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## 2010-02-02: A higher technology role

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## A higher technology role



Professor Christos Zahopoulos was appointed to the newly formed Governor's Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Advisory Council.

**February 2, 2010**

Christos Zahopoulos, who leads Northeastern's effort to boost math- and science-based education in the public schools, now has a larger task ahead of him.

Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick recently appointed Zahopoulos, an associate professor in the College of Engineering and Department of Education, to the newly formed Governor's Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Advisory Council.

Zahopoulos, the executive director of Northeastern's Center for STEM Education, will cochair the council's subcommittee on statewide curriculum standards for science, technology, engineering and math.

"I am looking forward to making as significant a contribution as possible," Zahopoulos said of his new role. "This is both an honor for myself and for Northeastern."

Northeastern's STEM center serves as a connecting link between the university's science, engineering and math programs and the education program, and seeks to play a key role in improving STEM education in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and beyond.

In his new position, Zahopoulos will work with members of Massachusetts' seven regional STEM Networks to make recommendations to the governor, cabinet members and legislators on how best to tailor curriculum standards to better serve students.

Zahopoulos favors more specific grade-by-grade state curriculum standards. Under a potentially new system, eighth-graders in Newton, for example, would learn the same concepts as their peers in Boston, Braintree and Brighton.

"This strategy would safeguard against students who move from school district to district learning the same concepts over and over, or leaving gaps," Zahopoulos said. "It would allow students who are mobile to have some continuity."

Patrick founded the council in October against a backdrop of sobering facts regarding math and science education in Massachusetts schools. Over the next decade, more than 80 percent of new jobs will require knowledge of the math and sciences, according to the Charter of the Governor's STEM Advisory Council. But data from the College Board indicates that only 23 percent of all students taking the 2008 SAT exam in Massachusetts expressed interest in pursuing a college degree in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics.

And while interest in these fields continues to rise on a national level, the number of Massachusetts college students studying science and math has been on a steady decline since 1993.

"One of the main goals of the council is to increase the number of students interested in pursuing these fields—and staying in Massachusetts to do so," Zahopoulos said.

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