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Alumnus named to new post with Clinton Bush Haiti Fund



Patrick Gaston, MBA '92, left, has been named executive in residence at the Clinton Bush Haiti Fund. Photo by Craig Bailey.

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Northeastern University alumnus Patrick Gaston, president of the Verizon Foundation, has been named executive in residence with the Clinton Bush Haiti Fund.

Gaston, MBA'92, hopes to play a significant role in his native country's recovery from last year's devastating earthquake.

"I have always wanted an opportunity to contribute to Haiti in a larger and impactful way, and I think this is the greatest opportunity for me to do that," Gaston said. "I'm honored, humbled and excited."

As a senior advisor to the Haiti Fund, Gaston will take on a multifaceted role involving global outreach to increase awareness and generate financial support for Haiti. He will assess investments and ensure they align with the organization's goal to help the country strengthen its economy and drive economic empowerment. Gaston will also identify businesses and industries in the corporate community to bolster that effort.

In addition, Gaston will focus on building a grassroots awareness campaign, and investigate ways to leverage new technology to generate additional fundraising and support.

His one-year post begins Jan. 17.

After the earthquake last January, President Barack Obama approached former Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush about organizing a global fundraising effort, leading to the nonprofit organization's establishment. Verizon, the New York-based global telecommunications company, was one of the first corporations to respond to the crisis, with contributions now topping more than \$1.3 million.

Gaston was born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and moved to the United States with his family in 1967 at age 9. He said his lifelong connection to the country, where some relatives still live, has fueled his desire to spur global engagement in its future and help Haitians rebuild their lives.

Gaston attended Northeastern's **College of Business Administration** part-time while working at New England Telephone Co. He rose through the ranks of that organization, which, as NYNEX, merged with Bell Atlantic in 1996 to form Verizon Communications.

He fondly recalled not only learning from his professors and colleagues, but also the university's emphasis on excellence. He also studied in France while working toward his MBA.

"I was always interested in the global aspects of business," he said. "I wound up learning a great deal."

Under Gaston's direction, the Verizon Foundation, the company's philanthropic arm, has collaborated with Northeastern to achieve positive social change. He launched Verizon Thinkfinity—a website that marshals twenty-first-century technology to improve K-12 education and student achievement. College of Business Administration marketing professors Richard Hanna and Scott Swain have been tapped, through a grant, to study how the site could maximize its ability to meet teachers' and students' needs.

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In October 2009, the **School of Law's** Domestic Violence Institute also received a grant from the Verizon Foundation to support survivors of domestic violence in Massachusetts.

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