

# Standard Six: Students

## OVERVIEW

Northeastern has become a more selective school, raising its admissions standards and enrolling students who are well prepared for college. The University's pool of applicants boasts more diversity of culture and region than ever before. At the same time, Northeastern continues to serve underrepresented groups, such as people of color and underprivileged students.

The University has made significant progress in providing its students with a positive experience. A focus on support services and interventions has contributed enormously to this improvement. The university's services are more robust and centralized to better meet students' needs. More students are living on campus. As a result of the many initiatives, the University's retention and graduation rates have increased significantly.

By continuing its successful system of program assessment, analysis of results, and planning, the University will ensure that its services meet the changing needs of a vibrant and diverse student body.

## Admissions

### DESCRIPTION

Northeastern's mission, vision, values, and history help guide its undergraduate admissions program, which seeks to enroll motivated and high-achieving students and to create a vibrant and diverse campus community. Recruitment, admissions, and retention programs have been designed to provide more opportunities for students from outside New England, those who have a global perspective, those from underrepresented and disadvantaged backgrounds, and those with wide-ranging academic interests.

The University's efforts in these arenas have been highly successful, since they have focused on achieving well-defined institutional enrollment goals that have driven the development of recruitment efforts, admission policies and procedures, and that are used to measure outcomes as well as to inform future actions.

Each graduate school, in conjunction with a specific program, manages the recruitment, admission, and enrollment of new students. (Standard Four discusses graduate admissions.) The School of Law continues to be highly successful in recruiting, admitting, and enrolling new students, and recently completed its reaccreditation process.

The College of Professional Studies offers undergraduate and graduate academic programs that reflect the diversity of backgrounds and career goals of working professionals and recent college graduates. At the time of the last NEASC accreditation, CPS operated under an open-admission policy. Under its current policy, only the first 16 quarter-hours of a student's study are open enrollment. Beyond that point, students must apply to a degree program and be accepted through the college's admissions process.

## APPRAISAL

Over the last ten years, Northeastern has met or surpassed many of its institutional undergraduate enrollment objectives. Since 2000, applications have increased by 142 percent. For the freshman class entering in Fall 2008, the University received more than 35,700 applications. Among private U.S. colleges and universities, Northeastern receives the fourth-largest number of applications; ten years ago, the university ranked 12th.

Much of the increase in applications can be attributed to the University's expansion into new geographic regions. A global recruitment plan targets more than 35 states and 30 countries. In 2001, 3,500 high schools sent applicants to Northeastern. Today, more than 5,200 high schools are represented in the University's pool.

The academic preparation of these applicants, as measured by high school grade point averages (GPA, weighted) and standardized test scores, has also improved. The typical Northeastern applicant in 2000 had an average GPA of 2.94 and an SAT score of 1087. The Fall 2008 applicant pool boasted a 3.50 GPA and an SAT of 1176. Applications from students with SAT scores at or above 1180 more than tripled between 2000 and 2008 (from 4,200 to almost 15,000), and made up 53 percent of applications in 2008 (compared to only 29 percent in 2000). A similar trend in improvement also characterizes the entering undergraduate class.

Northeastern has also enjoyed success in increasing undergraduate enrollment from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups. Since 2001, applications from underrepresented students of color increased nearly 200 percent. The fall 2007 entering freshman class was one of the most diverse in the University's history. More than 28 percent of new students describe themselves as African-American, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, or Native American. Northeastern also increased international student enrollment by 70 percent in this entering class, finally recovering from the enrollment lows most schools experienced following September 11, 2001.

In 2003, a West Coast regional recruitment position was funded to expand Northeastern's presence. Since the establishment of this office, West Coast applications have increased by 140 percent. In 2005 Northeastern added an office in the Southeast region, and the University has started to see success there as well; applications from the region are up by 61 percent.

Since 2000, the admissions-decision process has shifted from an eligibility-based model, using objective criteria (such as GPA, class rank, and standardized test scores), to a comprehensive review that uses a combination of objective and subjective (noncognitive) criteria.

As more and better-prepared students applied to Northeastern, the selection process began to emphasize such factors as preparation for intended major, achievement in academic environment, character references, extracurricular involvement, and personal characteristics. With the adoption of the new Academic Plan and clarification of Northeastern's mission, the University refined the comprehensive admissions review process to place even greater emphasis on core institutional values: global perspective, engagement, leadership, creativity, diversity, and resiliency.

One enrollment challenge for Northeastern is the complexity of its goal-setting process. Traditional factors such as faculty and facility resources are considered along with retention rates by academic program, student demand, academic profile of the applicant pool, and yield rates in

the development of enrollment goals. While a natural tension often arises in aligning these competing factors, a data-driven collaborative process has been used to set overall institutional and program distribution goals. The alignment of these factors in setting enrollment goals has contributed to the University's enrollment and retention gains over the last ten years.

Northeastern continues to be committed to providing opportunities for students with potential whose high school achievement did not consistently reflect their capabilities, and several programs support this goal. In 2007, the School of General Studies (SGS) joined the College of Arts and Sciences to expand resources for students admitted to the school. Since 2001 the size of the entering cohort has been halved (160 in Fall 2007) in order to increase the school's capacity to support and retain these students.

Northeastern has also continued Ujima Scholars, another program designed to support new students and celebrate the experiences of underrepresented racial and ethnic groups. In the last seven years, the University has reduced the size of the program to increase the institutional aid provided to each student.

The Boston Public High School (BPHS) Scholars program — a full tuition, room, and board scholarship program for Boston public high school graduates — was established three years ago. The program has increased the number of well-prepared Boston public school students who enroll at Northeastern. BPHS Scholars are required to participate in college mentoring and preparatory programs that reach out to other Boston public high school students.

Recently Northeastern established the innovative Torch Scholars program, which is designed to identify, enroll, and graduate first-generation students who, for a variety of personal and environmental reasons, have not always achieved their potential. Through funding from donors, Torch Scholars receive full tuition, room, and board, and a host of support and enrichment services designed to help them be successful. The third Torch Scholars class will enter in Fall 2008, and the University is on its way to endowing this program. Every aspect of the program — from the rigorous and intensive selection process and summer transition, to the support and retention efforts — is continually assessed, both to make refinements and to contribute to higher-education research on successfully admitting and graduating students from underserved backgrounds.

Northeastern enrolls a relatively large number of transfer students, with a goal of 550 undergraduates each fall. Providing support to this population has been difficult, given their varied academic backgrounds and needs. With the implementation of the new degree-audit system and online transfer-credit evaluation, the university has improved its communication about transferable courses, streamlined and standardized the transfer-credit process, and improved overall services to transfer students.

Each college and department manages the recruitment, admission, and enrollment of its graduate students. Northeastern has recently experienced a significant increase in graduate enrollment. Departments have successfully used the Recruitment Plus customer relationship management (CRM) system to improve communication with prospective students, streamline the admission process, and better coordinate stipend and financial aid awards. (Graduate enrollment data are in Form 6.)

CPS recently completed a successful reorganization. Enrollments have risen and new degree programs have been added. This college successfully partners with full-time colleges to offer innovative programs and opportunities, including the World Languages Center, professional doctorates, and the Global Pathways Program. CPS offers online tutoring, advising, and coaching to its students.

## **PROJECTION**

Although Northeastern has increased the number of students it enrolls from outside New England, much of this growth has come from the Mid-Atlantic states and California. The University is interested in increasing representation from the other western states, the Southwest, and Midwest, as well as increasing growth from the Southeast. Beyond the offices mentioned above, it very recently expanded its regional representation by opening offices in the Midwest and northern California. The University will evaluate this strategy's effectiveness over the next few years.

Overall racial and ethnic diversity in the entering class has improved, but African-American student enrollment has not increased at the same rate as have Asian and Hispanic/Latino enrollments. In conjunction with the newly established Center for Applied Research in Enrollment and Employment, the Admissions Office will investigate the reasons for this limited growth and implement new recruitment and enrollment strategies to achieve institutional goals. The new center will also formally evaluate Admissions' comprehensive review process to ensure that the objective and non-cognitive (subjective) characteristics used contribute to the selection of well-prepared, highly motivated students who can succeed at Northeastern.

The restructuring of the School of General Studies (SGS) program has expanded academic opportunities for many students. However, space limitations and enrollment prerequisites at Bouvé College of Health Sciences, the College of Engineering, and the School of Architecture make it unlikely that students who successfully complete SGS can enroll in any of these programs. The feasibility of continuing to admit SGS students interested in these programs will be examined, and a policy will be developed to improve overall services to SGS students.

Northeastern will continue to monitor the success of Ujima, BPHS Scholars, and Torch Scholars to ensure the admission process and program support contribute to high retention.

To increase international student enrollment and support, Northeastern is launching the Global Pathways Undergraduate Program, designed for international students who need additional academic preparation and English language training to succeed at a selective U.S. university. The initiative began last year with graduate programs and a small cohort of transfer students. It will expand to include traditional-aged first-time college students, integrating them into campus life while supporting their academic and English skill development.

## Retention and Graduation

### **DESCRIPTION**

Over the past decade, Northeastern has worked to enroll students who are more academically prepared, as measured by GPA, coursework, and test scores. Despite an increase in applications

— from approximately 15,000 in 1998 to 35,850 in 2008 — the number of high school students accepted remained in a narrow range of 10,000 to 12,500. Consequently, the university's acceptance rate has fallen from 78 percent in 1998 to approximately 35 percent in 2008. Over that time, the mean SAT of the accepted pool rose 180 points (from 1,090 in 1998 to nearly 1,270 in 2007) and the mean high school GPA rose by 0.73 points (from 2.99 to 3.72). The academic preparation of all new students has increased, including specifically recruited populations.

The University offers a range of activities, services, and programs to help students succeed, including new student orientation; parent and family programs; tutoring services; the Honors Program; experiential-learning opportunities; NUin, a Fall semester, international, academic program for students admitted for Spring semester; and a complete array of medical and counseling services, including the Disability Resource Center.

The institution informs and guides students to these services and programs via multiple channels, two of which are web portals (separate portals for admitted students, enrolled students, family/parents, and faculty/staff) and the FACT academic early warning system.

Each semester, the academic progress of all undergraduates is reviewed according to criteria clearly detailed in the *Undergraduate Catalog*. The catalog also notes the standards for academic probation and dismissal; the *Student Handbook* outlines the appeals process. This information, which is also on Northeastern's website, is available to all students, faculty, and administrators.

The institution sets numeric retention and graduation-rate goals for each college and each entering cohort of students. The retention performance of students in various programs is a key element in determining each college's enrollment targets. Retention and graduation rates are often calculated for specially recruited populations. Poor retention among specific populations can trigger an examination of the recruitment, admissions criteria, and programming and service available for that population.

## **APPRAISAL**

Over the last ten years, the University has made a concerted effort to improve its students' retention and graduation rates. This effort has included numerous research studies on retention, a task force comprised of faculty and staff from many units who met over a period of two years, a strong and sustained commitment at the highest levels of the University, and the setting of numeric goals for freshman retention and graduation rates for each college.

Policy has followed from this research. Admissions will continue to place more emphasis on high school GPA and noncognitive traits. In addition, the University has instituted an eight-semester financial-aid grant guarantee, and sets award levels to attract and retain the best students. Residence-hall space and programming continue to be expanded. The academic early warning system implemented in 2002 has recently been enhanced.

This array of activities, services, and programs attempts to fully integrate students into the University's social and academic systems. The University has made tremendous progress in creating a sense of community among entering students. The community building starts upon admission, when students are still high school seniors, and continues after students reach alumni status. Northeastern's mandatory new-student orientation and welcome programs help students

become successful members of the community and are highly regarded by students and parents. An expanded parent and family orientation program prepares family members to appropriately partner with the University in support of students' academic, social, and personal development. While enrolled at the University, students are constantly informed — via academic advising, electronic communications, and other means — of the array of services available to them.

The resulting increase in retention has been striking. The freshman retention rate rose from 78.6 percent (for the cohort that entered in 1998) to 90.7 percent (for the cohort that entered in 2006). The six-year graduation rate rose from 49.6 percent (for the cohort that entered in 1994) to 66.0 percent (for the cohort that entered in 2001). In the retention/graduation category of the *U.S. News and World Report* rankings, Northeastern rose from 162 in the 2000 edition to 109 in the 2008 edition. The continuous rise in the University's student retention has been broad-based, with virtually all populations demonstrating increased retention over the past decade.

## **PROJECTION**

Northeastern will seek to continue to improve its retention rates by building on research efforts and past practices. Attrition among upperclass students is a lingering area of concern. More research needs to be done to discern withdrawal patterns during the upperclass years and to determine what kind of programming or intervention would have a measurable impact.

Just underway is a pilot study to assess the impact of Insidetrack, a coaching company that has been hired to work with 150 current sophomores. In addition to assessing the impact of coaching on retention, this study should also yield insights into the reasons for withdrawal among upper-class students.

A project called Unified Digital Campus (UDC), which is replacing the current student-information, finance, and advancement systems with SunGard Higher Education's Banner software, will be completed in fall 2009. This will make retention tracking easier and expand reporting capabilities on retention and graduation rates. In turn, these data will allow faculty and staff to make more accurate retention assessments.

To aid new students, plans are underway to expand the orientation and welcome activities for international students, Global Pathways Program students, and spring enrollees. A first-year book program was piloted with the Honors Program for two years and was launched for the entire incoming class in Fall 2008.

## Student Services

### **DESCRIPTION**

Except for those providing academic support services, most student services units are within the Division of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs (EMSA). This enhances the ability of clusters of units to align their work. The organization is fluid enough to change in response to the Academic Plan, student needs, and staff talent. The structure enhances service, addresses students' developmental needs, invites students to participate in institutional decision making, enables a strong and compassionate crisis response, and promotes lifelong affinity and alumni engagement.

Each college has an academic student services unit that advises students as they progress through the programs. All the undergraduate student services units in the colleges subscribe to a philosophy of developmental advising and communicate regularly with their students, primarily through the student portal and e-mail. Academic student services representatives in the colleges, as well as from other areas (such as the Registrar's Office or the Disability Resource Center), meet monthly with the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education to manage academic advising issues and policies. The academic units publicize their academic advisory and support services both online and in print. Services are available to students who are in school or off campus on co-op.

Northeastern has worked to integrate services to students. For instance, the Registrar, Student Accounts, and Husky ID Card Services offices are located together in the center of campus and are known as Student Central (<http://www.neu.edu/registrar/contactinfo.html>). Other important student services can be found in the following offices: Student Financial Services (<http://www.financialaid.neu.edu/home.php>); the University Health and Counseling Center (<http://www.northeastern.edu/uhrs/>); the Office of Student Affairs, offering a wide spectrum of services (<http://www.northeastern.edu/studentlife/>); the Office of Career Services (<http://careerservices.neu.edu/home.php>); the Honors program (<http://www.honors.neu.edu/>); the International Student and Scholar Institute (<http://www.northeastern.edu/issi/aboutissi/>); and Off-Campus Student Services (<http://www.northeastern.edu/offcampus/>).

One office that is unique to Northeastern is Co-op Connections (<http://www.northeastern.edu/coopconnections/>) which provides student-life programs and services to students preparing for and participating in cooperative education placements. It also supplies logistical support, such as housing and ride-share services, and serves as a major means of connection to students working in cooperative education jobs across the country.

Northeastern offers a range of housing options, including theme housing and living-learning communities, all with programming. A professional staff of 18 resident directors work and live with 166 resident assistants and 7,500 students in 33 university-controlled residence hall facilities.

The Curry Student Center houses a food court, a bookstore, a game room, student organization offices, meeting rooms, and a late-night club. Events facilities include Blackman Auditorium, the university's 1,200-seat venue, and the Fenway Center, a multipurpose building acquired and opened in 2007. Chartwell's Dining Services manages more than 25 on-campus eateries, which are frequently updated.

A full range of student activities is offered on campus, including such signature events as SpringFest and Homecoming. More than 240 student organizations enjoy the benefits of advisors and a new business and event-planning office, meant to serve as a one-stop shop.

Northeastern offers students many ways to hone their leadership skills. Besides heading organizations, students can participate in Leadership Education Growth Opportunities (LEGO), a five-tier leadership program. Leadership accomplishments are often rewarded through scholarships. A minor in leadership studies has recently been initiated. Strong student representation in University decision-making is accomplished via the Student Government Association (SGA), the Graduate and Professional Student Association, the Resident Student Association, and open forums.

Northeastern's cultural centers — the Latino/a Student Cultural Center, the John D. O'Bryant African American Institute, the Asian-American Center — seek to create a home away from home for students from diverse backgrounds and to enhance their academic, cultural, and social experiences. Individually and working together, they provide a safe environment for students to discuss issues related to diversity, inclusion, and multiculturalism. In addition, the centers promote connections between the university and the greater Boston community.

Northeastern also offers programs to nurture spiritual and religious well-being through the Spiritual Life Center, Hillel, and the Catholic Center (<http://www.northeastern.edu/spirituallife/welcome.html>, <http://www.hillel.neu.edu/>, <http://www.nucatholics.neu.edu/contact/contact.htm>).

Northeastern boasts numerous recreational and athletic programs. All students have access to campus fitness and recreational facilities, including those at the Marino Center, Cabot Gymnasium, and the Badger and Rosen SquashBusters Facility. Through Campus Recreation, students can participate in more than 12 intramural sports and 28 club sports.

Northeastern fields 19 varsity teams in NCAA Division I sports — many considered among the region's most successful — as well as other teams and individuals participating in national and international arenas. Student-athletes work closely with coaches as well as Student-Athlete Support Services advisors to maintain academic expectations, which are the same for student-athletes as for other students.

The University has a full-service Public Safety unit. Its well-trained rapid-response staff hold commissions as deputy sheriffs in Suffolk County. The unit provides a personal escort service, campus safety phones, a 24-hour Class 1 ambulance service, and sexual assault seminars. Its annual reports are available to the public on the unit's website.

Services for graduate, law, and CPS students are provided by both the central University and the individual college or school of enrollment. While there is central oversight of the graduate schools, each college has a graduate school staff that serves as a resource during its students' courses of study. The School of Law and CPS each have a full student services operation. Recognizing that part-time students may be less connected to the University and seek its resources less frequently, CPS also offers coaching to students through an outside vendor, InsideTrack.

## **APPRAISAL**

Planning at Northeastern is driven by an evidence-based culture. At the undergraduate level, success is measured by the following standards: retention, quality of life, engagement, post-graduate success, and evidence of learning. For each of these standards, a multifaceted set of measures is used. Some of these data are gathered via national, standardized surveys, e.g., the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory or the ACUHO-I EBI Residence Life Satisfaction Survey<sup>1</sup>, and some through local surveys or focus groups. Through these ongoing evaluations students are involved in many key decisions.

Evaluation results inform decisions about resource allocation and the improvement of services and processes. Some of these decisions include the following:

<sup>1</sup>The ACUHO – I EBI survey was developed through a collaboration of the Association of College and University Housing Officers – International and Educational Benchmarking, Inc.

- Creating the myNEU academic guide (<http://www.advising.neu.edu>) and the FACT system.
- Increasing the number of living-learning communities, as assessment shows that they are a factor in increasing retention.
- Broadening Off-Campus Student Services.
- Creating the Co-op Connections office to provide a coordinated snapshot of key cooperative education experiences.
- Hiring a Sexual Assault Coordinator and staff for Alcohol and Other Drug programming.
- Adding the cultural centers to Admissions tours and the inclusion of “diversity and inclusion” as key competencies in hiring and awards.

As a result of the University’s commitment to increase residence capacity, Northeastern now guarantees housing to freshmen, sophomores, and middlers. New housing construction from 1998 to 2009 will result in the addition of 4,168 beds. To keep pace with this cultural shift to a residential campus, housing services have rapidly expanded and improved.

Student satisfaction with Housing and Residential Life has greatly increased, as judged by the ACUHO-I EBI survey. Since 2000, 97 percent of questions have received an increased satisfaction response. In addition, the institution ranks highly when benchmarked against its peers: 94 percent of questions were above all comparison institutions in 2007, compared to 27 percent in 2000.

With a more residential campus comes the expectation of more services for University residents. The Resident Student Association (RSA) has been active in providing vibrant programming and promoting student services issues. Online housing services now include, among other things, upperclass room selection, chats with customer-service representatives, and an FAQ system. Advanced security systems, such as card-activated entryways and closed-circuit cameras, have been implemented in all residence halls.

A one-stop grouping of services (ResNet, ResMail, Husky Cable) to aid student residents has been established in Speare Commons.

The student-centered culture envisioned ten years ago continues to grow and improve. In 1998, the “NU Shuffle” — a term used by students who felt they were passed endlessly from office to office as they tried to resolve a problem — was identified as a concern. Since then, numbers of services have been coordinated and one-stop offices have been established, as mentioned above. The integration of services has been successful in streamlining many student operations.

To coordinate services and nurture student leadership, in Summer 2007 the Leadership and Scholarship Office merged with Student Activities, the Student Activities Business Office, and the Student Event Planning Office to create an efficient one-stop shop for students. Over the year that followed, this staff has produced more programs than in any other year in recent memory.

National benchmarking surveys (including the American College Health Association Satisfaction Survey and the ACUI-EBI survey sponsored by the Association of College Unions International in partnership with Educational Benchmarking, Inc.) have generally shown Northeastern students to be satisfied with the services provided to them; however, these surveys have also

pointed out issues to be addressed. As noted, residential life services have seen vast enhancements. Other responses to survey outcomes have included devoting substantial resources to upgrade the University's Health and Counseling Services facilities, infrastructure and personnel, and working with students to identify new dining vendor options.

According to the broad Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory, student satisfaction at Northeastern improved between 1996 and 2006, with 92 percent of questions showing increased satisfaction. In 1996, responses to only 12 percent of questions were above those at comparison schools; in 2006, 34 percent were.

A 2006 benchmarking survey assessed students' use of and satisfaction with campus-recreation services. Results were generally positive. In particular, a vast majority of students agreed that their recreation needs are being met and they were satisfied with the hours of operation. They also strongly agreed that campus recreation contributed to their quality of life. However, fewer than a third of students were satisfied with the University's outdoor recreation space.

Ensuring a safe and secure community is paramount at Northeastern. To better provide a strong crisis response, a new University-wide crisis-management team has been created at the senior level. The Vice President of Student Affairs serves as a link between the crisis-management team and the operational student services teams. Effective response protocols have been developed, mock critical incident scenarios have been enacted, and an emergency alert system has been implemented.

The Northeastern Police Department was recently accredited by the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission for delivering an exemplary level of police service in the university community. Northeastern is only the third institution of higher education to receive this honor.

The addition of the Fenway Center and the relocation of the management of Blackman Auditorium under the umbrella of Student Affairs have provided significantly more access to space for student activities. However, both venues need significant renovation. They also present management and scheduling challenges because they are used for academic purposes as well as student activities.

A student services area that needs improvement is the size of the academic advising staff. As the size of the student body has grown through increased retention, the student-to-advisor ratio has grown to the point of strain. Electronic systems have helped but there is still a need for more advisors.

## **PROJECTION**

As the diversity of Northeastern's student body has increased, support services have been re-evaluated and multiple efforts have begun to enhance them:

- ISSI has reorganized and invested in ways to address a growing and increasingly diverse international student population. It will monitor these changes and adjust as necessary.
- Cultural centers will continue to broaden their programming to focus on the needs of both domestic and international students.

- The Office of Affirmative Action and Diversity is developing new strategies to advance diversity, social justice, and inclusion, with plans to engage in student services related to diversity education and intergroup relations.

Information technology will continue to be a key element in enhancing the University's student-centered focus. The ongoing Unified Digital Campus project will improve communications and services with and among students. The portals will continue to be developed to enhance the flow of communication with students off campus.

An EMSA committee is working with a student committee to address lingering aspects of the "NU Shuffle." Their recommendations will address three areas: processes, communication improvements, and quality commitment and referral processes.

The University will continue to address space demands. The increasing demand for on-campus housing has resulted in a new 1,200-bed facility that will be opening in Fall 2009, with an additional 600-bed facility in the planning stages. Upcoming institutional master planning will address the issue of recreation space.

The Off-Campus Student Services Office currently has no easy way to communicate with, and limited data about, the off-campus student population. The Office is working with students to develop community connections and increased apartment services.

Alignment of student services units with the Academic Plan is fundamental. While the University continues to invest a larger portion of its budget into academics, it is important also to support these areas of development:

- Decrease the student-to-advisor ratio. Two new hires were made in 2008; additional hires are planned for the near future.
- Expand Co-op Connections to support a greater geographic, including international, diversity in experiential learning.
- Develop further living-learning communities and faculty programs. Learning outcomes are being developed and will be used to evaluate services and curricula.
- Create synergy around the University's mixed-use space. A student survey is planned for next year which will yield planning information for the scheduling of events venues. An additional art display space will be completed by Fall 2008 in the Curry Center. The need for additional outdoor multi-use athletic and recreation facilities continues to be a topic of interest. This issue requires development input.
- Link the cultural centers more closely to academic and student life. The cultural centers will add a more active academic and research mission to their existing agendas.
- Include a civic-engagement requirement in merit scholarships. As of Fall 2008, all full-tuition scholars will be required to participate in community service. The infrastructure needs, placements, and outcomes will be assessed.

## **INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

Within EMSA rigorous assessment is used consistently to inform decision-making. Ongoing assessment is provided through student surveys, staff evaluations, annual reviews of academic-support programs, data from the new Center for Applied Research in Enrollment and Employment, and data gathering and analysis by the Office of Institutional Research. EMSA units also administer local surveys and participate in benchmarking surveys. Satisfaction- and needs-survey data are closely monitored by leadership and inform decisions about service models. The University's colleges and schools also perform regular reviews of their academic student services programs and staff through surveys and individual feedback.

Northeastern has raised its admission standards, improved retention and graduation rates, and surpassed matchmate averages in student-satisfaction surveys, thereby demonstrating how well it handles assessment, remediation, and planning. The assessment tools the University uses, many of which are standardized national instruments, have helped it make great strides in the quality and quantity of the services it provides to students.