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Messages & Writings : March 2010

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Supporting a Student-Centered University

03.09.10

To members of the Northeastern community:

I want to share with you a communiqué I sent to our students encouraging them to chart a unique course of study and inviting them to help make Northeastern an even more student-centered university. Just as I welcome their input and feedback, I welcome yours as well.

Chart Your Path

Just before spring break, I met with a group of students to hear directly about their experiences at Northeastern and around the world. The students' entrepreneurial spirit and energy impressed me as did the diversity of their paths.

Be it in business, communications, education, medicine, law or engineering, each student integrated rigorous classroom study with real-life experience. For some, fraternity and sorority life has been an important part of their time at Northeastern; others participated in intramural sports, NUTV or community service.

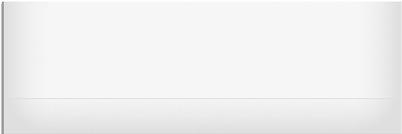
Danielle Cohen pursued her life-long dream of being a teacher. She completed two teaching assistantships in Massachusetts, served as President of the Pan-Hellenic Group and will graduate with a Bachelor's in Psychology and a Master's in Education. A member of the class of 2012, Mike Becker has already created his own computer service and repair company and is active in both student government and City Year.

Marketing Major Kate Zasada completed co-ops at Johnson & Johnson, Putnam Investments and Wellington Management. She participated in a six-week Chinese studies program in Beijing, and is a member of the women's rowing team and student government. Junior Kevin Green is pursuing studies in Behavioral Neuroscience. He has completed a co-op at our Marine Science Center and the General Medicine unit of Mass General Hospital. He is planning another co-op in South America that focuses on health care delivery and underserved populations.

Each student took full advantage of the many opportunities at Northeastern and shaped his or her own journey. No two journeys were the same, which is just as it should be. Northeastern empowers you—our students—to chart your own path. We are a student-centered university. What do I mean by this? At its core, a student-centered university encourages you to explore, and even create, your own academic paths. A student-centered university recognizes that you participate in the discovery of knowledge, rather than simply the absorption of facts. A student-centered university empowers you—in consultation with advisors—to pursue a unique course of study that will serve you for a lifetime.

I asked the group what Northeastern could do to become even better. The responses were candid: reduce red tape and bureaucracy, strengthen academic and co-op advising. As part of our efforts to become more student-centered, we will focus on these areas with the goal of making our classroom and experiential learning programs more readily accessible. As we move forward, I welcome your feedback.

I encourage each one of you to take advantage of the extraordinary range of academic opportunities at Northeastern—interdisciplinary majors and minors, self-defined interdepartmental or independent majors, and in-depth discipline-based programs, as well as experiential activities that span the globe—as you look for ways to develop an innovative and entrepreneurial course of learning, to leave established comfort zones and to embrace the unknown. Chart your own path. The result will be powerful: You will be better prepared for life.



Joseph E. Aoun

President

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