels shared details of its proposal with the Parcel 18 Task Force, the community oversight and outreach body on development plans at the site. More>

#### Professors muse on the campaign (an ongoing Voice project)

#### Faculty in the news

- Dean Jack Greene on experiential education
- Assistant professor Tim Bickmore's 'computer nurses'

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#### Students to explore what makes Boston Boston

Boston's "triple revolution" — demographics, industrial and spatial changes — is at issue in a new seminar course on public policy taught by School of Social Science, Public Policy and Urban Affairs Dean Barry Bluestone and Boston Foundation President Paul Grogan.



The duo will focus on the economic, social and political dynamics of central cities like

Boston, and focus on key factors of economic health, including education, housing, urban crime and health care.

The class kicked off Jan. 7 with an opening lecture on what makes a city a city. Other topics of discussion will include urban sustainability, transportation, housing, public policies to create competitive advantage, land use and zoning regulations, urban and neighborhood safety and civic engagement.

Bluestone and Grogan, who have worked on housing policy initiatives in Boston for many years, offer deeper insights on the critical challenges facing U.S. cities today, and the range of approaches being taken to meet them.

What's happening in Greater Boston serves as the locus for many issues covered in this graduate-level class, which meets Mondays at 6:30 p.m. in 215 Shillman Hall. Classes may be audited free of charge.

In draft chapters of forthcoming Oxford University Press textbook, which Bluestone is coauthoring, he describes the importance of where we live. "Place matters. Whether it's the exhilaration some of us feel when the hometown team wins the big game, or the desire to escape our surroundings and seek our fortune elsewhere (or, paradoxically, the ability to feel both sentiments simultaneously), we care passionately about the places where we live," he wrote.

He added: "Even when we choose to leave the places where we grew up, we are often nostalgic for 'the old neighborhood' or 'the old country.' We carry our origins with us even as we reinvent ourselves, crafting lives that are different from those of our parents or grandparents."

The wonders and paradox of urban life is explored in both the class and the new book "The Urban Experience: Economics, Society and Public Policy." Coauthors are Mary Huff Stevenson and Russell Williams, senior research fellows at the Center for Urban and Regional Policy, which Bluestone directs.

Susan Salk

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Applicants for early acceptance are up significantly as well, Mantella said, and the percentage of those students already making deposits for a place in fall 2008 has risen sharply.

"This is a very competitive admissions cycle overall," she noted. Mantella attributed the rise both to the admissions team, under Dean Ronné Turner, and the university's broad appeal.

"All the special aspects of Northeastern really resonate with today's high-school students, including the urban campus, the wide array of academic offerings and experiential learning," she said.

"And we have had a much more aggressive (recruitment) campaign in a much broader geographic region." She said admissions staff had reached out to "many more high schools" than in past years.

"We are excited at the response reflected in this great applicant growth," Mantella said.

— Jim Chiavelli

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Newcastle Hotels shared details of its proposal with the Parcel 18 Task Force, the community oversight and outreach body on development plans at the site.

Parcel 18, at the corner of Tremont Street and Melnea Cass Boulevard, also holds the Renaissance Park office building. Newcastle will build the Marriott Hotel in cooperation with Boston-based Columbia Plaza Associates (CPA), which includes notable local developer Ken Guscott.

Newcastle told the task force that the hotel will employ about 60 workers from the local community. Officials said their practice has been to hire locally and train workers for potential advancement throughout the hotel chain.

The Boston architectural firm Stull and Lee, which designed the Ruggles MBTA station and created the Parcel 18 master plan, is designing the hotel.

Newcastle will kick off the formal regulatory process with the April filing of a "project notification form" with the Boston Redevelopment Authority.

Task force members said they were pleased that Northeastern is following through on its commitment on the final development of the land, and the hotel project is advancing after decades in limbo. The state cleared several lots, including the one designated Parcel 18, for a highway in the late 1960s. When that plan was scrapped in the early 1970s, the state convened the Parcel 18 Task Force, drawn from five neighborhood community development corporations, state officials and Northeastern, the property's abutter. The land was transferred from the state to the Boston Redevelopment Authority, which in 1987 supported CPA's plan to build a hotel and office building.

The office building was rented to the Registry of Motor Vehicles and the hotel was put on hold based on economic projections; after the Registry left in1994, the task force asked Northeastern to assume stewardship over the land, in conjunction with CPA.

Northeastern renamed the building Renaissance Park and went ahead with a planned parking garage. In 2007, after more than two years of community meetings on siting residence halls, the university has begun construction of a building that will house 1,200 students, as well as retail and office space, at Parcel 18.

- Jim Chiavelli

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