In search of a station

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They have the equipment. They have the footage. Now, the only things the student-run NUTV is missing are a television station from which to broadcast, a channel on which to be viewed and an audience to view it. "The main problem is that we're not an official group yet, so we don't have any funding," said Event Coordinator of NUTV, Nina Baltierra, a freshman communications major. "It's kind of frustrating because I want to get on it right away, but it's also exciting because I think we're really close." The process of becoming an official organization is long, but the group is willing to wait, said treasurer and freshman communications major Jon Cunha. It will involve the help of the Student Activities, the media board and Comcast cable. "During the first few months of 2004, Northeastern will re-evaluate and submit a new financial plan for the entire university," Cunha said. "We're trying to ensure a position on that bill so that we can start receiving funding and be considered a legitimate program. Once that goes through, Comcast will re-wire the campus to make it one entire network instead of three different cable networks, as well as build the new TV station and supporting facilities like video editing studios." While nothing is definite in the Com-cast talks, among the plans are not only broadcasting abilities but the station's own studio, said NUTV's president and third year communications and philosophy major Mike Kligerman. "Right now, we're working with Com-cast so that basically what will happen is we'll send them a feed and they'll put it on air," he said. "We're still in pre-negotiations with them. Before we move forward with the Comcast deal, we must get funding from the university and be approved by the university. If we are on the budget as a project they can afford, we're in good shape and we can move forward with the station and Comcast. If we aren't on the budget, our plan receives a pretty severe blow." Baltierra said they hope to have a station by Sept. 2004, "if everything goes by the plan." However, there are still some obstacles to overcome before the broadcast can be launched, she said. With the exception of Kligerman, most of the group is not trained in using the equipment. "Since the rest of the executive board are freshman, it's a learning experience for us," she said. "But we're learning how to edit really soon." Despite his inexperience, Kligerman said he views the young staff as a blessing. "A lot of it falls on me to coach them along and show them the ropes, which is what I want to do anyway, so it works out for me," he said. "Their enthusiasm has blown me away and they are a vital part of making everything work. The whole idea of the station is to find people who have no experience and are looking for venues to get experience." Kligerman said NUTV would be an optimal outlet for students wishing to get the exposure to a new type of media. "What better way is there to get the experience than to create a station and make their own TV show?" Kligerman said. Kligerman has been pursuing a Northeastern television station since his freshman year, and finally made his push last May when he created a four-episode show called "I Love Boston" that aired on BNN, Boston's community access channel. The show was tailored for college students, highlighting local acts, concerts, places for dates and other inexpensive or interest-sparking
subjects. The experience gave Kligerman the tools he needed to pursue a television station on his own campus. "The show started in an attempt to help demonstrate the desire and the ability of students to produce a high-quality show," he said. "After the four shows were made, we edited [it] into [a] promo to show while pursuing NUTV. I can sit in a meeting with the provost or dean and talk until I'm blue in the face about how great this station could be, but if I have shown them something, it's a lot more convincing," Kligerman continues to add on to his promotional video reel. In order to gain experience and get their name out, the NUTV staff is offering to make promotional videos for other departments. In addition, the group shot the Nov. 18 'Battle of the Bands' in Speare Hall in hopes of compiling footage for their station's eventual launch. "What happened was that Speare Hall needed somebody to do the sound for them and since we have all the audio stuff, we decided to take that on as well as video tape it so that when we actually do have a station, we have something to air," Baltierra said. "We're going to start editing the Battle of the Bands so that we can use it as a promotional video." With the acquired experience and projects, NUTV's staff will use its new skills to make its major push to become a funded organization, Cunha said. "We're trying to get as much footage as we can now so that we can show Northeastern some of our work," he said. "What we're doing now is just waiting until everything happens, we're trying to do as much as we can to get our voice heard on campus. We have to show Northeastern that people want this."