

May 06, 2010

## 2010-05-06: Inspiration for the next generation

Jason Kornwitz  
*Northeastern University*

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### Recommended Citation

Kornwitz, Jason, "2010-05-06: Inspiration for the next generation" (2010). *News@Northeastern*. Paper 584. <http://hdl.handle.net/2047/d20001827>

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## Inspiration for the next generation



MJ Paradiso sits outside Dodge Hall, where he took international business classes when he wasn't working or studying overseas through Northeastern's global programs. Photo by Mary Knox Merrill.

**May 6, 2010**

Student commencement speaker MJ Paradiso's fondest memory of Northeastern took place in a rural village in eastern China, more than 7,000 miles away from the university's Huntington Avenue campus.

On a Dialogue of Civilizations in 2007, the international business major spent a day playing with children in China's Anhui province, an inland section of southeast China.

Though Paradiso faced a language barrier, the opportunity to bond with the youngsters exemplified his global tenure at Northeastern, during which he spent as much time completing international

co-ops and studying abroad in Germany, China and Brazil as he did taking notes and preparing for exams in Boston.

"The way we connected and the fact that we didn't speak each other's language was something very special," Paradiso recalled. "It was an unforgettable moment."

Paradiso's wide range of international experiences, as well as his role in student life on campus, made him the perfect candidate to inspire the future leaders of the world, said Ed Klotzbier, vice president and dean of student affairs.

A committee comprised of faculty and staff chose Paradiso to deliver the address to his fellow students after viewing a video of his performance of the speech.

Paradiso's speech focused on the unique opportunities for the Class of 2010 to explore the world through co-op, study abroad, Dialogue of Civilizations and other overseas opportunities.

"He's got a lot of energy and a great message," said Klotzbier. "He embodies the student who's experienced it all."

Indeed, Paradiso's resume reads like that of a business executive with years of experience in the industry. He studied abroad for two years at Reutlingen University, in Germany, through Northeastern's Bachelor of Science in International Business (BSIB) program; completed consumer-marketing co-ops for General Electric, in Cleveland, and Procter & Gamble in Frankfurt; and participated in the Dialogue of Civilizations program in China and Brazil. He speaks fluent German.

He got involved in student life from Day 1 on campus. From 2006-2007, he was the Student Government Association's vice president for academic affairs. In 2006, he helped found NUCALLS, a free, peer-taught language program that provides students with an outlet to share their knowledge on different languages and cultures.

He's relished every minute of his experience at Northeastern — especially those more poignant moments among his peers, who impressed him with their dedication to shaping initiatives, such as NUCALLS, and his co-op job managers, who trusted him with large-scale projects.

Speaking on behalf of the Class of 2010, he said, "We've had all these opportunities to meet people in the community, across the nation and around the world. They are ordinary people, but their stories have truly inspired us. Now it's our opportunity to go into the world to serve as inspiration for the next generation."

For more information, please contact Jason Kornwitz at 617-373-5729 or at [j.kornwitz@neu.edu](mailto:j.kornwitz@neu.edu).

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