May 2023
Office of the Chief Information Officer Update

Resources help colleges build capacity and reduce barriers to developing new online programs: A working group convened by IT Services' Academic Technologies, CATLR, and the Office of the Provost launched a new site and suite of resources to help Northeastern colleges increase their reach through online program offerings. The comprehensive one-stop-shop website offers colleges and programs a lower-cost course development option with resources such as technology consulting services, an educational technology plan, and Canvas course template options. Working draft versions of these resources have already been used by Bouvé and CSSH to create online programs and are currently being used to build a future COS Nanomedicine program. While higher profile online development programs are served best by EDGE, these more scalable resources provide a structured approach that expands capabilities for digital flexibility to more programs across the university.

Addition to IT governance framework improves strategic project alignment and prioritization: In advance of the July 1 start of the new fiscal year (FY24), a new IT governance body, IT Project Steering (ITPS), has been established to provide guidance for all annual strategic technology initiatives and decisions including those articulated in the university's long-range plan. ITPS will help ensure that the university makes the best possible decisions and investments in advancing the use of technology to meet the institution's mission, vision, and goals. In the first two months since forming in March 2023, ITPS has already reviewed a portfolio of more than 40 new and continuing capital projects for FY24, and prioritized two dozen more, including the financial system modernization, update of the graduate website, and acceleration of learning space AV upgrades, among others. Projects reviewed and prioritized by ITPS are then provided to the IT Council—the university's top IT governance body consisting of several university senior vice presidents and the CIO—for final review and approval.

Collaboration across global university teams help support student global mobility: This month, a team consisting of IT Services, Undergrad Admissions, Registrar, and Northeastern at London Admissions and Operations groups successfully transitioned all NU London Double Degree, Global Scholars, and London Scholars student records from Northeastern's admissions system to the London admissions system through automated feeds. This has been a great collaborative effort between Boston and London teams and the first of several integrations that will be going live throughout the summer to support up-to-date and secure data synchronization across borders, especially for students in the Double Degree program. As a result of this work, students can move more easily and freely across Northeastern's global university system, between the London, Boston, and Oakland campuses.

Community of Practice supports transformation in teaching practices and faculty innovation: Teams from IT Services and CATLR wrapped up a faculty Community of Practice focused on transforming teaching using Microsoft Teams in Global Learning Spaces, the new, modern classroom standard. During the fall 2022 and spring 2023 semesters, 37 faculty representing three campuses (Boston, Oakland, and Vancouver) came together to experiment, create, and share ideas with colleagues across disciplines and provide a more connected learning experience for students. 100% of students who completed the CoP end-of-term survey reported that Global Learning Spaces were somewhat or significantly beneficial to their learning. The feedback from this engagement is helping ITS enhance its training, documentation, and other resources to better support other faculty in leveraging these spaces and technologies.

Three new Global Learning Spaces on Seattle campus expand reach of new, modern classroom technologies: Three classrooms on the Seattle campus were upgraded to Global Learning Spaces, the new, modern classroom technology standard across Northeastern's global campus system. These classrooms launched in time for the start of summer classes, May 8, and support one-touch join sessions, modern microphone and camera configurations, innovative whiteboard capture, and seamless Microsoft Teams – Canvas integration. Combined, these features enhance classroom teaching and learning for both in-person and remote participants. Approximately 30 additional Global Learning Spaces will come online across the Boston, Oakland, and Seattle campuses for the start of the fall semester.

Search for Research Computing Executive Director will fill critical role for Northeastern research support: The search is underway to fill the open position of executive director, research computing, a role responsible for the development and delivery of research and computationally intensive academic and high-performance computing infrastructure and services to Northeastern researchers, teaching faculty, and students throughout the university's global network. College of Science faculty member Paul Whitford, who serves as chair of the Research Computing Advisory Committee (RCAC), is leading the search committee. Together with Whitford, and in consultation with researchers, the executive director serves in an advisory role to the senior vice provost of research and the vice president of information technology to best serve the research community, including both high performance computing and non-HPC research computing. The executive director also supervises a team of 19 ITS staff dedicated to the research needs of the university. In addition to the executive director, three more research computing searches are underway, including a computational scientist, HPC systems administrator, and research software engineer.

Assessment survey milestone met on way to creating playbook and roadmap for university's software applications: The university achieved the 80% response threshold on the application assessment survey and continues to stay on track with the project timeline. With this milestone met, the university's application assessment vendor partner, Gartner, will begin work on the final deliverables of a roadmap and playbook. Gaining a more holistic view of the application landscape across the university is a key step in understanding how students, faculty, staff, and other members of the community use digital tools as well as how the institution best evaluates existing and new tools for ongoing use or inclusion in the university's digital ecosystem.

Inclusion and accessibility in focus on Global Accessibility Awareness Day: On Thursday, May 18, Northeastern recognized Global Accessibility Awareness Day (GAAD), a day focused on digital access and inclusion for the more than one billion people alive today who live with disabilities or impairments. In the spirit of GAAD's purpose of getting people talking, thinking, and learning about digital access and inclusion, ITS hosted an Accessibility and Disability Resources Panel, where nine panelists representing departments throughout the university highlighted Northeastern's many resources, services, and educational opportunities related to accessibility and disability. Northeastern's digital accessibility team based in ITS, which also just launched a 21-day accessibility awareness learning path, is rapidly expanding resources and knowledge, crafting a sustainable and achievable roadmap for accessibility growth, and contributing to Northeastern's strategy on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

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