On a Mission

The Campaign for the Boston University School of Theology
For the founders of what would become the School of Theology—and later, Boston University itself—the world was the parish and the parish was the world. This spirit of mission animates the School of Theology today, and it still resounds at the very heart of the University. Stand on Marsh Plaza, and in the spirited throng of people from around the globe, you will see the living legacy of BU’s founding school.

Then step inside the School of Theology. In our classrooms and offices, in our library and common spaces, in Muelder Chapel—everywhere you will find people on a mission. They are pursuing knowledge of God, cultivating leaders for communities of faith, enriching the academy, and seeking peace with justice in a diverse and interconnected world. And so it is with our graduates, wherever their journeys take them.

We invite you to join us on our mission by supporting the good work we do together in this community.
I’m on a mission to engage with the world right from the pulpit.

The church I attend, Fourth Presbyterian in South Boston, has many social service programs operating from it, and all sorts of political engagement through the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization. It’s given me a chance to see how my interests in social work and in ministry can all flow together from the pulpit, which I didn’t really believe could happen before I experienced it.

It’s important to me that BU is in the middle of the city, so I don’t have to commute out of a bubble to do the work I want to do. Eventually I aim to be the pastor of a congregation, but I’m also committed to social work. One of the blessings I didn’t know to anticipate was the models I’d find here.
I'm on a mission to educate the next generation of religious leaders.

I grew up in Puerto Rico in an extended family that converted from Catholicism to Pentecostalism. I chose to become an American Baptist, and my wife and I became involved in youth ministry while I was studying sociology at Rutgers, which led to my own call to ministry. As a ThD student at BU, I discovered 16th-century Spanish spirituality and the work of early Spanish missionaries in Asia. Along the way, I taught at an historically black college in South Carolina and planted an Hispanic Baptist Church in Texas.

Teaching at BU, I'm able to bring all these strands of my life together while helping to form religious leaders who will go wherever the need is.
I’m on a mission to bring diverse people together.

My work is all about creating links between different groups even when the connection isn’t obvious. As a disabilities advocate, I took this approach when dealing with bureaucrats about accessibility issues. At YSOP, I live it constantly, creating spaces where our service learning volunteers can talk openly with the homeless and hungry people they serve and with each other.

I entered the School of Theology rather impulsively, not really thinking about how it was a strange choice for me, as a Jew. But my BU education—both in the classroom and living in Theology House—prepared me so well for the work I do. It has enabled me to answer my call to tikkun olam.

Lisa Gesson (STH’99)
National Program Director,
Youth Service Opportunities Project
Educating the Bold Leaders Our Times Demand

While envisioning the world as it could be, the Boston University School of Theology has always embraced the world as it is. We have educated an unbroken line of scholars and leaders in churches, universities, schools, and nonprofit agencies that stretches back more than a century and a half. From the beginning, our graduates have led change, fueled by faith and a sense of vocation.

With the quickening pace of social change, religious leaders are now called to do even more. Sustained by our legacy and by innovations we have recently introduced, the School of Theology is preparing the bold leaders our times demand. Spiritual and intellectual formation is our great strength, together with global and community engagement. These emphases enable us to train students for courageous leadership in the 21st century.

Our students benefit from our vital, engaged educational approach, which is defined by:

**Ethical witness**
We have a powerful tradition of prophetic witness that has brought such figures as Anna Howard Shaw, Howard Thurman, Martin Luther King Jr., Calvin S. Morris, Barry Lynn, Dai Sil Kim-Gibson, and Sally Dyck to our halls. Against this backdrop, our students learn how to connect religious traditions with such existential issues as peacemaking, human rights, ecological justice, and public health.

**Interdisciplinary research and teaching**
Boston University promotes collaboration among its schools and colleges. As theology is increasingly linked to the social and natural sciences, the humanities, and the arts, we are free to engage in research and teaching without borders. In doing so, we are advancing knowledge in such vital areas as theology and science, global Christianity, conflict transformation, ethical leadership, and interfaith engagement.

**Contextual vision**
The School has long been engaged in contextual learning—studying and analyzing the religious practices of everyday life, past and present, in the local community and throughout the world. Our students integrate their academic training with action and reflection as they work in churches, homeless communities, advocacy, mediation, sustainable farming, and many other ministries.

We Seek Your Support

The School of Theology is seeking $25 million to strengthen our research, teaching, and outreach. With your support for the strategic priorities outlined in the following pages, we can educate the next generation of religious leaders who will take what they have learned here into the church and world.
Theology has long enjoyed a comfortable kinship with history and philosophy. With science, the relationship has been edgier. But Professor of Philosophy, Theology, and Ethics Wesley Wildman—originally trained as a scientist—is intent on changing that paradigm. With neuroscientist Patrick McNamara, an associate professor of neurology and psychiatry at the BU School of Medicine, Wildman founded the Institute for the Biological Study of Religion. Among their areas of inquiry: Why do patients with Parkinson’s disease rarely rely on their faith for support, even though they were no less religious than others before they became ill? What makes a religious group turn to violence? Does religion have an evolutionary history? As Wildman says, “It’s when you put these disparate subjects together that you get, I think, the deepest insights into the way religion works.”

The School of Theology is distinguished by its world-class faculty, whose members balance research and publication, teaching and mentoring, and engagement in the world. We are gratified to have recruited and retained this fully inclusive group of remarkable individuals who flourish in our collegial environment.

The theology and religion faculty at BU is ranked Number 8 in the United States—and Number 1 in articles published per faculty member, citations per faculty member, and citations per journal article.* Beyond these statistics, our faculty are distinguished by their excellent teaching and scholarly engagement with diverse publics. Much of their work enriches church life, congregational leadership, and the church’s ministry in the world. Yet because they train students who follow many paths, the faculty also investigate such diverse topics as conflict transformation, ecology and sustainability, science and religion, interfaith dialogue, trauma, nonprofit leadership, and global mission work in the fields of health care, politics, education, and economic justice.

To further the strides we have made, we seek support for faculty research and to increase or complete funding for six named professorships.

*Source: 2009 assessment by Academic Analytics, a higher-education research organization that produces metrics on the scholarly productivity of faculties
The School’s core master’s programs—the Master of Divinity, Master of Theological Studies, and Master of Sacred Music—prepare students for many forms of religious leadership in the world. These are the people who will lead when a community turns in upon itself, when critical food aid fails to arrive in a remote region, when vandals deface a sanctuary, when a person in crisis sits before them.

Our new master’s curriculum reflects these realities through its focus on contextual learning, which can help unify traditional divisions—between the academy and the world around it, between faith commitment and openness to a pluralistic society. With the new curriculum, we are attracting and retaining students with great intellectual and leadership capacity. In order to support these students in challenging economic times, we need more resources.

Some of these resources will help build the structures to support contextual learning, including more internship sites and travel seminars. Another major priority is to increase the endowment for student financial aid. A more secure source of increased aid will make an immense difference, not only to our individual student leaders, but to the very foundations of the School: We will be able to recruit and continue to challenge the most promising students, regardless of their economic circumstances.

MDiv student Janjay Innis is preparing to travel to Liberia for an immersive learning experience—and also what she calls a “homegoing.” Evacuated from war-torn Liberia at age 9 and raised primarily in Massachusetts, Innis is returning after nearly 16 years thanks to an STM Springboard Scholarship for contextual learning. Informed by her studies in the School’s Religion and Conflict Transformation Program, Innis will work with former child soldiers and other young people victimized by Liberia’s devastating civil war through the United Methodist Church–sponsored Brighter Futures Children’s Rescue Center. In hearing their stories and learning about their needs, she hopes to discern “how God wants me to be part of healing and change in the world.”
Septemmy Lakawa (STH’11), who directs graduate studies at the Jakarta Theological Seminary, personifies the transformative leadership that our international doctoral graduates exercise in their home countries. Growing up in a Christian family with many Muslim relatives, Lakawa perceived talking through issues and resolving interreligious problems as a normal part of life, and this experience informs her scholarship and teaching.

Following the Christian-Muslim violence that shook Indonesia at the turn of the 21st century, Lakawa wanted to help. “But I lacked the analytical tools,” she says. To gain those tools, she enrolled at BU. In her ThD dissertation, Lakawa developed the concept of “risky hospitality”—that one must be open to others, yet protective of the self—as a way to heal in the aftermath of religious violence.

Septemmy Lakawa (left, in polka dot dress) is now pioneering a form of meditative dance that combines theological reflection and movement as a way to heal from within. During the dance, the witness must “enter the space of remaining, the space where suffering remains, yet now and the promise of life persists.”

The School offers doctoral research degrees to train committed individuals for leadership as scholars and teachers. These research doctorates are devoted to the advanced study of theology, ethics, scripture, liturgics, mission, and religious practices in their social contexts and in lively interdisciplinary engagement with the sciences, arts, and humanities. The professional doctorate educates professionals to develop a deeper understanding of and expertise in ministry.

These degree programs integrate concepts and practices that will define the future of theological education, so our graduates will be ideally suited to train their own students. Indeed, the School’s global tradition has positioned it well for educating those who take their knowledge into higher education and research. Recent doctoral graduates are teaching in Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Mexico, the Philippines, and South Korea, as well as across the United States.

Endowed student financial aid is a critical priority for the advanced research degree programs. Time for in-depth study and significant research is essential in doctoral studies, and increased aid will heighten the quality and innovative approaches of our doctoral students.
Recognizing that the value of our library’s collections is magnified when we increase access for researchers worldwide, we have embarked on a digitization initiative that will expand the School’s commitment to global scholarly reach. Our most ambitious effort to date is the growing history of missiology website (http://digilib.bu.edu/mission).

We are about to launch a digitization project involving motive magazine, a groundbreaking but little-studied Methodist youth publication that ran from 1940 to 1972. Hailed by TIME in 1966 as “probably the most provoca-

tively adventurous church magazine in the U.S. today,” motive explored the intersections of religion, the arts, social issues, and politics. Our motive collection is unique, encompassing not only the full run of the magazine, but the papers and art works of its recently deceased art editor. We are now working with a former editor and cartoonist to expand our understanding of this landmark publication’s historical context. The entire motive trove will be accessible online after it is digitized.

The new directions in theological education, the productivity of our faculty, and the quality of our students compel us to strengthen the resources that define us as a hub of academic research. These enhancements are focused in national and international research projects, academic centers and programs, and the library.

The School has created innovative centers and programs as a way to concentrate our efforts on key research areas and generate new knowledge. To further their work and impact, we seek to endow the Center for Global Christianity and Mission, the Center for Practical Theology, the Martin Luther King Jr. Initiative for the Development of Ethical Leadership, and the Religion and Conflict Transformation Program.

Our original academic resource, the library, is noted for its collections in Methodism, missions, and hymnology, among other subjects. The School launched a library improvement initiative in 2009, which ultimately resulted in the appointment of a new head librarian in summer 2011. Since that time, the library staff and faculty have been engaged in revising the collections policy to strengthen research collections and to digitize published and unpublished resources to provide universal availability. We are actively seeking to create an endowment for acquisitions and to renovate the library’s physical and technological infrastructure to fulfill 21st-century needs.
to improve the quality of community space
$3.5 million

The high cost of housing in Boston presents a challenge to our current and prospective students. Because we are committed to addressing this issue, we have established a housing endowment fund to develop more affordable student residence options that extend the educational experience and enhance the life of the community.

Our primary efforts are concentrated on intentional living communities. In the fall of 2011, Theology House—our campus residence off Bay State Road—was transformed into such a community. A year earlier, we inaugurated Green House, a similar residence devoted to sustainability, in a rented property in suburban Auburndale. We are now developing two more residences that will broaden housing options while contributing to community spirit.

Beyond housing, we aim to improve the ethical witness of our building to benefit and model for our community. Our top priority is the renovation of the School’s basement into a LEED-certified Community Center, with flexible space for meals, a student lounge, community offices, study areas, and facilities for seminars and workshops. A parallel focus of our infrastructure improvements is upgrading our technology to facilitate distance learning.

Once simply a graduate residence hall, Theology House has been transformed into an intentional community exclusively for 21 theology students who covenant to live by its tenets of intercultural competency and theological and vocational formation. At the heart of the community is the weekly Thursday night dinner, prepared by three or four students for all the residents, often showcasing a cuisine from “home,” wherever that may be. First-year MDiv student Chris Broadwell—who has prepared the jambalaya, fried chicken, and beignets of his native Louisiana—calls the diversity of its residents the best aspect of Theology House. “They’ve expanded how I see the world,” he says. “And I was especially honored when a Korean friend complimented the way I handled my chopsticks.”

As one of the few U.S. seminaries within a major research university, the School of Theology has the opportunity and incentive to explore and build multidisciplinary programs and courses, and the University’s culture facilitates boundary crossing among its schools and colleges. Already students are benefiting from our dual degree programs with the School of Social Work—a school that originated decades ago from our department of religious education—and from joint initiatives with the College of Fine Arts, especially in the Master of Sacred Music program and in the Church and the Arts track within the Master of Divinity program. We also collaborate in courses with the Schools of Education and Law and with many departments of the College of Arts & Sciences.

We intend to develop more joint degree programs in the near term, including a counseling psychology PhD in partnership with the School of Education, and we hope to offer accelerated bachelor’s-to-master’s (MDiv or MTS) degrees with the College of Arts & Sciences and the College of Fine Arts. In addition, we plan to design distance learning options for our students, graduates, and others.

Our students are pioneers in expanding what a theological education can be. THecology, a student organization that grew out of a discussion in Professor John Hart’s ecological ethics course, is leading the way. The group has organized recycling and fair trade coffee initiatives at the School, and it helps individuals incorporate sustainability steps into their lives and their ministries so that these actions become part of their spiritual mission.

THecology also hosts conferences open to students, clergy, and other seekers. The most recent explored primitive skills, a practice that helps people connect with the natural world while drawing on wisdom from Christianity, Native American spirituality, Buddhism, and other traditions in order to overcome alienation, discover kinship, and build authentic community.

THecology group members exploring the natural world with their children at the United Methodist Retreat Center in North Andover, Massachusetts.
Dear Alumni and Friends:

As the founding school of Boston University, the School of Theology embodies a legacy of leadership in teaching, research, and service. For the better part of two centuries, our graduates have made their mark around the globe. This legacy is alive today as we work to redefine theological education.

Over the last six years, the School has engaged in self-study and change that have resulted in two strategic plans; a major revision of the curricula in its core master’s programs; the launch of the PhD in practical theology; an innovative teacher-training initiative for PhD and ThD students; and a complete review of the library, with an infusion of leadership and resources. In this process, we have been a full partner in the visionary transformation of the University.

With one of the finest teaching, research, and mentoring faculties in theological education, we are recruiting outstanding students from across the United States and the world. We stand ready to reach ever-wider constituencies, to increase theological knowledge, and to collaborate with our local and global partners to address pressing religious and social issues. We are deeply engaged in what is critically needed: spiritual deepening, educating bold faith leaders, interdisciplinary research and teaching on the frontiers of knowledge, and community formation for missions of transformation. We are guided by an ever-increasing awareness of the relationship between everyday religious practices and religion’s influence on the world stage.

In order to press forward on these critical matters, we have made choices and set priorities. These priorities, and the human faces who represent them in the preceding pages, are the reasons we need your support. We invite you to join us as we continue on our mission.

Sincerely,

Mary Elizabeth Moore
Dean, Boston University School of Theology
The School of Theology’s Campaign Goal: $25 million

Overview of Priorities

To enhance and support the faculty: $6 million
• $4 million to complete or increase six named professorships
• $2 million for faculty research and teaching support

To prepare those who minister and serve: $5.5 million
• $2.5 million to increase the financial aid endowment for master’s students
• $1.5 million to increase the endowment for contextual and global learning
• $1.5 million for staff and program costs to support spiritual development

To train the next generation of scholars and teachers: $2.5 million
• $2.2 million to increase the financial aid endowment for doctoral students
• $300,000 to establish new joint degree doctoral programs

To strengthen resources for academic research: $6.5 million
• $1 million to create an endowment for library acquisitions and digitized collections
• $1 million for library renovation
• $4 million ($1 million each) to endow the Center for Global Christianity and Mission, the Center for Practical Theology, the Martin Luther King Jr. Initiative for the Development of Ethical Leadership, and the Religion and Conflict Transformation Program
• $500,000 for support of the STH Faculty Fellows Program in Religion and Global Challenges

To improve the quality of community space: $3.5 million
• $2.5 million to develop more student housing options
• $750,000 to create a Community Center
• $250,000 to upgrade electronic resources for classroom instruction and distance learning

To expand the boundaries of theological education: $1 million
• $300,000 for the ongoing design and implementation of dual degree programs
• $300,000 for developing collaborative events in Boston and elsewhere
• $300,000 for the ongoing development of distance learning options
• $100,000 to support student and faculty exchanges with international universities

To learn more about the School’s plans and priorities, we invite you to contact:

Development & Alumni Relations
617-353-2349

www.bu.edu/sth/giving

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