



**Remarks of Gregory W. Powell
Chairman, Harold Alfond Foundation**

**Northeastern University
Roux Institute and Alfond Center
Campus Groundbreaking**

Portland, Maine

September 13, 2024

I'm delighted to be here this morning with you all, along with my fellow trustee, Justin Alfond, and Foundation team members Travis Cummings, Ryan Fitzsimmons, Allison Holton, Levi Knapp, and Alison Leonard.

As you might imagine, the Foundation team and I have been to a few groundbreaking ceremonies over the years.

But this one, I confess, had us a bit confused as we realized this magnificent site and its beautifully designed and refurbished buildings were to be an academic center not an athletic center.

Where are the locker rooms? The ice rink? The basketball courts? What about a stable for Barb's Olympic silver medalist, Baloutinue?

Harold Alfond did favor athletic facilities and was a lifelong sports fan. So, from that, he had two great loves in life – teamwork and winning. And in keeping with Harold's two great loves, it's a special honor to be at this groundbreaking. In every way, the Roux Institute at Northeastern is the embodiment of teamwork and winning.

At Harold's Foundation, we have long thought that technological innovation and globalization, while challenging to our state, were also transforming the landscape of opportunity for Maine. We saw that for Maine to become, and our nation to become, more competitive and prosperous, new models of undergraduate and graduate education in science, technology, and engineering – STEM as it's called – were essential.

And experiential learning in sync with workplace demands of new and existing businesses was a model of education more needed than ever.

Northeastern University and its Roux Institute is all of that and more. Just think of it. Here we have an Institute dedicated to the sciences, where our country has an enormous competitive advantage.

Here we have Joseph Aoun, an internationally recognized thought leader in experiential learning for the digital age. We have an extraordinary faculty with deep expertise in STEM. We have a university that is the world's pioneer and leader since 1920 in experiential education. And we have the vision of an icon of the tech age in David Roux

So here is a little history.

In 2020, as the pandemic unfolded, Dave and Barb Roux and Northeastern University announced the launch of the Roux Institute here in this city, and the Harold Alford Foundation doubled down on Maine with the announcement of over \$500 million in new grants, including matching funds for the Institute.

We saw then as COVID emerged, as did the Northeastern team led by President Aoun and with the vision of the Rouxs and over a dozen Institute partners, that Maine could meet the challenges of the pandemic and emerge stronger and more prosperous than ever.

And so, in 2020 the Foundation matched Dave and Barb in supporting the launch of the Institute.

Teamwork and winning were at hand.

Since the launch of the Institute in 2020, its model of experiential education in artificial intelligence, computer science, and the life sciences has blossomed, and the Institute's accomplishments have accelerated at a remarkable pace.

Today, the Institute boasts 645 students; an incoming class of 1,000 students; 340 graduates, 80% of whom have stayed in Maine; and some 70 start-ups working in residence at the Institute's temporary home.

The Institute has assembled a world-class faculty and reached out across the state strengthening existing partnerships and building new ones with Maine businesses, non-profits, universities, and colleges.

Its academic model is all about doing and learning from doing. It asks real-world businesses: "What do you need and how can we help?"

All of this and more has occurred because of the vision of Dave and Barb Roux, the terrific leadership of Joseph Aoun and his Northeastern team, and the countless partners of the Institute across our state.

And so, the Harold Alfond Foundation, its trustees, staff, and the Alfond family could not be more proud to be here.

And we are honored and grateful beyond words to have the academic center building bear the Alfond name.

Let me leave you with this.

As we look out over Casco Bay this morning and reflect on our state's future, we know the moment has come to build a permanent home for the Roux Institute. For our state. For our future. The time is now.

So, at this groundbreaking, we are not putting a shovel in the ground to catch up. We are not putting a shovel in the ground to keep up. We are putting a shovel in the ground to lead.

And lead we will.