



Northeastern University

---

Northeastern Voice Electronic Edition

Office of Marketing and Communications

---

April 02, 2008

## Northeastern Voice: April 2, 2008

Northeastern University - Division of Marketing and Communications

---

### Recommended Citation

Northeastern University - Division of Marketing and Communications, "Northeastern Voice: April 2, 2008" (2008). *Northeastern Voice Electronic Edition*. Paper 17. <http://hdl.handle.net/2047/d10014883>

This work is available open access, hosted by Northeastern University.

# Northeastern Voice

Electronic edition, Vol. 1 No. 14, Apr. 2, 2008

## In This Issue

### Main Page

**Zoloth steps up to serve Northeastern**

**Online faculty ratings to allow students more depth, time**

**In Klein Lecture, Fox offers warning for campuses**

**Provost's office hosts research conference**

## Featured Article

**Zoloth steps up to serve Northeastern**



Stephen Zoloth, the longtime dean of Bouvé College of Health Science, said there was only one answer when the president requested he sit as acting provost.

"I was asked by President Aoun to serve the institution in the interim position," he said, "and I've always said 'yes' when the institution has asked."

**Online faculty ratings to allow students more depth, time**

Everybody knows about Rate My Professor. Now, there's TRACE — short for Teacher Rating Course Evaluation.

Later this month, Northeastern students will be asked to rate their teachers using the online tool that features in-depth questions to inspire more thoughtful feedback on their educational experience, according to a letter from TRACE Implementation Committee chair James Alan Fox.

**In Klein Lecture, Fox offers warning for campuses**

Now is not the time to panic. It isn't the time to make off-the-cuff decisions in panicky reaction to the perception that the United States falling victim to an escalation in campus violence so great that the nation's young people are imperiled, is giving sway to "epidemic thinking" that could have far-reaching, detrimental effects.



**Provost's office hosts research conference**

The university will host the sixth annual Undergraduate Research Conference of the Colonial Academic Alliance this weekend, an event featuring the work of students from 12 research universities on the eastern seaboard.

### In the news

- Joseph Giglio, senior academic specialist and executive professor of general management, was [quoted in a Money article](#) about the measures that cash-strapped states are considering to fund much needed infrastructure projects.
- Law professor Roger Abrams [spoke about his new book](#) "The Dark Side of the Diamond: Gambling, Violence, Drugs and Alcoholism in the National Pastime" in the Cleveland Free Times.

Read the university's [Equal Opportunity Policy](#).

© 2007 Northeastern University

716 Columbus Ave., Suite 598, Boston, Massachusetts 02115 • 617.373.7225 • TTY 617.373.3768

# Northeastern Voice

Electronic edition, Vol. 1 No. 14, Apr. 2, 2008

## In This Issue

**Main Page**

**Zoloth steps up to serve Northeastern**

**Online faculty ratings to allow students more depth, time**

**In Klein Lecture, Fox offers warning for campuses**

**Provost's office hosts research conference**

### Zoloth steps up to serve Northeastern

Stephen Zoloth, the longtime dean of Bouvé College of Health Science, said there was only one answer when the president requested he sit as acting provost.



Stephen Zoloth

"I was asked by President Aoun to serve the institution in the interim position," he said, "and I've always said 'yes' when the institution has asked.

"And it's especially exciting to take this role at such a crucial point in the university's academic momentum, when the Academic Plan and Interdisciplinary Faculty Initiative are being implemented," he said.

The dean, former professor of community health and longtime academic assumed the post April 1, to succeed Ahmed Abdelal.

This transition, he acknowledged, comes at "a critical time," in the middle of important ongoing projects, including department-chair searches and a faculty salary-market review. "The university doesn't stop" because of a provostial transition, he said.

Zoloth hit the ground running this week, moving into the provost's suite in Richards and meeting with Abdelal to get up to speed on the numerous project, initiatives and issues.

He said that, while he's sitting in a new office at Northeastern, "It's not a whole new world for me.

"Certainly, deans have a lot of administrative responsibilities, especially at Northeastern," he said. And before he came to Northeastern, eight years ago, Zoloth served as the sole associate provost at Hunter College in New York.

"My responsibilities there included the library, all research, all graduate programs, all health sciences programs and education programs," he said. "It was a pretty broad range of experiences."

Zoloth, who holds a Ph.D. in biology and an M.P.H. in epidemiology and occupational health and health policy, had served as a professor and dean at Hunter College before becoming associate provost. He joined Northeastern in 2000, and has served recently on the team that helped formulate the Academic Plan, co-chairing the committee on urban and global dimensions of the university's future.

He is eager to work closely with university deans in refining their plans for the coming academic year.

© 2007 Northeastern University

716 Columbus Ave., Suite 598, Boston, Massachusetts 02115 • 617.373.7225 • TTY 617.373.3768

# Northeastern Voice

Electronic edition, Vol. 1 No. 14, Apr. 2, 2008

## In This Issue

### Main Page

**Zoloth steps up to serve  
Northeastern**

**Online faculty ratings to allow  
students more depth, time**

**In Klein Lecture, Fox offers  
warning for campuses**

**Provost's office hosts research  
conference**

### **Online faculty ratings to allow students more depth, time**

Everybody knows about Rate My Professor. Now, there's TRACE — short for Teacher Rating Course Evaluation.

Later this month, Northeastern students will be asked to rate their teachers using the online tool that features in-depth questions to inspire more thoughtful feedback on their educational experience, according to a letter from TRACE Implementation Committee chair James Alan Fox.

"The quality of the feedback should really improve," said Fox, Lipman Family professor of criminal justice. "Students will be able to see their comments and the comments of their peers almost immediately, and they can fill out the survey in a much more convenient time frame."

Rather than the old-fashioned pencil-and-paper method used at the conclusion of Northeastern courses for years, this newer evaluation will give students time and privacy to develop thoughtful responses to a wider-range of "open-ended" questions, Fox said.

Students will be asked to complete their course evaluations between April 9 and 27, according to a memo. On April 29, faculty will be given access to the responses, and given until May 5 to respond. On May 12, the evaluations will be available to the entire university community, readable through the MyNEU portal.

In a report to the faculty, Fox described TRACE as an instrument that offers much more than previous evaluation methods, presenting students with a wide array of open-ended questions designed to reveal the strengths and weaknesses of each course.

"We ask a variety of questions now, focusing on anything from the syllabus to books," he said.

Susan Powers-Lee, executive vice provost and member of the TRACE committee, said the new evaluation tool has significant advantages over the older method.

"We have a wider range of questions concerning course content and instruction," she said, adding that they should elicit more thoughtful feedback.

"(We have seen) evidence, as well as data from other universities' experiences, that students provide more thoughtful input on the open-ended questions when using the on-line system," Powers-Lee said.

The move to online evaluations came out of a Faculty Senate resolution in 2007 to replace the current Teacher-Course Evaluation (TCE) program with a redesigned and electronically administered TRACE system, according to Fox.

Other members of the TRACE committee who brought the new system to fruition are Kostia Bergman, associate professor of biology; Raymond Kinnunen, associate professor of international business and strategy;

and Richard Mickool, executive director of Information Services.

— Susan Salk

© 2007 Northeastern University

716 Columbus Ave., Suite 598, Boston, Massachusetts 02115 • 617.373.7225 • TTY 617.373.3768

# Northeastern Voice

Electronic edition, Vol. 1 No. 14, Apr. 2, 2008

## In This Issue

Main Page

Zoloth steps up to serve  
Northeastern

Online faculty ratings to allow  
students more depth, time

In Klein Lecture, Fox offers  
warning for campuses

Provost's office hosts research  
conference

### In Klein Lecture, Fox offers warning for campuses



Klein lecturer James Alan Fox and his wife Sue Ann pose with president Aoun. Also pictured are daughter Jennifer Stark and son Alex.

Now is not the time to panic. It isn't the time to make off-the-cuff decisions in panicky reaction to the perception that the United States falling victim to an escalation in campus violence so great that the nation's young people are imperiled, is giving sway to "epidemic thinking" that could have far-reaching, detrimental effects.

"Epidemic thinking can tragically become a self-fulfilling prophesy by fueling a contagion effect," said Lipman Professor of criminal James Alan Fox at this year's annual Klein Memorial Lecture. "As tragic as the two campus shootings were this year, we are not in an epidemic."

Rather than rush to impose restrictions on students through the use of metal detectors, surveillance, training drills, beefed-up security and student profiling research— all measures Fox describes as reactionary — a reasoned approach to student needs should be taken.

Enhanced student counseling services is one path that could lead to better overall student wellbeing, he suggested.

Noting that the International Association of Counseling Services, a nonprofit accrediting organization, advises that campuses maintain a student-counselor ratio of 1,500 to one, Fox recommended doing better than this. Universities should increase resources for troubled students. If this means paying higher salaries to counselors, and staffing a fuller team, it will be money well spent on a proactive measure.

"We need to be very sensitive to the needs of our students and the subtle issues and worrying signs that indicate trouble," he said.

Another area that could be better leveraged is the way in which some faculty treat their students. Stresses abound in academia; faculty should remember that, he said. "All too often the faculty are not the most

sensitive or responsive people when it comes to their students' wellbeing," Fox said. "Sometimes their minds are more in the lab than they are on the students."

He added, "We must ensure the faculty members and the administration do not abuse their power over the lives and careers of students, and graduate students in particular, as well as colleagues. This extends to grading issues, disciplinary matters, advising roles, and mentoring and assessment of faculty."

Nor should members of the mainstream press forget their responsibility for reasonable, objective reporting, and their role in whipping up media frenzy this year that was embarrassing in its scope, he said.

The world does not need minute-to-minute death toll figures and television reporting that borders on absurdity. He was sickened by CNN's and MSNBC's marathon coverage of the massacre in Blacksburg, Va., he said.

"As if the tragedy wasn't horrific enough, the media coverage was shamelessly sensationalistic," Fox said. "With nearly gleeful enthusiasm, the anchors of the various cable channels tracked the rising death toll at Virginia Tech.

"Within hours, as the death toll climbed higher and higher ... and for the remainder of the day and evening, viewers were told repeatedly and ad nauseam that this had been the biggest, baddest, the bloodiest, the absolute worst, the most devastating."

Tragic as recent campus shootings are, they are not indicative of an epidemic, he said.

— Susan Salk

© 2007 Northeastern University

716 Columbus Ave., Suite 598, Boston, Massachusetts 02115 • 617.373.7225 • TTY 617.373.3768

# Northeastern Voice

Electronic edition, Vol. 1 No. 14, Apr. 2, 2008

## In This Issue

### Main Page

**Zoloth steps up to serve  
Northeastern**

**Online faculty ratings to allow  
students more depth, time**

**In Klein Lecture, Fox offers  
warning for campuses**

**Provost's office hosts research  
conference**

### **Provost's office hosts research conference**

The university will host the sixth annual Undergraduate Research Conference of the Colonial Academic Alliance this weekend, an event featuring the work of students from 12 research universities on the eastern seaboard.

"This is a wonderful opportunity to showcase the undergraduate research carried out by our own students as well as students from other CAA institutions," said Susan Powers-Lee, executive vice provost.

The provost's office is sponsoring the event, which begins Friday evening.

"The breadth of research topics is impressive, as is the participation by students from nine of the CAA member universities," Powers-Lee said.

She will moderate a Saturday discussion on chemistry and physics, vice provost Sara Wadia-Fascetti will lead another on business and engineering, and vice provost Luis Falcon will moderate a discussion on history.

Three Northeastern faculty members are lined up for key talks, including William Fowler, Dennis Shaughnessy and Craig Ferris. And helping to close the event, Northeastern alumnus Andy Jasenak will discuss his "Reflections on Experiential Education."

For more information about the conference, please [see the event's Web site](#).

© 2007 Northeastern University

716 Columbus Ave., Suite 598, Boston, Massachusetts 02115 • 617.373.7225 • TTY 617.373.3768