

September 2023

Office of the Chief Information Officer Update

61 classrooms across global network updated with cutting-edge technology that enables collaborative learning while also reducing overall cost of classroom AV installation and support: This summer, ITS worked with campus partners and external vendors to install brand new AV in 61 classrooms across the global network. This includes work in Boston, London, Oakland, San Jose, and Seattle. Since deploying the global classroom standard last fall, ITS has reduced the overall cost of classroom AV, from installation to support. For example, the installation cost of a new classroom with the new standard costs 2-3x less than previous costs. Importantly, this work also helps ensure Northeastern faculty and students have access to cutting edge classroom technology that allows for collaborative learning across the global campuses.

ITS partnership with the Office of the Provost to launch the digital properties that support Makerspace at EXP with the larger goal of setting a strong foundation for the Northeastern Makerspace ecosystem: ITS supported the development of a marketing website, training portal, point of sale system, and digital processes that allow for Makerspace at EXP to provide a seamless experience for the Northeastern community using the space. The digital properties were designed to provide a gateway into Northeastern's makerspaces by making them accessible, welcoming, and easy to navigate. For example, as users receive the appropriate credential for an equipment type, their Husky Card will allow them to badge into that equipment room. This process was created to prevent barrier to entry for users exploring their ideas. Makerspace at EXP opened on September 5 and provided orientation training (the first credential required to schedule trainings for all equipment in Makerspace at EXP) to 130 users, 95% of which were students, and expects for 800 users to complete orientation in the first week of being open.

Tech support provides faster response and resolution times to university community on first day of classes, in the classroom, online, and around the global network: On the busiest day of the year for the IT Service Desk, the global university community's requests for tech support were answered significantly faster and resolved more quickly than the same day last year, even with a 12% increase in interactions. These interactions also left the community more satisfied; Average customer satisfaction on the first day was 4.63 out of five, compared to 4.22 a year ago. Additionally, 68% of requests for in-classroom support were resolved on first touch, without further escalation. These successes are largely attributed to the preparations leading up to the new school year, including improved staffing and training. Recent investments in chat, an online synchronous support channel that the university community is increasingly turning to more instead of phone and email, may also help explain these trends.

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Oakland campus begins new school year with over 550 new wireless access points, offering a more steady connection and increased productivity for faculty, staff, and students: The Oakland-based IT teams completed a significant phase in improving the wireless networking performance on the Oakland campus by replacing over 550 legacy access points this summer. More than 1,000 access points around campus, an increased number from the approximately 300 on campus on July 1, 2022, are now all on the Northeastern-standard Aruba hardware, which provides a much better wireless networking experience for all on the Oakland campus. Prior to this replacement effort, Oakland had a hybrid of legacy wireless and new equipment resulting in network performance challenges caused by the pauses that can occur when a device had to switch from one type of AP to another. Now, the transition from one AP to another will be seamless and significantly reduce instances of wireless connection drops to devices. This replacement project was originally scheduled to be done over a 12-24 month period, but the wireless engineer in Oakland found a way to do all of the work over the summer of 2023.

New automation to the faculty change of grade process reduces manual work by Registrar staff and provides peace of mind to faculty and students: The ITS enterprise applications team helped automate the faculty change of grade process that averages over 6,500 transactions per year. In this new process, primary instructors updating a submitted grade for a student now receive immediate confirmation feedback. This includes email communication to students and faculty members when the grade change is complete, adding transparency to the process. This update significantly reduces manual work in the Registrar's office. It also provides quicker turnaround time for faculty members and students, providing peace of mind that the student's academic records are correct.

Workday Benefits Enrollment, a partnership between ITS and HR, brings a simplified and user-friendly experience to Northeastern's global workforce: Human Resources in partnership with Information Technology Services has launched an enhanced benefits administration experience through Workday. The launch of Benefits Administration within Workday provides a streamlined and user-friendly user interface for enrolling in and managing employee benefits. This experience is integrated within the same Workday experience our employees are used to for managing their staff, reviewing their pay information, and managing their time and absences. Previously, benefits administration was completed in its own separate system. Moving this functionality to Workday alongside other HR-related transactions helps to simplify HR administration and reduces costs to the university.

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First phase of Finance Transformation Project launches, improving contract and supplier management and allowing the university to conduct global financial operations more quickly and efficiently: The Office of the CFO and ITS released phase 1 of Husky Intellibuy contract and supplier management functionality using Jaegger. This is the first release of the Finance Transformation Project dedicated to modernizing and optimizing the university's finance systems and processes. This release provides the ability to have a centralized contracts database including standard clauses and terms and electronic signature workflows that enable efficient contract management at the university. By having this menu of standard pre-approved terms and clauses the system provides a toolbox of standard language that will enable users to build contracts that require less time to review, speeding up the contracts approval process. Additionally, this release enables centralized vendor/supplier management processes and provides a database of approved vendors at the university.

New events ticketing system improves student and employee ticketing experience and provides administrators enhanced reporting capabilities: Student Life and Northeastern Athletics worked with ITS to launch a new events ticketing system on Sept. 1, 2023, implementing the Paciolan events ticketing platform in a matter of weeks so that it would be ready for the new academic year. The shift to Paciolan improves the student-user ticketing experience with a dedicated section for student-specific events only accessible by logging in with Northeastern credentials. Faculty and staff, now have similar access to events specific to the Northeastern community that may not be accessible to the public. The modern ticketing system also enables features such as contactless entry through NFC technology and a streamlined mobile digital wallet. From the back-end management perspective, event administrators are easily able to separate out the business operations of Athletics and Student Life by having dedicated "seasons" built out to simplify reporting. Paciolan is a leading ticketing, marketing, and fundraising solution provider for college athletics that provides services to six other Hockey East schools and five other members of the Colonial Athletic Association (CAA) in addition to Northeastern.

New technology training and self-service resources for teaching assistants enhance support for programs and leave TAs better prepared to support successful student outcomes: Staff in Academic Technologies worked with Ph.D. students in the AT Scholar Program to improve the training for teaching assistants on using Canvas and integrated teaching and learning tools. The robust training program, which is designed to save TAs and their instructors time, includes a self-paced Canvas companion course, live session options, and documentation. Leveraging the resources from this program, Academic Technologies partnered with the College of Science and the COS Connected Ph.D. Institute to support their 49 TAs in course design and using Canvas leading up to the fall 2023 term. Providing training customized for TAs relieves faculty and programs from having to lead the training effort and prepares TAs for their jobs as future faculty. As TAs serve as facilitators, graders, and mentors of students, this training helps them better use technology to support the success of students learning in these classes. There are over 3,500 TAs enrolled in Canvas courses each year, with 4,247 individual TAs enrolled in Canvas courses during AY23.

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