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New Year, New Opportunities

01-10-11

As a new year gets under way, the media are awash with reports that 2011 will be an exceedingly challenging year for higher education.

Public university systems across the United States are in crisis as governors and legislatures plan to layer deep cuts on top of several years of existing reductions. Meanwhile, many private universities are expected to continue faculty layoffs, extend hiring freezes, and suspend campus initiatives.

At Northeastern, the opposite is true. Over the past several years, we have taken advantage of this period of retrenchment in higher education to recruit top-flight scholars, dramatically expand our faculty, and continue to attract exceptional students. I believe this year presents another precious window of opportunity—a rare moment for us to accelerate transformative change.

In 2011, we will swiftly pursue a number of ambitious goals that will affect every corner of Northeastern. These goals, shaped by our entire University community, are critical to our continuing success. Now is the time for us to achieve them—and for all members of our community to bring their ideas, energy, and commitment to this shared endeavor.

First, we are amplifying our commitment to co-op and to promoting global perspectives. Building on the Presidential Global Scholars program, we are dramatically expanding opportunities for students to take part in international education experiences, international co-ops, and out-of-region co-ops in 2011. These strategies have made our University a leader in undergraduate education, and, as a result, highly talented students continue to choose Northeastern. This year, for example, we have seen a remarkable 28 percent increase in early-action applications for the Fall 2011 undergraduate class. We must sustain this track record.

We also are accelerating our efforts to expand the faculty with vibrant new scholars. Through our innovative cluster hiring approach, we are attracting groups of scholars whose talents can be leveraged to create powerful new synergies within academic disciplines and among our colleges. By the end of the academic year, we aim to hire up to 60 new faculty colleagues, exceeding last year's accomplishment of hiring 40 new faculty.

On the research front, we intend to further cement Northeastern's leadership in our signature research areas of health, security, and sustainability, and surpass last year's banner result of \$82 million in new research grants and awards. We are well on our way. Since the start of the academic year, our faculty have secured \$58 million in new grants and awards, and we expect to reach \$100 million in new funding by the end of June—an all-time high for our University.

Finally, I'm pleased to announce that our Innovation and Entrepreneurship Initiative, which was established through a generous \$5 million gift from Richard A. D'Amore, BA'76, has been buttressed by a generous additional \$5 million gift from Alan S. McKim, MBA'88. This spring, we will formally launch the initiative with the establishment of our new Center for Research Innovation. The new center will help faculty and students across the full spectrum of disciplines commercialize their research ideas as we work to create a vibrant new ecology of innovation and entrepreneurship on campus.

Our shared accomplishments over the past several years have been made possible by the extraordinary dedication of the Northeastern community to the pursuit of uncompromising excellence.

I am deeply thankful for your efforts. I look forward to our continuing work together as we shape our

University's future and propel Northeastern to even greater heights.

Best wishes for a happy and healthy 2011.

Sincerely,

Joseph E. Aoun
President

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