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Northeastern University has used its leadership in experiential learning to create a vibrant new model of academic excellence. But like most great institutions of higher learning, Northeastern had modest origins.

At the end of the nineteenth century, immigrants and first-generation Americans constituted more than half of Boston’s population. Chief among the city’s institutions committed to helping these people improve their lives was the Boston YMCA. The YMCA became a place where young men gathered to hear lectures on literature, history, music, and other subjects considered essential to intellectual growth.

In response to the enthusiastic demand for these lectures, the directors of the YMCA organized the “Evening Institute for Young Men” in May 1896. Frank Palmer Speare, a well-known teacher and high-school principal with considerable experience in the public schools, was hired as the institute’s director. Two years later, under Speare’s direction, the YMCA advertised the creation of the “Department of Law of the Boston YMCA,” and on October 3, 1898, Robert Gray Dodge taught the first class. The program, an immediate success, marked the birth of Northeastern University. Speare would later remark, “We started with an eraser and two sticks of chalk.”

When demand for other courses grew, Speare moved to add more programs, and in 1909 the day colleges began instruction. That same year, the Evening Polytechnic School announced “cooperative engineering courses,” in which students would have an opportunity to apply classroom knowledge in the workplace—the beginning of Northeastern’s signature cooperative education program.

Decades of expansion
The school continued to grow and required more space. In 1922, the College of Business was founded. The university purchased the former home of the Boston Red Sox in 1929, and in 1934 the Boston architectural firm Shepley, Bulfinch, Richardson, and Abbott was awarded the contract to design Richards Hall. Using what was to become the campus signature—white brick—Shepley, Bulfinch presented plans for a neoclassical building. Opened in 1938, Richards Hall was the first building to appear on the front quadrangle.

As the campus grew, so did Northeastern’s programs. In 1935, the College of Liberal Arts was added, signaling that Northeastern was on its way to becoming a major university.

When Speare stepped down as president in 1940, he was replaced by Carl Stephens Ell, dean of the College of Engineering. It was under Ell’s leadership that Northeastern first admitted women to full-time day programs.

In the postwar world, Northeastern, like its sister institutions, saw a phenomenal increase in the number of people attending college. The university expanded its programs to accommodate this growing population of increasingly diverse students. In rapid succession, additional programs and colleges were established: College of Education, 1953; University College, 1960; College of Pharmacy, 1962; College of Nursing, 1964; Boston Bouvé College, 1964; College of Criminal Justice, 1967; and College of Computer Science, 1982.

This expansion of programs brought with it a need for more buildings. When Ell retired as president in 1959, he was succeeded by Asa S. Knowles, who accelerated the university’s growth. Suburban properties in Weston, Nahant, and Burlington were acquired. The Boston campus blossomed with new buildings, including various undergraduate dormitories designed to accommodate the increasing number of residential students at what had been primarily a commuter campus.
Transforming the campus
When Knowles retired in 1975, he was succeeded by Kenneth G. Ryder, who had begun his career at Northeastern as a member of the history department and had risen through the ranks to become executive vice president before his election as president. Under his leadership, the university expanded and enriched its programs, particularly in the arts and humanities, and continued to improve its facilities. Plans for the Snell Library were finalized during Ryder’s tenure, and the campus was beautified. During these years, Northeastern also deepened its commitment to Boston and its neighborhoods.

In 1989, Ryder stepped down as the fourth president of the university. He was succeeded by John A. Curry, Northeastern’s executive vice president and its first alumnus to become president. With President Curry in charge, the university embarked on a series of ambitious undertakings, including a new science and engineering research center, a state-of-the-art classroom building, a recreation complex, and several new graduate and undergraduate programs.

To support these new ventures, Curry led Northeastern in a successful fundraising campaign. His years of leadership also featured significant restructuring as the university prepared to enter its second century. In June 1996, after four decades of service, Curry retired from Northeastern. To succeed him, the trustees elected Richard M. Freeland as the university’s sixth president.

Elevating experience
A distinguished historian and administrator, President Freeland brought to the university a renewed sense of energy and mission. His programs were designed to support his vision of Northeastern as a national research university that would be student-centered, practice-oriented, and urban. Under Freeland’s leadership, the university made progress toward realizing this vision. Northeastern developed the West Campus with architecturally acclaimed residence halls and research and teaching facilities for the health sciences and computer science; added new spaces to enrich student life on campus; and strengthened the university’s experiential learning programs, including cooperative education, research, service learning, and study abroad.

When Freeland stepped down in 2006, he was succeeded by Joseph E. Aoun, an internationally known linguistics scholar. Northeastern’s seventh president came from the University of Southern California, where he served as dean of the College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences. President Aoun has developed an academic plan outlining the university’s vision in several areas: experiential learning, global outreach, use-inspired research, urban engagement, and intellectual life. He has greatly expanded global co-op opportunities. He has also aligned the university’s research with three worldwide imperatives—health, security, and sustainability—with a focus on interdisciplinary solutions.

A rising global profile
Under Aoun’s leadership, Northeastern started a system of regional campuses designed to be platforms for lifelong learning linked to area economies. The first two campuses opened in Charlotte, North Carolina, and Seattle. Two more campuses followed in 2015, in Silicon Valley and in Toronto. In 2016, he led the development of a new academic plan, Northeastern 2025. The plan is a blueprint for transforming the university into a global university system—featuring networks of learners and innovators—designed to empower people to succeed in this era of unprecedented technological change. Since 2016, the university has taken the first steps toward implementation by expanding the role of the regional campuses to serve as platforms for learning, research, and industry partnerships. Furthering that goal, the university in 2019 opened new locations in San Francisco and Vancouver. Northeastern also acquired a college in London, New College of the Humanities, to offer new learning and research opportunities at both institutions.
In January 2020, technology entrepreneur David Roux and his wife, Barbara, made an investment in the university to open the Roux Institute in Portland, Maine. It focuses on graduate studies and research in fields such as AI, digital engineering, and advanced life sciences, amplified by industry partnerships. The institute is designed to be a model of how higher education can jumpstart economic development in regions of the country largely bypassed by the innovation economy.

Resilience and momentum
Less than two months later, COVID-19 brought the world to a sudden, stunning halt. Campuses around the world emptied and moved online for the rest of the spring. But even as students and faculty grew accustomed to classes on Zoom, Northeastern’s leaders planned for a safe fall reopening. To restart in-person learning safely, the university built a state-of-the-art COVID-19 surveillance testing facility, including a government-certified lab capable of processing more than 5,000 tests per day. It installed cutting-edge online teaching technology in classrooms that seamlessly integrated in-class and remote learners. It reimagined campus life from student clubs to residence halls to dining. And it kept the research enterprise running at its highest capacity. As a result, the university opened on schedule in September and remained open throughout the school year with no COVID-19 outbreaks. All the while, Northeastern maintained its momentum in learning, research, and innovation.

Thanks to the dedication and hard work of our university community, Frank Palmer Speare’s “eraser and two sticks of chalk” have evolved into one of America’s most innovative universities.
MATTHEWS ARENA, NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY
TEN O’CLOCK

PROGRAM

Presiding
David Madigan
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Processional
Jeffery A. Born
Chief Marshal

Welcome and Opening Remarks
Emery Trahan
Interim Dean

Student Address
Wenjun Zhang

Recognition of Citation Recipient
Richard A. D’Amore
Chair, Board of Trustees

Introduction of Graduation Speaker
Alan S. McKim
Vice Chair, Board of Trustees

Graduation Addresses
Venkat Srinivasan, Managing Director, Innospark Ventures

Degrees in Course
Emery Trahan
Interim Dean

Conferring of Degrees
David Madigan
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Announcement of Graduates
Kate E. Klepper
Associate Dean
Alumni Greetings
Adam Fazzini

Charge to the Graduates
David Madigan
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Recessional
The audience is requested to remain seated during the recessional.

Music Provided by
Eric Berlin, trumpet
John Bottomley, tuba
Whitacre Hill, horn
Greg Spiridopoulos, trombone
Richard Watson, trumpet
GRADUATION SPEAKER
VENKAT SRINIVASAN

Venkat Srinivasan, the Founder and Managing Director of Innospark Ventures, has worn the shoes of an entrepreneur for most of his career. He brings deep expertise in AI and computational algorithms to the firm, especially computational linguistics, combined with deep functional knowledge in multiple domains including finance and accounting. He has founded several successful AI-led startups, including eCredit (acquired by ICG) and Rage Frameworks (acquired by Genpact). More recently he has founded several double bottom line enterprises - EnglishHelper, KnowYourMeds and Gyan.AI. He was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award by The Indus Entrepreneurs [TiE] in 2017.

Srinivasan holds 9 patents, has published over 30 research papers in prestigious peer-reviewed journals, has co-edited two books and is the author of a recently published book titled, The Intelligent Enterprise in the Era of Big Data. Venkat has strongly advocated for and believes in AI led transformation for Good; that successful AI-led transformation will be characterized by explainability, traceability, context awareness and the ability to learn from sparse data environments.

Venkat currently serves as a Vice-Chair of the Board of the American India Foundation. He also serves on the Board of New Profit, a pioneering venture philanthropy organization. Venkat is also a Trustee of BUILD and a member of the Dean's Executive Council at the D'Amore-McKim School of Business at Northeastern University.
DEGREES IN COURSE

Conferral Dates
May 7, 2021
August 21, 2021
December 18, 2021

MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Kehinde O. Adelani
Mourad Afani
Mavrick Fernandes Afonso
Cameron Kourosh Ahari
Dianne Ajayi
Narsing Rao Akula
Giuliana Clarice Alfnito
Colleen Marie Alie
Christopher Joseph Allen
Brian Philip Allenby
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Amroo Amer
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Samuel Skinner Bacon
Sully Baez
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Casimir Joseph Banaszek III
Ravikumar Baskaran
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Thomas S. Bearor
Steven Douglas Beattie
Magda Alexandra Beltran Roldan
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Natalie Catharine Bognanno
Marisa Felise Bolewicki
Daniel Robert Bolton
Jasmine Shannon Brawn
Hannah Riane Brower
Ryan John Bruchou
Yoon Byun
Steven Robert Calciano
Julia Caldas Marques Lima
Michelle Calderon
Anthony Calogero Jr.
Mariah Carr
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Allison Brooke Chase
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Bryan Michael Chin
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Cameron DeGregorio
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Derek W. Whitney
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Siyu Wu
Shi Yan
Hassan Tarek Yatim
Min Joo Yoon
Adriana Elisa Zegarelli
Erik James Zengel
Tatsiana Zhalniarkevich
Haining Zhang
Wenjun Zhang
Irina Zolotnitskaya

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Fiona Mokeira Congo
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Emma Katherine Boughton
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MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

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Business Analytics

Mariane Hae-Joong Kim  
Business Analytics

Minwoo Kim  
International Management
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Lawrence A. O’Rourke
Leonard C. Perham
Valerie W. Perlowitz
Steven Picheny
John E. Pritchard
Eugene M. Reppucci Jr.
Rhondella D. Richardson
Patrick A. Rivelli Sr.
David J. Ryan
George P. Sakellaris
Richard A. Schoenfeld
Peter J. Smail
Shelley Stewart Jr.
Gordon O. Thompson
Alexander L. Thorndike
James R. Turner Jr.
Mark L. Vachon
Laurie B. Werner
E. Leo Whitworth Jr.
Donald K. Williams Jr.
Donald L. Williams
Akira Yamamura
Richard R. Yuse
UNIVERSITY DEANS

Gregory Abowd, College of Engineering
David Fields, Interim, College of Professional Studies
James R. Hackney, School of Law
Elizabeth Hudson, College of Arts, Media and Design
Alan Mislove, Interim, Khoury College of Computer Sciences
Uta G. Poiger, College of Social Sciences and Humanities
Hazel Sive, College of Science
Carmen Sceppa, Bouvé College of Health Sciences
Emery Trahan, Interim, D’Amore-McKim School of Business

UNIVERSITY MARSHALS

Jeffery A. Born, Chief Marshal
Stefano Basagni
Christopher Bosso
Luca Caracoglia
Chris Cesario
Martin Dias
Amy Farrell
Charles Fountain
David Kaeli
Dan Kennedy
Jay Mulki
Mary Jo Ondrechen
Mary-Susan Potts-Santone
Heather Streets-Salter
Annemarie Sullivan
Thomas Vicino
Ronald J. Willey
PROGRAM NOTES
HISTORICAL NOTES ON ACADEMIC DRESS

Academic dress appears to have originated at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge more than 600 years ago, and, to this day, the most colorful gowns in the world are those worn at Oxford functions. European institutions show great diversity in their academic costume, since each adopted or initiated its own dress.

In contrast, American colleges and universities follow a single system of academic apparel. In 1894, a group of leading American educators met to draft guidelines on apparel. Known as the Intercollegiate Code, these guidelines were adopted the following year and amended slightly in 1932.

The distinctions set up by the Intercollegiate Code are simple. Gowns for the bachelor’s degree are to be fashioned from “worsted stuff” with a yoke, pleated front, and intricate shirring across the shoulders and back. Worn closed, the bachelor’s gown is distinguished primarily by its long, pointed sleeves. The master’s gown has the same yoke effect and long, crescent-shaped sleeves; it may be worn open or closed.

The doctor’s gown, which may also be worn open or closed, has velvet panels draped around the neck. Three horizontal velvet bars are stitched on full bell-shaped sleeves. This velvet trimming may be black or in the color that indicates the field of study to which the degree refers.

Northeastern University’s distinctive doctoral gown is crimson with black velvet panels and sleeve bars. The crimson cap, or mortarboard, bears a gold metallic tassel. In accordance with academic custom, recipients of the doctor’s degree, members of the university’s governing boards, and government officials in the procession are entitled to wear the official regalia.

The bachelor’s and master’s hoods have a similar shape, while the doctor’s hood has a rounded base. The length of the hood indicates the level of academic achievement, with the doctor’s hood being longest; the width of the border distinguishes the degree, with the doctor’s being widest. The color of the border indicates the field of study; the lining color indicates the institution conferring the degree.

At Northeastern, where only the master’s and doctor’s hoods are worn, a black chevron on a crimson background is used for the lining.

When colors were first assigned to signify a particular field of study, historical associations were retained as much as possible. For example, white, for arts, refers back to the white fur edging of the Oxford hood; red, for theology, to the traditional color of the church; and green, for medicine, to the color of herbs.

The tassel on the mortarboard may be black or in a color that indicates the graduate’s major field of study.

The College Flags used in the commencement ceremonies will be presented to the commencement audience by the class marshal, the highest-ranking student in the college.
Oh, Alma Mater, here we throng,
And sing your praises strong;
Your children gather far and near
And seek your blessings, dear;
Fair memories we cherish now
And will forevermore.
Come, let us raise our voices strong,
Northeastern, we adore.

Oh, Alma Mater, here we throng,
And sing your praises strong;
Your children gather far and near
And seek your blessings, dear;
Fair memories we cherish now
And will forevermore.
Come, let us raise our voices strong,
Northeastern, we adore.