



Dear BUA Families,

I hope this note finds you well as we enter the holiday season. I am writing to let you know about an upcoming change to BUA's science curriculum. The change **will not impact any current BUA students**, only students who begin in the fall of 2023 and after. We wanted to share the news with all of you, though, because it does represent an important and, we believe, exciting step.

For many years, our students have been well served by our science sequence. Currently, ninth graders study physics and tenth graders study chemistry, both taught by BUA teachers in undifferentiated honors sections. Juniors go on to take science coursework at BU – typically, but not always the two-semester Biology 107 and 108 sequence – and seniors often take a science course at the University as well, choosing from a broad range of options. All current BUA students will continue on this track.

Any good school is constantly reviewing its curriculum to ensure that we are offering our students the best possible experience. Based on several years of feedback and internal conversations, we have decided to **move away from the “physics-first” model** beginning in the fall of 2023. **Entering ninth graders will take an exciting, newly created biology course** that not only covers the fundamentals of micro- and macrobiology with the depth and rigor that our school is known for, but also leverages the resources of the City of Boston as a living laboratory. In the tenth grade, they will continue on with chemistry at BUA. In the **junior year, they will then be able to choose from various physics courses at the University**, where course placement will match their math level (e.g. some courses will require calculus and some will not). Physics will not be a BUA graduation requirement, but we will continue to recommend at least three years of lab science and fully expect most BUA juniors to find a physics (or other science) course in the junior year that fits their interest and provides the appropriate level of challenge. We have already established a strong partnership with our BU colleagues in the physics department, who are excited to work with us and our students.

There are several reasons we are making this change, all of which are about improving the student experience. Our ninth-graders come to us with a broad range of exposure to math topics. We believe that physics is best learned in sections where we can meet students where they are in terms of math, something that is difficult to do in undifferentiated ninth-grade sections but that we can accomplish well in the junior year at BU. We are excited about a rigorous, lab-oriented, place-based biology course as a common ninth-grade experience; imagine students conducting water sampling at the Charles River and integrating other examples of urban ecology into their studies. We also look forward to giving our juniors a broader array of choices for their science studies.

With any change, there are drawbacks. One of those is that since we will no longer offer a BUA physics course, **Dr. Cindy Taylor, our excellent physics teacher of the past five years, will be leaving BUA**. She has been a valued member of the science department – teaching physics with passion and empathy, leading the popular STEM seminar, advising senior theses, guiding the science team – and an integral member of the BUA family. She has shared with us that she

both understands and supports the changes, even though she will miss BUA. And we will miss her. In the coming days, we will begin a search for a dynamic, visionary biology teacher to design and offer a deeply engaging and innovative biology curriculum to our ninth graders.

One of the things I am proudest of is the way this school celebrates its traditions while also adapting when doing so is in the best interest of our students. BUA has always been about challenging students right to the edge of their ability, feeding their passions, and supporting them with caring, inspired mentorship. I am confident that these changes will make us even more capable of fulfilling that mission. As always, if you have any questions please do not hesitate to reach out.

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