**NIU Mission and Scope Statement -- highlighed**

Founded in 1895 as Northern Illinois State Normal School, Northern Illinois University is a multipurpose educational institution, mature in its aims and ideals and confident of its capacity to respond to the demands of the future. The university's growth and development since its creation attest to its ability to respond to changing circumstances, to support new initiatives, and to preserve the enduring values that sustain its fundamental purposes.

The central mission of the university is the transmission, expansion, and application of knowledge through teaching, research and artistry, and public service. In fulfilling that mission, Northern Illinois University meets the needs of students for liberal, professional, technical, and lifelong education. Mindful of the changing needs of the society it serves, the university reviews its programs at regular intervals, assesses their quality and their capacity to fulfill their objectives, and expressly commits itself to their continuing development or redirection when appropriate.

The university recognizes that it has a basic obligation to contribute to the betterment of the society of which it is a part. It believes that a democratic society requires an articulate citizenry, aware of the diverse multicultural nature of its national heritage, willing and able to participate in its governance, and capable of evaluating its goods and services. It believes that an ethical society requires of its members an informed sense of personal and collective values. It believes that a progressive society must keep pace with the need for new knowledge, including technological advances, and that its members must be able to continue to learn and be capable of self-renewal. It believes that a productive society requires a current and continually replenished workforce. The university believes that the quality of individual and social life depends on the quality of mind; and it commits itself to preparing students for effective, responsible, and articulate membership in the complex society in which they live as well as in their chosen professions or occupations.

Recognizing that students will need to learn throughout their lives, the university provides them with the opportunity to become more competent in analytical thought, informed judgment, and effective communication and to develop an appreciation for the life of the mind. In its instructional activities, the university conveys an understanding of the organization of knowledge and the means of inquiry. It aims to develop a respect for rationality, a tolerance for ambiguity, and an appreciation of diversity. It fosters the capacity to explore the unfamiliar, to use the intellect in the process of discovery and the synthesis of knowledge, and to become familiar with new technology and its implications. It strives to enhance the imagination, sensibility, and creative talents of each student. It believes that all students should attain a level of academic and professional competence sufficient for productive employment and citizenship and that many students should be able to undertake the advanced study required for leadership in their chosen professional fields and academic disciplines.

The university makes significant contributions to the expansion of knowledge. To accomplish this, the university provides an environment of academic freedom in which all are free to inquire and to disseminate scholarly and creative work. It believes that active programs in research and artistry promote intellectual vitality and enrich an institution's instructional mission and its service to the broader community. The university welcomes the opportunity to question earlier findings and seek new evidence, to confirm traditional perspectives and develop new explanations, and to explore the creative works of the past and advance the cultural life of the present. It enthusiastically accepts its responsibility to contribute to the nation's scientific and technological leadership, to support advances and innovations in education, to bring ideas to bear on issues of public policy, to contribute to the sustained appreciation of our diverse cultural heritage, and to prepare a new generation of scholars and educational leaders. It accepts a responsibility to prepare citizens who understand the increasingly international nature of contemporary life.

The university is committed both to pure research and to the application of new knowledge. The research talents of faculty often complement the development needs of business, industry, education, and government. The university promotes interaction between faculty and practicing professionals and encourages the application of theoretical findings to enhance the national and international capacity to anticipate, understand, and solve problems. In order to make the results of intellectual and creative excellence widely available, the university facilitates the publication and dissemination of scholarly works and the performance and display of creative activities.

Members of the university community are at the same time members of a disciplinary or professional community and of the larger community in which the university is but one institution among many. The university is essentially self-regulating; its members impose upon themselves the responsibility to participate actively in campus governance, to consult openly with each other, and to evaluate and monitor the quality of their programs and the efficacy of institutional processes. The university encourages its members to contribute similar services to their professional and scholarly associations, to assist those associations in establishing and maintaining standards of excellence, to accept leadership roles in such organizations, and to work with colleagues on advisory and editorial boards, review panels, and accreditation teams. Finally, the faculty and staff of the university are committed to sharing their teaching, research, artistry, and professional expertise with members of the broader public. Through clinical and technical services, consulting, non-credit programs, and cultural activities, the university opens new channels of communication and returns a portion of its resources to the community from which it benefits.

In its support of the art of teaching and the discipline of learning and of its commitment to scholarly work and creative research and artistry, Northern Illinois University capitalizes on its location. Situated close enough to Chicago to draw upon and contribute to the cultural and intellectual richness of one of the nation's largest metropolitan areas, the university is also located near the center of the unique concentration of high technology and agribusiness activity that extends westward through northern Illinois from Lake Michigan to the Mississippi River. Thus the university serves and interacts with one of the most cosmopolitan and dynamic areas in the nation. This region includes: (1) 80% of the state's population; (3) a significant aggregation of minority and ethnic groups; (3) a major clustering of businesses, manufacturing operations, industrial and scientific laboratories, health care and human service agencies, and legal and judicial institutions; (4) a majority of the Illinois community colleges; and (5) an important complex of farm and agribusiness enterprises. Many of the region's libraries, laboratories, and cultural facilities are of national and international stature; and its economy is of national and international significance.

Like the region, the university has developed rapidly and changed substantially in recent decades. It attracts a diverse student body, mirroring the population base from which it comes and which many of the university's graduates will ultimately serve. It has assumed an obligation to provide an education which is pluralistic and interdisciplinary in nature. By working closely with community colleges, the university supports one of the largest baccalaureate transfer programs in the state through carefully developed articulation agreements. In keeping with its historic mission, the university serves and continually seeks to provide greater educational opportunity for non-traditional students who can pursue courses and degree programs only on a part-time basis and at off-campus locations. It has established professional relationships with many of the scientific laboratories in the high-tech/agribusiness corridor, with many of the corridor's leading businesses and industries, and with its central service facilities. It also is a major cultural center in the region, drawing audiences to a wide range of exhibits, concerts, and theatre productions.

The multiple and ever-changing demands of society require the continuing development of academic and professional programs that are current, responsive, and of the highest possible quality. The university thus seeks to recruit and retain faculty of national stature from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds, attentive to developments in their respective disciplines, and capable of educating students who will be able to serve the region, the state, the nation, and the world with distinction in the coming decades. Convinced that the intellectual resources of the nation are held in common, the university hopes to maintain access for all segments of the population, and, within the constraints of its budget, intends to admit those who can meet its entrance standards, to retain those who can benefit from its programs, and to educate students to the extent of their capabilities and desires.

In pursuit of these objectives Northern Illinois University currently offers programs in the colleges of Business, Education, Engineering and Engineering Technology, Health and Human Sciences, Law, Liberal Arts and Sciences, and Visual and Performing Arts. It awards the baccalaureate degree in a wide range of programs and offers a comprehensive set of master's degrees, the Juris Doctor, a limited number of sixth-year programs, and the Doctor of Education and the Doctor of Philosophy. The university's undergraduate student body is drawn primarily from within the state. The institution's professional programs are designed to be especially attractive to employed adults, in that courses are offered both on and off campus and are scheduled to accommodate the needs of the working public. Northern's doctoral programs draw from a national and international student base and build upon the programmatic strengths of the institution.

Northern Illinois University's history reflects flexibility in the face of change and consistency in the pursuit of excellence. In this, the university expects its future to confirm its past.