

Q&amp;A with Stephen Zoloth

# Job prognosis: Healthy

**B**ouvé College of Health Sciences is poised to jump into exciting times in health care. It is an industry ripe with opportunity, innovation, and new jobs creation, even during global economic uncertainty. Dean Stephen Zoloth says his college is constantly adapting to real-world needs with new programs, all the while staying true to its mission of providing solid health care education to its students. At the same time, the Obama administration's stated commitment to health care reform represents even more opportunity for Bouvé in the future. "I believe Bouvé, with its creative and talented faculty, will be more than able to meet the needs of a changing system," he said.

**Bouvé has been remaking itself to accommodate the ever-changing scope and interests of today's health care students. What are some ways that you've tried to capture the market and re-make some of its programs and offerings?**

**q&a**

Bouvé's faculty carefully follow changes in the health care market, changes in student interests and respond with new programs and degrees. Over the past several years we have created new interdisciplinary programs in biotechnology and health informatics as well as several new programs within Bouvé, including a bachelor's in health sciences, a Ph.D. in nursing, and our new master of public health.

These reflect the changing picture of both health care and also of Northeastern. For example, our faculty recognized a national demand for highly talented students prepared to enter graduate school with a health care background, and they responded with our new bachelor's in health sciences. It has grown rapidly in popularity and is attracting a great group of students who would otherwise not enter Bouvé.

At the same time, several of our programs have also moved to clinical doctorates, reflecting national trends in health care education. Pharmacy led the way with the PharmD, which has been followed by the doctor of physical therapy and the doctor of audiology. And currently, our school of nursing is proposing a doctor of nursing practice (DNP). All of these require rethinking the curriculum and providing a new level of clinical education.

## profile

**NAME** Stephen Zoloth

**TITLE** Dean - Bouvé College of Health Sciences

**EDUCATION** Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania; master's of public health, University of California, Berkeley

**RECOMMENDED READING** A good introduction to the world of health reform can be found on the Kaiser Foundation Web site: [www.kaisernetwork.org](http://www.kaisernetwork.org). It has daily updates, Web casts, policy papers and stated, "non-partisan" information on national health issues.

**Bouvé adapts to changing times with innovative programs**



**At a recent faculty senate meeting, you described a burgeoning interest in the physical therapy and informatics programs, among others. Please describe some of the most popular programs, in terms of enrollment and applications, and how that interest sparks new opportunities at the college.**

All of our programs remain very popular. Health care is seen as a field where good careers are still possible. In terms of the largest numbers of applications, pharmacy, physical therapy, and nursing, followed by health sciences, are at the top. At the graduate level, we see a great deal of interest in counseling and school psychology, very high demand for the specialty master's offerings in physician's assistance, speech pathology and nursing.

In this time of economic uncertainty, we still think we have a great advantage and opportunity with co-op jobs and other forms of experiential learning. I can say, and I do say to parents, our students graduate with experiences that are not matched by any other program in the country. Add to this a growing interest in international experiences. Our students are already gaining new perspectives from international co-ops, study abroad, service learning and the dialogs programs.

**Will any new master's or doctoral programs be created soon?**

We are not standing still! As I mentioned, we are currently working on the DNP program in nursing, and there is discussion beginning with the College of Computer and Information Science to offer a degree in health and technology. Our chairs just met with Chris Hopey, vice president and dean for Professional & Continuing Studies, and I expect to see online degrees and certificate programs growing exponentially.

**When the decision to end the Athletic Training program was recently announced, you cited a drop in applications as one factor, but I imagine there were many others. What is happening in health care education as a whole, and at Bouvé, that made the program less relevant to the overall educational opportunities at the college?**

Athletic Training was an excellent program for many years, and we have a wonderful group of current students. However, strategically and in terms of research opportunities, interest and graduation data, we saw that the program would require additional funding to maintain its standing in a research university. The internal metrics and the need for a research base, and as we need to focus our efforts, led us to the conclusion that suspending admissions is the best course of action.

**On the flip side, what are some of the exciting trends and opportunities in health care that Bouvé can capitalize on?**

What is exciting and challenging is the promise of health care reform under the new Obama administration. Health care is 16.5 percent of the gross domestic product. If it continues to grow, it could reach 20 percent of GDP, while tens of millions remain uninsured. There is broad agreement in the field, and now within government, that this is not sustainable. What we will see in the next year, and what will shape health care for the future, is an attempt to reign in costs and at the same time increase access. Already the different stakeholders are lining up to make sure they are well represented in the discussion. Many of our faculty will participate in the upcoming policy discussions.