

November 2023

Office of the Chief Information Officer Update

New identity-management tool takes the technical and administrative work out of managing dynamic Canvas courses, leading to new community building and information sharing between students and faculty:

A new enterprise tool, Grouper, that launched in August is now supporting dynamic group enrollments to non-Registrar enrolled courses in Canvas. Identity-based groups built in Grouper on attributes such as major, minor, campus, and enrollment year take much of the technical work out of facilitating community between students and faculty in these Canvas courses. Grouper dynamic enrollment provides automated enrollment to Canvas courses based on always up-to-date identity data. A recent example of this is the program orientation provided to students in CPS's West Coast Analytics & Project Management program. Grouper automatically adds and removes students from the course as they drop or add the program, and the ability to enroll students into sections by campus affiliation supports fine-grained communication and interactions between campus co-located participants in this course. CPS is also managing a course design showcase in Canvas and used Grouper to enroll 800 faculty for this course. In the past, course managers have needed to spend hours getting lists from data sources and formatting them as enrollment spreadsheets, which is both time-intensive and error-prone. Additionally, in a fast-changing environment, the data can become quickly out of date.

ITS hosts members of the University of New Hampshire system to demonstrate the future of classroom technology: ITS hosted five IT and Academic Technology staff from the University of New Hampshire system on Friday, Oct. 27 to showcase how Northeastern is building simple, powerful, and cost-effective classrooms using Teams Room systems. The session included an afternoon of touring the ISEC and EXP buildings to see the various ways that the technology can be built into learning spaces and observe faculty leveraging it to engage with students during live class sessions. This is an example of how the news of Northeastern's successful global deployment of over 100 Global Learning Spaces has spread to other institutions and how eager they are to learn more about our innovative approach to classroom design, training, and support strategy, as well as the install process and faculty and staff adoption.

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Students provided with significantly improved academic planning solution that leverages their existing degree audit data to create personalized course and term recommendations, in turn helping them to more effectively complete degree requirements and graduate on schedule: A new academic planning solution, uAchieve Planner, is now available to students and advisors and is helping to ensure course selection decisions align with degree requirements, creating personalized course and term recommendations leading to graduation. The tool helps students make more educated decisions in course selection, keeping them on track to complete their degree requirements and ultimately supporting their ability to graduate on schedule. Through an integration with the university's degree audit application, academic plans are created directly from a student's degree requirements so that the student can immediately see their progress towards a degree with requirements checking off automatically as they plan. For advisors, faculty, and college and Registrar staff, the planning tool provides insights and reporting that reflect more realistic desired course demand directly from students (rather than guesswork based on history) as well as shows the most to least planned courses per term to aid in more efficient course utilization by faculty and faculty—better satisfying student course needs. Implementation of the uAchieve Planner was a combined effort between the Registrar and ITS team members.

Training solutions about classrooms and other technologies empower faculty and encourage adoption of the new Global Learning Spaces this fall semester: The fall semester training offerings provided by the Digital University Solutions Training Team cover 36 different training topics delivered as in-person sessions on the Boston and Oakland campuses, hybrid sessions hosted in-person and via Microsoft Teams, fully online sessions via Teams, and self-guided courses and videos. The four-person training team, including three Boston-based and one Oakland-based, hosted over 100 individual sessions across these topics for over 1,700 unique participants. The most popular topics were Global Learning Spaces, Miro virtual whiteboarding, and Microsoft Excel. Feedback from these trainings was overwhelmingly positive, demonstrating how much the university community has embraced and appreciated IT training.

Annual Security Awareness Training launches in new, bite-sized format to educate university community in small bursts: The Office of Information Security launched the university's annual information security awareness training this month, an important part of Northeastern's cybersecurity education program. All faculty, staff, and sponsored account holders are asked to spend about 15 minutes completing an interactive learning module that OIS developed and hosted in partnership with a third-party vendor, Proofpoint. This year, the content has been updated for a more streamlined and engaging experience for employees and is designed to be a refresher on common security situations and practices relevant to our global workforce. Last year, 76% of those assigned the training completed it, with a goal of exceeding that number this year. The deadline to complete is December 8. The security awareness training comes on the heels of October's Cybersecurity Awareness Month campaign.

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ITS reached another milestone in the efforts to modernize sponsored accounts and retire the legacy Waveset system with the latest release on November 17: IT teams developed and released new automation for sponsored account updates and terminations on November 17, which introduced the technology and workflows to process these requests more quickly. This update also included new streamlined account expiration email reminders that improve the experience for sponsors, especially those with multiple sponsorships expiring around the same time so that sponsors don't receive repetitive emails for each individual expiring account. This is the latest step on the roadmap to transform the sponsored account management process. This past September, ITS transitioned account management away from Waveset and updated it to support audit-recommended policy changes that improve security. ITS also launched a new sponsored account dashboard on ServiceNow in October. Read A peek into the future of Identity and Access Management at Northeastern.

Through training partnership and workshops, ITS is engaging its staff in conversations and work to better understand and mitigate biases while cultivating belonging: ITS has engaged with an external training partner, ReFresh Strategies, to conduct a series of workshops addressing diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB). These workshops and the related work for them are meant to explore each team member's personal experiences around bias, how they navigate those experiences, and how bias and inequity might be present in the workplace. These customized sessions are focused on managers in November and December and will be introduced to the rest of the division in early 2024. This initiative aims to cultivate a stronger culture of belonging and aligns with the division's and university's DEIB goals.

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