

Overview of the Institution: Northeastern Illinois University

Northeastern Illinois University is a comprehensive state university serving Chicago and its surrounding suburbs. The university has four colleges: the College of Arts and Science, the College of Business and Management, the College of Education and the Graduate College. Northeastern serves approximately 11,000 students (total enrollment for fall, 2002 was 11,409) offering programs of study leading to Bachelor's and Master's degrees. The university is a non-residential facility, providing opportunities for full and part-time study during day and evening hours. (See NEIU Documents Room for NEIU Organizational Chart)

Northeastern Illinois University's mission statement is as follows: *“Northeastern Illinois University is dedicated to both excellence and access. The most important facets of the University's mission are to offer high quality undergraduate and graduate programs to a broad spectrum of students and to foster student growth and development. To these ends, the University attaches primary importance to excellence in teaching. Since program quality is enhanced by professional activities beyond the classroom on the part of the faculty, emphasis is also given to pure and applied research and to academic and public service. Unique to Northeastern's mission are the two distinctive features of diversity and community partnerships. Because of its location in the Chicago metropolitan area, the University serves a population which is diverse in age, culture, language, and race. This diversity, a major asset, means that the academic programs utilize a variety of perspectives to enrich the teaching and learning experience and to prepare students for the multiculturalism which characterizes our society. The University's location also provides students and faculty with many opportunities to integrate field-based learning, research, and service with classroom instruction. Northeastern Illinois University preserves the finest traditions of university education, augmented by active involvement in the metropolitan area, on behalf of the residents of Illinois.”*

Northeastern is committed to providing students with opportunities for culturally diverse educational experiences. According to *Black Issues in Higher Education*, Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) ranks among the top universities in the U.S. in the number of Bachelor's and Master's degrees earned by students of various ethnic backgrounds. For four years in a row, Northeastern has been ranked by *U.S. News and World Report* as the most diverse university in the Midwest. For Fall 2002, NEIU's enrollment was 12.3% African-American, 11.3% Asian, 48.9% Caucasian, 24.6% Hispanic, .02% Native-American and 2.7% other. The undergraduate population in fall of 2002 was 13.4% African-American, 12.3% Asian, 43% Caucasian, 28.6% Hispanic, .02% Native-American, and 2.5% other. The average age of the Fall 2000 undergraduate student body was 26.2 and the average age of the graduate student body was 36.1. The total enrollment at NEIU in Fall 2002 was 63% female and 36.4% male.

Northeastern awards the highest number of Bachelor's degrees in education to Hispanic students in Illinois. Nationally, we rank 14th in the number of bachelor's degrees earned in education by Hispanics and 16th nationally in the number of bachelor's degrees earned in education by Asian-Americans. We are 53rd nationally in the number of master's degrees

earned by Hispanics in education. It is estimated that 44 different languages are spoken at NEIU. It is truly a diverse campus. The university provides special programs for minority students such as: The Center for Inner City Studies, El Centro de Recursos Educativos, Project Success, Handicapped Educational Liaison Program (H.E.L.P.) and Projecto Pa'Lante. Student organizations on the Northeastern Campus mirror the diversity of the student body and include: Assyrian Student Association, Black Caucus Club, Black Heritage Club, Black Heritage Gospel Choir, Chimexla, Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Alliance, Hellenic Club, the Muslim Student Association, Que Onde Sola, Spanish Club, Students for Israel-Hillel, the Union for Puerto Rican Students and the Vietnamese Club.

College of Education Mission. The faculty and staff of the College of Education of Northeastern Illinois University are dedicated to excellence and innovation in education. Serving the Chicago metropolitan area, we seek to make our teaching, research, and service efforts responsive to the needs and aspirations of a diverse student body and community. The College of Education strives to develop professionals who will teach, train, consult, and counsel and become leaders who facilitate learning, scholarship and creativity throughout life. To accomplish our mission, we pursue collaborative and systematic strategies which contribute to our teaching, learning, research, and service to schools and communities. We seek to utilize our location in the Chicago metropolitan area as a base upon which we will build and support teams and alliances within the university, and in all appropriate areas outside the university.

The College of Education provides undergraduate and graduate students with educational programs leading to bachelor's degrees and Illinois state certification as teachers; and master's degrees with Illinois state certification as teachers, administrators, and counselors. The College enrolled 3,023 students in Fall 2002. In 2002, 291 undergraduate degrees were awarded by the College of Education and 362 graduate degrees, for a total of 653 degrees awarded. Northeastern graduates primarily serve in Illinois, and many have been honored with awards, including the Golden Apple Teacher of the Year Award. The list of College of Education programs and their NCATE/ISBE review status is located on the NEIU/NCATE website, Institutional Report. Northeastern graduates are currently teaching in a wide geographic area of Illinois. Approximately 50% of our certification program graduates teach in the city of Chicago, with the remaining teaching in other locations in the state. (See also the NEIU Documents Room for full data report: Alumni Data).

Overview of the Conceptual Framework

The Conceptual Framework of the College of Education has developed over the last 10 years. Our graduates are "Reflective Professionals Building Learning Communities". (See NCATE Website for the full Conceptual Framework Document.)

The Conceptual Framework contains the six structural elements of (1) shared vision, (2) coherence, (3) professional commitments and dispositions, (4) commitment to diversity, (5) commitment to technology, and (6) candidate proficiencies aligned with professional and state standards. These six elements are woven throughout the Conceptual Framework document and are summarized as follows:

1. **Shared Vision:** This shared vision is evident in our College of Education Conceptual Framework brochure. There we have listed the mission statement, the organizing themes or assumptions, the candidate dispositions, the 14 performance standards. (See College of Education website, Conceptual Framework: www.neiu.edu/~edudept/)
2. **Coherence:** A common knowledge base, which is articulated in the Conceptual Framework Document, insures coherence throughout programs. Common entrance and exit requirements for the College and Graduate College standards insure consistent candidate performance.
3. **Professional Commitment and Dispositions** The Faculty of the College of Education have agreed upon candidate dispositions, which are measured at several points throughout programs. For example, faculty letters of recommendation prior to admission to the College include a rating of student dispositions. Field experience and clinical practice/student teaching rubrics also include an evaluation of dispositions. The Unit Assessment System produces data, which supports the fact that Northeastern candidates have professional commitment and dispositions. Employer surveys of our graduates include ranking our graduates on their professional development.
4. **Commitment to Diversity:** Our candidate data shows that we are a diverse campus. Our field settings are diverse; our coursework provides for all learners. We are not only committed to diversity, we live it. We regard our diversity as our greatest strength.
5. **Commitment to Technology:** Our commitment to technology is demonstrated throughout the curriculum and the campus. We use distance learning with an emphasis on “Blackboard.com”. Student and faculty computer labs are available throughout campus. Syllabi describe candidate technology requirements.
6. **Alignment with State and Professional Standards:** Many of our programs are nationally accredited by NCATE-sponsored Specialty Professional Organizations. Our 14 Performance Standards reflect INTASC and State Standards, as well as national specialty organization standards. Each certification preparation program submitted matrices to the State delineating how every program meets State Standards. The Unit Assessment System provides a framework for evaluating candidates’ achievement of standards.

In summary, the College of Education at Northeastern Illinois University is a diverse community of learners. We “reflect” on our practice that is grounded in a strong knowledge base. The faculty, candidates and administrators work together to create a positive environment for candidate learning. Professional preparation in the College of Education is based on a respect for all people and a lifelong passion for teaching and learning.