



Northeastern University

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Northeastern Voice Electronic Edition

Office of Marketing and Communications

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June 04, 2008

## Northeastern Voice: June 4, 2008

Northeastern University - Division of Marketing and Communications

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### Recommended Citation

Northeastern University - Division of Marketing and Communications, "Northeastern Voice: June 4, 2008" (2008). *Northeastern Voice Electronic Edition*. Paper 22. <http://hdl.handle.net/2047/d10015085>

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# Northeastern Voice

Electronic edition, Vol. 1 No. 22, June 4, 2008

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**Four African-American women to join faculty**

## Featured Article

**University community greets new provost**



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President Joseph Aoun told attendees that Director shares the university's commitment to "excellence, diversity, innovation and momentum."

## Four African-American women to join faculty

President Joseph Aoun's oft-stated drive to make Northeastern a model for society, rather than simply a mirror, on issues of diversity is gaining more traction with the addition of four African-American women to the university's faculty.

The hires, in the Colleges of Arts and Sciences and of Business Administration, will also significantly advance interdisciplinary academic efforts at the university.



### In the media

- Gloria Barczak, professor of marketing, [spoke with Computer World](#) about the effect of the year-old iPhone.
- Eric Stewart, senior research associate in biology, [talked with The Boston Globe](#) about new discoveries that could lead to better understanding of human aging.

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### University community greets new provost



Stephen Director greets faculty in the Alumni Pavillion. / Photo by CRAIG BAILEY

At a series of receptions on Monday, the Northeastern community welcomed Stephen Director, who begins as the university's provost on July 1.

President Joseph Aoun told attendees that Director shares the university's commitment to "excellence, diversity, innovation and momentum."

"We are all confident that Stephen will make a wonderful provost," said professor Donna Bishop, who chaired the search committee that recommended Director to Aoun.

"He is an outstanding scholar and researcher, and he fits exactly with the profile that you have indicated you want in a provost," Bishop said to academic leaders.

Aoun noted that Director was the "unanimous recommendation" of the committee, which he said was "absolutely magnificent" in its conduct of the search.

Director met first with academic leadership at a small gathering in the Alumni Pavilion. At a second reception for faculty and staff, he said he and his wife, Laurie, are "truly excited about joining the Northeastern community."

"I can't tell you how impressed I was to meet Joseph (Aoun)," Director said. "He articulates a vision of not just where Northeastern is heading, but where higher education in general should head."

Director praised President Aoun as being a "great leader" for the university as it moves toward "international recognition."

The new provost met student leaders at a forum on Tuesday with Senior Vice President Philomena Mantella and Vice President Ed Klotzbier, and

breakfasted with college deans as well.

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### Four African-American women to join faculty

President Joseph Aoun's oft-stated drive to make Northeastern a model for society, rather than simply a mirror, on issues of diversity is gaining more traction with the addition of four African-American women to the university's faculty.

The hires, in the Colleges of Arts and Sciences and of Business Administration, will also significantly advance interdisciplinary academic efforts at the university.

The new assistant professors are Nicole Aljoe and Kimberly Brown in English, Charissa Threat in history and Marla Baskerville in accounting. They are scheduled to start in the 2008-2009 academic year.

Luis Falcon, vice provost for faculty and graduate education, said the hiring of Aljoe, Brown and Threat in arts and sciences could be considered a "cluster hire."

"Even though they will be based in two departments, English and history, their scholarship spans from their own disciplines to gender studies and African-American studies," he said. "They advance our efforts at strengthening interdisciplinarity while also contributing to the diversity of our faculty."

"Once we realized that we had such excellent candidates in a pool of applicants, we made a concerted effort to make sure they were recruited," Falcon said. "We managed to do so despite the fact that all of them were entertaining offers from other top universities."

Aoun, in answers to questions submitted by the Council on University Programs last fall, said Northeastern "aggressively" recruits, "through formal and informal methods, faculty and staff who are both competitive in their fields and reflective of what our society looks like."

"Of course, we can always do more," he told the students.

The new faculty:

- **Aljoe** earned a doctorate from Tufts University, and is currently assistant professor of history at the University of Utah. Her work is on West Indian slave narratives and the African diaspora.

"Most people think of slave narratives as stemming from the United States. But there's actually a very significant narrative stemming from the Caribbean," she said in a recent interview. "I look at the global experience of slavery."

Her focus is on the different rhetorical information stemming from slaves. Surprisingly, she said, Caribbean and African slaves did not narrate their own stories; to do so was thought to be less believable. "Slaves who told their own stories were thought to offer less credible accounts of the facts," she said, noting that narratives offered by religious leaders and impartial historians were deemed more reliable.

Aljoe loves studying in Boston. From its rich "treasure trove" of historic records, which stem from close ties with Caribbean slave ships, to a strong intellectual base of researchers and faculty, the city has a lot to offer.

"I did my graduate work at Tufts, and I'm thrilled to be returning to the area," she said. "I think the English department, with the hiring of Carla Kaplan, seems poised to do great things, especially with interdisciplinary studies."

- **Threat** is a doctoral candidate in history at the University of Iowa, and a researcher at Northeastern University. Her dissertation is on the campaign to integrate the nursing corps, especially during wartime.

Her work focuses on the integration of African-American women into the Army nurse corps from the 1940s to the 1960s, tracing itself along her questions of race and gender, she said.

Her dissertation "Re-Imaging Civil Rights: The Campaign to Integrate the Army Nurse Corps" examines the way minorities were folded into nursing service, and how that opportunity correlated to ideals of full citizenship status in the United States, she said.

"The ability to serve as a nurse in wartime was in a large way an opportunity to push for equal rights," she said recently.

- **Baskerville** is completing her doctorate in organizational behavior at the A.B. Freeman School of Business at Tulane University. Her research focuses on the experiences of women and racial minorities in the workplace, and includes issues related to sexuality, minority recruitment, social dominance orientation and modern sexism at work. She has been published in the Journal of Applied Psychology and the Journal of Vocational Behavior, and she gave a presentation at the Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management, the Southern Management Association, and the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology.

"In my dissertation, I am examining whether expressions of sexuality at work are harmful or beneficial to women," she said recently. "I contend that such expressions may impact objective (e.g. promotions) and interpersonal (e.g. relationships with others) outcomes differently, depending on the context."

- **Brown** is a postdoctoral research fellow at Rice University, in the Center for the Study of Women, Gender and Sexuality. She earned her doctorate in African-American and American Studies from Yale University in 2006. Her research interests concern slavery and the black female body, 20th century literatures of the African Diaspora, as well as violence, visuality, and cultural memory. She will teach Contemporary American Literature and Murder and Unbelonging in the Literary Imagination at Northeastern.

"I am thrilled to be joining the English Department at Northeastern University," she said. "I am looking forward to developing as an interdisciplinary scholar and teacher in this exciting environment."

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