What is SAIL?

SAIL is an approach to learning and integration at Northeastern that helps us all extract meaning from our experiences, identify and maximize our use of the transdisciplinary skills we learn, and connect with one another around that process. SAIL stands for Self-Authored Integrated Learning:

- **Self-Authorship** – Proactively and intentionally writing your own life story in a way that is in line with your values and goals
- **Integrated Learning** – Seeing the connections between the learning you experience in all areas of your life, and then successfully applying what you’ve learned in new, unfamiliar situations

The SAIL framework consists of **five dimensions**:

- **Intellectual Agility**
  Developing the ability to use knowledge, behaviors, skills, and experiences flexibly in new and unique situations to innovatively contribute to your field.

- **Well-Being**
  Developing the knowledge, skills and behaviors necessary to live a balanced and fulfilling life.

- **Personal & Professional Effectiveness**
  Developing the confidence, skills, behaviors and values to effectively discern life goals, form relationships and shape your personal and professional identities to achieve fulfillment.

- **Global Mindset**
  Developing knowledge, skills and behaviors to live, work and communicate with people whose background, experience and perspectives are different from your own, as well as considering the global impact of your decisions.

- **Social Consciousness & Commitment**
  Developing the confidence, skills and values to effectively recognize the needs of individuals, communities, and societies and make a commitment to constructively engage in social action.

Each of these five dimensions has associated skills, along with masteries that are foundational to all of the five dimensions. You can find those skills, and other information, at sail.northeastern.edu/about. To support use of the framework, SAIL provides several digital tools, described below, that help us connect as a community around work related to the dimensions and skills.

Build Interdisciplinary Research Teams

The SAIL tools provide new opportunities for researchers from different disciplines and units across the university to connect with one another around common interests and initiatives. Developing an interdisciplinary research team can increase your chances of success in some grant applications, maximize the visibility and impact of your work, and help you broaden your own thinking about your research topic.

Use the SAIL Educator Portal (http://educator.sail.northeastern.edu) to advertise opportunities for others on campus with similar topical interests to come together, such as an invited speaker event or brown bag lunch about your research topic. Choose one or more dimensions (such as intellectual agility, which may be fostered by thinking about a topic from different perspectives), a few skills (such as networking), and be explicit that you’re inviting new colleagues to connect in ways that might lead to specific outcomes (such as a proposal for a specific grant solicitation or an abstract submission to an upcoming conference). You can limit eligibility to faculty and staff, or leave it open to students or alumni as well.

Use the Opportunity Finder feature of the SAIL app (which can be downloaded from the iOS or Android app stores) or SAIL Web (http://integrate.sail.northeastern.edu) to search for events of interest to you that are being hosted by other researchers on campus!
Recruit Undergraduate Researchers

Looking for an undergraduate student to work with you on a research project? Use the SAIL Educator Portal (http://educator.sail.northeastern.edu) to advertise the research opportunity to maximize the number of applicants, and to increase the diversity of skills your applicants might bring to the project.

Choose the dimensions and skills you expect the student to develop through the research project, and note specific learning outcomes so that applicants can choose the best opportunity to help them work toward their goals and aspirations (such as a job at a particular company, graduate school in a particular field, etc.). This step will help ensure that your applicants will be highly motivated to succeed on the project if you select them.

At the end of the experience, ask the undergraduate students you hired for the project if they would be comfortable discussing with you what skills and dimensions they actually learned. In addition to encouraging them to notice what they’ve learned, that information may help you confirm or revise your mapping of future opportunities, and may cue you into areas where your undergraduate researchers need more or less explicit support during the process.

Mentor Student Researchers

While undergraduate or graduate students working on a research project with you will learn and practice a number of discipline-specific skills (interviewing, titration, etc.), they are also likely to be working with a variety of transferrable skills outlined in the SAIL framework.

By drawing their attention to these skills, or even asking them to reflect on which ones they’re using, when, and how, you help them broaden their understanding of the professional and personal development they are achieving through their work with you. As a mentor, you might also ask your students which skills they feel they need help with, and guide them toward resources on or off campus that can support them in ways that fall outside your expertise or scope as a research advisor.

Track and Sustain Research Progress

SAIL web (http://integrate.northeastern.edu) provides a workspace that allows members of the Northeastern community to set their individual goals, identify milestones on the way to accomplishing those goals, and visually track their timelines on different goal streams. Use this platform to plan your research agenda and tasks, and identify any additional resources that might support your progress!