Dear Colleagues,

In recognition of his scholarship, technical and professional leadership, teaching, university citizenship, positive example, and strong contribution to the reputation, impact, and success of the College and University, it is with great pleasure that I appoint Professor Akram N. Alshawabkeh as the George A. Snell Professor of Engineering. Professor Alshawabkeh was selected from a highly competitive final pool of candidates presented to me by the George A. Snell Professor of Engineering Search Committee. The committee sought and received nominations through an open process and conducted a rigorous review of candidates including input from peer reviewers.

Professor Alshawabkeh is an authority in geoenvironmental engineering. His early work in electro-kinetics applied to remediation was strongly influential, producing highly referenced publications that are considered classics in the field. Since joining Northeastern in 1997, Professor Alshawabkeh has developed a reputation as a transforming influence in the geoenvironmental engineering field, bringing novel new techniques of measurement, such as radar, to bear, and expanding a field traditionally focused on environmental cleanup into areas of biomedical sciences, public health, and sustainable energy solutions. He has used his expertise in electro-kinetics to develop a method for reducing the effects of ground liquefaction during earthquakes by air bubble injection, which holds promise to greatly mitigate infrastructure damage. Perhaps his most visionary work has been connecting geoenvironmental engineering and groundwater contamination to human health issues, studying the connections between Superfund contamination sites in Puerto Rico to the island’s high rate of pre-term births. Professor Alshawabkeh has not only conducted distinctive research, he has transformed a traditional engineering field into one that can truly impact a population and its future well-being. Professor Alshawabkeh has published over 50 peer reviewed journal papers with 1700 citations of his scholarly work. He has been awarded a total research funding of $15 million from more than 20 funded projects. His many innovative and translational manifestations of environmental engineering will form a new standard by which leaders in his field will be measured.

Within the university and beyond, Professor Alshawabkeh has demonstrated important leadership. As an Assistant Professor, he was a Research Thrust Leader in the successful Engineering Research Center for Sub-Surface Sensing and Imaging Systems proposal and grant. This successful cross-university leadership was a major achievement for a junior faculty member. Recently, Professor Alshawabkeh has led a multi-university team from Northeastern, the University of Michigan and the University of Puerto Rico to the award of a National Institutes of Health Program Project Center. These exhaustively reviewed, prestigious centers, are extraordinarily competitive among the very top institutions across the nation. Professor Alshawabkeh built a great team, led it to success, and has executed the center with great acumen. The NIH program managers remarked at the one-year site visit that this was one of the best executed programs they have funded. As part of this accomplishment, it must be recognized that it is highly unusual for an engineering faculty member and college to lead a successful NIH center.
In addition to his achievements in scholarship and research leadership, his honors including the NSF Career Award, Professor Alshawabkeh is a strongly effective teacher. He has been professionally active in his field and has been a solid citizen within the university as the graduate program director in his department, as a member of the Faculty Senate and as the chair of the College of Engineering Tenure and Promotion Committee.

Please join me in congratulating Professor Alshawabkeh as the new George A. Snell Professor of Engineering.

Sincerely,

David E. Luzzi
Dean