Boston University Academy
Boston, Massachusetts
Head of School
Start Date: July 1, 2019
buacademy.org
Boston University Academy (BUA) is an academically rigorous independent day school located on the Boston University campus. The only high school in New England that is part of a major research university, BUA offers a distinctive curriculum to just under 200 students grades nine through twelve. Boston University Academy provides students with an unparalleled college preparatory program that combines liberal arts coursework with classes at Boston University. At BUA, students’ zeal for learning takes them as far as they are capable. Small class sizes and close relationships with faculty allow students to explore interests, pursue passions and nurture their talents.

The school’s motto is “Learning Without Limits.” BUA students build on a strong liberal arts foundation to pursue virtually any academic interest with world-class faculty at a major research university. Just as important, students develop the skills and confidence to know that they are capable of extraordinary things. With hard work and perseverance, nothing is beyond their reach. Each and every student at BUA is known, cared for, taught well, and advised thoughtfully.

Boston University Academy seeks a new Head of School to join the community in July of 2019. The next Head will work with the leadership team at BUA and the Provost of the University to define a vision and new strategic plan for the school. The successful candidate will demonstrate confident and collaborative leadership and derive joy from working with young people. BUA students seek a Head who is “the kind of person who would have wanted to attend Boston University Academy as a student.”

The Head of BUA reports to the Provost of the University and works closely with the Office of the Provost, Administrative staff, and support team members.
School History

Boston University Academy, founded in 1993 under the auspices of then-BU president John Silber, graduated its inaugural class of eight students in 1997. Over the past two-and-a-half decades, the school has grown in size and reputation, making a name for itself as a high-caliber college preparatory school in Boston’s competitive secondary school market. In May of 2018, Boston University Academy celebrated its 25th anniversary, bringing together nearly 350 alumni, current parents, parents of graduates, and current and past faculty and staff to celebrate the history and future of BUA.

BUA has a four section per grade model, typically enrolling between 186-192 students per year. Since its New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) reaccreditation in 2017, the school has moved forward on NEASC’s core recommendations: clarifying its mission and core values; prioritizing diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts; increasing support of faculty through evaluation, professional development, and compensation; and enhancing student support, health, and wellness programs. So far this year, applications for admission are at their highest point ever.

Academics

Boston University Academy offers a college preparatory education unlike any other. Students have the support of a small, cohesive community of peers and faculty and also access to the boundless resources, facilities, courses, and opportunities available at a global research university. Students at BUA are kind, happy, and supportive of one another; their maturity and eloquence are impressive, and their non-competitive interpersonal dynamic creates a community that is, at its core, passionate about learning and respectful of the individual.
BUA employs a hybrid curriculum, a combination of liberal arts coursework that leads into college-level courses at BU. This unique approach marries the small-class intimacy of BUA with the vast educational resources of BU, offering nearly unlimited academic opportunities to BUA students. One faculty member summarizes BUA as “a young school that reads old books.” Yet BUA is and offers so much more. It is “an ideal secondary school education for the most insatiable learners.”

Boston University Academy’s core curriculum provides a foundation for in-depth study of just about anything. Ninth and tenth grade students gain a strong grounding in the liberal arts and sciences. Within BUA's integrated humanities program, every student studies Classical Themes in Literature; English Literature and Composition; Ancient History; The Development of Modern Europe; and either Latin or Ancient Greek. With this comes immersion in primary texts, an interdisciplinary approach to humanities, and an emphasis on close reading and learning to write. Ninth and tenth graders also study Physics and Chemistry, a visual or performing art; and the level of mathematics for which they are prepared, from Algebra to Multivariable Calculus. All courses at BUA are honors level.

Eleventh and twelfth graders at BUA take BU courses for college credit in addition to courses in the Academy building. Hundreds of course offerings in eleventh and twelfth grade make it possible for students to build upon their underclassman experience and to pursue their particular interests at advanced levels. Students graduate from BUA with the capacity to become enlightened, thoughtful, impactful citizens. As competitive and sophisticated as the academic atmosphere is at the school, students characterize the community as one where fellow students support one another rather than compete or compare with others (to wit, seniors don’t share with others where they are applying to college).

Juniors typically take biology and modern language at the University, while seniors’ course selections vary widely. Seniors graduate with up to 48 college credits, which can often be transferred
to the colleges at which they matriculate. Students have meaningful opportunities to complete scientific research with BU faculty, and many have contributed to published research. Juniors and seniors enroll in seminars at BUA, and seniors are required to complete a year-long thesis project with the guidance of a BU professor and a BUA faculty advisor. In a typical year, half of these will focus on topics in the humanities while the other half will focus on science or math. Some examples of recent thesis projects include “Helen and Medea: Breaking Female Stereotypes;” “Media Fog in the Syrian Civil War;” and “Targeting the DNA Damage Response of Tumor Cells to Make Chemotherapy More Effective.”

The program at BUA is inherently college preparatory (“We don’t just prepare you for college, we integrate you into it.”), and the college counseling office informs and supports students and families at each step in the college search and application process. Counselors work with students and families individually in an effort to understand the type of academic programs and campus communities that will be the best matches for each student following his or her tenure at BUA. In a typical year, 10% of the graduating class matriculates at BU, and admission is guaranteed for students in good academic and disciplinary standing. Other graduates matriculate at four-year colleges and

**College Enrollment**

From 2013-2018, BUA students most frequently enrolled in the following institutions:

- Boston University (23)
- Harvard University (16)
- Northeastern University (14)
- Brown University (11)
- Smith College (8)
- University of Chicago (8)
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology (7)
- New York University (7)
- Brandeis University (6)
- Johns Hopkins University (6)
- Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (6)
- Tufts University (5)
- Yale University (5)
- McGill University (4)
- University of Rochester (4)
- California Institute of Technology (3)
- Carnegie Mellon University (3)
- The George Washington University (3)
- Harvey Mudd College (3)
- Hobart and William Smith Colleges (3)
- Oberlin College (3)
- Skidmore College (3)
- Stanford University (3)
- University of California, Berkeley (3)
- University of Massachusetts, Amherst (3)
- University of Michigan (3)
- Wellesley College (3)
- Williams College (3)
- Worcester Polytechnic Institute (3)
universities across the United States and around the world, often with prestigious scholarships, research opportunities, or advanced standing in their academic program of choice. In the words of one graduate, BUA represents an “intellectual trampoline” into college.

A number of faculty are former college and university faculty who have come to BUA for the caliber and enthusiasm of the students and the opportunity for dedicate themselves to teaching.

**STUDENT LIFE**

Research has shown that student involvement in out-of-classroom activities correlates with increased happiness and greater academic success. Boston University Academy encourages meaningful student participation in arts, athletics, clubs, school leadership, community service, and school-wide events as a means to pursue non-academic interests, stay healthy, enjoy creative outlets, reduce stress, and build community. Parents say that they appreciate that their children are “challenged and never bored,” and that the atmosphere is “kind and non-judgmental” with “fabulous teachers” and a “mix of students who don’t have to apologize for being into their studies.”

A variety of traditions and trips define the life of the teenager at BUA – from the annual tenth-grade recitation of the prologue to “The Canterbury Tales” to Camp Burgess, an overnight retreat for ninth and tenth graders that aims to build confidence, improve communication, and strengthen the community. Spirited events throughout the year include Fall Festival; Lock-In, the annual all-school sleepover; the Boston 10k Run for Women; a ski trip; the classics declamation contest; the All-School Day of Service; and Field Day.
Students can find outlets for various passions and interests in the school's many clubs, including Art Club, Chess, Gay-Straight Alliance, Nerdy Games Club, Robotics, Social Justice Alliance, and Women’s Empowerment Group, among many others. Students are encouraged to become involved in after-school athletics programs, regardless of prior experience, and they can participate on several athletic teams, including Varsity soccer, crew, cross-country, Varsity basketball, fencing, tennis, volleyball, and Ultimate Frisbee.

BUA appeals to the curious, independent-minded student. The school often enrolls individuals capable of taking graduate level Algebra, Chaos Theory, advanced Arabic, or college-level biology before their senior year of high school. The weekly All-School Meeting offers opportunities for students and faculty to gather together and hear from guest speakers from within and beyond the BU community. Students appreciate that the community is “accepting” and that BUA students and their teachers “share a passion about learning and are excited about what they are doing in the classroom.”

**PHYSICAL CAMPUS**

Boston University Academy’s building is centrally located on BU’s campus along Commonwealth Avenue and the Charles River (next to the “BU Bridge”). The campus includes 20 classrooms as well as two state-of-the-art science labs, a computer room, a black box theater, student study rooms, a recording studio, renovated art space, and a gymnasium. BUA is currently in the early stages of a classroom renovation initiative: during this year’s winter intersession, the school will remake two classrooms into “living laboratories,” which will help inform the future renovation of all classroom spaces.
On the wider BU campus, BUA students have access to 5.4 million volumes through the nearby Mugar Library, as well as Nickerson Field, the 270,000-square-foot Fitness & Recreation Center (FitRec), and the university’s robotics lab, concert halls, adjacent student union, athletic facilities, boathouse, sailing pavilion, and more.

**BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS**

Boston University Academy’s location along the Charles in the Fenway-Kenmore neighborhood offers easy access to the activities and attractions of the entire Boston area. Faneuil Hall, the State House, Symphony Hall, the Museum of Fine Arts and Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Harvard Square, and Fenway Park are all within close proximity of BU. Residents and visitors enjoy Boston’s cultural appeal as well as the Charles River basin and Frederick Law Olmstead’s Emerald Necklace park system, and the beaches and mountains that lie proximate to the city. The BUA campus lies along the B line of the MBTA Green Line (BU Central stop).

Boston is one of the world’s premier cities, home to world-class cultural and educational resources. BU, Harvard, Tufts, MIT, Boston College, Berklee College of Music, Northeastern, New England Conservatory, and Wellesley College are among the area’s 35 colleges and universities contributing to the area’s youthfulness, vitality, and pride. Rich in history and central to the birth of our nation, Boston also gave the country its first college, secondary school, public park, subway, and periodic newspaper.

Boston is a world leader in medicine and pharmaceutical research, technology innovation, and education. Other leading cultural institutions that call Boston home include the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston Ballet, the Athenaeum, Boston Symphony and Pops, and Museum of Science. Boston
is a legendary sports town, abounding in professional, collegiate, and youth teams of all varieties (and generating plenty of opinions). A river city with a busy harbor and the adjacent Massachusetts Bay and Harbor Islands, Boston is also ideally positioned for recreation with mountains, lakes, and seacoast all within easy drive. Served by a good public transit system, Boston is an eminently walkable (and bikeable) city. Many students arrive at school on an MBTA trolley.

**OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

The HOS position at BUA represents a unique opportunity to lead a thriving, well-known independent secondary school with a rising profile while, at the same time, working with the administration, faculty, and deep resources of a large university. Without exaggeration, there is no other position quite like this in the United States even among the handful of strong university lab schools. Even with BUA's high ranking among Boston schools, the new Head must work assiduously to continue to communicate the quality of its programs to the greater Boston community. The school is particularly keen in attracting students from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and issues related to diversity, equity and social justice are important topics on BUA's agenda.

The new Head of School must lead continuing efforts to advocate for BUA as a high school within the University – and to appropriately align BUA's priorities with those of the University. Attention must be paid to ongoing coordination in terms of academic programs, facility usage, fund-raising, and professional development. As a part of the University, the governance and financial structures at BUA are different from those at most independent schools – understanding those differences and finding ways to make them advantageous to the Academy is part of the challenge and reward of the position. Boston University Academy’s Advisory Board will help the new Head of School to understand these opportunities.

The Head of School will also have the opportunity to build upon what is already a distinctively wonderful school culture. The new Head of School will be expected to address how to incorporate student wellness and quality of life concerns into the rigorous BUA experience. Additionally, finding ways to standardize the operations of the school without spoiling the school’s culture will require attention. BUA's teachers are remarkable (and popular) for their academic accomplishments and their passion for teaching and students. The new Head will need to be a champion for the faculty, to reinforce a climate of trust and confidence, and to guide and support professional and program development.

BUA’s identity is still evolving as it enters its 26th year, and the next Head will have to shepherd the changes as they continue as well as serve as the most visible spokesperson and advocate for the school, both in the greater community and within the university. Founded as a “classical academy,” BUA’s program has a long-time commitment to the importance of classical languages and literature. This commitment is challenged by trends in what students and parents expect from a secondary school. The new Head will be charged to honor and nourish BUA's traditions and distinctive qualities while continuing to make the program relevant and up-to-date.

The Head of School reports to the University’s Provost and holds a role somewhat equivalent to a college dean within the university. Reporting to the Head at BUA currently are the Assistant Head of School for Academics and Student Life; Assistant Head of School for Institutional Advancement; Director of Admission; Director of Operations and Special Projects; and Director of College Counseling. In addition, the Head works with an Advisory Board selected by the Head, functioning and meeting as designated by the Head (as is the case for all college deans at the University).
QUALIFICATIONS AND QUALITIES OF THE NEXT HEAD OF SCHOOL

• A strong leader, negotiator, and advocate for high school students who is eager to work within a university setting and prepared to serve as a liaison for the school’s relationship with BU.
• A scholar, preferably with an academic terminal degree, who has a passion for the life of the mind and an appreciation for the liberal arts curriculum of BUA.
• An academic committed to excellence with substantial pedagogical depth and understanding.
• A team builder and manager willing to make decisions but also collaborative and transparent in decision-making.
• Someone who wants to lead a small school where s/he will know each student, parent, faculty member, alumni, and donor, and will fully participate in the life of the school.
• A strong negotiator able and eager to work within a university setting. Someone who knows where to focus energies.
• A person who needs to work hard, who relishes challenges and opportunities on many fronts.
• A discerning and positive public speaker who will enjoy celebrating BUA and its students to audiences both internally, at the university, and externally.
TO APPLY

Interested candidates should contact one of the consultants and would subsequently be asked to submit the following materials confidentially as separate PDF attachments:

- Cover letter expressing interest in the Boston University Academy position;
- Current resume;
- Statement of educational philosophy and leadership practice with some attention to the opportunities and challenges of leading a secondary school that is part of a research university;
- List of five references with name, phone number, and email address of each (references will be contacted only with the candidate’s permission) to:

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