



August 22, 2019

Dear BUA Families,

I hope everyone has had a restful and restorative summer break! For my part, in addition to my day-to-day work at BUA, I've had the opportunity to participate in rewarding professional development (more on that below). I also enjoyed time away with my family – visiting with my parents in North Carolina and taking my son to Ireland on his first trip overseas.

Summer's not quite over yet, but I'm writing to share some logistical and programmatic updates ahead of the start of the 2019-2020 academic year.

Staffing Updates

When you return to school in September, there will be several new faces around the BUA building, both teachers and administrators.

Carlos Martinez will join BUA as an English Instructor for grades nine and ten. Dr. Martinez received his Bachelor of Arts from the University of Texas in San Antonio, and his doctorate from Brandeis University. He has taught writing and literature courses at Purdue University, Brandeis University, Wheelock College, Boston University, Framingham State University, and Newbury College. Dr. Martinez will teach two sections of ninth-grade English and one section of tenth-grade English. You can read a short interview with Dr. Martinez [here](#).

As I announced in my spring letter to the BUA community, we are moving forward on our commitment to student health and wellness by providing BUA students access to a nurse within the Academy building. **Dawn Bregoli**, a registered nurse from BU Student Health Services, will be at BUA daily during the lunch hour, and will be on-call throughout the school day. Her office will be located in a new space on the first floor across from the chemistry lab. Students will have the opportunity to meet Ms. Bregoli during our first All-School Meeting on Thursday, September 5, and she will be available to meet parents/guardians during Parents Day on Wednesday, October 30. Her email will be BUANurse@bu.edu.

I am happy to share that we have recently hired **Rachel Buday Mansour** as a part-time Learning Specialist. Ms. Mansour has over 10 years' experience in special education, academic coaching, and learning and accessibility services in both public and private institutions of secondary and higher education. She will provide academic support and study skills across all disciplines, and will work to develop strategies for students with learning differences.

While I continue on as interim head of school this year, **Ellen Evans** will step in to serve as director of student support, a role she has held in the past. In this role, Ms. Evans will lead the student support team and course registration process, and will collaborate with families on academic support plans. We will be hiring a part-time college counselor to provide additional support to the while Ms. Evans takes on these added responsibilities.

Sirena Davis joined the BUA community as a new administrative assistant in July. Previously, Ms. Davis served for two years as a college advisor at the College Advising Corps at Tech Academy in Dorchester, MA. She earned her BA from Denison University, where she majored in anthropology and sociology. In her role at BUA, Ms. Davis will manage human resources and hiring processes, assist with registrar and scheduling duties, and help to carry out the administrative functions of the office of the head of school.

Physics and math instructor **Travis Bain** and his wife Kerstin welcomed their daughter Maya on August 4. I know you'll join me in congratulating Dr. Bain, and in welcoming our new teachers and staff to BUA!

Head of School Transition

As we announced in June, BU Provost Jean Morrison appointed [Chris Kolovos](#) to serve as Boston University Academy's next head of school, beginning July of 2020. Mr. Kolovos brings impressive vision, experience, and energy to the head of school position. I am excited to work with him in his transition to BUA, and in my former and future position as assistant head of school for academics and student affairs, which I will assume again next summer.

There will be several opportunities to meet Mr. Kolovos over the course of the coming year. He plans to make three multi-day visits to BUA, including at Fall Festival in October, during the Evening with the Head of School (to meet applicant families) in January, and again in late March. During these visits, current students and parents, as well as BUA faculty and staff, alumni, and friends of BUA, will have a chance to get to know Mr. Kolovos in a variety of settings. We will share more information about dates, times, and venues as they become available.

Annual Fund and Restricted Giving, 2018-2019

Thanks to the generosity of parents, alumni, parents of graduates, faculty, staff, grandparents, and friends of BUA, total giving to the school in 2018-2019 reached \$783,000! Back in April, BUA raised a record-breaking \$86,000 on Giving Day from 139 donors in 24 hours! We received gifts from around the world, and nearly doubled the number of donors compared to last year. Additionally, I am proud to share that 100% of BUA's faculty and staff contributed to BUA's 2018-2019 Annual Fund, demonstrating their belief in and commitment to BUA's students and mission.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

A major highlight in giving in 2018-2019 was securing the \$100,000 matching grant from the [E. E. Ford Foundation](#) to support diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives at BUA - thank you to everyone who made a gift in support of this work. Under the auspices of the grant, BUA is working to increase access to Boston University Academy for underrepresented students in the greater Boston area; enhance support of students by increasing institutional competency related to diversity, equity, and inclusion; and provide greater access to selective postsecondary institutions, including Boston University. The BUA Diversity & Inclusion Fund has been established to support this important work beyond the grant timeline.

The funds raised as part of this initiative will empower BUA to undertake additional projects and programming in the service of our DEI goals and objectives.

In 2019-2020, BUA will expand support of students and families receiving financial aid by providing laptops to those whose grants represent 75% or more of the cost of tuition, and by providing increased grants for books, lunch, and incidental expenses. We will also provide free MBTA passes for the academic year to all students receiving financial aid.

Over the course of the upcoming school year, BUA will continue to work with DEI practitioner Liza Talusan to increase our institutional competency around diversity and inclusion, both for students and for faculty and staff. Liza will lead an All-School Meeting on October 17, and we have faculty training days scheduled as well.

I am also delighted to share that the Association of Independent Schools of New England (AISNE) will hold its Expo for Families of Color Exploring Independent Schools at the GSU on October 6. The event will bring together independent schools and families of color from across the greater Boston area for a day of

panel discussions and information sessions. We are very much looking forward to being involved in this event, which aligns so closely with BUA's commitment to building an inclusive school community.

Programmatic and Operational Updates and Initiatives

To further our goal of providing holistic support for our students, including academic support, this year BUA will host open study halls and subject help Monday-Thursday afternoons after school in the Academy building. Open Study Hall will be monitored by proctors (mainly BU graduate students) with different specialties each day of the week. For example, Monday's Open Study Hall will be dedicated to help in English, Tuesday will be history, Wednesday is math, etc. My hope for this new program is to offer students homework help in all core subjects without creating additional time or cost burdens on families.

In an effort to restructure and simplify our communications with students and families, this year you will notice that the College Counseling Newsletter will have a new look and feel, as well as a new name – the Academic Bulletin. The Academic Bulletin is an evolution of the College Counseling Newsletter, and will contain not just details of the college application process, but also important information on BU course selection and registration; exam schedules and policies; standardized testing; advisor selection; and key academic dates and deadlines. The Academic Bulletin will be emailed bi-weekly on Thursdays.

News and Notes, which contains information about upcoming school events, student activities (including links to permission slips), holidays and school closures, photos and video from school events, and more, will continue to be sent weekly on Tuesday afternoons. I encourage you to open and read each edition of News and Notes and the Academic Bulletin, as both contain important information about school life and your child's academic experience.

This year, as part of the ongoing Classroom Renovation Initiative, we will install new furniture in Rooms 116 and 217 (Dr. Larash and Dr. Formichelli's rooms), similar to the modular tables and chairs in Dr. Davis and Dr. Alonge's rooms. Additionally, we will be carving out a dedicated nurse's office on the first floor, across from the chemistry lab.

Student Support/Health and Wellness

At the end of July, School Counselor Stacey Weiskopf, History Instructor Olive Brown, and I attended a RULER training at 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."

As part of the RULER program, we learned exercises to help both students and adults Recognize, Understand, Label, Express, and Regulate their emotions. Some of the tools we took away from the training include a vocabulary to identify and talk about emotions, as well regulation techniques such as mindfulness and positive self-talk. The Student Support team is excited to implement these lessons on emotional intelligence into the ninth-grade health curriculum this year.

BUA Parents Network

The mission of the BUA Parents Network (BUAPN) is to facilitate connections between BUA families and enhance and enrich the BUA parent experience through monthly meetings, online forums, social events, volunteer opportunities, and educational programs. This year's BUAPN co-chairs are **Lynne Chuang** (Olivia '21 and Henry '22) and **Diane Gwin** (Katie Kara'a '22): thanks to them both for volunteering their time and energy in this role! **Margo Cox**, BUA's assistant director of institutional advancement, will serve as the staff liaison to the BUAPN.

The BUAPN provides volunteer support to school events and student activities including admission open houses, Fall Festival, and Lock-In. There are many opportunities both large and small for families to be active participants in the BUA community, and I hope you'll consider getting involved this year! As a reminder, all parents/guardians of current BUA students are automatically members of the BUAPN – there is no joining fee or need to sign up to participate. The BUAPN hosts evening webinars on a variety of topics throughout the year, which makes it easy to get involved and stay informed, even if you are unable to make it to a Friday morning meeting.

I am excited about the upcoming school year, and the new people, programs, and structures we have in place. I also look forward to getting to know our new families and students, and to deepening my existing relationships with returners. As I did last year, I will host open Coffee and Conversation hours in my office each month: the first two will be held on Tuesday, September 10, and Tuesday, September 24 at 8:00 a.m. Coffee and Conversation is a chance to meet with me in an open-door forum with no set agenda - everyone is welcome to stop by to say hello!

Additionally, in an effort to start building partnerships with new families, I will invite parents/guardians of incoming ninth graders to schedule one-on-one meetings with me over the course of the fall. New families will be sent more information and a link to sign up for a time slot. If you are a returning family and would like to schedule a meeting, I'd be happy to meet with you as well! Please [email Sirena Davis](#) to set up an appointment.

This year's **Back-to-School Night and Senior Kickoff will take place on Thursday, September 12 from 5:30-9:00 p.m.** Back-to-School Night is an opportunity for parents/guardians to meet their children's teachers and to enjoy a sneak peek into their child's classroom experience. Unlike in past years, this year's Back-to-School Night will take place entirely within the BUA building, starting with a reception and short program in Sargent Gym and followed by advisor group meetings and classroom rotations. Senior Kickoff (for 12th grade students and their parents/guardians) will take place in the Black Box Theater. Students in ninth, tenth, and eleventh grade are welcome to go home immediately after school or to study or hang out in the GSU. The Camp Burgess question-and-answer session for parents/guardians of ninth and tenth graders will be in webinar format this year, and will be held on **Wednesday, September 18 from 7:30-8:30 p.m.** More details and a complete schedule for this evening are to come.

I hope everyone enjoys the last few days of summer, and I look forward to welcoming you and your family (back) to BUA soon!

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rosemary White". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small heart symbol above the "y".

Dr. Rosemary White
Interim Head of School