January 2024
Office of the Chief Information Officer Update

IT supports successful intersession during which 1,785 students immersed themselves in topics ranging from storytelling in Taylor Swift's Eras to financial literacy taught by Northeastern faculty: IT staff from Academic Technologies and the Customer Experience teams helped Northeastern faculty, students, and administrators with this year's intersession offerings, which included six courses, 1,785 students who accessed the courses, and 324 badges awarded. To prep for the courses, which ran last week during the break between the winter holidays and the beginning of the spring academic term, nearly 60 hours of Academic Technologies staff time was spent on planning sessions, course design and learning technology consultations, training, and administrative activities. During intersession, AT and IT Customer Experience staff attended several of the virtual sessions to respond quickly to any issues that arose and were available throughout the week to address any concerns. By the end of the week, 324 badges were awarded for intersession coursework using the Canvas Credentials platform that AT helped migrate from the previous solution and onboard at Northeastern last August.

Student Hub relaunch provides performance enhancements and new features to make students' online experience simpler and faster, just in time for the start of the Spring 2024 term: Just before the Winter Break, the IT teams that support the Global Digital Platform launched a new version of the Student Hub that's designed to streamline the student experience and address some of students' most-voiced feedback about the Hub. The Hub was reengineered and migrated to a new platform, shifting it from the SharePoint site where the Hub had been hosted since its initial launch in 2020. The move provides performance enhancements and faster loading times that improve the experience, especially on mobile devices. The main landing page has also been rearranged so students can launch and navigate to favorited and recently visited resources in fewer clicks. The new resources section on the homepage has quickly become the second-most clicked feature on the Hub in 2024. Since students returned from the winter recess on January 4, there have been over 341,000 sessions on the Student Hub from 153 different countries with an average visit lasting 4 minutes 41 seconds.

Rollout of new Teams transcription feature promotes more inclusive meetings and class sessions and supports a diverse, global university: The Microsoft Teams transcription feature was rolled out at Northeastern in late December and announced to the community earlier this month. This new capability allows faculty and staff to download and share a written transcript of what was discussed, making meetings and classes more inclusive and more accessible to members of Northeastern's diverse community. For example, Teams transcription promotes inclusivity for participants who have hearing disabilities or different levels of language proficiency. Attendees who joined late or missed the meeting can also easily catch up by reading what was discussed, which can be much more convenient than watching or listening to a recording. The planning for this was a collaboration across ITS departments, including Office of Information Security, Digital University Solutions, Academic Technologies, and Digital Accessibility. ITS also partnered with the Office of General Counsel and the university's Chief Privacy Officer during the planning.

The preparations by the IT Customer Experience teams before and during the Winter Break set the university community up for success, resulting in a smooth first week of classes both in and outside of the classroom: IT Services put in hours of work to ensure ITS-managed classrooms and printers were fully functional going into the winter recess, helping ensure a successful first week of classes. Comprehensive use of a managed service provider for AV support on the Boston and Oakland campuses this semester has also paid off with any technical issues that did arise in the classrooms. For example, in Boston, there were just 350 requests for help in the classroom out of 4500 scheduled class sessions during the week across 300 ITS-managed classrooms. Instructional assistants responded to those 350 requests in around two minutes from request to arrival and resolved 50% of these requests on site. The remaining 50% of issues were escalated to the MSP technicians and resolved in 24 hours or less. In addition, 89,000 pages were printed on the Papercut printers managed by ITS across the Boston campus during the first week of classes.

Consultation services from Academic Technologies provide faculty with one-on-one support for their teaching in record numbers while deepening relationships with schools and colleges: Northeastern faculty are using Academic Technologies (AT) consultation services more than ever, with a record-high 91 consultations so far this month and 500 so far this academic year. These consults, which are held virtually and used by all colleges and schools, connect faculty and college administrators one-on-one with a member of the AT staff with the most expertise in a particular area. An intuitive booking system facilitates easy scheduling and matching with the right expert, providing efficiency and reducing back-and-forth emails to schedule and determine which staff should take it. Consults cover Canvas course design, integrated tools and technologies in Canvas, and Canvas administration. While they offer valuable teaching support to faculty, the consult services also allow AT to make deeper connections with schools and colleges, leading to more visibility for AT with faculty and better collaboration and partnerships in future Canvas-related projects.

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