Question: Do you think the use of renewable energy resources should be expanded on campus?

Question Type: A Call for the Northeastern Administration to Act

Introductory Clauses:
Whereas: Climate change is a real and present danger for members of the Northeastern University community. Human activities have caused carbon dioxide levels in the Earth’s atmosphere to top 400 ppm, the highest they have been in over 4 million years. The accompanying temperature increase will cause severe weather events, unprecedented sea level rise, massive species extinction, and is expected to displace hundreds of millions in this century alone; AND
Whereas: Climate change poses particular concerns for the Boston area. It is well-documented that average temperatures in the Northeast have been rising for over a century, and that Boston is hotter than its surrounding communities due to the “urban heat island effect.” The sea level in Boston has risen over the past century at a rate three to four times faster than the global average, and from 1958 to 2010, the Boston area experienced a 70% increase in the amount of precipitation that fell on the days with the heaviest precipitation, an increase greater than for any other region of the country; AND
Whereas: Solar, wind, and geothermal energy are all energy sources with no greenhouse gas emissions after construction; AND
Whereas: Massachusetts has significant incentives for entities looking to install renewable energy technology, making them a cost-effective long-term investment; AND
Whereas: Many other Boston area colleges and universities, including Boston University, Harvard University, and MIT are distinguishing themselves as leaders in campus renewable energy generation; AND
Whereas: Northeastern University is a signatory of the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment, which has set a goal of zero net greenhouse gas emissions on participating campuses; AND
Whereas: Despite the release of the “Sustainable Action Plan: Roadmap Towards Carbon Neutrality” in 2005, Northeastern University has failed to make significant improvements to renewable energy infrastructure on campus; AND
Whereas: Northeastern University’s Institutional Master Plan includes the construction of eleven new academic and residential projects, each representing an opportunity for renewable energy expansion.

Therefore, be it resolved...

It is the Sense of the Student Body that in keeping with its commitment to leadership in sustainability, Northeastern University should take steps to address the carbon footprint of the University. The Undergraduate Student Body specifically calls upon the Northeastern University Administration to take the following actions regarding sustainability:

1. Assess the suitability and feasibility of expanding renewable energy generation on campus.
2. Take the appropriate steps to add renewable energy installations in locations deemed feasible and review the efficiency of existing renewable energy sources on campus, with a goal of carbon neutrality.
3. Establish a procedure through which all new buildings will be reviewed for viability of renewable energy production, and amend the Institutional Master Plan to reference this process.