



Professor Jean Morrison, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer

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TO: Boston University Faculty

FROM: Jean Morrison, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer

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DATE: June 23, 2014

SUBJECT: University Provost's Faculty Hiring Initiative in Data Science

Data Science, the methodical study of the generalizable and scalable extraction of knowledge from data, has emerged as a key enabler of transformative disciplinary and interdisciplinary research. Data Science incorporates varying elements and builds on techniques and theories from many basic engineering and science fields and is, thus, closely tied to many of our existing disciplines. Areas in which Data Science may be applied to extract new information from data and to synthesize new approaches encompass healthcare, business, e-commerce, communications, urban sustainability, material design, supply-chain management, learning analytics, and many others. Moreover, as we enter an era of ubiquitous connectivity of sensors to the internet, innovations will emerge at the intersection of technology and data science that have not yet been imagined.

Given the rapid expansion and evident impact of Data Science, we want to build strategically on our existing base of talented faculty who conduct research and develop academic and educational programs in Data Science-related fields. To that end, I am pleased to announce the *Provost's Faculty Hiring Initiative in Data Science*. This initiative is designed to support faculty hiring in areas of strategic importance relating to Data Science and is aligned with our institutional strategic plan to emphasize interdisciplinary research and scholarship in areas in which Boston University can be uniquely excellent.

Boston University has considerable strength in, and substantial commitment to, the important interdisciplinary areas that comprise Data Science. The Rafik B. Hariri Institute for Computing and Computational Science and Engineering has, in just a few short years, established itself as a hub for high-impact University-wide collaborative research and education initiatives that apply computational and data-driven approaches to real-world problems, with significant industrial engagement. As such, the Hariri Institute is positioned to help lead in the expansion of our capacity in data science. These efforts will be in coordination with relevant academic departments and research centers in the College of Engineering (ENG) and the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), including the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering (ENG), the Department of Computer Science (CAS), the Center for Information and Systems Engineering (ENG), and the Department of Mathematics and Statistics (CAS).

Through the Provost's Faculty Hiring Initiative in Data Science, we will provide positions and funding to recruit up to six new faculty members to Boston University within the next three years. *It is our expectation that these hires will augment, not replace, ongoing faculty hiring in Data Science-related disciplines through the regular hiring processes in the Schools and Colleges.* In addition, we expect that these hires will also leverage ongoing faculty hiring in these disciplines through hiring in the Schools and Colleges.

Appointed in the departments that most closely match their expertise (or jointly across departments, Schools and Colleges), these new faculty members will join the strong cohort of faculty we already have in Data Science, and will have an opportunity to shape Boston University's vision for research and education in this strategically important area.

To begin the hiring effort, I have established an interdisciplinary committee of distinguished faculty and leaders in this broad area that will be charged with two tasks. The first is to develop a consensus for the aims of this new hiring initiative, which must include consideration of how we best leverage our existing strengths as we expand our faculty and capacity in this area. The second is to serve as the standing committee that will develop and oversee the search process for these new faculty. The committee membership is listed at the end of this memo. I will ask the committee to report back to me on the specific aims they recommend for the hiring initiative by August 1, 2014. I will then solicit input from the appropriate Deans and other senior leaders about the recommendations. Following this period of consultation, I anticipate that the searches will begin in mid-August 2014.

The search committee will have the responsibility for:

- Drafting the position description(s);
- Actively soliciting nominations for candidates from all appropriate sources;
- Actively recruiting outstanding candidates who have a record of leadership and achievement and an academic profile suitable for appointment at either the junior or senior professor level at Boston University;
- Evaluating the qualifications and assessing the strength of nominees and applicants and identifying candidates to be interviewed;
- Collaborating with the Provost's Office and with the Schools/Colleges that would be the likely home(s) of potential faculty to develop and host campus interviews;
- Develop recommendations to the Provost on hiring.

Detailed aspects of offers, including the nature of the start-up package and the responsibilities of the recruited faculty member to the various units will be determined by the Provost in consultation with the appropriate Deans. The Office of the Provost will staff the committee.

I look forward to working together to make this important new initiative for Boston University a success.

Cc: Robert A. Brown
Provost's Cabinet
Academic Deans

Committee on Provost's Faculty Hiring Initiative in Data Science

Azer Bestavros, *Committee Chair*, Professor, Department of Computer Science, College of Arts and Sciences, and Director of the Hariri Institute for Computing

Margrit Betke, Professor, Department of Computer Science, College of Arts and Sciences

Christos Cassandras, Professor, Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering, College of Engineering

Simon Kasif, Professor, Department of Biomedical Engineering, College of Engineering

Erik D. Kolaczyk, Professor, Department of Mathematics and Statistics, College of Arts and Sciences

Yannis Paschalidis, Professor, Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering, and Director of the Center for Information and Systems Engineering, College of Engineering

Venkatesh Saligrama, Professor, Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering, College of Engineering

Evimaria Terzi, Associate Professor, Department of Computer Science, College of Arts and Sciences