



Dear BUA Families,

I hope this letter finds you all well and enjoying these final weeks of summer. The teachers, staff, and I are excited to welcome our students to campus. Their energy, passion, curiosity, and idealism give life to these hallways. These young people also give great joy and purpose to those of us who work closely with them. To our parents and guardians, thank you for trusting us with the most precious thing in your lives.

This year is special in two ways. For one, it promises to bring a return to normalcy we have not experienced since the start of the pandemic. COVID is, of course, on our minds, and later this month I will reach out with details about our updated health policies. But, given more favorable conditions, we will fully revive our in-person traditions and, in time, shed the uncertainty and anxiety that have shrouded so many of our daily routines.

We also celebrate BUA's 30th anniversary this year, capped off by our [gala at the Museum of Fine Arts on May 6](#). Much has changed from the early days. But the core remains the same: a small, caring community with unapologetically high academic standards and made up of exceptionally kind and curious students taught by mentors who love their subjects and love their students more. This year will give us a chance to celebrate our beginnings and dream together about our future.

Below, I've offered some brief reflections on the past year and notes about the year ahead.

### **BUA Admissions and College Matriculation**

Numbers cannot capture a school's success. Our impact lies in the fulfillment of our students as they navigate their lives. But the numbers do tell the story of a school very much in motion.

This was a record year in admissions, surpassing even last year's highs. BUA saw more applications and a lower acceptance rate than ever in the school's history. While many independent schools saw a rise in demand in the early days of the pandemic, our recent admissions numbers indicate that there is more to the story; the word is out, and we are increasingly known as the school of choice for the kindest, most curious young people in the Boston area. Next year, we will enroll 56 new ninth-grade students and four new eleventh graders, with a total enrollment of 229 students. Those numbers hide the rich diversity of our community, with 58% of our students identifying as students of color, and more first-generation Americans and students from the City of Boston than nearly all of our peer schools. Our classrooms reflect the world around us, and we are stronger for it.

It was also another remarkable year in college admissions. I have, in the past several

years, talked to admissions officers at dozens of colleges and universities our students want to attend. They have told me how excited they are to have our students, both because they have already demonstrated the ability to succeed in college-level classes and because, in the words of one dean, “their curiosity jumps off the page.” The data bears that out, with our seniors finding their matches, with many attending their top-choice schools, and with the great majority enrolling in the most selective colleges in the country in a system that has become hyper competitive. Please review the [Class of 2022 college matriculation list](#) and join me in wishing our graduates well as they start this new journey.

### **Fundraising, Financial Aid, and Renovations**

When we asked our community for support last year, so many of you responded, and we are grateful. I’m delighted to report that BUA had its most successful fundraising year ever. The school set a record for the annual fund and for total giving, which again topped \$1 million. Participation rates reflect the community’s deep commitment: 100% of teachers and staff, 90% of parents, and 23% of our graduates chose to make BUA a philanthropic priority.

That generosity is a key reason why, again this year and in a rarity for independent schools, no applicant was turned away because of a family’s inability to pay. It is why we can support nearly 30% of our families with need-based financial aid grants. And it is why we were recently able to implement a substantial increase in lunch grants, making the full BUA experience accessible to our students.

Philanthropy has also allowed us to continue the process of renovating our teaching and learning spaces. Last summer, all classrooms were outfitted with new, modular furniture, giving teachers the ability to change the arrangement to match the day’s pedagogical approach. This summer, we built on that progress, installing new ceiling tiles and energy-efficient LED lighting in all classrooms and throughout the facility. The outcome? Our classrooms now give our teachers the tools they need to work with these exceptional students. They also better reflect the excellence that’s happening within.

### **Commitment to Boston: Alexander Twilight Academy**

This summer, BUA hosted [Alexander Twilight Academy](#) for six weeks. ATA is a free academic enrichment program for academically promising middle school students from under-resourced backgrounds, the great majority from the City of Boston. Partnering with ATA and welcoming them into BUA classrooms for the summer is a way for us to amplify our impact and live into our promise to be a private school with a public purpose. The relationship with ATA extends beyond the summer, with BUA teachers and students engaging with ATA students for tutoring and other sessions throughout the school year.

### **Dr. Monica Alvarez Steps into DEI Leadership Role**

BUA English teacher [Dr. Monica Alvarez has stepped into the newly-created Director of Equity and Inclusion role](#). As BUA's inaugural Director of Equity and Inclusion, Dr. Alvarez will work across constituencies – students, faculty, staff, parents, alumni – and lead the school's efforts to fully live up to our core values of community and inclusion. The work will touch many areas of school life: student support, parent engagement, admissions, professional development, curriculum, pedagogy, hiring, and others. DEI is not one person's job. It is the work of the entire community and only succeeds when we are all involved. I know the BUA family will embrace Dr. Alvarez in this new role, and I look forward to partnering with her for years to come.

## **Innovation in English and History Curriculum**

As a result of the vision and hard work of our faculty this spring and summer, and inspired by conversations with our students over the years, our students will engage in a [revised history and English curriculum this year](#), with the most significant changes in the 9th and 10th grades. BUA's humanities program has been, since the school's founding, one of our great strengths, with an emphasis on critical thinking, close reading of rigorous texts, excellent writing, and debating some of life's most important questions around a seminar table. The path our teachers have chosen going forward preserves the richness of our traditions while injecting a global and diverse outlook. Courses are organized around themes, many of which traverse disciplines and all of which have deep relevance for our students' lives in the 21st century. Please refer to the [course descriptions](#) to explore our revised curriculum.

## **Strategic Design**

Last year, we began the process of developing a strategic vision to guide BUA's path for the coming years. Many of you completed a survey, offering your thoughts on your BUA experience and hopes for its future. Groups of faculty and staff, alumni, and parents engaged in generative sessions about our strategic priorities. A strategic design steering committee of teachers, staff, parents, and alumni synthesized that feedback and began to lay out a roadmap. That work will continue this fall, putting us in a position this winter to share BUA's direction with all of you.

## **30th Anniversary Gala**

On May 6, 2023, we will celebrate BUA's 30th anniversary with a gala at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts. This will be a chance to reflect on our past, express gratitude for those who helped build this great school, and dream together about the opportunities ahead. Please keep an eye out for information about the event and tickets, and thank you for [saving the date](#).

## **Mural by Sitarah Lakhani '22**

A vibrant, celebratory, and inclusive mural now adorns the 4,000-square-foot exterior wall of Sargent Gym facing the BU Bridge. The mural was created and installed by

Sitarah Lakhani '22, with mentorship from muralist Amanda Hill and support from Boston University Academy and the BU Arts Initiative. Read more about the mural project, including a Q&A with Sitarah, and see pictures of the completed mural [at this link](#).

## **Welcoming our New Teachers and Staff**

Passionate, knowledgeable, skilled, loving teachers working with students in small classes -- that is the core of BUA. And that is what our students deserve. We are excited for you to get to know our new colleagues. Please visit this page for [more details about our new teachers and staff members](#).

The hiring process for these positions was the most competitive I have seen in my career, with hundreds of applicants for each job. We prioritized candidates with deep independent school experience, content expertise, and, most importantly, an appreciation for our kids and community.

Dr. Sherard Harrington joins our English department, coming most recently from Phillips Exeter Academy where he taught 10th and 11th grade literature. Ms. Ariana Kelly also joins the English department, having spent many years teaching at Harvard Westlake School in Los Angeles and Middlesex School. Ms. Claire Tam joins our history department, coming most recently from Pacific Ridge School in Carlsbad California, where she was also involved in theater. Ms. Julia Rowny steps into our math department after years at Hopkins School in New Haven and at Blair Academy, where she served as the department chair. Mr. Mato Seth steps into a Math Teaching Fellow role, having taught math and coached volleyball for several years at Phillips Academy Andover.

Long-time BUA history teacher, Dr. Jim Davis, has asked to move to a part-time teaching position for next year. He will continue working with students in his senior seminar and with his advisees. Given Dr. Davis's reduced teaching load this year, we have hired Mr. Anthony Vitali as a one-year history teacher, having taught previously at Judge Memorial School in Utah and Damien Memorial School in Hawai'i. Ms. Alyssa Doust will take on a Visual Arts Teaching Assistant position; this is a new role at BUA, providing support to our art teacher, Ms. Lisa Townley, as that program grows and we expand the range of media our students have access to.

After a competitive nationwide search, Mr. Rob O'Rourke has stepped in as our Director of College Counseling. Mr. O'Rourke joins us from Groton School, where he served as the Associate Director of College Counseling and Director of Community Engagement for eight years. Before Groton, he was a Senior Assistant Director of Admissions at Georgetown University. Ms. Jessica Jackson will stay on as Associate Director of College Counseling, having joined us in a temporary position last year during Jill Atkinson's parental leave. Ms. Jackson comes to us with a decade of experience, both at the independent school level at Milken Community School and at the college level at Claremont McKenna.

## **New Roles for Returning Faculty and Staff**

Ms. Jill Atkinson and Ms. Ellen Evans will stay on at BUA as Co-Directors of Student Support. They have both served our students beautifully in their roles in college counseling. We are thrilled that they will stay with us at BUA this year and allow us to increase the resources devoted to supporting all of our students, 9-12th grade, academically and socio-emotionally – working alongside our school counselor, learning specialist, and associate head of school.

Many of our students already know Ms. Olivia Hartman, who has recently served as a part-time athletic trainer. Olivia will continue on in that role with expanded hours and also assist Mr. Dave Stone in managing and delivering the athletic program.

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As always, please [reach out with any questions](#) as we head into this new year together. Wishing you and your families a happy, healthy end of summer.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Christopher Kolovos". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Christopher" and last name "Kolovos" clearly legible.

Chris Kolovos  
Head of School