After a year marked with tragedy and a reputation for being "cursed," Northeastern rolled into fall 2004 with its campus life needing resuscitation. With ties to the community damaged and students reeling from the loss of several classmates, the 2004-05 academic year was a time for new beginnings.

Granted, it didn't start on exactly the right foot. In September, shortly after nine Orientation Leaders were forced to resign, the Student Government Association (SGA) president stepped down amidst an Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution trial and a report detailing a party at his Mission Hill apartment.

But it was not just a changing campus atmosphere that greeted students in September, as the physical campus changed as well.

SpeareCommons opened its doors to the student population, promising one-stop shopping for daily student needs. Now, instead of being shuffled all around campus, students have the luxury of at least staying in the same building.

If pacing around the basement of Speare Hall riled up students' appetites, the swank new Stetson West dining hall served up some new eats and a new look as well. Sporting $5,000-a-piece plasma TVs, a classy cheese and bread station and an Xhibition Kitchen to host culinary experts, the new cafeteria was a sight for the eyes as well as the stomach.

Though the campus eatery was undoubtedly impressive, when it came to a new taste in the neighborhood, Tex-Mex titan Qdoba moved in and students flocked to its lines anxiously debating "black or pinto?"

As if cilantro and lime weren't enough to sell NU to prospective students, President Richard Freeland welcomed the new semester with news of Northeastern moving up seven spots on U.S. News and World Report's list of best colleges to No. 120. To celebrate NU's achievement, President Freeland handed out Fruity Pebbles to students and faculty. The red-painted rocks were a nice gesture, but did little more than give students something else to throw in the fountain outside Stetson East.
For those seeking a different kind of rock, the Council for University Programs (CUP) promised to make up for last year’s canceled Springfest concert with the aptly-named Fallfest, where students would be given a roof-raising performance by Wyclef Jean … no, wait, Method Man and Busta Rhymes. Regardless of how high the roof may have been, ticket sales lingered at floor level.

The fall wasn't a complete wash, though, as October treated students to a performance by comedian Jay Mohr, courtesy of Kappa Sigma and SGA, and a packed concert at afterHOURS by Berklee alum Gavin DeGraw.

While it seemed like campus was teeming with activity, Bos-ton was abuzz with the Red Sox World Series Victory (with minimal riot activity) and John Kerry’s unsuccessful bid for the presidency. A wave of bipolar-esque emotion enveloped the city, with many celebrating the Red Sox, but cursing the red states.

As 2004 calendars wore down to December, many students hopped on their respective buses, planes and trains home for the holidays.

Upon their return, news of the Asian tsunami was still sending shock waves. An outpouring of sympathy and donations followed with Northeastern hosting its own drive and promising to match the amount collected.

Also facing returning students was just a whole lot of snow. There's really no other way to describe it. On a scale of one to 10, one being Nevada and 10 being frozen tundra, the winter came in at a miserable nine.

Before students had the chance to let the snow slow them down, the New England Patriots captured their third Super Bowl victory in four years, this time without riots or Janet Jackson's nipple.

On campus, February offered students a lot to celebrate as well. CUP brought comedian Mo Rocca, it was that time of the month for the Vagina Monologues to make their annual return and the International Student and Scholar Institute (ISSI) kicked off its International Carnevale. The Northeastern men's hockey team made it to the final round of the Beanpot tournament while the familiar funny men of NU & Improv'd hosted their first Beanpot of Comedy.

Student groups continued to shine through March as the hard-working individuals of NUTV went on to host Campus Movie-fest, giving budding filmmakers a chance to show their stuff. The group will do what many students thought impossible -- begin officially broadcasting online at the end of April.

With spring 2005 wrapping up, CUP's Springfest rolled out an eclectic lineup featuring Less Than Jake, Moby and Mos Def … oh wait, the Dropkick Murphys.

This year was truly a year of new beginnings, including a new curse-free beginning for the Red Sox and for Northeastern as well. With next fall only a few short months away, it appears there will continue to be many more new beginnings with the hope of direct elections finally for SGA, new residence halls and a newly renovated health center.

Looking back, it's important to know where you've come from to know where you're going and, after the traumatic 2003-04 academic year, we've come a long way.

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