

Professor Jean Morrison, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer

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TO: Boston University Faculty and Staff

FROM: Jean Morrison, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be "JM" or "Jean Morrison".

DATE: August 30, 2019

SUBJECT: Professor Mary Elizabeth Moore to Step Down as Dean of the School of Theology (STH); Formation of the Dean Search Advisory Committee

Mary Elizabeth Moore, Professor of Theology and Education and Dean of the School of Theology, has announced that she plans to step down from her leadership role at the conclusion of the 2019-2020 academic year.

Since 2009, Dean Moore has provided clear-headed, compassionate, and inspired leadership for the School of Theology, Boston University's oldest school. Her passion for theological education and dedication to building a more just, peaceful, and sustainable world are apparent to all who have interacted with and been impacted by Dean Moore during her time at Boston University.

The mark she leaves on the School of Theology is equally enduring. Under Dean Moore's leadership over the last decade, STH has made significant gains in the caliber of academic opportunities it offers students, in the supportive and welcoming climate it provides junior faculty and rising theologians of all backgrounds, and in the school's standing as a nationally-respected center for religious and theological scholarship.

Early in Dean Moore's tenure, she put into place new structures and processes – from the creation of a new handbook to increased funding for faculty research – designed to support the development of junior faculty and invest in their mentorship. She successfully shepherded STH through the 10-year reaccreditation process with the Association of Theological Schools and introduced a wide range of new academic programs, including the Ph.D. in Theological Studies, degree and certificate programs in Latin American studies and ecological justice, and denominational communities of learning, expanding the school's reach and relevance to new audiences. Externally, she has been an exceptional ambassador for the school, achieving a high level of national recognition for STH's scholarly and pedagogical advances and maintaining a leadership role within the United Methodist Church organization, connecting the school with new constituencies and alumni.

Dean Moore has been among BU's most vocal champions of diversity and social justice over the last 10 years, leading efforts both at the University level – as co-chair of the recent task force to re-envision the Howard Thurman Center for Common Ground – and within STH to create a safe

and welcoming environment for women, minorities, and the LGBTQIA+ community. She updated the STH faculty search process to ensure that search committees are committed to building a diverse candidate pool, thereby increasing the likelihood of identifying and hiring high quality diverse candidates. Especially during recent turbulent times in the United Methodist Church, Dean Moore has been a consistent voice for the historic breadth of welcome that has characterized Methodists, ensuring that all students, faculty, and staff continued to feel welcomed at STH.

Dean Moore came to BU from Emory University, where she was a professor of religion and theology and director of the Women in Theology and Ministry program. An ordained deacon in the United Methodist Church, Dean Moore's research has focused on eco-feminist theology and spirituality, sacramental teaching, and reconciliation theory and practice. She taught at Claremont School of Theology for 20 years before going to Emory and has been a visiting professor at the Princeton Theological Seminary, Boston College, and the Vancouver School of Theology in British Columbia. Dean Moore has written several books, including *Teaching as a Sacramental Act* (2004), *Teaching from the Heart* (1991), and *Ministering with the Earth* (1998).

After earning a bachelor's and master's degree in psychology from Southern Methodist University, Dean Moore went on to receive her master's and Ph.D. from Claremont School of Theology. She has received honorary doctorates from Hebrew College and from the University of Judaism. She was awarded the Mildred Hutchinson Award by the Methodist Federation for Social Action, and received the California-Pacific Christian Education Award jointly with her late husband Allen. Next spring, we will hold an event to celebrate and honor Dean Moore's many contributions to Boston University and to the School of Theology.

A national search is planned to identify the next Dean of the School of Theology. The process for constituting a Dean Search Advisory Committee, outlined in the BU Faculty Handbook, specifies that: *"the advisory committee shall consist of three faculty members elected by the faculty of the School for which a dean is to be selected, two faculty members elected by the Faculty Council from other Schools, and as many as three members designated by the provost."*

The faculty members who are appointed to serve on the Advisory Committee will have responsibility for directing the search effort and should be among our most thoughtful, engaged, and committed scholars, teachers, and leaders. Potential committee members should demonstrate the capacity to proactively attract and recruit outstanding candidates for the School of Theology deanship; the faculty most well positioned to carry out this work will be actively engaged in significant ways in their professional communities and within their academic disciplines. Please note that no member of the Advisory Committee may be considered for the position of dean.

I am requesting that the faculty in the School of Theology organize internally to solicit nominations and to elect three faculty representatives to the Search Advisory Committee. Any individual who would have a role in overseeing the election within STH should neither wish to serve on the Dean Search Advisory Committee nor want to be a candidate for the dean's position. Accordingly, I have asked Steven Sandage, Professor of Psychology of Religion and Theology, to organize the election to identify the STH representatives. I will hold a special meeting for the STH faculty in September to discuss the search effort.

Boston University's Faculty Council will also be sending an email communication to all members of the faculty on both campuses requesting nominations of candidates external to STH to fill the two elected seats on the Dean's Search Advisory Committee. Nominations or expressions of interest can be sent to the Faculty Council (fafc@bu.edu). Please note that membership on the Faculty Council itself is not an eligibility requirement for election to the Search Advisory Committee by the Faculty Council. I request submission of the results of both of these elections by Friday, September 13, 2019. Following receipt, I will appoint additional members so that the Committee will be assembled and prepared to begin its work immediately.

The STH Dean Search Advisory Committee will be charged with responsibility for:

- Proposing refinements to the initial position description;
- Actively soliciting nominations for candidates from appropriate sources within the University and nationally;
- Actively recruiting outstanding candidates who have a record of administrative leadership and achievement and an academic profile suitable for appointment at the level of professor at Boston University;
- Evaluating the qualifications and assessing the strength of nominees and applicants;
- Consulting with the faculty of STH and other school and University stakeholders on finalists; and
- Recommending the names of 3-5 qualified candidates to me, outlining the strengths and limitations of each, for final selection by the President and me, with approval by the Board of Trustees.

The members of the STH Dean Search Advisory Committee should not vote as part of its process and deliberations. Rather, the work should be accomplished by discussion and consensus. Ideally, the committee will conclude its work and submit its recommendations no later than Monday, March 30, 2020.

Please join me in thanking Mary Elizabeth Moore for her service to Boston University and to the School of Theology. The formal appointment of the Dean Search Advisory Committee for STH is forthcoming, and I appreciate your contributions to and support of the search effort.

cc: Robert A. Brown, President
Cataldo Leone, Chair, Faculty Council
Provost's Cabinet