



Northeastern University

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Featured Article

Sternbergs donate \$5 million to endow faculty positions



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Sy Sternberg '68 and his wife, Laurie Sternberg, generously donated \$5 million to establish two endowed interdisciplinary faculty positions at the university: \$3 million will be used to establish the Sternberg Family Distinguished University Endowed Chair and \$2 million will be dedicated to creating the Sy and Laurie Sternberg Interdisciplinary Endowed Professorship.

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Stephen Trachtenberg, president emeritus of The George Washington University, will bring that first set of fresh eyes to campus next week as he makes a preliminary visit. Trachtenberg has been named chair of the team that will evaluate Northeastern.

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But twice a week they're on equal — and sometimes unsteady — footing, moving their bodies into positions with names like "down dog" and "lotus."

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The Husky men's varsity opened its regular regatta season with a two-length victory over Boston University, taking the cup for the 23rd time in 31 competitions.

GoNU.com has [the full story](#).

Northeastern in the news

- Steve Morrison, professor and chair of economics, [talks with The New York Times](#) about the merger of Delta and Northwest airlines.
- Medical News Today [writes about professor Kim Lewis' \\$1.4 million grant](#) from the National Institutes of Health.

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President Joseph Aoun and Sy Sternberg. / COURTESY PHOTO

"I am proud to call Sy and Laurie partners in our quest to raise Northeastern to the next level of excellence," said university President Joseph E. Aoun. "Their extreme generosity opens new doors for our research and teaching enterprises to flourish and will be a powerful catalyst in the life of this institution.

Ultimately, the impact of their investment will reach far beyond campus borders as it supports excellent scholars whose work in emerging fields has a substantial impact on the world. We are immensely grateful for their generous and visionary gifts to our university."

"Laurie and I are thrilled to support the continuation of Northeastern's longstanding tradition of research and teaching excellence," said Sy Sternberg. "Endowed faculty positions are immensely important to the future of this campus in so many ways. Our decision to support interdisciplinary faculty in particular stemmed from a desire to help professors pursue the kind of innovative research that leads to a better society for all of us. Beyond that, we want Northeastern to always be a stimulating place for undergraduate and graduate students to learn. We felt one way to perpetuate that tradition was to support the talented professors who will bring learning to life for future generations of students. We're happy to do our part."

The Sternberg Family Distinguished University Endowed Chair will be awarded through a university-wide initiative to recognize a select group of senior faculty. University chairs are awarded to faculty whose work and scholarly achievements bring significant recognition to the institution. The holder of the Sternberg Family University Endowed Chair will be a scholar whose research and teaching activities are either at the intersection of or cross traditional academic boundaries and whose work promises to broaden the scope of learning and discovery.

The Sy and Laurie Sternberg Interdisciplinary Endowed Professorship will be awarded to an outstanding faculty member at the associate

professor level whose work demonstrates exceptional promise in adding knowledge in one or more fields of study.

The Sternberg family's generous contribution underscores the university's Interdisciplinary Faculty Initiative. This initiative brings together excellent scholars from different disciplines to blend their expertise in order to create new knowledge. As part of the initiative, Northeastern seeks to add 50 new scholars to its faculty. These scholars will aspire to create new areas of scholarship and new disciplines by combining their knowledge and mastery of different fields with others.

Sternberg, who graduated with a master's degree in electrical engineering from Northeastern, is chairman of the board and chief executive officer of New York Life Insurance Co., and a Northeastern trustee.

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Stephen Trachtenberg

Trachtenberg will "begin to lay the groundwork for his team," said Kay Onan. "He will develop a sense of the university and critical areas for his team to focus on."

Trachtenberg will meet with President Joseph Aoun and other officials and faculty members, Onan said.

On-campus committees have spent the academic year shaping Northeastern's responses under 11 standards set out by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, the regional accrediting body. The campus community will be invited to open meetings on the final reports, and is being asked to comment on draft committee reports, some of which are now posted online at www.northeastern.edu/oir/reaccreditation/index.html.

The 11 reaccreditation standards the self-study must address are: mission and purpose; planning and evaluation; organization and governance; the academic program; faculty; students; library and other informational resources; physical and technological resources; financial resources; public disclosure; and integrity.

The reaccreditation team, made up of faculty and administrators from colleague universities, will visit in November and will "not be looking at specific programs, but will take a comprehensive view of the entire university," said Mark Putnam, senior vice president for executive affairs. "They look at whether our planning and organization and resources are appropriate to the institution's mission and purpose."

Trachtenberg, who was president of George Washington for 19 years until he retired in 2007, holds a bachelor's from Columbia, a J.D. from Yale and an M.P.A. from Harvard. He had been vice president and academic dean at the College of Liberal Arts at Boston University, then president of the University of Hartford for 11 years before assuming the George Washington presidency. He also served as special assistant to the U.S. education commissioner, an attorney for the Atomic Energy Agency and a congressional aide.

His full biography appears at www.gwu.edu/~presemer/.

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For an hour, staff from throughout the campus community trek to SquashBusters to participate in a yoga class offered by Campus Recreation.



You can set your watch by them. At about 12:15 every Monday and Wednesday, they file into the gym, many carrying their own brightly colored mats, to participate in a class that has grown in popularity and commitment.

"The reason this class is so popular is in part because of how dedicated the students are," said Colleen Fritze, coordinator of non-credit instruction for Campus Recreation. "The energy of the group we have right now is phenomenal."

Campus Recreation introduced yoga classes about five years ago as an opportunity for staff to reduce stress, increase flexibility and get away from their computer screens for a brief time, Fritze said. "Yoga is a wonderful way for staff to build strength and balance, and reduce stress," she said.

Sue Du Brava, public safety administrator, Debra Smith, staff assistant for marketing and communications, and Maureen Underhill, senior budget analyst for the School of Law, are three dedicated converts who recently discovered the class, each for their individual reasons.

Du Brava decided to join the class after a friend suggested that maybe their lunch break could be spent doing something really good for them. "I said, 'OK, let's try it.' The class has really turned out to be wonderful," she said. There are about 16 or 18 of us, and we've all become so committed to it."

Smith decided to try it to ease her neck strain. "I'm surprised how much it has helped in my mobility and with the reduction of pain," she said. "I can't believe how much it has helped, and I've only been doing it for five months."

She credits the patience of instructor Erin Cooney as a big plus. "She always works within the capabilities of the students, but she also sets goals for us," she said.

Underhill started taking yoga classes on campus about six years ago as a way to get into shape.

What she found was so much more than a good workout routine. "I find it really replenishes me," she said. "I'm much more positive and feel better."

The idea behind yoga courses and other instruction through Campus Recreation, is to offer employees a way to reduce stress and improve their physical well-being, said Fritze, noting that information about all non-credit classes offered at Campus Recreation can be found on www.campusrec.neu.edu.

— Susan Salk

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