When I started my academic career as an assistant professor of physics at Northeastern University in Boston, we lamented the fact that Northeastern considered itself to be a "blue collar" university, the only entrance requirements were a credit card to pay tuition and fees and the administration seemed to have priorities different from ours. Northeastern, you see, was created to provide a chance for the "average citizen" of Boston to attend the university. In a metro area filled with universities like Harvard, MIT, Tufts, Boston University and Boston College, there really was not a place for a good to average student to study. These top-notch universities all had extremely high entrance requirements. So, there was need for Northeastern.

In the early 1980’s, there was a definite move to improve Northeastern University. This move originated in the sciences. The science departments started to push that research was important. They eventually had the support of the administration to promote research at Northeastern. Of course there were problems. For instance, they built a new optics laboratory, but decided it was cheaper to put in a wooden floor instead of a concrete floor. Every laser on every table vibrated with every step anyone made in the room. This was hardly a reason to give up. The push continued. Soon, tenure at Northeastern required publications. Next, the Dean was pushing for research grants.

Northeastern did not give up pushing for change. They continued to push for research to underpin their teaching. The change took a while. Well, maybe more than a while. Now, 25 years later, Northeastern is in the top 100 universities in the US as ranked by US News and World Report (they rank 96 in Tier 1 universities).

JSU has started to push for such change. This change has some faculty scared. It has others cynical. My money is on the improvement that we will see. It will come slowly - and there will be some missteps - I am certain of that. However, in the sciences, we will always be at the forefront of change. We already have a firm
foundation of research. We can allow that grow. It will not happen tomorrow, but it will happen.

Lou

Department News

Department Meeting
Reminder, there is a Department meeting on Wednesday (22 July) at 1:30 in the Joint Conference Room.

Lights Fixed in Room 234
The switch at the front desk in Room 234 now turns off the first two rows of lights in the room. Thus, as lecturer, you can turn off the front lights to show slides better, and the room remains light for the students to take notes (and not fall asleep). We still have a request in to have lights above the chalkboards with a cornice to direct the lights only onto the chalkboard.

University News

Dean Returns
Dean Wade will return (we hope rested and with batteries fully recharged) on Monday 20 July. Lisa Williams is breathing a sign of relief.

Degenerate States

One Liners
Now that food has replaced sex in my life, I can’t even get into my own pants.
I don’t do drugs. I get the same effect just standing up fast.
I live in my own little world. But it’s OK. They know me here.
If flying is so safe, why do they call it an airport terminal?
I don’t approve of political jokes. I’ve seen too many of them get elected.
I love being married. It’s so great to find that one special person you want to annoy for the rest of your life.
If a nobody is perfect, I’m perfect.
Everyday I beat my own previous record for number of consecutive days I have stayed alive.
How come we choose from just two people to run for president and 50 for Miss America?
Isn’t having a smoking section in a restaurant like having a peeing section in a swimming pool?
Why is it that most nudists are people you don’t want to see naked?
If you have items of news or interest that you would like included in the Department of Physical and Earth Sciences newsletter, then contact Tracy Casey before noon on Thursday at: tscasey@jsu.edu or phone (256) 782-5232.