



August 23, 2023

Dear BUA Families,

A friend chided me a few days ago for asking, “How was your summer?” rather than the present-tense version of that question – and she was right. Even as preparations are underway for the start of the school year, there is still time left for cookouts, trips to the ice cream store, and reading in the hammock. So, in that spirit, I hope you and your loved ones *are* enjoying a happy, healthy summer!

I’m reaching out with some brief reflections on the past year and notes about the year ahead.

30th Anniversary Celebration

In May, many of you were among the 500 BUA parents, past parents, graduates, faculty, staff, and former colleagues who celebrated BUA’s 30th year at a [gala](#) at the Museum of Fine Arts. The turnout was a heartwarming testament to the impact this school has had on so many. The evening gave us all a chance to mark how far we have come in three decades and reaffirm the enduring values that have led us here. And we all made a difference that night – raising \$130,000 to support financial aid. Thank you.

Strategic Vision

Last year was also a year for looking forward. We announced the [BUA 2030 Strategic Vision](#), the culmination of a two-year, inclusive, iterative effort involving members of every BUA constituency. The vision is as bold a statement as you will find at any independent school in the country – appropriately so for a thriving school with advantages no other school can match. I’m excited to work with all of you to realize these aspirations in the years to come.

State of the School - October 5

Building on the success of last year’s gala, we will host BUA’s first annual State of the School event on October 5 at 6:00 p.m. This will be a chance for parents and other adult members of the BUA community to be together, have some fun, and hear about what’s happening at the school.

Admissions, Enrollment, and Financial Aid

It was another very strong year in admissions. Application numbers near record highs, selectivity near record lows, and strong yield all confirm that the word is out about BUA and that we are quickly becoming the school of choice for exceptionally kind, curious, capable students in the Boston area.

Again this year, no applicant was turned away because of their family’s financial situation – a rarity in independent schools; we accepted and offered to meet the full demonstrated need of

every student whom we feel should be here. Thirty percent of our students and families will attend with the support of financial aid. Grants extend far beyond tuition to help cover the cost of books, laptops, and all the pieces necessary to make the full BUA experience accessible.

With 56 excellent new ninth graders and several more new students in tenth and eleventh grades, we will open our doors with 234 students. Those numbers hide the rich diversity of our community, with 56% of our students identifying as students of color and 35% speaking a language other than English at home.

College Admissions

I continue to be grateful that the top colleges and universities in the country recognize how exceptional our students are – young people who have demonstrated an ability to excel in the college classroom and, in the words of one admissions dean, whose “curiosity jumps off the page.” Please review the [Class of 2023 college matriculation list](#) and join me in wishing our graduates well as they start this new journey.

Fundraising

I’m proud to report that BUA had its most successful fundraising year ever. The school set a record for the annual fund and for total giving, topping \$1.2 million. Participation rates reflect the community’s deep commitment: 100% of teachers and staff, 91% of parents, and 21% of our graduates chose to make BUA a philanthropic priority. That generosity is a big reason we are able to make BUA broadly accessible to students across the socioeconomic spectrum and we can say yes to teachers looking to grow professionally.

Commitment to Boston

This summer, BUA again 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. The students at ATA are remarkable, and we are honored to be part of their journey.

Innovation in the Science Curriculum

In our ongoing efforts to better serve our students, we are moving away from the “physics-first” model beginning this fall. Instead of physics, 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 City of Boston as a living laboratory. In the tenth grade, students will continue on with chemistry at BUA. In the junior year, they will then be able to choose from various lab-based science courses at the University, including physics courses where placement will match their math experience. The change only impacts the class of 2027 and future classes. Please see my [letter announcing this shift](#) for more context.

Computer Science, Engineering, and Entrepreneurship Seminars

Our ninth- and tenth-grade seminars continue to evolve as opportunities for students to explore topics central to their development and in areas of passion. Ninth graders rotate through trimesters of Health & Wellness, Foundations in Language & Logic, and Cultural Competency – all taught by BUA faculty. Tenth graders, in addition to continued wellness work and an introduction to research, will choose either a hands-on Python and machine-learning course with colleagues in BU’s [Software & Application Innovation Lab](#) or a combined

engineering/entrepreneurship course with BU's [Engineering Product Innovation Center](#) (EPIC) and [Innovate@BU](#)'s BUild Lab. By leveraging BU, we are able to offer a world-class experience few can match.

Global Travel

We have reimagined our global travel program as an avenue for students to go far beyond sightseeing – producing deeper learning in areas connected to our curriculum and fostering lasting personal growth. Evolving from our tradition of one international March trip, we are planning trips in March and June, and will include overseas and domestic options. We will announce several exciting trip options in September. Limited financial aid will be available.

New Faculty and Staff

There is nothing more important than providing our students with extraordinary mentorship; teachers are the core of this great school. 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](#).

Dr. Colleen Krivacek joins us as our new biology teacher. Dr. Krivacek earned her undergraduate degree at Wellesley College and PhD in biology from Boston College. She is a veteran independent school teacher, having spent the last eight years (of her 20+ year teaching career) at Episcopal High School in Alexandria, Virginia.

Mr. Nick Dent will be on sabbatical this year pursuing an advanced degree in mathematics at BU, and Ms. Marie-Claire Guidoux will be stepping in in his absence. A thoughtful and experienced math teacher, Ms. Guidoux has taught most recently at St. Joseph's Prep and Boston College High School, and has earned undergraduate and master's degrees from Boston College in mathematics and education.

Mr. Jingxiao Zeng joins us as our Music Teaching Assistant, supporting Dr. Abigaña and working with students across the program. He is an accomplished trombonist and is pursuing his PhD at Boston University.

Ms. Jessica Gutierrez in our admission office has made the decision after three excellent years at BUA to return home to the Bay Area. We are thrilled to welcome Ms. Paula Jurado as our new Assistant Director of Admission. Ms. Jurado has previous admission experience at her independent school alma mater, The Athenian School in San Francisco, and has recently completed her master's degree from Boston College.

BUA's indomitable Assistant Head of School for Enrollment Management and Institutional Advancement, Ms. Nastaran Hakimi, will be on parental leave for much of the winter and early spring (and we are thrilled for her!). We feel fortunate that long-time independent school admission veteran, Ms. Gillian Lloyd, will join us this year as Interim Director of Admission after a 22-year career at The Rivers School overseeing that school's admission and enrollment operation.

Other Faculty and Staff News

After a year of part-time teaching, which allowed him to pursue areas of passion outside of school life, beloved history teacher Dr. Jim Davis will return full-time in the fall, much to our delight!

In the spring, we [celebrated Ms. Ellen Evans's retirement](#) from BUA after a 21-year career here in college counseling and, most recently, as co-director of student support and university liaison. Ms. Evans's wisdom, advocacy, and empathy touched the lives of a generation of BUA students and families, and we miss her already. Ms. Jill Atkinson, who worked alongside Ms. Evans in all of these areas, has assumed the student-support and university-liaison duties.

Several returning teachers will be taking on new responsibilities in addition to their teaching duties. Visual Art Visual Arts Teaching Ms. Assistant Alyssa Doust adds a part-time position in development. Math teacher Ms. Julia Rowny steps into the Coordinator of Professional Development role. History teacher Ms. Claire Tam will work with Dr. Monica Alvarez as our Assistant Director of Equity & inclusion. Chemistry teacher Dr. Lizzy Karnaukh will serve in a new position: STEM Research Coordinator. And history teacher Ms. Emily Kamen becomes our inaugural Experiential Learning Coordinator, overseeing travel programs and local engagement.

As always, please [reach out with any questions](#) as we head into this new year together. And we'll see you soon!

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