



April 4, 2019

Dear BUA Community,

As we do around this time every year, I'm sending you an update on new and in-progress strategic initiatives as well as some logistical information about staffing and programming.

Earlier this week, I submitted BUA's two-year interim report for the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). Comparing our progress as a school against the recommendations of our 2017 reaccreditation report, I've had the chance to reflect on the strides we've made as well as the opportunities we still have ahead of us. Going into the last months of the spring semester, we've got great momentum on a number of important programs: I'm excited to share the following updates with you, our community!

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Student Health and Wellness

I am delighted to announce that, beginning in the fall of 2019, **BUA students will have access to a nurse from BU's Student Health Services** Monday-Friday during school hours. A nurse will spend several hours each day in the BUA building, and will be on-call throughout the school day. Students will be able to lie down in the nurse's office if they are feeling unwell or are sick and need to wait for a parent/guardian to pick them up. The nurse will also be able to provide First Aid, take a student's temperature, and dispense basic over-the-counter medications. This is something we have been discussing with the University for several years, so I am especially glad that it has finally come to fruition. Enabling students to have access to a health professional during the school day is a critical step in helping BUA fulfill our commitment to prioritizing student health and wellness.

We are also making great strides in supporting students' social-emotional health. This summer, **School Counselor Stacey Weiskopf, History Instructor Olive Brown**, and I will participate in **Yale University's Center for Emotional Intelligence's RULER Institute**. RULER is an "evidence-based approach for integrating social and emotional learning into schools," and teaches "the skills of emotional intelligence – those associated with recognizing, understanding, labeling, expressing, and regulating emotion." The core skills and practices of the RULER program will be integrated into the ninth-grade health and wellness curriculum in the 2019-2020 academic year.

Student Support

As part of our annual budgeting process, Provost Morrison has approved the hire of a **permanent learning specialist for BUA**. The part-time learning specialist, who will start in the fall of 2019, will provide academic support and study skills across all disciplines, and will work to develop strategies for students with learning differences. Having a dedicated learning specialist at BUA will augment our student support team, provide valuable resources to our students, and enable us to complement our social-emotional support program with professional academic support. We will announce the hire of the learning specialist this summer.

Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives Under the E. E. Ford Grant

As we [announced in January](#), BUA is the recipient of a prestigious matching grant from the Edward E. Ford Foundation to undertake diversity, equity, and inclusion work.

The purpose of the grant is to create a more diverse community and a more welcoming and supportive environment for underrepresented minority students at BUA. We will accomplish this objective through providing greater academic and financial support to underrepresented minority students (both currently- and newly-enrolled); training and professional development for faculty and staff; and diversity, equity, and inclusion programming for the entire BUA community.

Under the auspices of this grant, BUA is able to more fully support students through increased lunch grants; free MBTA passes; and covering the costs of outside tutoring and other supplementary academic supports.

In May, a group of faculty and staff will meet with DEI facilitator Liza Talusan to discuss the book *White Fragility: Why It's so Hard for White People to Talk About Racism* by Robin DiAngelo. We look forward to considering this and other works related to institutional racism, inequality, and implicit bias, and to having challenging but necessary conversations around these issues.

In the 2019-2020 academic year, BUA will utilize funds from the E. E. Ford grant to engage a **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion consultant** who will work with us to develop DEI programming for students and faculty throughout the course of the year.

Physical Plant

Thanks to the generosity of our community at the 25th Anniversary Gala last May, the first phase of our Classroom Renovation Initiative was completed on schedule over the 2018-2019 winter intersession. Rooms 209 and 210 (Dr. Davis' and Dr. Alonge's rooms) were completely overhauled, and a new digital flipboard, bookshelves, tables, and chairs have been installed. [Click here to view our Classroom Renovation Update video](#). The next phase of the Classroom Renovation Initiative will take place over the summer, when we'll make similar upgrades to additional BUA classrooms.

Head of School Search

As we shared in January, Boston University Provost Jean Morrison announced that she has extended the search for BUA's next head of school, with a goal of welcoming a new head in July of 2020. I will continue to serve in my role as interim head of school through the 2019-2020 academic year.

Last month, Provost Morrison approved the final position description and met with the recruitment firm Carney Sandoe & Associates to begin to form a new Head of School Search Advisory committee. The search committee, which will be named in the coming weeks, will work in conjunction with Carney Sandoe & Associates to identify and recruit potential candidates. This second round of the BUA head of school search will take place on a more favorable timeline than the first. BUA is well-positioned to attract top talent from a deeper pool of qualified candidates.

Staffing Updates

In mid-March, we welcomed back **Assistant Head of School for Institutional Advancement Katie Kozin** from her maternity leave; **Director of College Counselling Jill Atkinson** will return from parental leave in early May. In other BUA baby news, **Mathematics Instructor Nick Dent** and his wife Sarah welcomed their second son, Jack, in late February.

School Counselor Matt Elliser's last day at BUA was March 8. Mr. Elliser will be relocating to Philadelphia with his family this summer. We are grateful for the positive and upbeat energy Matt brought to our community over the past eight months.

We are so grateful to **Michelle Cannon** for stepping in as interim director of studies this year, and for all the work she's accomplished on behalf of our students and faculty in this role. I look forward to sharing additional staffing updates for this and other positions later in the summer.

Admission Updates

In the 2018-2019 admission cycle, BUA's admission office had record numbers of Open House visitors, the highest number of completed applications, and our most selective cohort of admitted students in BUA history. As a new element of accepted students revisit days this year, we have been featuring special All-School Meetings on each of the four revisit days, including alumni speakers and a Classics declamation contest.

We are in an excellent position to welcome another strong class of new ninth-graders, and to have our school fully enrolled next year.

Senior Thesis Working Group Update

In the spring of 2018, BUA convened a **Senior Thesis Working Group** to assess the scaffolding, learning goals, and advising model of senior thesis, as recommended in our 2017 New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) self-study. The group researched peer schools' capstone and senior projects, presented these findings to the full faculty in early March, and is currently working on incorporating faculty feedback into a proposal. Once the full faculty has approved the proposal, we will share our revisions to the senior thesis program with the broader BUA community. We are excited to strengthen BUA's senior project to better serve our students.

Fundraising Updates

The generosity of our community accelerates our progress in teaching and learning, student health and wellness, improvements to our facilities, and much more.

The Annual Fund, which supports the school's operating budget including financial aid, remains our top fundraising priority this year. If you have already made a gift this year, we are grateful for your contribution and encourage you to consider supporting one of BUA's other fundraising initiatives, described below. If you haven't yet made your gift to the 2018-2019 Annual Fund, please make your contribution by June 30 so that we can continue to meet our most pressing priorities in support of our students. Increased Annual Fund gifts will also help us to attain the E.E.

Ford matching grant for our diversity and inclusion initiatives. Current fundraising initiatives include:

- **2018-2019 Annual Fund:** Our goal is \$385,000 and we have raised \$244,414 (63% of our goal) to date; the deadline to give is June 30. Many thanks to the 139 donors who made a gift yesterday during #BUGivingDay!
- **E.E. Ford Matching Grant for BUA Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives:** In order to secure the \$100,000 award from The Edward E. Ford Foundation, BUA must raise \$200,000 by July 31, 2019. In a show of support for this strategic priority, Boston University has pledged \$100,000 toward this matching grant. Any increased Annual Fund giving over the amount you gave in 2017-2018 may also be counted toward our fundraising goal. Gifts to the BUA Diversity & Inclusion Fund combined with increased Annual Fund gifts have brought us more than 80% toward our goal to date.
- **BUA Great Teachers Fund for Academic Enhancement:** We have raised \$140,224 to date for this endowed fund, in honor of retiring teachers, that helps incorporate unique learning opportunities that lift the quality of teaching inside and outside the classroom.

Commencement and Year-End Events

I'm pleased to share that **WBUR Morning Edition** host [Bob Oakes](#) will be this year's commencement speaker. Mr. Oakes is the unofficial voice of public radio in Boston and one of the most respected journalists in New England. BUA Commencement is a community-wide event, and everyone is welcome – and encouraged! – to attend. This year's **BUA Commencement will take place on Monday, May 20 at 11:00 a.m. at BU's Tsai Performance Center.**

This year's **Senior Thesis presentations will take place on the morning of Monday, May 13** at various locations at BUA and BU. Thesis presentations are one of my favorite parts of the year: it's so impressive to see our seniors share the findings of their research, which spans many disciplines, and I always learn something new. The entire BUA community is invited to attend, and we hope to see many of you there.

A full schedule of year-end events is available [here](#).

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I continue to be proud and excited to work with our students and families as interim head of school, and I look forward to making progress on our goals and celebrating our achievements – and the BUA Class of 2019 – in the months ahead.

Best,



Dr. Rosemary White
Interim Head of School