



Provost and Senior Vice President
Northeastern University
Boston, Massachusetts

THE SEARCH

Northeastern University – renowned for its innovative and entrepreneurial model of education and research – seeks an outstanding academic and entrepreneurial leader for the position of Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs. Reporting to the President, the Provost is the chief academic officer and the second ranking officer of the university.

Northeastern's unique value proposition is grounded in several key tenets: an experiential education, including its highly regarded co-op program, that prepares graduates to thrive in a technology-driven world; a global network of campuses and partners for students and faculty to leverage for learning and research; a deep investment in lifelong and experiential learning; a premium placed on pedagogical innovation; and a highly collaborative, partner-fueled, and frequently, inter disciplinary research enterprise focused on high-impact solutions.

The university has experienced unprecedented growth over the last 20 years. Annual external research funding has increased by more than 500%, fueled by highly collaborative, interdisciplinary institutes and centers, and the hiring of more than 1,000 tenured and tenure-track faculty. Northeastern's experiential model, with its signature co-op program, has been globalized and includes a vast array of real-world projects and experiences that attract top students at all stages of learning from around the world.

The next Provost will sustain and accelerate the university's extraordinary momentum and record of innovation in higher education. The successful candidate will combine exemplary academic credentials with strategic leadership ability, entrepreneurial ambition, systems thinking, collaborative and creative energy, and outstanding interpersonal and communication skills. This is an exciting opportunity to join a university with a unique mission, a differentiated and attractive position in the higher education landscape, and led by a nimble and innovative executive leadership team and a highly collaborative council of college deans.

Northeastern has retained Isaacson, Miller to assist in this search. All applications, inquiries, and nominations, which will remain confidential, should be directed to the search firm.

NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

Trajectory

Founded in Boston in 1898, Northeastern is renowned for its experiential learning model, high-impact research, deep partnerships, and worldwide reach. From day one, the university has pursued innovative ways of teaching and research that place a premium on experience and engagement with the world. Today, its signature approach spans the world, empowering not only students, but faculty, alumni, partners, and innovators to explore ideas, solve problems, and scale impact.

Our global university provides our community and academic, government, and industry partners with unique opportunities to think locally and act globally. It includes 13 campuses across the U.S., U.K., and Canada, 320,000-plus alumni, and more than 3,800 employer partners worldwide, serving as a platform for scaling ideas, talent, and solutions.

The university's residential campuses for undergraduate and graduate education and research are located in Boston, London, and Oakland, California. Our research- and graduate-focused campuses are in the Massachusetts communities of Burlington and Nahant; Arlington, Virginia; Charlotte, North Carolina; Miami, Florida; Portland, Maine; Seattle, Washington; Silicon Valley, California; Toronto; and Vancouver. In 2024, we announced the addition of a campus in New York City through a merger with Marymount Manhattan College, subject to the state and federal regulatory approvals now underway.

Northeastern's personalized, experiential undergraduate and graduate programs lead to degrees through the doctorate in 10 colleges and schools across our campuses. Learning emphasizes the intersection of data, technology, and human literacies, uniquely preparing graduates for an AI-driven world and the careers of the future.

Our research enterprise, with an R1 Carnegie classification, is solutions-oriented and spans the world. Our faculty scholars and students work in teams that cross not just disciplines, but also sectors—aligned around solving today's highly interconnected global challenges and focused on transformative impact for humankind.

The university had an endowment of \$1.9 billion as of June 30, 2024, and an FY24 operating budget of approximately \$2.3 billion.

Research and Faculty

The pace of change and progress has accelerated significantly under the leadership of President Joseph E. Aoun. Northeastern's research profile and external funding levels have risen sharply, and in 2015 the university moved into the top tier for research activity when it achieved R1 status under the Carnegie Classification system.

Driving Northeastern's interdisciplinary research growth and impact are more than two dozen high-performing, well-staffed, and well-resourced institutes and centers. These institutes and centers are organized around solving major societal challenges. They operate across colleges, disciplines, and global campuses. And they have attracted top-tier faculty from around the world, fueling prominence in three particular domains:

- *Network Science*. Mapping the unseen systems around us to surface new solutions (disease transmission, Big Data bias, disease patterns, optimized digital platforms, operational efficiency)
- *Cognitive and Brain Health*. Human-centered ways to draw upon the mind's complexity and resilience (Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, autism, aging, depression)
- *Network engineering*. Making wireless communications faster, more efficient, and secure (underwater IoT, 6G innovation, smart implantable medical devices, blockchain technologies, secure IoT devices)

External research funding was \$296.3 million in 2024, up more than 500% since 2006. Examples of recent funding investments by the U.S. federal government include:

- **\$85M** from the National Institutes of Health for Northeastern's PROTECT and ECHO programs, focused on the linkage between environmental factors and pre-term birth rates in Puerto Rico.
- **\$36M** awarded by the Department of Homeland Security to Northeastern's Bernard M. Gordon Center for Subsurface Sensing and Imaging Systems to lead a center of excellence called SENTRY to design a real-time surveillance system that can protect the vast array of so-called soft targets, such as stadiums, schools, and places of worship.
- **\$30M** awarded to a multi-university interdisciplinary group of universities from the National Science Foundation to establish a network science center that will revolutionize large-scale manufacturing through the discovery of new solid materials.
- **\$17.5M** over five years from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for faculty in our Network Science Institute to lead an innovation center designed to detect and prepare the U.S.—with a focus on rural areas—for the next outbreak of infectious disease.
- **\$1.9M** from the U.S. Commerce Department under CHIPS and Science Act's **\$1.5B** Wireless Innovation Fund for Northeastern's Institute for the Wireless Internet of Things to test approaches for building open and interoperable next-generation wireless networks.

Northeastern's faculty totals more than 4,000 (more than 2,000 are full-time) and comprises a diverse and talented group of teachers and scholars. The [Academic Plan](#) prioritizes research, personalized experiential learning, and global impact. The Provost, Chairs, and Deans have built a tenure-track faculty aligned with Northeastern's strategic themes, supported by large investments in new campuses, facilities, and startup packages. Faculty productivity and distinction is at the heart of the Northeastern mission and of the university's commitment to grow its academic enterprise, and faculty cite the interdisciplinary and translational intellectual culture of the campus, Northeastern's excellence in foundational disciplinary research, and institutional momentum as key reasons for joining the university community.

Academic Excellence and Experiential Learning

Northeastern's distinctive, internationally recognized programs for experiential learning attract an increasingly diverse and academically talented pool of students. The university's signature cooperative education program (co-op) and other experiential programs have enabled Northeastern undergraduate and graduate students to have professional, research, and service opportunities in 151 countries, giving students real-world experience that adds enriching new dimensions to their classroom studies.

Northeastern's reputation as the world leader in global experiential learning with an emphasis on academic excellence and research has spurred 105,092 applications for the fall 2025 entering class, and the mean composite SAT score was 1483 for fall 2024. Applications for master's and certificate programs exceeded 71,000 as of fall 2024, up 260% in the last decade. Participation in global experience programs has grown 183% over the past decade to 7,341 students in 2023-2024, and the number of countries where Northeastern has provided global experiential learning opportunities is up to 151.

Over the past five years, 97% of Northeastern graduates were employed (full- or part-time) or in graduate school within nine months of graduation, and 91% of employed 2022 graduates were doing work related to their major. About 60% of graduates obtain their first job placement at one of their co-op employers.

Successful Fundraising Campaigns

Northeastern's global community of alumni, parents, students, and friends are driving a historic \$1.75 billion campaign to continue building on the university's strengths while launching it into the future. **Experience** Powered by Northeastern is supporting the vision set out in Northeastern's academic plan through key fundraising priorities—student experience, faculty excellence, research, communities of belonging, entrepreneurship, and global exploration.

Beginning its silent phase in January 2018 and launched publicly in 2022, the **Experience** campaign has raised \$1.2 billion at the campaign's midpoint, with record participation of more than 116,000 donors. Critical to the campaign's success has been multiple groundbreaking gifts, including a \$50 million naming

gift to establish Khoury College of Computer Sciences, \$30 million to support a Center, and \$20 million to establish a center focused on social change and innovation.

The **Experience** campaign has raised transformative investments to enrich educational and research initiatives that expand our global system. Most significant among these is the Roux Institute in Portland, Maine, which launched in 2020 through the extraordinary commitments of Maine-based donors to drive economic growth in region. To date, the Roux Institute has secured philanthropic support totaling nearly \$450 million, which includes funding for the construction of a state-of-the-art campus that will house students, research faculty, startups, and corporate partners.

The current campaign builds on the success of Northeastern's previous Empower campaign, which met and exceeded its original goal of raising \$500 million in philanthropy and another \$500 million through industry and government partnerships, closing in 2017 at \$1.4 billion raised for students, faculty, and research. The Empower campaign set new records for the university and included including a first named college with the D'Amore-McKim School of Business, first named deanship, 155 new scholarship funds, 14 new endowed chairs and professorships, and donors from 110 countries.

Academic Plan

In 2021, the Northeastern community adopted a new strategic plan, [*Experience Unleashed*](#), that builds on previous efforts and sets ambitious goals for Northeastern's coming decade. At the heart of the framework is the central goal of maximizing Northeastern's positive impact in the world by:

- Recognizing the complexity of acute and chronic challenges and working across disciplines to address them.
- Translating excellence in scholarship and learning into measurable impact.
- Ensuring all students, faculty, and staff have access to the skills and tools they need to take projects from idea to implementation.
- Preparing globally mobile, culturally agile lifelong learners through experiential learning and a curriculum that emphasizes the intersection of data, tech, and human literacies.
- Celebrating and leveraging a community of belonging across the university.
- Providing an unparalleled experience for those who place their trust in Northeastern—students, employers, research partners, families—enabled by seamless technological integration.

President Joseph E. Aoun

Joseph E. Aoun, a well-known higher education thought leader and renowned scholar in linguistics, is the seventh President of Northeastern University.

An internationally respected voice on the value of higher education, President Aoun has led the global expansion of Northeastern's signature co-op program, bringing experiential learning opportunities to more than 150 countries. During his tenure, the university has spearheaded the establishment of

Northeastern's global system across North America and the U.K., increased external research funding sevenfold, and hired more than 1,000 tenured and tenure-track faculty.

He is the author of numerous articles and books, including *Robot-Proof: Higher Education in the Age of Artificial Intelligence* (MIT Press, revised and updated 2024). In it, he expands on his initial blueprint for colleges and universities to meet the challenges and opportunities associated with the transformative effects of artificial intelligence.

President Aoun came to Northeastern from the University of Southern California's College of Letters, Arts & Sciences where he was the inaugural holder of the Anna H. Bing Dean's Chair. He received his Ph.D. in linguistics and philosophy from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and advanced degrees from the University of Paris VIII (France) and Saint Joseph University (Beirut, Lebanon). He was named a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor and a Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Palmes Academiques by the French government and is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and a past Chair of the American Council on Education.

ROLE OF THE PROVOST AND SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT

As the university's chief academic officer, the Provost has overall responsibility for all educational and research activities of the colleges, schools, and academic units including the following direct reports:

- Dean, College of Arts, Media and Design
- Dean, College of Science
- Dean, College of Social Sciences and Humanities
- Dean, D'Amore-McKim School of Business
- Dean, College of Engineering
- Dean, Khoury College of Computer Sciences
- Dean, Bouvé College of Health Sciences
- Dean, School of Law
- Dean, College of Professional Studies
- Dean, Mills College at Northeastern
- Dean, University Libraries

The Provost guides the university's strategic academic planning, with a special responsibility for integrating academic planning across the colleges and fostering cross-college interdisciplinary initiatives. The Provost oversees the research and instructional missions of the university and elevates Northeastern's internal and external reputation as a leading center of both research and practice in experiential education. The Provost takes the leading role in designing broad strategies for recruiting and developing a faculty appropriate to Northeastern's mission and expands opportunities

for faculty at all levels to collaborate across departments, colleges, and campuses in interdisciplinary academic programs and research initiatives.

The Provost mentors and supports the college deans in a management structure that accords the colleges and schools substantial responsibility for guiding their programs, developing their faculty, pursuing institutional advancement, and allocating resources. In addition to being an academic leader in his or her own right, the Provost cultivates and inspires academic leadership at all levels of the university.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE PROVOST

The next Provost will sustain and accelerate Northeastern's development as a global, experiential, and interdisciplinary research university on the world stage. In advancing the university's strategic and academic goals, he or she will:

Enhance the quality, quantity, and external reputation of Northeastern's research effort.

Northeastern is uniquely positioned to continue its momentum in interdisciplinary and impactful research, and the Provost will strategically guide the university's research efforts to ensure it remains well-positioned to adapt to and address society's most pressing and rapidly evolving questions and opportunities. In collaboration with the deans, the Provost will identify areas of research opportunity aligned with the university's strategic themes and will invest both new and reallocated resources, including faculty lines, in these areas. The Provost will look for innovative opportunities to further break down silos and foster collaboration in research across disciplines and across Northeastern's network of global campuses. The Provost will recognize and support outstanding research and scholarly accomplishment across all disciplines of the university through clear and rigorous processes of faculty recruitment, evaluation, tenure, and promotion. She or he will ensure that the goals and accomplishments of Northeastern's research effort are communicated effectively to audiences both inside and outside the university, including funding agencies. The Provost will continue to accelerate the translation of Northeastern's use-inspired research innovations into practice and to develop partnerships towards this end with industry and external organizations.

Sustain educational excellence and widen Northeastern's lead in experiential education.

The Provost will exploit Northeastern's distinctive advantage in global experiential education, including its signature co-op program, to maintain and develop academic programs that draw increasing numbers of highly qualified students to the university. The Provost will support instructional innovations, including innovative uses of instructional technology, that provide students with increased curricular flexibility; allow them to pursue their passions across disciplines; give students in all majors access to the university's full range of global experiences; and deepen students' capacity to learn from their experiences outside the classroom. The Provost will support global efforts in experiential education and the continued growth and development of opportunities across the global university system. Throughout this work, the Provost

will ensure students are empowered in their own education and that their needs remain a core priority for the university.

Raise the stature of Northeastern's graduate programs, especially doctoral programs.

In collaboration with the college deans, the Provost will develop and implement strategies for aligning doctoral programs more rigorously with the university's research strengths; attracting very highly qualified students from top institutions to Northeastern's doctoral programs; and improving student outcomes. The Provost will support the development of cross-college interdisciplinary doctoral programs aligned with research strengths. The Provost will support and sustain high academic quality and programmatic innovation in the university's professional master's programs, including those delivered through Northeastern's global network of regional campuses.

Recruit, develop, and retain a distinguished faculty.

The Provost will oversee the university's overall growth in faculty under the long-range plan. In collaboration with the college deans, the Provost will continue to improve Northeastern's strategies for successfully recruiting, developing, and retaining outstanding faculty members, with special emphasis on recruiting outstanding senior faculty and interdisciplinary clusters of faculty in specific areas of research. The Provost will align faculty growth with the university's capital planning.

Maintain and build a strong leadership team.

The Provost's leadership team, including the college deans, will embody the Provost's highest academic standards; will model the university's commitment to excellence, and will support the Provost in developing academic leaders throughout the university.

Maintain and build Northeastern's academic infrastructure.

The Provost will ensure that faculty and students are provided with the information technology, academic computing resources, and instructional technologies needed to maintain and accelerate Northeastern's development as a major research university identified with innovation in global experiential education.

Oversee the continuing development of Northeastern's budget and management model.

As Northeastern has prospered it has acquired a complex, matrix management structure that links the provost, to a Chancellor with enrollment and student life responsibility and a VP for Global Programs. Much of the research crosses school and departmental lines and Northeastern adds campuses and programs regularly.

The Provost joins their colleagues in systems development, in structure, responsibility and budget. The Provost will ensure that the budget model's incentives and allocation of resources continue to serve the university's highest strategic purposes. The Provost will continue to develop and sustain budgeting and planning processes that provide deans with the information needed to be entrepreneurial strategic leaders of their units.

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Northeastern University has a bold vision and an aggressive plan for the institution's future. The senior officers of the university embody and cultivate an institutional culture of rigorous engagement, focused on strategic as well as operational excellence. Successful leaders at the university demonstrate confidence and flexibility, enjoy creative and collaborative planning and problem-solving, and combine outstanding capability in their own domains with appetite and enthusiasm for discussing programs, initiatives and challenges that span the university. Innovation is a cornerstone of the university.

To lead Northeastern's academic community, the university seeks a Provost with exemplary academic achievements, together with strategic leadership ability; outstanding interpersonal and communication skills; entrepreneurial spirit and high energy; and a passion for the unique mission of Northeastern University in all its facets. She or he will be able to work effectively and collaboratively with a broad range of constituents, including other members of the university's senior leadership, deans, faculty, students, staff, alumni, donors, and external partners.

The successful candidate will bring many of the following skills and qualities:

- An earned doctorate and a record of distinguished scholarly and professional accomplishment appropriate for appointment as a tenured full professor at Northeastern University. Outstanding academically qualified candidates from industry, government, and foundations will be considered.
- Significant administrative experience, preferably at a major research institution, with proven ability to execute ambitious, fiscally responsible, entrepreneurial initiatives.
- Demonstrated success in promoting and sustaining organizational change and innovation.
- A systems thinker experienced in leading, working within, and communicating across complex multi-faceted organizations
- Personal and professional integrity. Capacity to maintain poise in complex and conflictual situations, to hear opposing views clearly, and to persevere when principles or strategic considerations are at stake. Ability to work with varying of thoughts and perspectives.
- Ability to make difficult, timely and principled decisions.
- A record of developing and supporting excellent and innovative academic programs at the undergraduate, masters, professional, and doctoral levels, both within and across disciplines.
- A commitment to success of bold initiatives set forward in the academic plan, including the expansion of the global university system. An entrepreneurial spirit to realize the ambitions of the university.
- Demonstrated success in cultivating research and scholarship. Ability to identify and support areas of research opportunity that span individual investigators and existing disciplines.

- A strong commitment to fostering belonging and a record of demonstrated success in recruiting, advancing, retaining and working collaboratively with a faculty and academic leadership team with unique backgrounds, experiences and perspectives.
- A record of success in developing partnerships with industry, government, and nonprofit organizations.
- A participatory and collaborative management style that empowers and develops energetic, entrepreneurial academic leadership at every level of the university.
- Commitment to an active faculty governance model at the level of Northeastern's colleges and schools as well as the university as a whole.
- Extensive knowledge of planning and budgeting processes.
- Capacity to oversee the continuing development of the infrastructure and information technologies needed to support the activities of a major research university.
- Enthusiasm for high accomplishment throughout the wide range of Northeastern's academic activities, and ability to communicate the same both inside and outside the university.
- The ability to engage and inspire the academic community at the university as well as on a national and global scale.

BACKGROUND: ESSENTIAL CONTEXT AND EXPLANATIONS

About the Global Campuses

Northeastern has pursued innovative models since 1898 when we launched evening classes in Boston. At the time, higher education for working professionals was unheard of. In 1909, the College of Engineering began integrating cooperative learning into its programs. The other schools and departments soon followed suit, and over the next century we built a world-renowned experiential model.

More than 100 years later, under the leadership of President Joseph Aoun, we recognized that the American system of higher education would change dramatically in the 21st century. In alignment with our core values in experience and engagement with the world, we embarked on an extensive planning process to create a model of higher education that moves beyond the traditional boundaries of a singular place or point in time – one that allows us to learn, gain experience, conduct cutting-edge, use-inspired research and innovate where and when the problems and needs exist.

At the heart of that plan, would be the creation of a truly global university system—campuses, alumni, and partners—that would enable us to become the most impactful university in the world. Today, our global university system operates as a distributed network, providing our community and academic, government, and industry partners with unique opportunities to think locally and act globally.

For example, new programs may be developed and established at one of the network campuses, enhanced locally, and then offered throughout the broader campus system, consistent with local needs and demand. The successful Align computer science master's program—which accelerates people with no prior computer science education or training into a career in computing—is an example of this approach. It was designed, implemented, and revised in Seattle before being offered in Boston and other campuses.

The university also encourages and enables students to benefit from pursuing learning and experiential opportunities at more than one campus in the system. Faculty are encouraged to use the campuses to scale their research, and several of the university's research institutes are located across multiple campuses. The Academic Plan envisions that all members of the Northeastern community will have a "passport" to the university's global network to maximize their own opportunities and the impact of their work.

Colleges and Schools

Our personalized undergraduate and graduate programs lead to degrees through the doctorate in 10 colleges and schools across our global system of campuses in the U.S., U.K., and Canada. All are encouraged to introduce interdisciplinary academic programs and research across college lines.

Bouvé College of Health Sciences (established in 1964), home to the School of Clinical and Rehabilitation Sciences, School of Nursing, School of Community Health and Behavioral Sciences, and School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences

College of Arts, Media and Design (established in 2010 with the restructuring of the College of Arts and Sciences), home to the School of Architecture and departments of Art + Design, Communication Studies, Journalism, Music, and Theater

Khoury College of Computer Sciences (established in 1982, named in 2018 with a \$50 million gift), home to degree programs in computer science, cybersecurity, and data science, and 56 combined majors with other colleges at the university (including computer science and English, computer science and criminal justice, computer science and music, data science and biochemistry, and cybersecurity and economics)

College of Engineering (established in 1909), home to departments in Bioengineering, Chemical Engineering, Civil and Environmental Engineering, Electrical and Computer Engineering, and Mechanical and Industrial Engineering

College of Professional Studies (established in 1960), offering bachelor's, master's, post-baccalaureate, and professional doctorate, degrees, and certificate programs

College of Science (established in 2010 with the restructuring of the College of Arts and Sciences), home to departments in Biology, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Chemical Biology, Marine and Environmental Science, and Psychology

College of Social Sciences and Humanities (established in 2010 with the restructuring of the College of Arts and Sciences), home to 22 departments and schools, including departments in Economics, English, History, Political Science, Latinx, Latin American, and Caribbean Studies Programs, Philosophy and Religion, and the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice and the School of Public Policy and Urban Affairs

D'Amore-McKim School of Business (established in 1922, named in 2012 with a \$60 million gift), home to departments and programs in accounting, analytics, family business, computer science, healthcare management, international business, marketing, and supply chain

Mills College at Northeastern (established in 2022), our newest college formed with the merger that established our Oakland, California campus

School of Law (established in 1898), our founding school and offering juris doctorate and master's of law degrees with areas of study including business law, criminal justice, health and policy law, intellectual property and technology, human rights, immigration, and privacy

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/northeastern-university/provost-and-senior-vice-president>. Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

John Isaacson, Founder and Chair
Andy Lee, Partner
Kelly McLaughlin, Managing Associate
Mindy Cimini, Senior Search Coordinator
Isaacson, Miller