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Co-op Innovation

02.02.10

To members of the Northeastern community:

For 100 years, co-op has been the driving force behind a Northeastern education. More than just a practical approach to learning, co-op is a guiding philosophy—a belief that the world beyond our campus is too interesting to ignore.

It is precisely because of the way co-op informs our thinking that Northeastern is constantly adapting its educational offerings. For example, there was a time when co-op amounted to alternating weeks of work and classroom study. This model would certainly not work today, with our students on co-op around the world.

In recent years, we have seen an increasing number of Northeastern students earn bachelor's degrees in four years—some with one or no co-op experiences. As a university committed to its signature academic program, we need to make sure that students who chart a four-year path are able to maximize the benefits of multiple co-ops. For this reason, we are formalizing a four-year, two co-op option that will take its place alongside our renowned five-year option.

Our students—in consultation with their advisors—will determine which path is best for them. The choice is theirs: some will choose four years; some will choose five years. No option is designed to supersede the other. Students have the flexibility to chart a course that is aligned with and advances their aspirations.

As we celebrate this centennial year of co-op, and pursue the ongoing expansion and globalization of our signature program, I have asked the provost, deans, and vice president for student affairs to host a series of college-based discussion forums in the next few weeks. I commend and share the passion that our community feels about co-op, and I look forward to your participation in these important events.

Joseph E. Aoun

President

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