



Boston University Office of the President



The Opportunity at Boston University
The Case for the University Provost

Introduction

Boston University seeks a distinguished scholar and an innovative administrator and academic leader to serve as University Provost.

Boston University enrolls 33,000 graduate and undergraduate students in 17 schools and colleges located on the Charles River and Medical campuses in downtown Boston. Beginning as an institution serving the Boston area and New England, Boston University has emerged as a major private research university—hosting leading researchers and scholars in myriad disciplines while offering highly ranked undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs. These education and research programs are sustained by an annual operating budget of approximately \$2 billion.

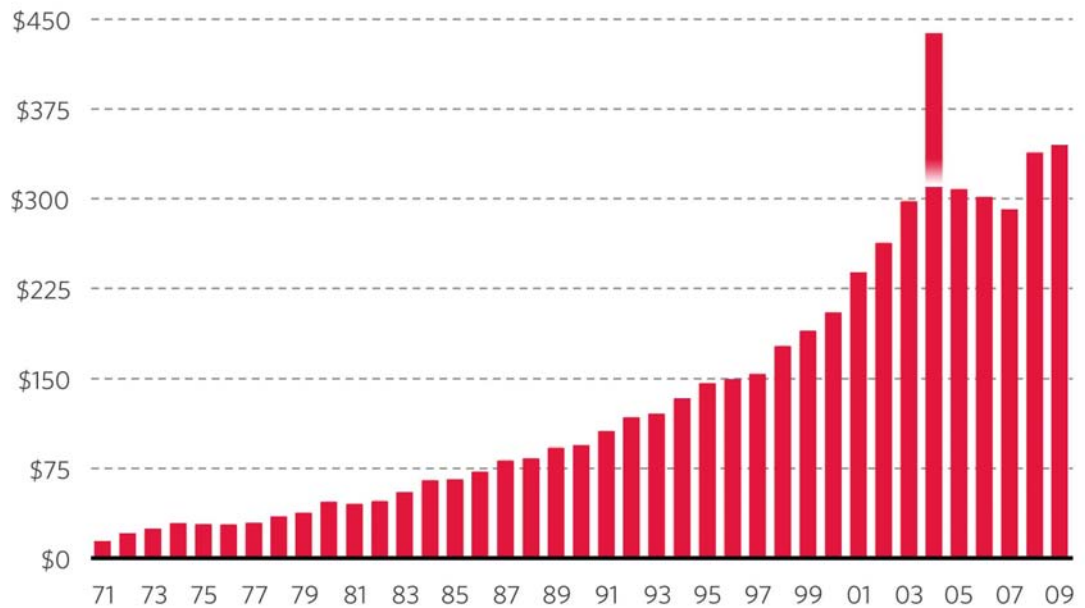
From its founding, Boston University opened its doors to women and minorities. However, the University's ascent into the ranks of major private research universities is recent. Founded in 1839 as a Methodist seminary, the University was incorporated in 1869 and emerged in the twentieth century as a Boston-area institution. Until the early 1970s, the University was mainly non-residential, with a modest research profile and limited on-campus housing. The transformation into today's Boston University began in the early 1970s with a conscious decision to raise the University's standing and quality by marshaling resources, primarily from operating funds, to build an infrastructure for basic and applied research and to improve the campus by adding residential facilities. These now include state-of-the-art residential high-rises—developed in the past decade—that anchor the John Hancock Student Village and redefine Boston University's skyline.



John Hancock Student Village viewed from across the Charles River.

There are multiple measures of Boston University's transformation. Particularly striking is the growth in sponsored research. This has increased by more than 25 times in the last 40 years, nearly doubling in the last decade and reaching a total of \$342.5 million in fiscal year 2009. [See chart below.] This dramatic increase in the University's research profile is a strong indicator that excellence in scholarship and research has become the norm on both the Charles River and Medical campuses.

Sponsored Program Awards*: FY 1971 through FY 2009 (Millions)



*Excluding Financial Aid. FY 2004 includes \$128.0 million for the National Emerging Infectious Diseases Laboratory (NEIDL).

Boston University's transformation is also evident in the national and international recognition achieved by faculty in diverse fields on both campuses (see: www.bu.edu/research/highlights/awards/) and in prestigious grants to distinguished programs or departments. The highly ranked (consistently top ten) Biomedical Engineering Department is the only department in the nation to receive both a Whitaker Foundation Leadership Award and a Coulter Foundation Translational Partnership Award. BU's schools and colleges have achieved significant gains in rankings within notably short spans of time. The College of Engineering, unranked in 1992, was 42nd in the 2010 *U.S. News & World Report* rankings of graduate engineering schools. The MBA program of the School of Management was ranked 31st nationally for 2010 by *U.S. News & World Report*. The ranking in 2000 was 58th.

The University has made major recent investments in research, particularly in science and engineering, with the construction of two major laboratory facilities—the Photonics Center and the Life Science & Engineering Building. The University also nurtures strong programs

in the humanities, arts, and social sciences within the College of Arts & Sciences, as is evidenced by nationally recognized programs in fields such as economics, archaeology, and creative writing.

Boston University is young as a major research university, having fundamentally transformed itself within a roughly forty-year span. This transformation makes possible still more ambitious aspirations. Shortly after his appointment in 2005 as the University's tenth president, Robert A. Brown, with the enthusiastic support of a revitalized board of trustees, initiated the University's first community-wide strategic planning process. The plan that resulted in fall of 2007, *Choosing to Be Great*, defined clear priorities and set ambitious goals—including expenditures of \$1.8 billion over a decade—and generated broad support across the University's schools and colleges. (See *Choosing to Be Great*; www.bu.edu/president/strategic-plan.) Even with the disruption in international financial markets that sparked the economic downturn in 2008, the implementation of the University's plan has continued. The University's basic economic model has proved robust, and early, preemptive decisions protected the University's financial soundness. In fact, fiscal year 2009 marked the best ever financial performance of the University.

Concerted outreach to the nearly 300,000 alumni of the University in the past five years—and significant recent major gifts to the University—justify optimism that private giving will increase in the near future, outpacing the current \$75 million per year level of private support.

The Opportunity

The University Provost position offers a rare opportunity for a distinguished scholar and innovative academic leader/administrator to work with a talented senior leadership team to implement an ambitious agenda by supporting accomplished researchers and educators, recruiting new faculty, and developing new programs and infrastructure, particularly in areas in which strategic planning has identified strengths and opportunities.

As the chief academic officer of the University, the University Provost oversees all academic programs and has primary responsibility for the 14 schools and colleges on the Charles River Campus. This includes responsibility for faculty hiring, development, and promotion for the approximately 1,900 faculty members in these schools and colleges as well as for planning, budgeting, and space allocation. The University Provost, together with the Provost of the Medical Campus and the Vice President for Research, is responsible for the research enterprise, including sponsorship and oversight of interdisciplinary initiatives as well as operational and financial compliance.

The organizational structure of the senior leadership of the University is available at the website www.bu.edu/offices/administration, and for the Office of the Provost at www.bu.edu/provost/meet/orgchart.

INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHS

1. Seventeen Schools and Colleges

Boston University's 17 schools and colleges offer a broad palette of programs leading to professional, graduate, and traditional liberal arts degrees; and the range of disciplines represented across the schools and colleges gives students a rich menu of educational options. Of these academic units, 14 are located on the Charles River Campus and report directly to the University Provost. Three health-science related schools (the School of Medicine, the Goldman School of Dental Medicine, and the School of Public Health) make up the Medical Campus and report to the Provost of the Medical Campus, who also serves as Dean of the School of Medicine.

On the Charles River Campus (CRC), the College of Arts & Sciences enrolls nearly fifty percent of all undergraduate students and provides the liberal arts foundation for the majority of our undergraduate programs. Undergraduates from all the schools and colleges take approximately fifty percent of their credits in the College of Arts & Sciences (CAS). Because of the size and quality of the College of Arts & Sciences, Boston University can ensure that graduates of both liberal arts and professional programs have a strong foundation in the liberal arts.

Leading professional schools on the CRC include: the School of Management, School of Law, College of Engineering, College of Communication, College of Fine Arts, School of Social Work, and the College of Health & Rehabilitation Sciences: Sargent College.

Faculty members can take advantage of this disciplinary range to launch research initiatives that depend on interdisciplinary collaboration. Well over 100 centers and institutes bring scholars and students from across the University together to address particular issues or create new knowledge. For example, the Photonics Center is a national resource in scholarship and technology translation in the interdisciplinary field of photonics—the practical use of light. The Institute for the Study of Muslim Societies & Civilizations brings together scholars from fields such as anthropology, linguistics, and history (among others) to conduct research and educate a new generation of students in Muslim Studies.

2. Undergraduate Education

The University's emergence in research does not obscure a cherished tradition of providing high-quality instruction. As stated as the second goal of the strategic plan, the University is committed to "continue to develop the special undergraduate educational environment that combines our commitment to a liberal arts and sciences education with professional opportunities, while creating flexible educational opportunities to leverage the depth of CAS and our other schools and colleges."

Much progress has been made in recent years to take advantage of the breadth of the University for the benefit of our students. For example, the University Honors College (www.bu.edu/uhc/) will launch in the fall of 2010 as a new interdisciplinary program for

fulfilling the undergraduate general education requirements, augmenting curricular pathways such as traditional divisional studies and the Core Curriculum offered by the College of Arts & Sciences, and the cohort-based curriculum in the College of General Studies.

A recent University-wide task force on undergraduate education led by the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education has filed its report (*One BU: Unlocking the Undergraduate Experience*, at www.bu.edu/unlock) and proposed several initiatives that will expand opportunities for students and strengthen programs. Creating consensus around these initiatives and implementing the recommendations of this report will be a major responsibility of the University Provost. Significant progress toward consensus has been made and resources are being allocated. A new Student Service Center that will house expanded and integrated services for undergraduates has been approved for construction, which is being funded with internally generated reserves.



Architectural drawing of new 100,000-square-foot Student Service Center.

3. Organizational Coordination and Structural Adaptiveness

The University does not follow the “every tub on its own bottom” dictum in either planning or resource allocation. Boston University’s administrative and budgetary structure allows for fiscal flexibility by centralizing resource allocation with the President, Provosts, and Executive Vice President. Through this approach, resources can be allocated to stimulate and nurture promising initiatives or to support strategic priorities, while giving academic and administrative units appropriate incentives for growth in impact and quality, and at the same time maintaining fiscal discipline. The University Provost is a critical leader in the system and, to be successful, must become a master of the dynamics of revenues and expenses as well as the details of academic programs.

4. Boston

Boston University's location in the heart of Boston is a strategic advantage; students and faculty are drawn to the city's cultural and intellectual richness. The city at the University's doorstep is a place where students can find internships, job opportunities, recreation, great museums and libraries, as well as a vibrant social life. The concentration of universities, research institutes, medical schools, and teaching hospitals makes Boston one of the world's great centers of intellectual activity. Boston University is a major institution in this environment, currently ranking as the sixth-largest employer in the city. Even as the University competes for its place in this demanding environment, it benefits from the ferment and stimulation that accompany the concentration of educational institutions.

5. Engagement in the City and the World

Boston University's third president, Lemuel Murlin, described an institution "in the heart of the City, in the service of the City." That early commitment to service now reaches over the horizon. Boston University is diverse in the best sense, genuinely global, and aspires to create new knowledge and offer solutions to the world's most pressing problems. Its scale and institutional flexibility make it a rugged vehicle for finding solutions through research and preparing future generations of students for fulfilling and productive lives. Boston University's traditions of engagement and outreach remain strong. The University is committed to its enduring work in Boston in collaboration with schools and health centers, and it seeks to be of service in whatever part of the globe its diverse capacities can be applied. For example, the Center for Global Health & Development is an interdisciplinary center based in the School of Public Health and dedicated to improving the health of low-income or marginalized populations around the world. Research initiatives launched by this center are currently active in more than twenty countries, drawing on the knowledge and talents of faculty members from both campuses.

Boston University has a well-established and broad array of study abroad programs (see www.bu.edu/abroad); the University currently operates 75 programs in more than 20 countries as part of this effort. The University is expanding its offerings at overseas campuses. Programs are offered at the Brussels campus (www.bu.edu/brussels) and the University recently opened a graduate dental institute in Dubai. The University has much more ambitious plans for overseas operations that will require significant time and effort from University leadership.

CHALLENGES

1. Changing Economic Landscape

Boston University's financial position is sound. In response to the decline in capital markets in September of 2008, President Brown made a series of prudent, early adjustments in anticipation of a prolonged period of economic weakness. Slightly decreased budgets, modest reduction in administrative positions (primarily through attrition), and initiatives to improve operational efficiency freed resources for increased undergraduate financial aid and

ensured that the University could continue to generate annual surpluses, last year topping \$100 million for the second consecutive year on an overall operating budget of approximately \$2 billion. Ironically, because the University's endowment has historically been comparatively modest (currently standing at approximately \$1 billion), the University was not overly dependent on endowment income.

The pursuit of the priorities described in the University's strategic plan continues in earnest against the backdrop of greater economic uncertainty, but with a more concentrated focus on securing philanthropic support.

2. Competition

As a major, urban research institution, Boston University competes for faculty, students, and research or charitable dollars in a crowded and competitive sector. The University must strive constantly to improve the quality of its academic programs, student services, and scholarly and research portfolios. The University's advantages are significant and growing, but the market position the University occupies is not a place for the timid or the complacent. The Provost must recognize, appreciate, and lead the response to the challenges of not only keeping pace, but gaining ground.

3. Increasing Complexity of the Research and Regulatory Environment

A major research university with a medical campus and other advanced research programs (many of which are federally funded) is subject to a varied and complex collection of regulatory regimes. To ensure ongoing, competitive, and successful operations, the Office of the Provost must lead in the implementation of systems for financial and regulatory research compliance.

4. Infrastructure

In 1971, Boston University had 5.4 million square feet of space (gross) on 46.5 acres of land. Today, the University has 15.4 million square feet of space on 134 acres. This skyward and horizontal growth reflects a conscious effort to create a campus, by means of opportunistic and strategic acquisitions—and construction of high-rise facilities. The University's capital plan provides for additional construction and renovation, including major changes in municipal traffic patterns. Nonetheless, an enduring challenge for Boston University is that both the Charles River and Medical campuses are bounded by highways and densely populated neighborhoods. New acquisitions and construction projects must be undertaken with respect for neighbors and complicated urban zoning requirements. The University's advantage of urban location comes at the price of significant cost and complexity in space management. The University Provost plays the key role in defining academic space priorities and allocating both space and financial resources to outfit laboratories and other research/instructional spaces.

Desired Qualities and Capacities for the Boston University Provost

- Boston University's academic range and aspirations require that the University Provost be a distinguished researcher and scholar whose achievements within a discipline or emerging interdisciplinary area are widely recognized and merit appointment at the most senior level in an academic department or program.
- The Provost will need to demonstrate a history of innovative and effective leadership in a consultative academic environment.
- The Provost will need to be knowledgeable about internal and external funding streams necessary to build and sustain excellence in research and educational programs and be experienced in envisioning, establishing, and managing these enterprises.
- Boston University has a strong commitment to the liberal arts and sciences and to ensuring that all bachelor's-level graduates possess a strong liberal arts foundation. The Provost should share this commitment.
- The Provost, who is responsible for academic budgets and a key participant in shaping the overall budgeting of the University, should understand fiscal planning and accountability and possess a well-developed sense of how to allocate resources to fulfill the priorities of the University's strategic plan.
- The Provost will need to appreciate the principles of shared governance and master the procedural details that undergird shared governance, while recognizing that these are not a substitute for a spirit of generous understanding.
- The Provost has primary responsibility for building Boston University's faculty and should have significant experience in recruiting, retaining, and nurturing faculty. Along with his/her own credentials for excellence in research, scholarship, and education, the successful candidate should have a well-developed ability to gauge academic quality and an appreciation for the vital importance of hiring and promotion decisions in creating and sustaining excellence in the University.
- The Provost bears the responsibility for making many resource allocation decisions, some of them zero sum. This reality calls for personal traits of resilience, thoughtfulness in speech, responsiveness, and fair-mindedness. A prudent respect for Murphy's Law should live alongside a predisposition to optimism.

Process

Boston University President Robert Brown, with advice from key trustee, administrative, and faculty leaders, will recommend the successful candidate for University Provost to the Board of Trustees. Nominations and expressions of interest should be addressed to:

R. William Funk
Funk & Associates
100 Highland Park Village
Suite 200
Dallas, Texas 75205
E-mail: bill.funk@rwilliamfunk.com
Fax: 214-295-3312

Mr. Funk is serving as the executive consultant for this search. Associate Provost and Assistant to the President Douglas Sears will oversee the search process for Boston University, coordinating with Mr. Funk. Prospective candidates should include a letter expressing interest and current curriculum vitae. Candidates will be asked to provide references after preliminary review and screening; references will be contacted only with the express consent of the applicant. While nominations and applications will be accepted until a new Provost is selected, interested parties are encouraged to submit their materials before June 30 to assure optimal consideration. Boston University reserves the right to terminate the search at any time or to continue the search until the position is filled. Salary and benefits will be competitive with the responsibilities of a senior position in a major private research university.

Boston University is an equal opportunity employer and actively seeks to recruit candidates of diverse backgrounds.