Strategic Navigation—The ecosystem of regulatory affairs of prescription drugs
WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS NOW

When U.S. Senator William J. Fulbright established the Fulbright Program in 1946, the world was emerging from unprecedented destruction and loss of life in World War II, and the increasing complexity of international relations was daunting. What began as an international exchange program to pursue “a vision for mutual understanding” has become a global model of intellectual and cultural exchange, with countless positive effects on society.

While the College of Professional Studies and our predecessors, such as University College, were once thought of as a resource for ambitious students in the New England region, today we are educating students from around the globe, teaching students in dozens of countries, and participating in Fulbright’s vision of the pursuit of mutual understanding.

In these pages, you will read about alumni who are making an impact in our globalized educational and economic society, from a startup business and an established pharmaceutical company in the innovation district of Kendall Square in Cambridge, Massachusetts to those who are teaching and promoting educational institutions, and finding new ways to support education through philanthropy.

I am proud to report that your college is engaged with the Fulbright program, too. We salute four members of the College of Professional Studies community:

• Stanislas Phanord, a spring 2014 graduate of Northeastern, who started college in our unique and rigorous first-year program, Foundation Year, was awarded both a Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship in France and a Rangel Fellowship, setting him on a path toward a diplomatic career (see page 22).

• Alexandrine Policar, a 2009 graduate of the Doctor of Law and Policy program, was awarded a Fulbright U.S. Scholar grant to Haiti to investigate the readiness of the State University of Haiti for online education in its quest to adopt a more modern and global approach to teaching and learning.

• Hanife Akar, PhD, an accomplished scholar from Middle East Technical University in Ankara, Turkey, has spent the past academic year in our NU Global unit researching the internationalization of higher education by studying Northeastern and its embodiment of a global viewpoint.

• Nadine Nassif, PhD a visiting Fulbright scholar in environmental science from Lebanese University in Beirut, Lebanon, has joined Northeastern for a six month research project with faculty member, Cordula Robinson, academic director of the Geographic Information Technology master’s program. Working together in Robinson’s area of expertise, generating groundwater potentiality maps in arid and semi-arid areas, Nassif is studying ways to use geographic information in law, policy development and agricultural management.

While mutual understanding is a lofty goal yet to be achieved, I am proud to witness all the ways in which the students, alumni, faculty, and staff who make up our community are on the path to that goal, with inspiration and dedication. Thank you for continuing to share your journey with us.

Sincerely,

John G. LaBrie
Dean
Acknowledgment: For photos in this issue, we thank Boston Ballet, Altan Dugaraa, Tom Hall, Lifetouch (Lifetouch National School Studios Inc.), Evan Minamoto, and David Puvirajasingam.

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The Project Management degree was so timely… It gave me tangible, hard skills, complementing the softer skills of the Leadership degree.
A Business of One’s Own

Northeastern helped Robin Hamilton, BS’10, MS’12, find the entrepreneur within

Robin Hamilton does not look like the typical tenant at the Cambridge Innovation Center. No spiky hair. No nose ring. No hipster knit hat.

However, as Boston Globe innovation columnist Scott Kirsner once noted about the startup incubator near Kendall Square, “an astonishingly high percentage of cool startups in town start off in this space.”

By that yardstick, Hamilton, the mother of three adult children in their late 20s, fits right in with the hundreds of young entrepreneurs around her. Her startup, Boston Business Operations Group (http://www.bizopsgroup.com), has earned its cool factor due to a distinctive value proposition.

“After I earned my Master’s in Project Management from Northeastern in 2012, friends and colleagues urged me to go into business fixing companies from an operational standpoint,” she recalled. “I resisted it because, when you go into an established business, you have entrenched politics and resistance to change. I didn’t really want to be doing that.

“But then I had this lightbulb moment,” Hamilton continued. “What if I did this for people who are just starting their businesses – companies that aren’t entrenched in politics yet and might not have too much change management resistance?”
Thus, Boston Business Operations Group (BBOG) was born. BBOG occupies a unique niche between outsourced operations companies and business consultants who offer prescriptive advice but little hands-on assistance.

The business is tailor-made for Hamilton’s skills, which combine the understanding of process and problem-solving abilities of a project manager and the behavioral insights of a human resources expert.

All of this is happening for Robin Hamilton at a time when many of her peers are looking ahead to retirement, not embarking on new ventures. But she displays the drive and focus of someone determined to fulfill a long-deferred dream.

Road to entrepreneurship

“I had tried college right out of high school, but it wasn’t a good fit at the time,” she remembered. “Around 1979, I started taking a few courses, but then I got married and started a family.”

Hamilton devoted herself to being a Navy wife, traveling from post to post with her husband Allan and working as an administrator at Camp Dresser Mckee, a leading engineering firm. When Allan finished his five-year stint in the service, she shifted her focus to caring for their children, David, Keith, and Katherine.

“I worked as needed to help support the family,” she said. “I was in the child support payment division of Bucks County, Pennsylvania. I worked as a pharmacy technician. When the kids got a bit older, I worked at SEEM Collaborative, an education organization, ultimately taking on the role of Coordinator of Program Support Services. I worked mother’s hours until the children were in high school.”

By this time, the Hamilton family was back in Massachusetts. The needs of the family were always Hamilton’s top priority, but the early experience of working at Camp Dresser Mckee revived her interest in furthering her career through education.

“As my children went off to college, I thought, ‘I want to get what I never got,’” said Hamilton. She set her sights on earning a bachelor’s degree, because “in today’s corporate world, if you haven’t earned a bachelor’s degree yet, you almost feel like a bit of an impostor.”

However, just when the timing seemed right, family needs again took precedence.

“I intended to finish my bachelor’s in one fell swoop, but then I had to care for my father, who had Alzheimer’s disease,” she said. “So I took a few more courses to finish up my associate’s
Northeastern helped me find myself.

On the fast track
Robin Hamilton’s dreams did not remain deferred for long. One day, she received a brochure from Northeastern promoting its Fast-Track accelerated degree completion program offering a bachelor’s in Leadership.

“The bachelor’s program built on the subjects I had studied for my associate’s degree – sociology, communications and history – but delved deeper into them by focusing on things like motivating workers and team building,” said Hamilton.

Signing up for the program became a pivotal moment in Robin Hamilton’s life. “Not only did I get very close with my cohort – we were together for 18 months nearly nonstop – I also got very close to a number of our professors,” said Hamilton. “One of them, Maggie Chernin, overheard me talking to one of my classmates toward the end of the program. I was saying, ‘I thought I would do nonprofit work, but now I’m not sure.’” Chernin recommended a career coach, who helped build Hamilton’s confidence and further refine her career path.

Having finally earned that bachelor’s degree in 2010 – nearly 30 years later than originally expected – Hamilton immediately set out to earn a Master’s in Project Management.

“The Project Management degree was so timely,” she said. “It gave me tangible, hard skills, complementing the softer skills of the leadership degree.”

All three Northeastern degrees are helping Hamilton build her business today.

Networking at the Venture Café
“I’m in the early stages of client development,” she said. “I’ve gained several clients through personal relationships that I’m developing, and I’m starting to get referrals from people I know. And I go to the networking events at the Venture Café here at the Innovation Center.”

Hamilton is advising a number of budding entrepreneurs and connecting them with appropriate resources from her network of business contacts. While most of her clients are just starting out, she said, “I’m in discussions with someone who has a 30-person company who thinks I might be the right person to analyze their operations and help them set priorities and accomplish some unfulfilled goals.”

Meanwhile, the family that has always been her top priority is right behind her. “My family has been wonderful,” she said. “My husband said, ‘I don’t care if this takes three or five years to take off. This is your time. I always thought that you had so much to offer, you’ve always succeeded. Now it’s time for you to do something for you.’”

Northeastern has been instrumental in making it all possible. “I don’t think I would be here right now on this path had it not been for my experiences at Northeastern,” Hamilton said. “Northeastern helped me find myself.”

WHAT’S NEW IN ONLINE EDUCATION?
In the last decade, there’s been an explosion in the popularity of and respect for online learning, either earning some of your degree online (known as “hybrid”) or studying fully online. And online students garner benefits that go beyond course material, an added bonus to employers. The skills to succeed in online learning are the same qualities employers are seeking in workers. Online learners are decisive, independent, internally motivated, proactive, skilled in online collaboration and relationship-building, and comfortable with and creative in using technology to achieve goals, according to director of digital learning at Dartmouth, Joshua Kim, PhD.

Northeastern University now has approximately 12,000 students in online and hybrid programs.
Video: “Don’t do what everyone else does.”
From Gandhinagar to Cambridge

Shrenik Desai, MS’12, traveled halfway around the world to build a career in regulatory affairs.

Shrenik Desai is keenly aware of his role in the complex ecosystem of modern-day healthcare delivery. On one side are millions of cancer patients seeking new hope from the latest life-extending treatments. On the other side are the pharmaceutical and biotech companies developing, testing, and commercializing those treatments. >>>
To come to work each day knowing that what we do is making a difference in the lives of so many patients is the greatest feeling one can experience.

Strategic navigation

“Regulatory affairs is all about how you bring a product to market, how you strategically navigate the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) process,” said Desai. “Every medical product – a device, a drug, a biologic – must follow a strict process to gain FDA approval.” It takes anywhere from 8 to 12 years for a new drug to clear the rigorous regulatory approval process. If a pharmaceutical company can get a drug patented in the United States, it will typically have exclusive rights for 20 years before it becomes available as a generic drug. Each additional day of commercial availability before a medication reaches the “patent cliff” can be worth millions.

In this challenging environment where failure is the overwhelming norm, drug companies have two essential keys to success. They need to save time, resources, and costs by identifying the most promising drug candidates earlier in the development process; and they need to master the regulatory approval process to reduce time-to-market and maximize the limited window of opportunity available to new patented pharmaceuticals.

“The strategic piece of regulatory affairs involves interpreting the dynamic regulatory landscape to explore opportunities for accelerated product development, such as orphan drug, fast track, and breakthrough designations,” said Desai. “Regulatory professionals need to be proactive and forward thinking, providing timely and robust regulatory guidance to help shepherd a drug from the laboratory bench to the patient’s bedside.”

This combination of science and strategy is what first attracted Shrenik Desai to the field.

“I grew up in Gandhinagar, which is the capital of the state of Gujarat in western India,” he recalled. “No one in my family was in the scientific field. But I was always curious about science and learning about new and fascinating things, including how medicines work. As a kid, that interest was initially focused on doctors, but then I realized that it was scientists who bring those new medicines to market.”

Desai attended Rajiv Gandhi University in the state of Karnataka, where he pursued his Bachelor of Science degree in Pharmacy. Graduating with honors, Shrenik Desai began plotting his next career move. The Northeastern College of Professional Studies degree in Regulatory Affairs quickly caught his eye.
“The best thing about Northeastern is the curriculum,” he stated. “Regulatory affairs is divided into three parts: medical devices, drugs, and biologics. Some master’s programs focus only on devices; some just focus on drugs. The Northeastern program is designed to provide exposure to all three.”

When he was accepted into the program, Desai felt some trepidation. He had never been outside India and knew no one in the United States other than a few distant relatives.

The College’s resources helped him get acclimated to his new life when he arrived in Boston in 2010 and quickly sharpened his English skills. However, getting used to the Boston climate took some time.

“I’m from a state in India where it has never snowed,” said Desai with a laugh. “During my first winter in Boston, I loved snow because I was seeing it for the first time. People told me, ‘Wait two years and see how much you still love it.’”

Helping the next generation

There were other aspects to being a graduate student in a new country that Desai could only learn from experience, which is why he became active in Northeastern’s International Student and Scholar Institute (ISSI). As an orientation leader, he helped other international students obtain their emigration clearance and complete U.S. documentation requirements, and organized activities to help them ease their transition to life in the United States. Since graduating, he has continued to mentor international students in the master’s program.

Shrenik Desai seemed very much at home as he walked across the Millennium Pharmaceuticals campus in Cambridge, Massachusetts in early winter. Although he had been busy filing an Investigational New Drug (IND) application with the FDA, he was looking forward to his first extended trip to visit his family in warm and sunny India. Even with snow on the ground and temperatures dipping, he didn’t bother to wear a coat.

REGULATORY AFFAIRS: WHAT IS IT?

Just as you wouldn’t wake up one morning and write a new law to govern the pharmaceutical industry, you also wouldn’t wake up one morning completely understanding all the nuances of existing laws, especially when those laws are always changing. That’s where regulatory affairs professionals come in.

Getting a new product to market takes years of research and testing, and, of course, understanding the country’s market and the global regulatory environment. What does a company need to do to gain government approval for a new drug or medical device? Regulatory affairs work means analyzing product development, manufacturing, and commercial distribution, and weighing in on strategic decisions along the way.

Since the timetable for getting a new medical product to market has implications for patients and business, regulatory affairs experts are a valued and necessary part of the team.
Thrillers and Diamonds
It was a drama worthy of a young adult novel. Tom Hall, a Long Island high schooler, had moved with his family to Weymouth, Massachusetts in 1962, when his father took a new job at Logan Airport in Boston. The oldest of five children and a gifted track athlete, Tom was applying to area colleges when his world was turned upside down. “About a year after we moved to Massachusetts, my dad had a serious heart attack, then he developed a staph infection in the hospital,” recalled Hall. “In the process of giving him antibiotics, they accidentally punctured his lung and found that he had tuberculosis. He was in a sanitarium in Braintree for nine months. Because we were still new to the state, we weren’t eligible for welfare, and my mother had five children to care for.”

A door opens
In the midst of these precarious circumstances with his future in doubt, Tom Hall received a godsend: a full scholarship to Northeastern University. “Northeastern saved me, in a lot of ways,” said Hall. “Not only was my tuition paid for, but when I went on co-op at Northeastern, a lot of the co-op money went to support the family. If I didn’t have the full scholarship, I don’t know what I would have done.”

Hall made the best of the opportunity, earning good grades as an English major and competing with distinction on the Northeastern track team. In fact, by the time Tom graduated in 1968, he held school records in the quarter-mile, half-mile, and 600-yard track events.

The Tom Hall of 2014 is not much different. He’s still writing and competing – only now, his sport is senior softball and he’s writing novels, not term papers. His latest book, *Hidden: A Novel of Suspense*, was published earlier this year and has received uniformly positive reviews from fans of the genre.

Hall spent the intervening decades as an educator and administrator. Starting out as an English teacher and track coach at Quincy High School, he later returned to Northeastern’s University College to earn his Master’s degree in Curriculum and Instruction in 1975, and became an assistant principal, then principal, at a series of award-winning middle and high schools in Massachusetts and Long Island. Hall completed his career as principal of the Bromfield School in Harvard, Massachusetts, retiring in 2006.

You’d think that a quiet life in retirement would be the end of the tale. But that’s just where the plot of the Tom Hall story took an unexpected twist. >>>

How retirement turned Tom Hall, MEd’75, into a crime novelist and senior softball star
“I never thought in a million years that I would write a novel,” he noted. “But one day I was working in my yard and an idea came into my head. I thought it might be interesting to pursue, and right then and there I wrote the first chapter.”

Eight months later, with the editing help of his wife Marcia, he had a book entitled *Something Else Entirely*, a novel that “reads more like a standup routine on paper,” as Hall described it. Satisfied that he had proven he could write a novel, he self-published the book and left it at that.

**Turning to fiction and publishing**

Oddly enough, softball got him writing again.

“One of my teammates had just finished writing a novel and he belonged to a writing group, so he invited me to join,” said Hall. “That’s when I came up with the idea for the second book (Spectrums) which, at its heart, is a love story.” Once again, Hall published it himself in 2011. As Hall became more confident in his writing skills, he looked for a new challenge.

“What I mainly read are thrillers, crime novels, and courtroom dramas,” he thought. “Why don’t I go in that direction?”

The result is *Hidden*, a fast-paced, plot-driven story that revolves around a missing boy whose mother has recently died. This time, Hall reached out to three publishers, all of whom requested a sample chapter to read – then asked for more. The book was published in 2012 by Brighton Publishing, and is available in both paperback and e-book formats.

Encouraged by the positive response to *Hidden*, Tom Hall has recently completed a second crime novel, which will be published by Brighton later this year.

For years, the responsibilities of career and parenthood largely kept Hall from quenching his thirst for athletic competition and exploring his gift for storytelling. Now, he’s happily doing both.

Referring to his most recent book, he said, “I don’t like books that are formulaic. I have to do something different. There’s a lot of layers to this book. There’s a lot of twists and turns.”

He might as well have been describing his own eventful life.

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EXCERPT FROM
*HIDDEN BY*
THOMAS HALL

EXcerpted from: *Hidden: A Novel of Suspense*
Author: Thomas Hall
Publisher: Brighton Publishing LLC
Copyright ©2012
Available online at Amazon.com or at Tatnuck Booksellers in Westborough, Massachusetts
The benefits of being a Husky don’t end when you graduate. Northeastern wants to welcome you back to the pack with this exclusive Double Husky Scholarship. Get the tools you need, from the school you love, for the career you want. Northeastern undergraduate alumni are eligible for a 25% tuition discount on a graduate degree program or certificate.

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877.668.7727
Leading by Example

Tramaine Weekes, MS’11, proves that leaders are made, not born

Video: “An opportunity would present itself.”
For the record, there is only one Tramaine Weekes. Although her activity level is roughly equivalent to that of a small army, the 2011 graduate of the College of Professional Studies Master’s of Science degree program in Nonprofit Management is one person.

One very busy, very motivated, and very caring person. >>>
As the Director of Professional Success for Alumni Engagement at Suffolk University, Tramaine Weekes works to serve the needs and interests of Suffolk’s 76,000-member global alumni community.

However, her activities and interests are not confined to her day job. On Sundays, Weekes is at South Shore Pentecostal Church in Whitman, teaching Sunday School to small children. She’s a member of the alumni council at Colby College, where she earned her undergraduate degree in Biochemistry in 2001.

At the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), she is an active member and conference presenter. Weekes is also an avid photographer and “foodie” who delights in traveling. Last March, she accompanied a group of Suffolk students to Denver on “alternative spring break” for a Habitat for Humanity project.

Perhaps Weekes’ most significant extracurricular activity is her role as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Woodward School in Quincy, the 120-year-old independent girls school she attended as a teen.

Class assignment comes to life

“I was just finishing up the board governance class in my master’s program in Nonprofit Management at Northeastern when I ran into the board chair of Woodward,” Weekes recalled. “I had known her for years, doing various fundraising efforts and projects for the school. When I told her I was studying nonprofit management, she said, ‘Oh, I was looking for new members for the board.’”

At first, Tramaine Weekes, who was then 31, felt she was too young for a board position. But the timing couldn’t have been better. The Woodward School board was in a period of transition and needed a fresh perspective. Weekes incorporated her trustee role into her master’s thesis.

“I was able to tailor my final project for my master’s degree to the Woodward School’s needs,” she said. “I developed a strategic plan for building a board where everyone can have a leadership role, and I developed an orientation program for new board members.”

The Northeastern master’s program accelerated a career transition that Weekes had begun several years earlier.

“When I first graduated from Colby, I thought I wanted to be a doctor,” she noted. “Then I taught science and math at the Woodward School for six years.” As rewarding as teaching was, Weekes found herself increasingly drawn in a new direction.

“I felt like I needed to go off and have new experiences and be more helpful to the school in another capacity,” she said. “I wanted to grow and experience new things.” She had particularly enjoyed the development work she had done at the school.
“I think the ability to lead can be realized by playing to people’s strengths, understanding how they can have a stake in things,” she said. “You don’t have to necessarily be the director, the chair, or the VP to be a leader. All people have the capacity for leadership. Sometimes they have to be shown how they can have impact.”

Rising star
Weekes has certainly proved that point herself. She received the CASE District I Rising Star Award in 2012, and in addition to being a regular presenter at events, such as the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) People of Color Conference, she is contemplating writing a book and starting her own business.

“I have a career coach, and it’s something we discuss,” said Weekes. “Am I doing too much? But I almost can’t help it. I love to contribute; and through contributing I learn a lot.”

That thought dovetails nicely with the motto of the Woodward School – *Discimus ut Ducimus* (“We Learn So That We May Lead”). It’s a motto that Tramaine Weekes has clearly taken to heart.

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Mission driven
“I realized that I like mission-driven work, being able to see tangible results, and to be working in a community, helping other people achieve their goals,” she said.

In 2007, she was hired as the Assistant Director of Alumni Relations at Wentworth Institute of Technology, and several years later moved on to a development position at the Chestnut Hill School. Along the way, she became more deeply involved in CASE and saw a new future for herself.

“I knew that if I wanted to advance in the nonprofit world, I would need a master’s,” she explained. “When I looked at the various options for nonprofit degrees, not only was Northeastern right next door to my job, but it was very affordable.”

Weekes especially enjoyed how she was able to tailor her master’s program to help her achieve her career goals.

“Northeastern was a springboard into a new confidence in my own leadership and skills,” she noted. “It’s given me new direction and caused me to pursue new interests. And it got me moving faster than I expected.”

As Tramaine Weekes pursues her own goal of becoming an executive director for a nonprofit organization, her experience at Northeastern has informed her ideas about how nonprofits can move forward effectively.

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We learn so that we may lead.

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**THE WOODWARD SCHOOL FOR GIRLS**
“We Learn So That We May Lead”
The Woodward School, located in Quincy, Massachusetts, is a school for girls in grades 6 through 12. Founded in 1869 by Dr. Ebenezer Woodward, the school was originally conceived as a girls-only counterpart to the Adams Academy in Quincy, an all-boys school founded by former U.S. President John Adams. The Woodward School stands for thoughtful, compassionate, conscientious students who want to further their own education to advance the lives of others, through hard work, high standards, and service. The recent Class of 2014 graduated 26 students.
A Legacy of Mentorship

“Professor Heron was just one of those folks that really took an interest in their students, and wanted to see them succeed.”
David Puvirajasingam, BS’05, MBA’08, is keeping Professor Robert Heron’s impact alive

Even after David Puvirajasingam graduated from Northeastern’s Executive MBA program and moved to California, he stayed in touch with Dr. Robert Heron (MEd’71, EdD’86) of the CPS English faculty.

“He was just one of those folks that really took an interest in their students, and wanted to see them succeed,” said Puvirajasingam. “He was also a personality – a very well-dressed, old-school gentleman, very sharp. And we became friends.”

The friendship endured until one day in 2010, not long after Dr. Heron retired and moved to Florida. “I left him a message, and I didn’t hear back from him, which was unusual,” recalled Puvirajasingam. “I had this feeling that something was wrong, so I did a search on Google and read he had passed away.”

In the wake of Dr. Heron’s death, Puvirajasingam sought a way to connect with other former students. “I wanted to see if we could organize and share our experiences,” he said. “This effort to establish a memorial scholarship is a way to connect all the different folks in whose lives Dr. Heron made a difference.”

A native of Sri Lanka, Puvirajasingam immigrated to Massachusetts at age five, and graduated from Lexington High School in 1993. Earning a scholarship to Boston University, he began pre-med studies later that year, “because in the South Asian culture, you have three options: doctor, engineer, or lawyer, right?” Then his life took a detour. “My dad was working in IT and my mom was working in banking, and then the dot-com bubble burst and they both lost their jobs,” remembered Puvirajasingam. “So I had to make a decision – could I afford a $25,000-a-year tuition or help my parents out? So I left school to find a new path.”

Puvirajasingam traveled to Austria, where he spent two years teaching English to business people, then returned to the United States and took a job at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts in 2000, where he was later accepted into the company’s management training program. “I had been planning to go back to school, so I looked at Northeastern,” he said.

Meeting a mentor

Enter Dr. Robert Heron. “He was the first person I met at Northeastern,” Puvirajasingam said. “He was assigned to me as an academic advisor. I told him about my background, and he said, ‘Listen, I get it. We have other people who have been in your situation, and I’m confident you can be successful in this program.’”

Dr. Heron continued to monitor Puvirajasingam’s progress as he juggled his job and evening classes, earning his bachelor’s degree in Finance and Business Administration in 2005 and graduating summa cum laude. After Puvirajasingam learned that Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts had several employees who had been through Northeastern’s Executive MBA program, he applied and was accepted, earning his master’s degree in 2008. “Dr. Heron and I still kept in touch throughout the program, and we would have dinner every other month or so until I moved to California,” Puvirajasingam recalled.

Today, Puvirajasingam is married and works in the IT Infrastructure Management Group at Kaiser Permanente, which provides technology, systems architecture, and information security services across the healthcare organization’s hospitals, medical groups, and insurance operations that serve its 9.3 million members.

How to give back

“I succeeded because of people like Dr. Heron and other mentors at work who supported me in this process,” >>>
Puvirajasingam sees this combination of philanthropy and social networking as a new way to honor cherished faculty and reconnect with the University.

said Puvirajasingam. “That’s something that really resonates with me. So, now that I’m established in my career, how do I give back?”

He answered that question for himself at an alumni event in the San Francisco Bay Area, when he pitched the idea of a memorial scholarship to Carla Kindt, Northeastern’s Director of Development for Special Programs, who also happened to be Dr. Heron’s next-door office neighbor. She responded enthusiastically and has been working with David to develop the idea further.

“We want to reach out to other former students and colleagues who would be willing to support this scholarship,” said Puvirajasingam. But fundraising is only one objective.

“There’s an opportunity to leverage social media, so people can share their unique experiences,” he noted. “We can connect through our shared experiences about the positive influence Dr. Heron made in our lives. Anyone can write a check and give money to a scholarship. But what’s really meaningful is sharing stories about the impact he and other professors have made in our lives.”

Puvirajasingam encourages other alumni to find a way to “pay it forward,” so other deserving students can benefit from the opportunities that a high-quality education provides. He sees this combination of philanthropy and social networking as a new way to honor cherished faculty and reconnect with the University.

“Northeastern is part of our lives, our stories. It’s ingrained in our DNA,” he said. “Northeastern has made a difference in many lives, and the collective power of these personal stories is very real and extraordinary. Through this, we can help ensure the future of Northeastern. And it’ll just continue to build. Over the next few years, we’ll be able to read all of the stories that people have contributed. Now that’s powerful!”

Left: David Puvirajasingam with Lindsey Sampson, Empower Campaign blogger. Right and below left: David and fellow Executive MBA classmates with students from IPADE Business School, Universidad Panamericana, Mexico. Below right: David with Northeastern University President Joseph Aoun.
EMPOWER A STUDENT THROUGH THE “POWER OF WE”

Unprecedented in its scope and ambition, Empower: The Campaign for Northeastern University is about people empowering people. Fueled by the “power of we” – alumni, parents, friends, faculty, students, staff, and corporate and industry partners – our students and faculty will master and create knowledge that improves lives.

Make Your Impact at the College of Professional Studies

Since 1898, Northeastern University has made it possible for working men and women to secure a brighter future. Today, a college education is more important than ever. But the great challenge facing many students is paying for tuition while also working to support a family.

You can give working students the gift of education by supporting the Spirit Scholarship Fund at the College of Professional Studies. Gifts to this fund provide grants to students facing severe financial hardship. Last year, 130 students received $300,000 in grants, thanks to people like you.
The Path to Diplomacy

Stanislas Phanord, a 2014 graduate of Northeastern College of Social Sciences and Humanities in Political Science, moved from Haiti to Boston’s Mattapan neighborhood when he was three, facing various personal challenges throughout his childhood and into high school. It was in Northeastern’s Foundation Year program, in 2009, however, where Phanord said he discovered the confidence and direction to put himself on the path to success. Foundation Year is the rigorous first-year college program run by the College of Professional Studies.

Phanord has taken full advantage of his Northeastern experience – and his determination and hard work have clearly paid off. He was recently named a Rangel Graduate Fellow and the recipient of a Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship in France. Phanord is one of only 20 students to win the Rangel, which aims to prepare recipients for careers in the Foreign Service, and one of six people in the nation to be awarded the teaching assistantship.

“Foundation Year provided me the opportunity to improve the skills that I wasn’t able to obtain in high school and prepared me for any institution that I was going to attend afterward,” said Phanord, whose political science studies include a concentration in international and comparative politics.

Making the Student the Center of the Learning Experience

All students learn at a different pace and style. So, what if an instructor, regardless if he or she is teaching six or 60 students, could adapt the class to meet the needs of every student through a new online learning technology?

This is exactly what a new collaborative adaptive learning project, spearheaded by the Northeastern University College of Professional Studies, seeks to do. The goal is to transform online education by making the student the center of the learning experience.

Funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the project, which started in January 2014 at Shoreline Community College in Seattle, uses technology developed by project partner, CogBooks, an adaptive learning platform. This software technology allows instructors to adapt to an individual student’s pace and learning to meet his or her needs.

As the pilot project proceeds, the College and its partners will seek new insights on how technology like this can be used on a wider scale, making learning more individualized, specialized, and accessible.
Altan Dugaraa, a dancer with the company, who is originally from Mongolia, is pursuing a Master’s in Leadership degree. He notes that while it’s difficult to balance the demands of his dance career and his graduate studies, the program is designed with flexibility in mind; students in the program can take courses on campus, online, and even some at the Boston Ballet.

Dugaraa explains that the Leadership curriculum is equipping him with the management skills he needs to translate his goals into reality – one day he would like to return to Mongolia and create a world-class dance school.

“As a developing nation, Mongolia has naturally devoted most of its resources to the modernization of its economy and infrastructure. There are fewer opportunities in the arts. I would like to play a role in developing more of those.”

All 16 dancers from the first group are currently enrolled in classes; undergraduate students are studying in a cohort together, while graduate students are continuing their work in the Master’s in Non-Profit Management and Master’s in Leadership degree programs. A second cohort of dancers began their studies last spring.

Preventing Boston Ballet Dancers for Life after Dancing

When a ballet dancer’s dream comes true – finally joining the ranks of an esteemed ballet company – sometimes reality sets in sooner than expected. Many dancers start to wonder, “What will I do next?”

A new program with the Boston Ballet and the College of Professional Studies aims to transform how dancers, who have demanding schedules and a “shelf-life” on their career, can succeed after their lives as professional dancers come to a halt. This unprecedented program began in May 2013 through the generosity of two Boston Ballet board members, Jack Meyer and Henri Termeer, who created a scholarship fund so that 16 dancers could pursue a bachelor’s or master’s degree while they work, preparing them for life off the stage.

National Principal of the Year Leads a Breakthrough School

Sheila Harrity, EdD’13, used her Northeastern studies, knowledge, and ingenuity to transform a low-performing school, Worcester Technical High School, into a national model leveraging both rigorous academics and technical training. She was named Principal of the Year, a first for Massachusetts, and President Barack Obama made his only high school commencement address of spring 2014 at Worcester Tech.

Sheila Harrity with Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick.
Tova Olson Sanders, a faculty member in the Graduate Education programs, was awarded the University’s top recognition for teaching, the Excellence in Teaching Award, at the spring 2014 Academic Honors Convocation. Her research and teaching focus on shared and distributed leadership, organizational learning, and individual and organizational identity. The award committee noted her exceptionally well-organized and rigorous courses in online formats for graduate students who are working professionals, making deft use of technology to provide extensive feedback. Students praise the organization of her courses for truly scaffolding their learning, which is especially important in online formats.

Extraordinary Students and Role Models Honored among Huntington 100

Two spring 2014 graduates of the College of Professional Studies were handpicked for a special Northeastern honor: they were named to the Huntington 100, a group representing the University’s greatest strengths, and celebrated at a reception at the home of Northeastern President Joseph Aoun.

Elisabeth Cheries, BS’14, recounts her journey from high school dropout to new college graduate with a job at General Dynamics, the aerospace and defense contractor. Northeastern had been on her radar growing up. “But it was the mirage in the desert – it seemed beyond me or above me,” she says. Still, she was determined to go, drawn to the academic challenge. “I wanted it as much as I’d ever wanted anything. I don’t believe in shortcuts. I want the best teachers, with the best assignments – and by best I mean difficult, and by difficult I mean an opportunity to really learn.”

Cheries was recognized for her academic strength and her efforts to encourage other students, perhaps more quiet than she is, to use their voices. She notes, “I would like to know that I have given something that has inspired someone else in their dreams, and allowed them to believe in themselves.”

Lionel Shiwala, BS’14, was also chosen for his academic excellence, demonstrated leadership capability, and ability to navigate through change, from his growing up years in Kinshasa, the Democratic Republic of the Congo; a move to Kansas City, MO and initial college studies; then on to Bunker Hill Community College in Boston. Upon arriving at Northeastern, Shiwala embraced and completed two co-ops: at Lufthansa Airlines, the largest airline carrier in Europe, and at Cisco Systems, a U.S. multinational corporation that designs, manufactures, and sells networking equipment. He received the Student Scholar Award at the College’s Co-op Awards.

In addition to his Huntington 100 honor, Shiwala was honored at the University Professional and Continuing Education Association (UPCEA) New England 2013 Regional Conference in Ogunquit, Maine. Shiwala was presented with the Continuing Education Student Award, which “honors a student who has demonstrated outstanding achievement and an unusual will to learn – not only to enhance his or her own career – but also to add to the quality of life for himself or herself, the family, and community.”

In accepting the award, Shiwala said, “When I came here [to Northeastern], I worked so hard, and my dream was to one day be recognized for all the efforts that I have made. I want to lead by example and inspire the next generation of students.” “My goal later in life,” he continued, “is to fund a scholarship for other students who might be motivated to go to school but don’t have the financial resources to do so. Now I have a story to tell them – hard work pays off. I came from a different country and being at Northeastern propelled me.”
Where are they now?  
Gaining the knowledge to pursue a passion

With an undergraduate degree in Sociology and two years of teaching software to adults at Apple, Pauline Vo knew she would need more skills to take her career to the next level, so she enrolled in a Northeastern graduate program. “I wanted to teach adults but not necessarily in an academic setting,” she says.

After earning her Master of Education, Vo began a new job in IT at the software company Palantir Technologies in Palo Alto, CA. “I don’t think I would have been able to get the job I have now if I didn’t have Northeastern,” she says. “When I received my degree, I held onto it for a half-hour, just looking at it. I earned it. And it’s really gratifying.”

Tell us your story by sending an email to cpsalumni@neu.edu

Generations of Alumni Reach Out with Scholarship Assistance

Each summer, alumni representing multiple generations of University College and the College of Professional Studies remember their own journeys and honor them through supporting the students who are following them at the College’s annual scholarship reception. In fiscal year 2014, the College of Professional Studies awarded more than $300,000 in undergraduate scholarship assistance.

1 Scholarship Event: (Left to right) Bill Lowell, Maggie Wilson, John G. LaBrie, dean of the College of Professional Studies, and student, Sasha Velic, BS’14, at the annual gathering of scholarship donors, students who received scholarships, and family members celebrating the ties between alumni and current students.

2 Cheryl McCormick, BS’09, (left) and Erica Roche, BS’14, (right) shared the impact of a scholarship on their lives.

3 Alumnus Allan Ditchfield, BS’68, hosted the ceremony, and stressed the importance of hard work along with tips on how to be successful.
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LOOKING BACK

Since its founding in 1960 as University College, the College of Professional Studies has developed a rich history of change and progress. We dove deeply into our archives to find and share these photographic gems.

See a familiar face? Let us know at cpsalumni@neu.edu and we’ll include your update in the next issue of the Northeastern College of Professional Studies Alumni Magazine.

1964 Above: Dedicated students pursue their passions at University College, now known as the College of Professional Studies. While on-campus courses are still popular today, the College has adapted to offer online experiential learning as well.

1969 Left: Two Northeastern University staff members talk with a prospective student about the benefits of enrolling at University College, which we know today as the College of Professional Studies. Things haven’t changed much. Although most people learn about our programs through our website, we still hold similar events, or open houses, where prospective students can meet faculty and staff.

1978 Right: Two members of the Northeastern community share A Guide to Part-Time Higher Education at Northeastern University, featuring University College and Lincoln College programs. The College continues to offer a variety of guides for current and prospective students at www.northeastern.edu/cps.
Plan for your financial future while supporting Northeastern

A charitable gift annuity with Northeastern provides you with income and tax benefits, and offers future students the gift of an accessible education.

For generations of alumni, Northeastern made the dream of a college education a reality by providing innovative, flexible programs that met the needs and schedules of students. That pioneering approach continues today through the College of Professional Studies. By establishing a charitable gift annuity with Northeastern, you will receive income and tax benefits. But more than that, you will be providing essential scholarship aid to worthy students who are juggling work, family, and educational responsibilities, and who are struggling to find the funds to make it all work.

“Over the years, I have made multiple charitable gift annuities with the University, and it has turned out to be a rewarding experience. I have been able to make gifts that will support scholarships and know that future students will be helped. At the same time, I am receiving a guaranteed income for life.”

– Bob Carter, ’50

Sample rates for a one-life $25,000 gift annuity:

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NOTE: Examples are for illustrative purposes and will differ depending on the date of your gift. No matter what your age, the benefits of a charitable gift annuity remain certain:

- Achieve the satisfaction of making a meaningful difference at Northeastern University.
- Enjoy the security of guaranteed income payments for life.
- Obtain relief from taxes. You receive a charitable deduction, and each payment may be partly tax-free for your life expectancy.

For more information on how a Northeastern charitable gift annuity will work for you, please contact Carla Kindt at 617.373.2724 or c.kindt@neu.edu. Or mail your request for additional information in the attached envelope.
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- Geographic Information Systems
- Global Studies and International Relations
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