

FROM THE DEAN



THE ONGOING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INDUSTRY AND HIGHER EDUCATION

In this issue of *Encore*, we take a look back at an extraordinary time in the history of the high technology industry, as well as the history of the Massachusetts economy. Not only do we learn that Northeastern's University College alumni contributed in a variety of ways, but also that industries and universities worked together to support and advance one another. In particular, we discover how the School of Professional and Continuing Studies (SPCS) is uniquely structured for this purpose.



We are committed to developing degree, certificate, and professional development programs that keep pace with today's leading industries. At the same time, our faculty includes distinguished researchers and industry leaders who have exceptional academic credentials and impressive public- and private-sector résumés. We frequently provide connections to colleagues, businesses, resources, and mentors that can define a student's career path. Faculty researchers and their student collaborators have access to state-of-the-art research facilities, both on campus and in Greater Boston. As industry leaders, our adjunct faculty have the expertise and experience of applying knowledge to the issues of their profession.

The high-tech boom of the 1970s and 1980s created tens of thousands of jobs for people with the right skills, drive, and desire to be a part of that new frontier—the computer industry. This collaboration between industry and the world-class educational institutions in and around Boston made it possible to develop the skilled and knowledgeable workforce that supported the phenomenal growth of that time.

We can draw some parallels between our collaboration with the high-tech industry in the 1970s and 1980s and the way we develop programs to address the needs of today's economy. Our three-pronged approach to building programs and curricula aligns with the current and future needs of leading and emerging industries. First, one of the hallmarks of our school is that we draw adjunct faculty from the local business community. That gives us an immediate connection to leading industries, including high technology, financial services, and healthcare.

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We use that talent to create new talent, which is a powerful model for educating students. The faculty offers us insights into cutting-edge technology and emerging industries, as well as valuable professional networking opportunities for students.

The second way that SPCS partners with industry is through our ongoing involvement with advisory boards, which inform the School on the latest trends and keep SPCS apprised of the needs in the marketplace. While building the curriculum, we continually consult with industry leaders.

Market research is the third element of the School’s approach to developing programs and training students for industry’s needs.

Through a partnership with Eduventures, we study industry trends, whether it be in technology, financial services, or healthcare. This research helps us to plan where we are headed and ensures that we are aligned with industry needs. In addition to these efforts, we learn much about what is happening in specific industries through our students, many of whom are high-level executives working in the fields we serve.”

What’s more, with all the new delivery systems we now have, such as online and hybrid course formats, we can draw on experts who are outside of the local area. This keeps us attuned to the needs of the broader marketplace.

As you read about the experiences of our alumni who served on the front lines of the high-tech revolution during the 1970s and 1980s, you will understand how vital the relationship between industry and education was to the Massachusetts economy—and to leading-edge companies of that time, such as Digital Equipment Corporation, Prime Computer Systems, and Wang Laboratories.



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