EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING TRANSFORMS IDEAS INTO IMPACT.

Cover story: Jorge Calzada CPS’01, COE’04 uses Big Data to navigate the energy future.
The Gift of Education

“Not only had it helped me financially, but emotionally as well. It gave me such a boost that I can’t explain. I thought of the donors, and thought: ‘I really hope that the donors understand how much they’ve helped! Thank you, thank you wherever you are. That moment, I decided I will be a donor as well, because I know what it means!’”

Sasha Velic, CPS’14, shared the story of his journey to his Electrical Engineering Technology degree at the Lowell Institute School, Northeastern University. He spoke at the 2016 Scholarship Reception.

“I came to the United States as a refugee from war-torn Yugoslavia. These were very, very dark times for me and the human race in general….With $30 in my pocket and not speaking English at all, everything was new to me. Starting from scratch.

I had to learn the language, had to have a full-time job and with a young family on the way, I was afraid to even think about going back to school…

I started taking classes and catching up with everything. What really helped me was talking to other students, professors and staff. I always had questions, and there were always friendly answers. Right away I felt like I belonged here at Northeastern.”

Velic ended his reflection on his experience as a student and scholarship recipient by addressing the students in the room, beginning with “#1–Your toughest part of your education is behind you. The moment you decided to sign up for your education, that was it!” and ending with “#13–Be proud of yourselves and help others.”

To make a donation to support students like Sasha or for more information: Please contact Carla Kindt, Director of Development and Special Projects at Northeastern University, at 617.373.2724 or c.kindt@northeastern.edu. Or visit northeastern.edu/cps to make a gift on our secure website.
The College and the Academic Plan

“Sustainable human communities require agile, resilient learners and innovators who create change by networking across boundaries of every kind. They exchange knowledge, skills, and ideas—working with anyone, anywhere, at any time.

**Northeastern 2025** will integrate students, alumni, employers, teachers, and researchers into evolving global networks for lifelong learning and discovery that they can personalize to their own goals.”

– ACADEMIC PLAN: NORTHEASTERN 2025

A major source of inspiration for Northeastern’s new academic blueprint is what we know about our students and alumni—that your agility, resilience, and ability to learn from all of your experiences are crucial components of your success. Those qualities will always be in demand as globalization, technology, and new challenges transform every field of work and industry.

Students who returned to complete a degree, working professionals who added coursework to full-time schedules, learners who changed careers, veterans who began new careers, international students who crossed borders to learn in another language, culture, and system—you have all been agile in adopting new ways of thinking and skills.

In these pages, you’ll meet alumni whose stories embody those qualities. We hope you will read about their successes and glimpse your own story of agility and resilience, too. From advocating for women’s health and women in professional sports to easing transition for newly arrived immigrants to planning for the energy infrastructure used by more than three million people, our alumni in this edition all found themselves in fields and jobs they could not have predicted, but now love.

Here at Northeastern, we’re adapting too, to offer our students different ways to learn. One example is graduate students taking on six-week virtual assignments for employer sponsors in order to learn on the job through the Experiential Network, or XN. These short-term assignments reflect the project-based work in many companies and organizations and the virtual nature of many working relationships that are not bound by time or geography. Our students who are not able to participate in three, or six-month co-ops and internships, or who seek additional work experience, find these a valuable complement to their studies.

We invite you to revisit what’s familiar about Northeastern through new generations of alumni and get to know what’s new about Northeastern.

Sincerely,

Mary Loeffelholz
Dean, College of Professional Studies
Vice President, Professional Advancement Network

Tell us your story. Contact us at cpsnews@neu.edu
Northeastern University Seattle opened

National University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam and Northeastern University teach joint Master of Science in Leadership in Vietnam

The Association for Continuing Higher Education gives its Program Award for Outstanding Service to Undererved Populations for Northeastern's intensive first-year college program, Foundation Year

Sheila Harrity, Doctor of Education alumna, named National Principal of the Year, (a Massachusetts first), for her leadership of Worcester Technical High School

Northeastern forms a partnership with Boston Ballet to educate dancers for life and careers after performing ends
1960
University College founded. Its mission was to educate adult students with previous work experience, part-time students working toward an undergraduate degree, and full-time students who had varied scheduling requirements.

1970
University College becomes one of the largest undergraduate part-time colleges in the United States with more than 15 suburban metro-Boston campuses.

1980
Enrollment reached a peak of 14,000 students. Courses were taught in locations around greater Boston, including campuses in Dedham and Burlington.

2007
Master of Science in Global Leadership dual degree program initiated with Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, Australia. Since inception, more than 300 students have graduated with 2 degrees from institutions in 2 countries.

2008
University College re-named the College of Professional Studies.

2009
Doctor of Education program launched after 12-year hiatus.

2007-8
Last paper course catalog produced, known as the “Bulletin and Student Handbook.” Course listing and registration move online.

2015
Lowell Institute School is re-envisioned as a bachelor’s degree completion program preparing students for the 21st century technological workplace.

2016
Graduate School of Education established

Northeastern University creates the Professional Advancement Network, a new way to access education and skills throughout a professional career. It offers—to learners and employers alike—degrees, certificates, bootcamps, and experiential learning online, in Boston or at regional campuses. The College of Professional Studies is part of the Professional Advancement Network.
HELPING ASIAN IMMIGRANTS SURVIVE AND THRIVE: HOW QI QIN IS HELPING TO BUILD “A MORE HARMONIOUS COMMUNITY”

“Experiential learning” is not an abstract concept to Qi Qin, CPS’13,'16. Six years ago, she was an idealistic young woman in China with a bachelor’s degree in Applied Psychology and a desire to experience the world. Today, she holds two master’s degrees and is building a career in the nonprofit field helping Asian immigrants adapt to life in America.

It was the experiential learning Qi Qin received at the College of Professional Studies that enabled her to earn those advanced degrees and apply her knowledge at Quincy Asian Resources, a nonprofit organization dedicated to developing the social, cultural, economic, and civic lives of Asian Americans and their families in Quincy, Massachusetts.

It all began in Guangzhou, the third largest city in China, after Qin graduated from Guangdong University of Foreign Studies. “I wanted to explore the world and get more international experience,” she recalled.

Searching online, she found Northeastern and was particularly attracted by its Global Pathways program, a transitional program that helps international students build English fluency and prepare themselves for the rigors of the Northeastern master’s degree program. Global Pathways combines intensive college-level English and academic coursework in business, science, and mathematics.

Qin applied to Northeastern, was accepted, and came to Boston in 2010.

It was a challenge at first. “I had studied English beginning around 10 years old, so I knew a little bit about how to read and write in English, but it’s not the same as listening and taking part in conversations,” Qin noted. “At Global Pathways, there were also activities designed to help us explore the United States and American culture.”

After completing the Global Pathways program, Qi Qin began work on her master’s degree in Nonprofit Management, and took on an internship at the Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center.

“That was the first work experience in the United States,” she recalled. “I was a development intern, preparing for events and doing data entry for donations and sponsorships. It was important for me because it helped me to learn more about nonprofits.”

Completing her master’s program in 2013, Qin felt she was getting closer to what she wanted to do in life, but she wanted to take it one step further.

>>> continued on page 13
USING BIG DATA TO NAVIGATE THE ENERGY FUTURE

You probably wouldn’t expect a data scientist on the cutting edge of Big Data and analytics to be at home in a utility company that was founded back in 1906. But that’s exactly where Jorge Calzada, CPS’01, COE’04, is plying his trade as Director of Core Processes, Advanced Data, and Analytics for National Grid.

Calzada and his team are using Big Data to solve a wide range of challenges, including addressing the impact of climate change, predicting the suitability and impact of residential rooftop solar, and ensuring that the grid of the future will be able to handle it all.

It’s a big job. National Grid operates more than 9,000 miles of electricity transmission and delivers electricity and natural gas to large swaths of Massachusetts, New York, and Rhode Island, serving more than 3.3 million electrical power and 3.4 million natural gas customers. And the utility industry has been dealing with deregulation, climate change, and the growth of renewable energy, including residential rooftop solar.

“This is an industry in tremendous churn, and that attracted me,” said Calzada, who joined National Grid in 2010. “Energy is an industry in the midst of a disruption that we haven’t seen in literally a hundred and fifty years, since the introduction of electricity.”

Calzada’s background prepared him well for this challenge. The son of Mexican immigrants, he has never let obstacles stand in his way. “I was the first in my family to go to college,” he noted. “My parents never graduated high school. I never really had much of a mentor. There were some travails there, and it was a more circuitous journey than I imagined, but I wouldn’t have changed anything about it.”

As a teenager with a love for math and problem-solving, the California native set his sights on getting a PhD in biomedical engineering. He was accepted by Boston University and came east to pursue his dream—until reality hit.

“I went through three years in the biomedical engineering program at Boston University, then ran out of money,” Calzada explained. “So I started working full-time at John Hancock doing product development. But I really wanted to finish my degree, so I looked around and there was no place that was as rigorous, convenient, and as willing to work with me as Northeastern.”

>>> continued on page 14
“My experience at Northeastern was the enabler of everything; I wouldn’t be where I am today without that experience.”
Twenty years ago, Rosa Browne, CPS’90, made a fateful decision. Discouraged by the failure of her adopted city of Middletown, Connecticut to fulfill its Affirmative Action mandate and hire minority employees, she attended her first meeting of the city’s legislative body, the Common Council. As it turned out, a TV news crew covered the event.

"I ended up on television, and as a result of that exposure, the NAACP recruited me and the mayor of Middletown asked me if I would like to join the Affirmative Action Committee for the city," Rosa Browne recalled. >>>
That first experience launched Rosa Browne’s entry into community activism, which continues to this day. She has held executive positions at the NAACP and the ACLU, co-created a reading literacy program for elementary school students and SAT college prep program for African American and Hispanic high school students, worked on the Sickle Cell Disease Association of America’s Annual Walkathon, and served as coordinator of the annual bi-national health week in partnership with the Consulate General of Ecuador.

On top of all that, she has worked full-time at Yale New Haven Hospital for 15 years. Currently, she is the Special Project Coordinator and Breast and Cervical Cancer Program Coordinator, tasked with promoting and coordinating access to care for underserved minority populations.

Browne is not only a committed community activist—she’s also a very effective one. In 2015 and 2016, the national NAACP presented Rosa Browne with its National NAACP Thalheimer Award, the organization’s highest award given to branches for outstanding achievement.

Long before that first Middletown Common Council meeting, however, Browne had already become an expert at advocating for people in need and navigating the corridors of power. A native of Panama, she married an American servicemember and started a family in her home country, but her life was turned upside down when her toddler son developed a brain tumor.

“At the U.S. Army took him from Panama to Walter Reed Hospital for his surgery,” Browne noted. “We were back and forth to the hospital for several years, and then we moved to Massachusetts to get him the care he needed.”

Browne held an education degree and had been a math teacher in Panama, but that counted for little when she arrived in the United States.

“I struggled in Massachusetts, like any Hispanic in the beginning looking for a job, but I was lucky to have met individuals who helped me and guided me,” she remembered. Her son’s health issues forced her to develop her English skills and learn how to advocate for his care. She understood that education would be key to her survival.

“I took classes in Business Administration from Roxbury Community College and earned an associate’s degree, then transferred to Northeastern,” said Browne.

“Northeastern provided a perfect environment for learning... It really gave me the opportunity to build my confidence.”

“Yale New Haven Hospital was looking for someone at the community level to develop and organize community programs, including promoting access to care and health fairs,” she said. She got the job and continued her pattern as a lifelong learner, earning a master’s degree in Public Health from Southern Connecticut State University.

As she noted in speaking at a recent NAACP event, community outreach is of “utmost importance because we can help shape and make policy within our community and direct things to the way we want them to be.”

Meanwhile, the city where Rosa Browne protested two decades ago recently showed its appreciation for her many efforts. At the Middlesex County NAACP’s annual Freedom Fund Dinner, Middletown Mayor Daniel Drew rose to issue a proclamation. He formally declared October 19, 2016 as Rosa Browne Day in the city of Middletown, “for her tremendous contributions to the Middlesex County NAACP and the community.”
“It is time for female athletes to get the same treatment as their male counterparts, and the opportunity to play professionally, as a career, and not just a hobby!”
Alton Buzzell, CPS’16, is all fired up. Working in the marketing department of the United Women’s Lacrosse League, he has become, in his words, “a passionate advocate for women’s professional sports.”

He writes and posts blog entries on LinkedIn on the subject: “As a societal obligation, we don’t need to make every female athlete a multi-millionaire overnight, we simply need to give them the opportunity to play the sport they are great at. We need to give them the opportunity to play without having to worry about how they are going to fund their next meal, or pay their rent....It is time for female athletes to get the same treatment as their male counterparts, and the opportunity to play professionally, as a career, and not just a hobby!”

Buzzell discovered his passion for women’s professional sports in his master’s degree studies in Sports Leadership, when he had the opportunity to combine coursework and professional work for an employer sponsor in the field.

“Since my resume wasn’t full of sports experience, I thought it would give me a chance to start to build some of that,” he remembered. “I signed up for the course and it’s been an amazing journey ever since.”

Alton Buzzell had already seen a few twists and turns in his career journey by then. In 2004, fresh out of high school in his native Brewer, Maine, he enlisted in the U.S. Army. He envisioned a 20-year career in the military. Over the next eight years, he had assignments in South Korea and Fort Hood, Texas, and spent more than three years in Iraq and Afghanistan as an Ammunition Specialist in the First Cavalry Division.

“I did a few years, re-enlisted, and then I got married. But the real game-changer came when we had our son,” recalled Buzzell. “That’s really where you go, ‘Man, do I really want to do 20 years of this?’ The first three years of my son’s life, I only spent about eight months with him.”

Leaving the Army in 2013, Buzzell returned to Maine and took a job as a financial advisor with Edward Jones, then switched to a position as an investment analyst. While working full-time, he took online classes at American Military University to complete his bachelor’s degree in homeland security.

“I spent almost two years doing the investment analyst job and I found I wasn’t waking up and loving what I do,” said Buzzell. “I said, what do I want to do? I’ve always been incredibly passionate about sports. So I was thinking about perhaps being an athletic director—something where I could get up in the morning and be excited to go to work again.”

Buzzell began researching schools offering graduate degrees in sports leadership.

“I was looking for a school that had a sense of community, that had a good reputation, and was going to challenge me academically,” he recalled.

>>> continued on next page
ABOUT XN

THE EXPERIENTIAL NETWORK

Northeastern recognizes that professional students can benefit from its experiential learning model but may not be able to step out of their own workplaces for a co-op or internship. XN offers students the opportunity to complete a six-week project virtually for an employer, on their own schedule, while they are immersed in their studies.

The Northeastern Experiential Network, or XN, is rooted in the power of experiential learning (most familiar as co-op) and responds to the vision of the new academic plan, Northeastern 2025, to “…deliver accessible, flexible opportunities that fit a wide range of learner needs.” XN is part of the Northeastern University Professional Advancement Network, which creates programs that enable people to stay ahead of change in the workplace and advance in their careers and personal lives.

Are you interested in learning more about sponsoring a Northeastern XN student in your company or organization? There is no cost to employer sponsors. Please contact Laura Evangelista, XN Sponsor Relations Manager, at l.evangelista@northeastern.edu for more information.

Partnering with sponsoring businesses and organizations, XN facilitates opportunities for students to work on short-term, real-world projects to complement their academic work. Projects are carried out virtually over a six-week period, and students and sponsors work closely in an authentic professional environment during which students produce deliverables for their sponsors that will go on to inform critical business decision.

“They gave me three options, one of which was women’s professional lacrosse,” said Buzzell. “A few weeks earlier, I had read an article on sponsorship in women’s sports in the Sports Business Journal, and it included a statistic that half of 1 percent of all sponsorship dollars is spent on women’s sports. It made me think, here’s something where I can make a difference.”

The timing was perfect. The United Women’s Lacrosse League (UWLX) was just getting up and running. Through his XN project, Alton Buzzell found himself working directly for UWLX co-founder and CEO, Digit Murphy, a former women’s professional ice hockey coach.

Instead of having UWLX teams play their games at each team’s home field, as most professional sports teams do, Murphy had the idea to take the league to the fans by hosting their games at established amateur lacrosse tournaments. The question was: would that strategy work? Alton Buzzell took on this research challenge.

“It started out with a project to help the UWLX estimate the expected attendance at the lacrosse tournaments at which they were going to play—the attendance, the demographics, and so forth,” he noted.

Buzzell’s XN stint morphed into an extended internship.

“For the majority of my internship, I was helping organize and run the marketing team meetings and working the communication between the leadership team and the marketing team,” said Buzzell. “Once my internship ended, I stayed on board and now I work directly with Ms. Murphy and the player’s leadership committee. We’re working to raise sponsorship money and make the league profitable so we can start paying our athletes a livable wage.”

The UWLX is off to a promising start. The league’s inaugural 10-game season included four teams from Baltimore, Boston, Philadelphia, and Long Island, New York. In July 2016, the Long Island Sound defeated the Boston Storm in the UWLX Championship Game to become the first-ever champions of professional women’s lacrosse.

“I can’t express how grateful I am for the Sports Leadership program,” said Buzzell. “I came into the program with high expectations and I was blown away. The people—from Dr. Robert Prior to Dr. Pamela Wojnar to the other instructors—have just been phenomenal. It’s more than just sitting in a classroom and reading a book. It’s about networking and the practical aspect of things. The instructors in the program are very quick to use their connections to help you apply your knowledge. As somebody with no formal sports background, that alone was worth the cost of tuition.”

Now that he’s found his passion, Alton Buzzell is unstoppable. In addition to the UWLX, he works as a reporter for U.S. College Hockey Online, writing about the University of Maine Women’s ice hockey team. He is also working with Digit Murphy’s Play It Forward Sport foundation, an organization dedicated to building gender equality in sports. His most recent project there is focused on getting 10,000 kids from underserved communities to attend the 2017 NCAA Women’s Lacrosse Championships at Gillette Stadium.

“I love waking up every day and feeling like I’m making a difference. I have that now!”

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“Northeastern was head and shoulders above every other school I talked to.”

Alton Buzzell started his master’s program at the College of Professional Studies in 2015. He enjoyed the coursework, but still lacked practical experience in the sports world. That changed when he signed up for the XN program.
continued from page 4 “Helping Asian Immigrants Survive and Thrive”

“I like nonprofits, but they’re working on a local, micro-level scale,” she explained. “I wanted to know more about big-picture international relations.” So, she enrolled in a second master’s degree program at the College of Professional Studies, this time in Global Studies and International Relations. She completed that degree in 2016.

Through the College, she secured an internship with Quincy Asian Resources, which led to Qi Qin receiving the Student Scholar Award at the College’s 2015/2016 Co-op Awards.

“Qi joined Quincy Asian Resources as an outreach specialist,” wrote the organization’s then-executive director John Brothers in his nomination of Qin for the award. “She took on a substantial leadership role, leading a group of eight bilingual part-time undergraduate students and volunteers to provide bilingual information and referrals to immigrants. Under her leadership, the department’s performance improved remarkably. Qi has now transitioned to the role on a permanent basis and is leading the planning process for expanding the department and its services. Qi has made a substantial and lasting impact on the agency and our community.”

Quincy Asian Resources provides an array of social services, including translation, information and referrals, English as a Second Language programs, survival English for Asian elders, as well as other services, such as legal clinics, Chinese painting, and Chinese calligraphy classes.

Accepting her award, Qin spoke about how satisfying her work is.

“The most rewarding moment for me was...when I heard an Asian elder in my survival English program speak a little English to me, like ‘how are you?’ or ‘thank you very much,’” she said. “I felt it was like a baby calling ‘mama’ or ‘papa’ for the first time.”

When asked about her future plans, Qin laughs, “I’m still exploring myself. I don’t know yet. A couple of months before I graduated, I began working with a friend to found a new nonprofit organization, the Chinese American Citizen Right Alliance. We want to focus on Chinese immigrants here and help them to know more about the United States and U.S. culture. I want to build a more harmonious and inclusive community, not only to help Chinese Americans, but to help U.S. citizens learn more about immigrants, as well.”

The new organization held its first meeting in September and 300 attendees showed up, including Quincy City Councilor-at-Large Nina Liang and State Representative Tackey Chan.

In addition to her role as Clerk of the Chinese American Citizen Right Alliance, Qin became Clerk of the Asian Pacific Islander American Public Affairs Association’s Boston Chapter in January 2017.

“Whether studying psychology or nonprofits or international relations, my intention has always been to help people,” reflected Qin. “I didn’t know where to start or how to do it. My Northeastern studies helped me to know what I could do, not only the coursework, but also the experience I could get. The experience showed me what I can do and what I liked to do. It allowed me to be a bridge among Asian immigrants and mainstream Americans.”

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**EMPLOY A STUDENT IN A CO-OP OR INTERNSHIP**

Co-op assignments and internships offer students the opportunity to gain valuable new professional experiences while employers benefit from a cost-effective infusion of new talent and ideas—and possibly their next hire. Now, the variety of experiential learning formats, such as co-ops and internships lasting three to six months, part-time or full-time and even 6-week projects, means that working students can participate in the “on the job” learning that adds an important dimension to undergraduate and graduate studies. Many College of Professional Studies students are already experienced professionals accustomed to balancing rigorous coursework with a demanding career, and they are eager to apply their knowledge in fresh ways and can offer an organization new perspectives and solutions.

To learn more about employing a Northeastern student in a co-op or internship with your company or organization, please contact Ellen Stoddard, Director Experiential Partnerships, at e.stoddard@northeastern.edu or visit the employer guide on the College’s website: cps.neu.edu/employers

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Qin receives 2016 Co-op Student Scholar Award from Laura Hannon, Career and Academic Coach.
“Northeastern enabled me to make that transition and keep jumping to bigger and better things.”

With his employer reimbursing his tuition, Calzada had to switch to a more business-oriented degree program, so he signed up for the Bachelor of Science in Northeastern’s Operations Technology program and had some of his previous credits applied. He completed his degree in 2001.

“After taking a year off, I got the itch to go back and get an engineering degree,” he said. “I had such a fantastic experience finishing my undergraduate degree that Northeastern was my first choice. Great curriculum, great instructors. Put myself through, again at night, and finished up my master’s degree in Information Systems with an emphasis on software development. That catapulted me into bigger and greater things.”

One of those greater things was the MBA he next earned from MIT’s Sloan School of Management. While at MIT, he became attracted to the idea of founding a startup.

“I spent some time interning at Deutsche Post, the German courier company, advising them on radio frequency identification technology, and began developing an idea for a kiosk-based package-handling solution here in the States,” he said. “My co-founders and I went so far as to launch the company, file a patent, get financial backing, and run a test site with eight locations in Boston for 18 months."

With the Great Recession looming, additional financing wasn’t forthcoming, and Calzada’s dream of disrupting the logistics space was dead. The experience led him to another opportunity.

“My old boss recruited me to come work at National Grid,” he recalled. “He saw what I had done in logistics and said, ‘I want you to do the same thing with energy. I want you to decouple the flow of information about an electron or a gas molecule so we can make intelligent decisions before we route the energy through.’ It was an easy sell for me.”

“There’s a convergence of internal and external factors going on in energy right now, making it the most exciting place to work,” said Calzada. “There’s a tremendous change in expectations among consumers. They live in this digital world when they expect you to know everything. At the same time, you have this incredible penetration of renewables and intermittence, which is adding volatility and complexity to the grid. That means that data and analytics become that much more important to how you run the utility.”

For example, National Grid is taking a data-driven approach to the development of residential rooftop solar.

“I don’t know of any other utility that can do image processing,” said Calzada. “We have a team that can take imagery and diagram the size of your roof, identify any obstacles and determine the viability of your roof for solar. But we don’t stop there. We stitch together laser imaging to get at anything around the roof, like trees. We model how the light diffuses through those trees and the impact it has on the solar irradiance of the roof. So our information is based on hard data, not estimates. Having this level of prediction accuracy enables us to plan intelligently.”

Reliable data is essential for Calzada and his team to predict—and begin building to meet—the future requirements of National Grid’s massive electric and gas networks. The company needs to know now, for example, how the growth of electric cars will affect demand and usage a decade from now. Calzada’s team is crunching the numbers to provide the answers.

Another area of focus is emergency planning. Calzada has co-authored several papers on the subject, including one on improving emergency storm planning using machine learning. In 2015, National Grid received Computerworld’s Data+ Editors’ Choice Award for its severe weather forecast data modeling project, recognizing it as an “innovative big data initiative that has delivered significant business value.”

“Data science to me is a Venn diagram of mathematics, software development, business problem solving, and being able to communicate and tell a story,” said Calzada. “That’s what we look for when we recruit data scientists, but those are very hard things to find. That’s why my circuitous path through my academic career has served me well—it exposed me to all those dimensions.”

Others have taken notice. In 2014, the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce named Jorge Calzada one of its 10 Outstanding Young Leaders.

“My experience at Northeastern was the enabler of everything,” said Calzada. “I wouldn’t be where I am today without that experience and their willingness to help me achieve my goals. I would have just been another first-generation immigrant with some college experience, but no degree. Northeastern enabled me to make that transition and keep jumping to bigger and better things.”
Revisiting Vietnam—This Time as an Author

The box of Kodak slides had been sitting for more than four decades when Richard Udden, UC’78, took them out three years ago. There were scores of images comprising a record of Udden’s experiences during his time in the U.S. Army at the height of the Vietnam War.

“I thought, I should put captions to these pictures, otherwise my children are going to look at them and not understand what they are,” recalled Udden. The more time Udden spent with the images, the more memories resurfaced—and the more motivated he became to assemble them into a book. The result is 21 Months, 24 Days, a 300-page memoir that captures the experience of a blue-collar kid from Norwood, Massachusetts who reluctantly enlisted in the Army rather than taking his chances with the draft. Self-published in 2015, the book is ranked #208 among Vietnam books on Amazon.com and has garnered 4.3 stars out of 5 from over 100 reviewers on the site.

Udden’s tale is, as he put it, “not a Clint Eastwood movie.” It follows his evolution as a soldier, from innocence to resignation to self-preservation. Udden shares all of his emotions as he goes from basic training to Vietcong fights and an incursion into Cambodia that ended when a booby trap explosion injured him and killed a friend.

As Vietnam veteran Lieutenant Colonel Henry Zeybel wrote in his review of the book, “I partially judge autobiographies based on how much soul a writer is willing to bare. In this respect, Udden scores high.”

Udden, who earned a Purple Heart for his service, turned to education to shorten his service time. Returning to the States in the early 1970s, he returned to school to earn his associate’s degree, got a job at the engineering firm Stone and Webster, and soon began evening classes at Northeastern’s then University College, earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Industrial Technology in 1978.

Thirty-seven years later, he relied on his Northeastern training to help him write his “first and last book.”

“I picked up technical writing skills at Northeastern,” Udden noted. “And if it wasn’t for Northeastern, I don’t think the book would’ve ever happened.”
Dear alumni:

We have created the Northeastern University Professional Advancement Network with you in mind as valued stakeholders in the university’s mission to continue to innovate in higher education. The Professional Advancement Network is for working professionals aspiring to advance their careers, add credentials to a résumé, make a career change, or build on their current success. The Professional Advancement Network offers access to distinct educational programs, degrees, certificates, and bootcamps of the highest quality. The academic programs of the Professional Advancement Network educate through real-world experiences and rigorous curriculums, a supportive learning environment, and comprehensive career coaching—all powered by an extensive network of alumni and employer partners engaged to propel students quickly toward the realization of career and life goals.

Built on the principles of the university’s academic plan, Northeastern 2025, the Professional Advancement Network is the portal to the lifelong learning that the evolving workplace will require and the rich network of programs, regional campuses, faculty, alumni, and employer partners.

If you are an employer, please join our educational endeavor as a co-op or Experiential Network sponsor to bring the talents of Northeastern students into your company or organization, or connect with the Professional Advancement Network for customized professional education for your staff. For more information, connect with us online at northeastern.edu/pan.

Sincerely,

Philly Mantella
Senior Vice President and CEO,
Professional Advancement Network
Introducing the Professional Advancement Network

Accelerate your career and fulfill your life’s goals.

The Professional Advancement Network is a pioneering new model for delivering world-class experiential learning programs and degrees to Northeastern alumni and career professionals.

DISCOVER MORE AT NORTHEASTERN.EDU/PAN