



Dean of the College of Engineering
Northeastern University
Boston Campus

THE SEARCH

Northeastern University invites nominations and applications for the position of Dean of the College of Engineering. It's a role of uncommon scope and opportunity, based in Boston and connected to one of the most distinctive university networks in the world.

The College of Engineering holds a unique position in advancing Northeastern's identity and ambitions. It is among the university's largest and most research-intensive colleges, generating \$104 million in externally funded research annually and maintaining educational and research activity across 12 of Northeastern's 14 campuses. Its partnerships extend to more than 2,400 corporate and research collaborators in 43 states and 23 countries.

On the educational side, the college draws from an unprecedented pool of applicants and ranks among the most selective undergraduate engineering programs in the country; it has simultaneously emerged as one of the fastest-growing graduate engineering programs nationally. Home to the #1 co-op program in the nation, the college has built its reputation on rigorous, personalized education and experiential learning that produces exceptional outcomes for its students.

The incoming Dean will arrive at a moment of real momentum. Northeastern has achieved significant advances in academic stature and research prominence, attracted highly eminent faculty and staff, and invested in the facilities and infrastructure to support ambitious work across its global campuses. That growth has been purposeful, guided by a series of bold academic plans and a genuine institutional appetite for what comes next: an even deeper commitment to experiential lifelong learning and use-inspired research, and a clear-eyed embrace of AI and what it means for the future of education and discovery.

The Dean will help shape that next chapter for engineering specifically: translating the college's considerable strengths into greater impact, deepening its global engagement, and developing an approach to engineering education that reflects both the demands of the moment and the scale of Northeastern's reach.

The right candidate will bring distinguished scholarly credentials and administrative experience to lead a complex, thriving college. Equally important are the qualities that are harder to credential: the ability to earn trust across a large and decentralized university system, to articulate a vision that resonates with faculty, students, alumni, and partners alike, and to recognize in this role the opportunity to lead a college with unique potential and capacity for impact.

ABOUT NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

Founded in Boston in 1898, Northeastern is renowned for innovative teaching and research that place a premium on experience, interdisciplinarity, and engagement with the world. Today, its signature approach spans the globe, empowering not only students, but faculty, alumni, partners, and innovators to explore ideas, solve problems, and scale impact. The university's endowment is \$2.1 billion, with an FY25 operating budget of \$2.5 billion.

Northeastern's signature [global university system](#) provides the community, as well as academic, government, and industry partners, with unique opportunities to think locally and act globally. With 14 campuses across the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada, more than 360,000 alumni, and over 4,000 employer partners worldwide, Northeastern is a powerful platform for innovation and the scaling of ideas, talent, and solutions. Northeastern's campuses are located in eight U.S. states: California (Oakland and Silicon Valley), Florida (Miami), Maine (Portland), Massachusetts (Boston, Burlington, and Nahant), North Carolina (Charlotte), Virginia (Arlington), New York (New York City), Washington (Seattle); two Canadian provinces British Columbia (Vancouver) and Ontario (Toronto); and in England (London). Most recently, the university established the Dublin Innovation Institute, extending its longstanding partnership with University College Dublin in Ireland. This partnership provides access to new research collaborations across Europe and the European Union's Horizon Research program.

Northeastern's Academic Plan envisions that all members of the university community will have a "passport" to the global network, enabling them to maximize their own opportunities and the impact of their work. The university encourages students to pursue learning and experiential opportunities at more than one campus in the system, while faculty use the campuses to scale their research, including through several of Northeastern's multi-campus research institutes. The university is rolling out an updated academic plan in the fall, and the new Dean will support this process.

As a Carnegie R1 institution, Northeastern's use-inspired research enterprise not only spans geographies, but also disciplines and sectors. Its scholars and students work in teams aligned around solving today's highly interconnected global challenges and focused on transformative impact for society and the planet. The Northeastern faculty includes over 3,600 highly accomplished scholars and teachers; 2,000 are full-time. Faculty excellence, productivity, and distinction are at the heart of the Northeastern mission, and the university is the proud home of eight members of the National Academies and six members of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. The non-tenure-track faculty receive progressive titles for promotion, training in the science of teaching and learning, and directly participate in Northeastern's strong shared governance tradition. Faculty success has been supported by large investments in new campuses, facilities, and startup packages.

Northeastern's personalized, experiential programs offer undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral degrees at 10 colleges and schools across the network. Learning emphasizes the intersection of data, technology, and human literacies, uniquely preparing graduates for agency in the careers of the future in an AI-driven world. The university's signature cooperative education program (co-op) and vast range of experiential

programs have enabled Northeastern undergraduate and graduate students to pursue professional, research, and service opportunities in 151 countries since 2006, providing real-world experience that enriches their classroom studies.

A testament to the university's success, Northeastern received over 105,000 applications for the fall 2025 undergraduate entering class, and the mean composite SAT score was 1472. For the Class of 2024, 96% of Northeastern graduates were employed or in graduate school within nine months of graduation, and 93% of employed graduates were doing work related to their major. More than half of graduates obtain their first job placement at one of their co-op employers.

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

The mission of the university and the College of Engineering is to educate students for a lifetime of continued growth, fulfillment, and accomplishment and to discover and translate knowledge to meet global and societal needs through innovation. The college is a worldwide leader in experiential engineering education, producing 21st-century engineers who are technically strong, multidisciplinary, multifaceted, and uniquely prepared to lead and innovate in a complex and fast-moving world. The College of Engineering has supported the development of over 3,900 employer partners and during the 2025 academic year 2,945 undergraduate and graduate engineering students were hired for four- to six-month full-time co-op positions.

The College of Engineering comprises five departments: Bioengineering, Chemical Engineering, Civil and Environmental Engineering, Electrical and Computer Engineering, and Mechanical and Industrial Engineering. It is home to 3,866 undergraduate and 5,041 graduate students, as well as 207 tenured and tenure-track faculty and 149 full-time non-tenure-track faculty. More than 300 dedicated staff support the college's mission, programs, and operations.

College of Engineering faculty pursue bold innovation by collaborating across engineering disciplines and the entire university. The college also has strong collaborations that extend into government, academia, and industry, as well as more than 20 multidisciplinary [research centers and institutes](#) with funding from eight federal agencies. Northeastern has made major investments in premier engineering [research facilities](#), including the 223,000 square foot Interdisciplinary Science and Engineering Complex and the 367,000 square foot EXP facility for teaching and research, both on the Boston campus.

THE ROLE OF THE DEAN

As the chief academic and executive officer of the college, the Dean reports to the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and serves alongside other college Deans and the university's Chancellor as a member of Northeastern's academic leadership team. The Dean holds ultimate responsibility for the college's faculty, students, and staff, as well as its long-term planning and infrastructure. The Dean is also responsible for the college's overall financial health, including careful attention to its revenue streams, fundraising goals, and efficient and effective operations across the campus network. Importantly, the

Dean plays a critical role in broadcasting the impact and success of the college externally, with public and industrial partners at the local, state, national, and international levels. The Dean is the primary advocate and champion for the college and university internally, both to university leadership for participation in large-scale initiatives and to fellow deans to seed collaborations across colleges.

Reporting to the Dean are eight Associate Deans and two Senior Associate Deans, along with five Department Chairs.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE NEXT DEAN

Deans at Northeastern serve as key institutional leaders and intellectual partners with the President, Provost, Chancellor, and fellow deans. The university values creativity, nimbleness, and transformational change, and the Dean will embody that spirit and culture in addressing the following opportunities:

Setting strategic vision and leadership

In an increasingly technological world, Northeastern's strength in engineering positions the college to address global challenges and make meaningful contributions to society. The Dean will draw on the university's bold ambitions and institutional agility to elevate the College of Engineering among the top tier of programs—expanding research endeavors, forging translational discoveries, and deepening partnerships with public and private entities that create distinctive opportunities for students and the broader research enterprise. Central to this work will be leading the college's engagement with AI's profound implications for engineering education and research, developing new approaches that leverage Northeastern's global network and strengthen the college's reputation and reach.

Expanding leadership in education and student success

The Dean should be student-centered and passionate about student success and outcomes for both undergraduate and graduate students. The Dean will champion innovation and strive to place the College of Engineering at the forefront of a modern engineering education, including the integration of AI. The Dean will reinforce efforts in personalized education, experiential learning, and lifelong learning to ensure students are prepared for the future in a rapidly changing landscape where emerging technologies are transforming workforce needs. The co-op program is a major advantage and the foundation of Northeastern's student experience. As more universities try to replicate the co-op program, the Dean will foster innovation and expansion of opportunities for student engagement through co-op and other experiences. As the global network expands, the Dean will creatively explore new models for delivering education across a broad set of campuses and along the continuum of lifelong learning, while supporting faculty development for teaching excellence.

Fostering impactful, transformative research

The college has experienced significant increases in research activity. The Dean will build on this momentum by working with the college community to identify strengths and continue to elevate the research enterprise. In a dynamic research funding environment, the Dean will pursue creative strategies

to foster large-scale collaborative proposals and expand funding through partnerships with industry and additional funding opportunities in the global network, such as through the aforementioned Dublin Innovation Institute. The Dean will make important resource-allocation decisions to enhance research through seed programs, recruitment of world-renowned researchers, research infrastructure and equipment, renovations, and other means of supporting faculty success. The Dean will be a strong partner in forging collaborative work across colleges, working in close cooperation with other deans.

Building strong relationships and partnerships across Northeastern's global network

Northeastern has built one of the most vibrant educational ecosystems in the world, and leveraging its matrixed, globally distributed structure is essential. Successful Deans at Northeastern find ways to engage with their peers on a regular basis, designing and building cross-disciplinary programs that are customized to individual market needs. Beyond programmatic growth, there is enormous potential for cross-network research expansion. The Dean will work with peers and the Senior Vice Provost for Research to develop the vision for research expansion throughout the network and identify novel opportunities presented by the global reach. This will require effective communication, strategic alignment, and coordination to ensure all are aware of the opportunities and activities across the college.

Leading a high-performing community of dedicated and ambitious faculty and staff

The Dean will bring the college community together with a shared purpose, communicating regularly with the broad range of constituencies across campuses. The Dean should be a visible and accessible part of the community. Establishing a strong, high-functioning office to oversee the functions of the college is critical, and the Dean will cultivate, develop, and retain a high-performing team. Demonstrating a commitment to an inclusive working and learning environment where all can flourish is vital, and the Dean will promote leadership development opportunities for faculty and staff more broadly.

Developing, attracting, and strategically stewarding resources

As the chief ambassador and fundraiser for the college, the Dean plays the leading role in securing and shepherding financial resources to continue the College of Engineering's momentum and achieve its aspirations. The college is poised for transformational gifts, including naming opportunities, and the Dean must generate excitement among alumni, donors, and other friends of the college to invest in its future. The Dean will be a superb relationship builder and an energetic fundraiser, establishing relationships with leaders in industry, foundations, and government in support of students and the research enterprise. In addition to fundraising, the Dean should pursue additional engines of revenue generation in new programmatic growth, continuing education, and global education.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The candidate for Dean will have exemplary credentials and a demonstrated capacity for entrepreneurial vision, as well as many of the following professional achievements and personal qualities:

- Creative and visionary leadership skills with the proven ability to execute ambitious goals and bring a forward-looking perspective on trends in science and technology
- A superb record of scholarly achievement
- Demonstrated intellectual breadth and the ability to support excellence in research programs across varied disciplines.
- A distinguished record of leadership impact and administrative accomplishments in a complex organization
- Demonstrated ability to generate resources, including a strong record of fundraising from public and private sources
- Proven commitment to recruiting and retaining excellent faculty, staff, and students from a broad range of backgrounds and experiences
- The ability to establish and maintain high-impact collaborations with industry
- Experience as a collaborative champion and strong institutional citizen with a record of interdisciplinary program development, institutional innovation, and impact
- The ability to develop, articulate, and communicate the institutional mission, values, and priorities
- A talent for engaging and inspiring communities, including cultivating a robust leadership team and fostering career development of faculty and staff

TO APPLY

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue on a confidential basis until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website:

www.imsearch.com/open-searches/northeastern-university-college-engineering/dean

John Muckle, Partner
Andy Lee, Partner
Karen McPhedran Managing Associate
Kira Hamilton, Senior Search Coordinator
Isaacson, Miller

All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability status, protected veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by the law. Northeastern is an E-Verify Employer.

APPENDIX: University Leadership

President Joseph E. Aoun

Joseph E. Aoun, an internationally 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 global and experiential education, President Aoun has led the expansion of experiential learning—centered on Northeastern’s signature co-op program—to offer opportunities for work, research, service, and global study in 151 countries.

President Aoun has strategically aligned the university’s use-inspired research enterprise with three global imperatives—health, security, and sustainability—a focus supported by 12 interdisciplinary research institutes. Northeastern has also established a network of 14 campuses in the U.S., Canada, and the United Kingdom, as part of the president’s vision for a global university system that expands opportunities for lifelong learning and collaborative research. As a result of these and other initiatives created during the president’s tenure, Northeastern has attracted record numbers of high-talent students and faculty, while external awards for research have more than tripled.

Among his awards and honors, President Aoun was appointed as Chevalier of the Legion of Honor by the President of the French Republic. He is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and a past chair of the American Council on Education.

Interim Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Thomas Sheahan

Tom Sheahan serves as Interim Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, bringing extensive academic leadership experience to the role. Most recently, he served as Executive Vice Provost beginning in 2022. From 2019 to 2022, he was the Senior Vice Provost for Curriculum and Programs. As Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs for the College of Engineering from 2011 to 2019, he oversaw undergraduate and graduate education, cooperative education, faculty affairs, budgeting, and a range of operational functions. From 2007 to 2010, he served as Interim Chair for the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, where he has been on the faculty since 1991.

Sheahan’s technical expertise is in geotechnical engineering. He received funding from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and the U.S. National Science Foundation, and authored more than 90 publications, including a seminal geotechnical engineering textbook. He served as editor of the ASTM journal in his field and co-edited several conference proceedings. Sheahan holds leadership positions in both ABET and the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), of which he is a Fellow. He received outstanding teaching awards at Northeastern, and numerous honors from ASTM, ASCE, and Tau Beta Pi, the national engineering honor society.

Sheahan holds a BS in Civil Engineering from Union College and his master’s and doctorate from MIT, and is a registered professional engineer.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by Northeastern University. The material presented in this leadership profile should be relied on for informational purposes only. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and information provided by Northeastern University would supersede any conflicting information in this document.