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Joseph E. Aoun
Northeastern University

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Individual Excellence, Shared Success

04-22-11

Yesterday, Northeastern inaugurated an important new event: our first annual Academic Honors Convocation. At a time when our university's momentum has been on display as never before, we celebrated the people who are behind that momentum – and who represent our shared accomplishments as a community.

Business Professor Sheila Puffer – who was awarded the rank of University Professor at our ceremony – captured this sentiment: "All of us share in the excellence and excitement of Northeastern's rapid rise to international renown as an institution that produces important and meaningful research, educates students from around the world in the classroom and on co-op assignments, and gives back to communities, all the way from local to international."

The twenty-seven outstanding women and men we honored reflect the depth and breadth of our university. They include faculty colleagues whose innovative research is addressing the complex challenges of our age, and students whose academic excellence has been recognized both on campus and through external scholarships. They are faculty and graduate students whose inspiring teaching is emboldening the next generation, and dedicated staff members whose energy and creativity have furthered our mission and enhanced our campus environment.

Our honorees also include distinguished alumnus Dr. George J. Kostas, who received the Presidential Medallion – the university's highest honor – for his exceptional commitment and generosity, which has propelled Northeastern's leadership in nanotechnology and national security research.

The achievements of these individuals are impressive on their own. But together, they symbolize something even greater: the limitless potential of our vibrant intellectual community.

Professor Puffer described this potential when she spoke of "three degrees of freedom" she has found at Northeastern: the freedom to pursue research without interference; freedom to explore ideas from an interdisciplinary perspective; and the freedom to learn from the rich variety of individuals that comprise our campus.

These freedoms have enabled us to be, as Dr. Kostas put it, "a model of what a research university can – and should – become."

As we take pride in the distinguished accomplishments of our faculty, staff, students, and supporters, let us also celebrate the freedom we all have embraced – the freedom to achieve our highest goals. By doing so, we have taken Northeastern to new levels – and our journey has only just begun.

Sincerely,

Joseph E. Aoun
President