



August 22, 2018

Dear BUA Community,

I hope you all are having a fun and relaxing summer! In addition to settling into my new role as interim head of school, I have enjoyed spending time with my family on the beach in North Carolina, in the desert of New Mexico, and in the mountains of Vermont.

As we look ahead to the upcoming school year, I am writing to share some staffing and logistical information as well as updates on big-picture strategic initiatives currently underway at BUA.

Staffing Updates

As we announced in the spring, **Cynthia Taylor** will join the BUA science and mathematics faculty as our new physics and mathematics instructor. In 2018-2019, Dr. Taylor will teach two sections of physics, a section of math, and two sections of the STEM junior research seminar. Additionally, she will coach the science team. Dr. Taylor spent nineteen years as a faculty member at The Lawrenceville School in Lawrenceville, NJ, teaching honors physics, pre-calculus, calculus, and astronomy courses. Dr. Taylor attended the University of Pennsylvania, where she majored in astronomy before earning her PhD in physics and astronomy at Dartmouth College.

This fall, I will step back from teaching chemistry and we will add a new chemistry lab instructor, **Dr. Stacey Hughes**, to the BUA science department. Dr. Hughes earned her PhD in chemistry from University of California, Irvine where she taught a variety of general chemistry courses and was a graduate student mentor for the NASA Student Airborne Research Program (SARP). She will assist Chemistry Instructor **Victoria Perrone** with the preparation and execution of weekly chemistry labs and will be available for additional academic support in chemistry. She will also advise science senior thesis students this year.

We are delighted to welcome back veteran English teacher **Phil Gambone** as a one-year, part-time adjunct English teacher. Mr. Gambone, who retired in 2017 after 13 years of teaching at BUA, will teach two sections of ninth-grade English, and **Jennifer Formichelli** will teach the other two, in addition to one section each of tenth-grade and eleventh-grade English. Dr. Formichelli will also work with her colleagues in the English department to vertically integrate BUA's English curriculum across ninth, tenth, and eleventh grades, ensuring the purposeful, logical progression of that course sequence. We will post a full-time English teacher position in the fall for the 2019-2020 academic year.

This year brings a bumper crop of new babies to BUA! School Counselor **Stacey Weiskopf** gave birth to her daughter, Aubrey, in June – mom and baby are happy and healthy! In August, **Matt Elliser** assumed his role as interim school counselor. Mr. Elliser is an educator who has spent nearly a decade in schools and has experience working with students and their families in the capacities of teacher, advisor, and counselor. He received his master's degree in school psychology with a specialization in school counseling from Lesley College. He has extensive experience supporting

students and families at the individual, school, and community level, and we are excited to welcome him to the BUA student support team.

Director of College Counseling **Jill Atkinson** and her wife, Erica, are expecting their first child in November. During Ms. Atkinson's parental leave in the spring of 2019, Assistant Director of College Counseling **Ellen Evans** will oversee the responsibilities of the College Counseling Office as interim director of college counseling. **Sandra Michelman** will join the College Counseling team to assist Ms. Evans three days a week. Ms. Michelman was BUA's director of college counseling from 1996 until 2007, and most recently served as the co-director of college counseling at Cushing Academy.

In other exciting BUA baby news, Assistant Head of School for Institutional Advancement **Katie Kozin** and her partner Jon will welcome a new baby in December. During her maternity leave, Ms. Kozin's responsibilities will be covered by her colleagues in the Institutional Advancement Office: Director of Athletics and Alumni Relations **Dave Stone**; Associate Director of Institutional Advancement for Marketing and Communications **Elisha Meyer**; and Assistant Director of Institutional Advancement **Margo Cox**. Ms. Cox joins the IA team this year on a full-time, permanent basis after being in her role part-time in 2017-2018. She is a graduate of Dartmouth College and will earn her Master of Education degree from Boston University this fall.

Michelle Cannon will (re)join Boston University Academy for the 2018-2019 academic year as interim director of studies. Mrs. Cannon worked at BUA for 10 years as director of admission, director of studies, and assistant head of school for academics and operations before leaving in 2016 to pursue her master's degree in Education Administration. For the last two years, Mrs. Cannon has worked with BUA as an educational program consultant. As interim director of studies, Mrs. Cannon will oversee curriculum and faculty, and will collaborate with teachers to develop and maintain curriculum standards and promote a culture of continuous improvement. She will also focus on developing and enhancing our faculty evaluation and professional development program.

I will continue to work directly with students and families on academic matters in the coming year including student support and course scheduling. I look forward to building upon the relationships I have formed with the BUA community over the past two years in my role as assistant head of school. I am confident about our plans for administrative and teaching coverage for the upcoming months, and I hope you will join me in congratulating Stacey, Jill, and Katie, and welcoming (and welcoming back) Cindy, Matt, Phil, Sandra, Stacey, and Michelle to BUA!

Head of School Search

On August 15, Boston University Provost and Chief Academic Officer Jean Morrison announced the formation of a Search Advisory Committee tasked with collaborating with the search firm Carney, Sandoe, & Associates to identify BUA's next Head of School. The members of the committee include current BUA faculty members, BU professors, current and past BUA parents, and a BUA Head of School Advisory Board member. [You can read the full announcement from the Office of the Provost here.](#)

New Records in Giving

We reached new highs in philanthropic giving in 2017-2018. With your support, total giving to the school reached a record **\$902,522**. We raised \$394,070 for the Annual Fund – a new high for BUA. On BU Giving Day, 72 donors helped BUA raise over \$51,000 for the Annual Fund in just 24 hours. At the 25th Anniversary Gala Celebration on May 5, our supporters came together and raised over **\$180,000** for the Classroom Renovation Initiative.

BUA alumni reached a record **30.6%** participation in giving, surpassing the previous high of 28%. Total giving from alumni reached a record \$54,161, a 37% increase in dollars compared to last year.

Building on the momentum and energy of our milestone 25th anniversary year, we are well-positioned to reach our goals in 2018-2019. We are grateful for the continued strong participation of our parent and alumni communities.

Strategic Initiatives

Boston University Academy's current strategic planning cycle runs through the close of 2018. While we had intended to undertake an inclusive strategic planning process with our community this year, Boston University Provost Jean Morrison has approved putting the process on hold until we have a permanent head of school in place.

Over the course of this academic year, we will use the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) major recommendations from the Spring 2017 report to guide our strategic initiatives, and to inform our two-year accreditation report, which is due to NEASC this spring. Areas of focus for the year are:

1. Mission and Core Values

Over the course of the last year, BUA worked in close consultation with the firm Leadership + Design to evaluate and revise our mission statement and core values to better align with our school's curriculum and community ideals. BUA teachers and staff had input into the process at faculty meeting and in small group sessions, as did the Head of School Advisory Board. A working group comprised of BUA faculty and administrators are in the final stages of revising the statement of mission and core values. We anticipate that the process will be complete in early fall, at which point we will look forward to sharing our work with you!

2. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Over the past several months, we have made tangible progress on our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. We are working to promote greater socioeconomic equity within our community by providing new financial aid lunch grants and offering stipends for tutoring for families who receive financial aid. In the coming academic year, we will provide anti-bias training for all faculty, as well as specific training for admission interviewers and file readers. We look forward to sharing more about our work in this area this fall.

3. Student Health and Wellness

This year, under the leadership of Interim School Counselor Matt Elliser, we are excited to introduce new student health and wellness initiatives focused on community building and

social-emotional wellbeing. Weekly class meetings for ninth and tenth graders will have a new format, with the goal of increasing student voice and sense of belonging. Class meetings will be led by different students each week, and will celebrate student work, achievement, acts of kindness, and successes. Mr. Elliser will also lead weekly small-group classes for ninth and tenth graders on issues like identity and values, social media use, healthy relationships, the #MeToo movement, and other relevant topics. He will also address these topics and others in eleventh and twelfth grade class meetings periodically. Small support groups for all students will be held during lunch based on student need and input as well.

4. Safety and Security Updates

In response to the NEASC recommendation that we “review, evaluate, and improve policies on...monitoring visitors to the building, supervision of less monitored spaces such as the Sargent Gym and the Arts Wing,” BUA has secured funding from the University to implement several important safety and security updates.

Over the summer, we have installed a new, upgraded bell and intercom system that allows announcements to be heard in the Arts Wing classrooms. A new swipe-card access system will soon be installed at the entrances to Sargent Gym and to the 3rd floor Arts Wing, which will restrict access to these spaces by non-BUA-affiliated individuals during school hours. We are in the process of replacing and installing new security cameras in the halls and stairwells. These updates represent major strides toward ensuring the safety and security of our students and the Academy building at all times.

We are also delighted to share that as part of the Commonwealth Avenue/BU Bridge construction over the summer, new crossing signals and stop lights have been installed at the intersection of Comm. Ave. and University Rd. While we can't really take credit for this change, we are thrilled that this long-awaited improvement will greatly increase the safety of BUA students, teachers, and all pedestrians along this stretch of Comm. Ave!

5. Classroom Renovation Initiative

As mentioned above, the BUA community raised over \$180,000 for BUA's Classroom Renovation Initiative at the school's 25th Anniversary Gala Celebration in May. The first two classroom renovations are scheduled to occur during this year's winter intersession (late December-early January). We are working with the firm ICON Architecture to design two classrooms that will serve as “living laboratories,” which will help inform our future renovation of all classroom spaces. The first classrooms to be renovated will be rooms 209 and 210 (Dr. Alonge and Dr. Davis's rooms).

The Classroom Renovation Initiative is part of a multiphase effort that represents the most significant physical plant initiative at BUA since the opening of the Arts Wing.

All-School Learning Experience

Our All-School Learning Experience (ASLE) for the upcoming academic year is focused on the local and global implications of climate change. The ASLE is led by Physics and Mathematics

Instructor **Dr. Travis Bain** in conjunction with a group of students who will help determine content and facilitate discussions.

The first ASLE learning event of the year will be during All-School Meeting on Thursday, September 6, in which Dr. Andrew Babbin of MIT will give a general introduction to current climate science. Dr. Babbin is professor of ocean utilization in MIT's Earth, Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences department, and his research focuses on the nitrogen cycle in the ocean.

We will announce additional ASLE learning opportunities throughout the year.

Schedule Update

In the spring of 2017, BUA changed its schedule matrix to accommodate the new, longer passing times adopted by the University. Following the schedule change, we received student and parent feedback noting that the new academic block periods were too close together and requesting that they be spread out more evenly throughout the week.

In response to that feedback, we have rearranged the overall BUA schedule for 2018-2019 so that academic block will take place on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. [The updated schedule matrix is available here](#) and on the [student resources](#) and [parent resources](#) pages on our website. The new schedule will also incorporate **Student Council's Activity Block proposal**, which the faculty adopted in the spring of 2018. Under the activity block proposal, student clubs can petition to use the Friday afternoon academic block for meeting times.

In an effort to be responsive to the needs of students and families, the **Academy building will now remain open until 5:30 p.m.**, Monday-Friday. We are pleased to be able to extend the building hours to help working families accommodate school pick-up within their commuting schedules.

Promoting Student Leadership

A main focus for me as interim head of school this year will be promoting opportunities for student leadership and incorporating greater student voice at BUA. Based on the survey data we collected in 2016, as well as information gleaned from senior and parent "exit interviews" last spring, our students are eager to step into additional and enhanced leadership roles and work together to improve our school.

As a first step, I will meet with Student Council in late August to brainstorm areas for increased student involvement. Some preliminary ideas include greater student participation in designing and running both class meetings and All-School Meetings.

I envision student leadership involving *all* BUA students – not just those on Student Council – and I am excited to harness the energy of our students to make BUA an even more vibrant school community.

I am grateful for the support of my colleagues, the Boston University leadership, and the entire BUA community as I transition into my role as interim head of school, and I am excited for the year ahead. I am hosting a series of drop-in meet-and-greets (with Munchkins and coffee!) during the last two weeks of August and the first week of September, and you all are invited to stop by and say hello! The dates and times are:

- Monday, August 27, 10:00-11:00 a.m. (new parents only)
- Wednesday, August 29, 3:15-4:15 p.m.
- Friday, September 7, 8:00-9:00 a.m. (please note the change in date from Wednesday, Sept. 5)

I also hope you will join us for the first-ever **BUA Back-to-School Family Picnic on Tuesday, September 4** from 4:00-7:00 p.m. on BU Beach. [More information is available here.](#)

This year's **Back-to-School Night and Senior Kickoff** will take place on **Wednesday, September 12** from 6:00-9:00 p.m. at the GSU Metcalf Ballroom and in the BUA building. Back-to-School Night is an opportunity for families to meet their children's teachers and enjoy a sneak peek into their child's classroom experience. Parents of ninth and tenth graders are invited to an information session on the Camp Burgess overnight trip at 5:00 p.m. that evening.

Unlike in past years, **this year's Back-to-School Night will be for parents only.** Students are welcome to go home immediately after school or to study or hang out in the Academy building (until 5:00 p.m.) and in the GSU. **Seniors and their parents should plan to attend the Senior Kickoff** activities at 6:45 p.m. that evening. More details on all of these events are to come!

I hope you all squeeze as much fun as possible out of the last few weeks of summer, and I look forward to welcoming you and your family (back) to BUA soon!

Best,



Dr. Rosemary White
Interim Head of School