

# THE NEURODIVERSITY INITIATIVE NEWSLETTER

Greetings! Here are all of our first semester accomplishments!

**September – December 2024**

[Our Website is Live!](#)

**[Check out the article from our Northeast Regional Higher Education Neurodiversity Coalition Conference](#)**

## **Student Mixer Events** **Pathfinders**

Pathfinders is the Neurodiversity Initiative's version of Summer Bridge programming. The initiative would like to build a community of students to keep their voices prominent within our mission. In the inaugural event, the Neurodiversity Initiative introduced their roles and services. The Initiative wanted to engage with new first year students to ensure they were aware of the resources the Neurodiversity Initiative offers, and give them the opportunity to meet the team. The Neurodiversity Initiative team collaborated with Training Path, who provided team building exercises to get the students comfortable and to start engagement. The second Pathfinders event was on October 24th, which included more teambuilding opportunities and gave students space to say what they would like to see in a successful Neurodiversity Initiative. We received a lot of valuable feedback to put into action!



## **Co-op Updates: Connecting Neurodivergent Talent with Leading Employers**

At Northeastern University, the Co-Op Program is a cornerstone of our students' education, providing invaluable real-world experience. The Neurodiversity Initiative is proud to be actively engaged in connecting neurodivergent students with employers. This year, we've partnered with a growing list of companies eager to create meaningful opportunities for our students, including industry leaders such as Liberty Mutual, Pfizer, Travelers Insurance, Microsoft, Amazon, Honeywell, and Hearst.

Each student working with the Neurodiversity Initiative benefits from ongoing support, including access to a Neurodiversity Coach, a dedicated Co-Op Advisor, regular check-ins with managers, and tailored professional development opportunities. As we continue to foster these connections, we're excited to share that more co-op opportunities are on the horizon, opening doors for our neurodivergent students to thrive in a wide array of industries. Stay tuned for more updates as we continue to build a diverse and inclusive workforce!

# Communication Badge Collaboration

Helping to provide neuroinclusive spaces within NU



## Engineering for Women's Health Conference

Communication badges were a prominent tool which we debuted at the Neurodiversity Coalition Conference this past summer. The Neurodiversity Initiative wanted to expand this resource into other spaces on campus, to aid in creating neuroinclusive spaces. The Initiative then collaborated with the Engineering for Women's Health Conference, which discussed the dialogues and collaborations needed to advance women's health. The Initiative provided the communication badges which were then used during the conference, with over 80 participants using the badges and learning about the importance of having a neuroinclusive environment.

## Amazon DEI Event

The Initiative collaborated with Women in Engineering at the Amazon DEI Meeting. The meeting had experienced engineers discussing their technical expertise, demo technologies, and insights from their career journeys; a talk on Amazon Internships + DEI Outreach was hosted by the team that brings audio to the Echo.

## 115th Anniversary of Co-Op: Careers Beyond Co-op Alumni Event

For the 115th Anniversary of Co-Op event in November, we collaborated with the Careers Beyond Co-op Alumni Event. We engaged with alumni employers and educated them on the Neurodiversity Initiative and the importance of the communication badges. Over 40 people attending the event wore the badges in support of the Neurodiversity Initiative and helping to create a neuroinclusive environment.



If you would like the badges at your next Northeastern event, please reach out to us at [neurodiversityinitiative@northeastern.edu](mailto:neurodiversityinitiative@northeastern.edu)

# Neurodiversity Professional Development Series



The Neurodiversity PD presentations are administered by Erik Brenner (Neurodiversity Initiative Director) and Bridget Smyser (College of Engineering faculty) discussing what neurodiversity is, the importance of creating neuroinclusive settings and practices, and common misconceptions about the neurodivergent community. Education on these topics helps to promote inclusivity, enhance understanding, and support the wellbeing of the neurodivergent community on Northeastern's campus and beyond. A follow up survey is collected after each session where the attendees shared feedback on the presentation. Numerous companies and 4 departments within Northeastern's College of Engineering have attended. **If you are interested in Professional Development for your company or Northeastern department, please email us at [neurodiversityinitiative@northeastern.edu](mailto:neurodiversityinitiative@northeastern.edu)**

## Cushman & Wakefield Visit

Cushman & Wakefield recently hosted Northeastern University Planning, Real Estate, and Facilities (PREF) and the Neurodiversity Initiatives team to explore their neuroinclusive and sensory-friendly work environment. Rob Skinner (Managing Principal at Cushman & Wakefield) emphasized the importance of creating inclusive spaces to attract and retain top talent. A huge thank you to Kelly Mann, Gable Clarke, Jeff Wachter, Patricia Carroll, and Shaniyah Clouden for guiding us through the process of developing sensory spaces in the workplace. Your insights will be invaluable as we look to implement these ideas on our campus. These partnerships between industry and higher education are essential for mutual learning and growth. Special thanks to Beyazmin Jiménez, Kelly Hall, and Cheyenne Mason for your ongoing support!



## December Fall Coalition Conversation Event

As part of our ongoing efforts to foster a community of industry and higher education professionals dedicated to improving work outcomes, the New England Neurodiversity Coalition is proud to share the success of our Fall Webinar. This event was a collaboration between the Colleges of Engineering at the University of Rhode Island, Northeastern University, and the University of Connecticut, featuring guest speaker Michael John Carley. Michael John led an insightful discussion on "Unlearning Our Bias" in the context of neurodiversity, which was both informative and thought-provoking. We are thrilled to report that 125 attendees participated in the event, all gaining valuable insights into how we can create more inclusive and supportive environments for neurodivergent individuals in the workplace and beyond by starting with ourselves. **If you missed the webinar or would like to revisit the discussion, you can access the link to the recording in the title above.** Stay tuned for information on our upcoming spring 2025 webinar, where we will continue to explore ways to support neurodiversity in professional and academic settings.

email: [neurodiversityinitiative@northeastern.edu](mailto:neurodiversityinitiative@northeastern.edu)