

OFFERING A WORLD OF PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

DEAN HOPEY ON

Facilitating Access to Global Market Opportunities



We live in an increasingly global economy and society. Time zones, geography, and language are no longer barriers to multinational business operations, cross-cultural collaborations, or international friendships. It is in this environment that Northeastern's School of Professional and Continuing Studies (SPCS) fulfills its obligation to provide students with the skills and experiences that will enable them to compete and contribute to the world at large.

Inherent in the mission of the School of Professional and Continuing Studies is its commitment to making a quality education readily accessible to working professionals and adult learners. According to the School's Vice President and Dean Christopher E. Hopey, Ph.D., international programs are a significant facet of this mission.

"It's not just access in terms of convenient scheduling and tuition structure that we're talking about," explains Hopey. "It's access to other cultures. The students we certify must be prepared for the world in which they are going to work and live."

Through a broad range of international educational opportunities, the School promotes the development of global perspectives for all its students, faculty, alumni, and friends.

"We have three core strategies connected with international," explains Hopey. "First, we want to internationalize our college. Our goal is to bring people from around the world to SPCS to experience our programs, which we feel are the best. Second, we believe all students should have international experience due to the global economy in which they live and work. Lastly, part of our mission is to work with alumni and friends in lifelong learning. We accomplish this by offering meaningful opportunities to travel and study abroad."

Among these opportunities are the School's Short-term Education Abroad (SEA) programs, which are specially designed for working professionals. Ranging from one to two weeks, these innovative

travel programs combine academics, in-country specialists, and sightseeing, and are an enhancement to certificate, degree, online, and other SPCS programs.

Hopey notes that one upcoming SEA program, "Peru and the Business Environment of Latin America," is intended to familiarize students with the business and cultural practices of Latin America. Prior to the trip, students meet three times and read advance materials. After returning to Northeastern, they prepare a research paper.

World Language Center

Whether studying abroad or working in a multinational organization, language is essential. Being multilingual is therefore a distinct competitive advantage for any student looking to pursue a career in the global marketplace.

"The world is changing dramatically every day," asserts Hopey. "In developing these programs, our philosophy is that what you learn today, you can use tomorrow."

Under the School of Professional and Continuing Studies, the World Language Center is expanding. The center now has 21 full-time faculty, and enrollments are growing. With several new languages added this year, we now offer 13 languages that range from French and German to Japanese and Swahili.

Global Pathways

Among the international programs offered by the School of Professional and Continuing Studies is "Global Pathways." This unique program offers international students the opportunity to experience life at a top American university while preparing for a U.S. bachelor's or master's degree.

SPCS has partnered with Kaplan, Inc., to recruit international students for this program, which currently includes approximately 150 participants from locations such as Buenos Aires, São Paulo, Kyoto, Shanghai, Bangalore, Mumbai, Tokyo, Cape Town, and Tunisia.

On the importance of recruiting internationally, Hopey offers, "It's a fundamentally richer experience when you have students from other countries in the class. Many of our students will be working in international companies, so access to a broad range of cultures and ways of thinking results in a richer educational experience."

The nine-month Global Pathways program offers specialized areas of academic study along with intensive English language training and university study skills preparation. What is especially appealing about this program for international students is that it is not merely a preparatory program. Students actually start earning credits toward a degree. Those who successfully progress through the Global Pathways program are admitted to Northeastern to continue their education.

Within Global Pathways, SPCS offers an NU in Australia Program for students who are interested in attending Northeastern, but who may or may not have been accepted into the fall-semester freshman class. Designed with international partner Swinburne University of Technology located in Melbourne, Australia, the NU in Australia Program is essentially a semester abroad during which students earn credits that they can apply to winter entry at Northeastern or another college of their choosing.

The program kicks off in Massachusetts with a three-day orientation and training session that features team building, preparation for study abroad, and Northeastern orientation. Following those three days, the students board a plane to Australia along with a Northeastern representative and a graduate student who help to ensure that students have the best possible study-abroad experience. The first NU in Australia Program is now in progress, and SPCS is looking to expand the program to other locales in Europe and South America as well.

International Partnerships

In addition to bringing students to Boston, Hopey reports that the School of Professional and Continuing Studies is partnering with a number of colleges and universities across the globe to bring Northeastern's practice-based learning model to students in other countries.

"We are seeing more countries that are interested in adopting a U.S. educational model—one that is more practice-based, vocational, and designed to facilitate access for a range of students," explains Hopey.

One of the most successful partnerships thus far is with Swinburne University of Technology in Melbourne, Australia. Through this partnership, students earn a dual degree—a Master of Business Administration in International Business or Accounting from Swinburne and a Master of Science in Leadership from Northeastern. All classes take place in Australia, including those taught by Northeastern faculty.

"In developing these programs, our philosophy is that what you learn today, you can use tomorrow."

The program currently has 100 students who hail primarily from India, China, Malaysia, and Australia. The international student population is the result of Swinburne's far-reaching recruitment effort. In fact, the dual degree has become one of their most popular programs. Feedback from students and faculty has been tremendously favorable, leading to discussions on replicating the program in other countries such as England and Argentina. In addition, SPCS is looking to offer online programs worldwide, and is now in talks with leading colleges in Greece and Russia.

Whether through creative programs like Global Pathways, resources like the World Language Center, or strategic partnerships with world-class schools like Swinburne, SPCS provides U.S. and international students with the skills and knowledge needed to compete successfully in the global marketplace.

"By facilitating and brokering connections internationally," concludes Hopey, "we can offer practical exposure to the world."

INTRODUCING

PATRICK PLUNKETT

SENIOR ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Patrick Plunkett is senior associate dean for International Engagement and oversees international initiatives for the School of Professional and Continuing Studies, including the English Language Center, the World Language Center, the Global Pathways Program, and the Office of International Education. As the executive director of International Initiatives, he is responsible for advocating and coordinating Northeastern University's international agenda.

Plunkett has more than 30 years of experience in higher education and has authored numerous publications, including articles, editorials, and book chapters. In addition to earning an A.B. in biology from Saint Anselm's College, an M.S. in physiology from Rivier College, and an Ed.D. in higher education administration from Northeastern University, he completed the Management Development Program at Harvard University.

Plunkett envisions the Office of International Education as "a Center of Excellence for international innovation, where new international models can be developed, tested, and adopted."

His top priorities for the Office of International Education include:

Leverage the School's entrepreneurial culture, academic infrastructure, international partnerships, and curricular flexibility to establish innovative international programs in Boston and abroad. These programs will attract new populations of international students, while engaging Northeastern students and faculty in meaningful academic and experiential learning and exchange.

Serve as the strategic portal for increasing the number of international students on Northeastern's Boston campus through the English Language Center, the Global Pathways Program, institutional relationships with recruitment organizations, and study abroad in Boston.

Build new opportunities for students, alumni, and friends to travel and study abroad.

Enhance and nurture collaborative relationships with institutions outside of the United States.