



Dear BUA Community,

In the face of so much change and uncertainty in our nation and the world, I find myself ever more grateful for the constancy and strength of the BUA community. This school has, for three decades, stood for timeless and increasingly countercultural values: joyful inquiry, curiosity, critical thinking, and pursuit of knowledge; an appreciation for what young people can do when challenged, loved, held to high expectations, and granted the independence to shape their paths; and an insistence on fostering a community of kindness and belonging.

These principles are a large reason why this school continues to thrive. As you'll read below, interest in BUA among families in the Boston area has never been stronger. Boston University, despite the challenges it faces along with much of higher education, continues to invest in BUA – putting its institutional support behind this jewel on campus. Our teachers, staff, parents, alumni, and parents of alumni recognize what makes BUA so special and help propel us forward through their extraordinary generosity and commitment to this school and its mission. We are deeply grateful.

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

### **Historical Restoration Project**

Over the coming twelve months, the facade on two sides of BUA's building will undergo a full [historical restoration](#). The project will reinforce and replace the facade and improve the safety of the structure after nearly a century of Boston winters. The decorative panels of this Art Deco structure – fluted columns and sea-life frieze – will all be replaced with exact replicas of the originals. The columns are a fitting echo of this school's classical roots. The sea creatures are a product of this building's pre-BUA history. It originally housed the Shell Oil Company when this stretch of Commonwealth Avenue was Boston's [auto mile](#) (the large Shell sign now located at a gas station on Memorial Drive once crowned our building). The estimated completion date is August 2026. The construction is scheduled during hours that will not disrupt the school day. We thank our partners at Boston University for spearheading and funding this project – a reflection of BU's long-term commitment to BUA.

### **BU Relationship**

BU's leadership recognizes BUA as a unique and valuable part of the University ecosystem. Several key University leaders are part of BUA's advisory board, providing strategic thought partnership and playing an important role in advocating for BUA across campus. We were delighted that BU's president, Dr. Melissa Gilliam, joined us for a campus visit, spoke at an all-school meeting, and addressed the community at BUA's commencement last year. Each time, she celebrated BUA's strengths and contributions to her vision for the University.

Like so many colleges and universities around the country, BU is facing financial headwinds due to federal regulatory actions, demographic changes, and other factors. The University has made difficult but necessary decisions to cut budgets where possible and, in some cases, eliminate positions, all with the goal of ensuring a sound fiscal future.

As a financially healthy and thriving unit of the larger University, BUA has been largely insulated from these moves. There have been no layoffs of BUA faculty or staff and only minor budget adjustments, none of which will impact the student experience. The philanthropic generosity of our community has also played a role in ensuring that we can not only maintain our commitment to financial aid, teachers, and programmatic excellence, but also continue investing in innovation and our strategic objectives.

### **Admissions, Enrollment, and Financial Aid**

It was a remarkable admissions year. Again, applications well outpaced available seats, and the acceptance rate was the lowest in BUA's history – a wonderful sign that the word about BUA is out. We open our doors with 225 students.

Part of what makes this community so special and attractive is our diversity. Our students come from 45 cities and towns. 54% identify as students of color. 33% of them speak another language at home. 27% receive financial aid. For the fifth year running, we accepted and fully funded every student whom we felt should be here – with no financial-aid waitlist. Few schools can say that, and we will strive to keep this school accessible to the most wonderful students regardless of their family's financial situation.

### **College Admissions**

Colleges and universities recognize what we already know: our students are exceptionally ready to excel in the college classroom and make a difference on campus. I am proud that our students, with the expert support of our college counseling team, work hard to find a school that is the right fit for them – the best predictor of a happy and successful college career. You'll see that reflected in the broad array of [colleges and universities the Class of 2025 will attend](#) this fall.

### **Fundraising**

I am humbled by the generosity this community showed last year. We finished the fiscal year with \$1.44 million in total giving – a record for this school. Thank you to the hundreds of alumni, parents of alumni, faculty, staff, and friends of BUA who made BUA a philanthropic priority. The impact is immediate. Because of your generosity, we were able to say yes to wonderful students and families who qualified for financial support and yes to teachers – for professional development, curricular development grants, and the other resources they need and deserve. We were also able to renovate and open our new 3,500 square-foot [Student Commons](#), which has transformed the students' experience in our building.

### **Math Curricular Evolution**

This fall, BUA will roll out the first course in a [new three-course math sequence](#). The new first-level math course, *Algebraic Thinking & Coordinate Geometry (Integrated Math 1)*, features two exciting innovations: an integrated approach where students see the connections between algebraic concepts, geometry, and other areas; and a problem-based approach designed to help students build confidence as problem solvers. The course has been developed from scratch by BUA's math faculty specifically for BUA students. In the subsequent two years, we will roll out *Euclidean Geometry, Functions, & Graphs (Integrated Math 2)* and a revision of *Pre-Calculus (Integrated Math 3)*. For more on this exciting evolution of our math program, please click on the link above.

## **Civil Discourse**

We remain committed to creating opportunities for students to learn about potentially divisive topics and practice engaging with one another across difference. This work happens naturally and best in the classroom, under the guidance of trusted adults and informed by reliable readings and other sources. Conversations@BUA will continue too – a periodic in-person forum for productive dialogue on a broad range of topics among students hosted by several teachers. In addition, this year we will partner with the Close Up Foundation on two initiatives: hosting a one-day conference for area high-school students, including BUA students, to practice deliberation, critical reasoning, and reasoned dialogue; and a multi-part professional development session for BUA teachers focused on facilitating these kinds of conversations in and outside the classroom.

## **Generative AI**

We continue to adapt to the challenges and opportunities presented by generative artificial intelligence. Last year, a working group of teachers and staff led our colleagues in learning about and experimenting with AI. This summer, the entire faculty and staff read *Teaching with AI* by Bowen and Watson. It is a thoughtful, practical survey of how educators and educational institutions are responding to AI, addressing many of the questions we are tackling here. Several BUA teachers and staff members are part of a cohort of eight New England independent schools that will meet this year to learn together, share best practices, and bring perspectives back to their schools. This fall, informed by focus groups of students across grades, we will roll out a refined set of expectations for students about AI use on academic work.

## **Commitment to Boston**

As part of our commitment to the City of Boston, last year we launched BUA's Boston Afterschool Service Fellows program. This inaugural group of BUA students volunteered weekly in the spring in the afterschool program at the Eliot School in Boston – a wonderful K-8 BPS school with strong connections to the BUA community. We intend to expand that program this year to involve more BUA students for more weeks and potentially to more area schools.

This summer, BUA again hosted [Alexander Twilight Academy](#) for six weeks. ATA is a free academic enrichment program for 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.

We also hosted several sessions of [gbSTEM](#) (Greater Boston STEM), a wonderful organization led and run in part by BUA students and graduates. It provides free math, science, engineering, and coding classes to area elementary and middle-school students.

## **Career Mentoring**

This will be the second year of BUA's [career mentoring program](#) – connecting our seniors and young alumni with BUA parents, parents of graduates, and more experienced alumni for informational interviews and workplace shadow days. In the program's inaugural year, we made 50 matches between mentors and mentees.

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As always, please [reach out with any questions](#) in the days and weeks ahead. Wishing you all a happy and healthy year.

Warmly,

Chris Kolovos  
Head of School