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NORTHWESTERN PARTNERS WITH GOOGLE FOR STUDENT E-MAIL SERVICES

EVANSTON, Ill. --- In response to student feedback, Northwestern University is partnering with Google to provide e-mail and other services to students beginning this spring.

The idea for the service began when students from the Associated Student Government and the Graduate Student Association requested such a partnership during collaborative meetings with Northwestern University Information Technology (IT). IT announced today (February 27) that Google Apps for Education will soon be available to students through "@u.northwestern.edu".

@u.northwestern.edu, powered by Google Apps for Education, will provide advanced and easy-to-use tools such as searchable, two gigabyte e-mail services, a large integrated address book space, robust security features, integrated calendaring, instant messaging, and online support.

"Northwestern University is one of the first research universities to forge this type of innovative relationship with a premier technology partner such as Google," says Mort Rahimi, Northwestern’s vice president for information technology and chief technology officer. "We now lead our peer institutions in offering students integrated communication and collaboration technology services while efficiently managing University resources."

Working closely with student groups, Student Affairs, Alumni Relations and Development, and many others, IT sought to ensure that the partnership met the needs of students and the University.

"We are giving students more services than they had before, such as mailboxes that are 50 times larger, and functionality that we don’t provide today," says Director of Technology Support Services Wendy Woodward. "A leading-edge company like Google is a great partner because they listen to customers and develop products that are innovative and relevant to today’s user."

Student groups requested outsourced e-mail services because many students have an e-mail account outside of the University and a large percentage forward their Northwestern mail to an outside account. Of that group, a majority already forwards their mail to Gmail.

The new @u.northwestern.edu service allows the University to add value to an important student service.

Students who participate will experience user-friendly functionalities and interfaces similar to those found in public Google services. Advertisements will not be displayed on the e-mail interface for students.

By the end of spring quarter 2007, IT’s goal is to facilitate the opting-in of current Northwestern students to the new @u.northwestern.edu service. Graduating students could then choose to continue to use their new @u.northwestern.edu service as an alumnus of Northwestern University.

IT will provide additional details about these services and opt-in procedures in the coming weeks. Student communications will include information on the IT Web site at www.it.northwestern.edu/transitions/google.
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