**ON EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP IN AN ERC**

Giving birth to, nurturing, and sustaining an Engineering Research Center is no small feat. The goals and objectives of this initiative are lofty and require leadership with creativity, integrity, fortitude, and humility. Michael Silevitch, founder and Director of the Gordon Center for Subsurface Sensing and Imaging (CenSSIS), based at Northeastern University, in my view stands alone among the many others who took on this challenge across the decades and across the nation.

Michael’s vision for CenSSIS inspired and continues to inspire a generation of researchers and professionals at Northeastern. He guided and at times prodded his team to think out of the box, to move beyond old comfort zones in order to meet these new challenges. As the Center’s K12 Outreach Director then, I recall when the Center was in its formative years and we sought to craft an education program that was innovative and sustainable. Guided by Michael’s vision and support, the education staff were able to establish numerous education initiatives that inspired and helped develop future STEM professionals. Many of these initiatives continue to this today through the offerings of The Center for STEM Education, which I direct.

Although sustaining a center post-graduation is always laudable, what is truly remarkable is the number of successful careers and additional research initiatives that grew from Michael’s vision and inspiration. From K12 students participating in outreach and teachers engaged in professional development, to participating undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty, CenSSIS inspired great work. Michael Silevitch’s vision for CenSSIS not only became “our” vision, it became the vision of those who followed us.

Research centers are launched with grant funding. However, sustaining both the research vision and the continued growth of the people that funding supports requires a passion and commitment for discovery, innovation, and growth that goes well beyond the funding provided. Here at Northeastern University, we have come full circle, with affiliated faculty and staff from CenSSIS leading their own centers, coupled with students inspired in high school by these programs who are now in faculty roles at our institution and/or serving as leaders in industry.

John Quincy Adams once said, “*If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.”* CenSSIS had the benefit of a truly inspirational leader and a generation of professionals who sought to fulfill his vision. I am truly fortunate to be one of those professionals.

– Claire Duggan

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