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Northeastern University

Aoun University Messages

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October 31, 2011

Messages & Writings : October 2011

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Recommended Citation

Aoun, Joseph E., "Messages & Writings : October 2011" (2011). *Aoun University Messages*. Paper 33.

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Northeastern University
Office of the President

Boundless Opportunities

To my faculty and staff colleagues:

Northeastern has always been a university engaged with the world, and this has enabled us to be nimble and innovative in meeting the needs of our students and society. We are on an exciting journey to realize our vision of the 21st century University, and I have important news to share about our next steps.

Later this morning we will announce the launch of a system of regional campuses in selected American cities, starting today in Charlotte, North Carolina. Next year we expect to open a second regional campus in Seattle, Washington, and we are actively evaluating opportunities elsewhere. This follows two years of planning by many members of our community, including extensive discussion with the deans and Faculty Senate.

Moving beyond the traditional campus model, the regional campus initiative is responsive to fundamental and dramatic changes in higher education today. This initiative will position Northeastern to meet evolving educational needs and seize exciting opportunities beyond Boston; at the same time, this new model will enrich our local education and research enterprise. New research collaborations, opportunities to develop new curricula, and an expanded network of co-op employers are all benefits that will flow from a robust and integrated university system.

Our regional campuses will be platforms for graduate degree programs tailored to the needs of regional economies, and for partnerships between Northeastern and industry. While we will not offer undergraduate programs at our regional campuses, we will offer a broad range of degrees—in business, engineering, health sciences, education, and computer science—from our current menu of excellent graduate programs and programs that our colleges develop in the future.

In his new role as Dean of Academic Affairs for External Programs, Steve Zoloth will work with the college deans to ensure that programs offered at our regional campuses are consistent with our mission and academic plan and are of the highest quality. All programs will be taught by Northeastern faculty and delivered through various combinations of online and classroom instruction that are tailored to the needs of working professionals.

Dean Zoloth will also work with the Senior Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, the Provost, the college deans and the faculty to identify and leverage opportunities for regional research partnerships aligned with our areas of focus in health, sustainability and security. In Charlotte, for example, we may pursue a research collaboration with Duke Energy and a Charlotte-based civic organization that would focus on the impact of sustainability efforts within the local labor market. Relationships with these and other business partners will provide new opportunities for undergraduate co-op placements.

Our activities in Charlotte will be centered in 14,000 square feet of leased space in the city's business district, comprising classrooms, administrative offices, and convening spaces. Dr. Cheryl Richards, who has a background in higher education and strong local ties, will serve as regional dean. The campus will initially launch with eight programs, all aimed at meeting the demands of the local economy—from a master's degree in health informatics to an MBA, to a Master's of Education.

This broad initiative—in Charlotte and beyond-- follows a trajectory we set several years ago when we adopted our Long Range Plan. Our ongoing and planned investments to hire 300 new tenured and tenure-track faculty, expand our research enterprise, and enrich our curricula provide the opportunity and the foundation for taking this exciting next step.

Our global, knowledge-based economy requires universities to move beyond the boundaries of place.

Northeastern is uniquely suited to lead this change. I want to thank all of you who have worked to make this bold vision a reality. I look forward to working with you in the future as we continue our amazing journey.

Sincerely,

Joseph E. Aoun
President

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