Dear Colleague,

We all sense the increase in activity and the atmosphere of anticipation that accompanies the start of a new academic year. As we begin the fall semester and look to the year ahead, I want to bring you up to date on our progress in several important areas, to share a few announcements that are worth celebrating, and to give you a preview of some important discussions that are underway. I hope you find this update informative and useful.

Our Freshman Class

First, the freshman class of Boston University has arrived and is off to a great start. As a result of another excellent recruiting year, we have an incoming class of 4121 students representing 49 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and 50 foreign countries. The high academic standards of the class are exemplified by their average composite SAT score of 1272 and average high school GPA of 3.46. These young students are bright, ambitious, and interested in every Boston University experience we have to offer.

Faculty recruiting also went well. This fall we welcomed 44 new, full-time faculty members to the University, with 26 assistant, associate, and full professors on the Charles River Campus and 18 on the Medical Campus. These new colleagues comprise a remarkable group of scholars and educators across the full spectrum of the intellectual diversity of the University. I hope you will join me in welcoming them to the Boston University community.

Last year saw the appointment of new academic leadership in two units, with Professor Maureen O’Rourke assuming the deanship of the School of Law and Professor Kenneth Lutchen being appointed Dean of the College of Engineering. Maureen and Ken add considerable strength to the senior academic leadership of the University. There are other critical positions to fill as we move ahead with an ambitious academic agenda. Searches are, or soon will be, underway for the decanal positions in the College of Arts and Sciences, the School of Education, the College of Communication, and the School of Social Work. Dean searches in the School of Theology and the College of Fine Arts will begin soon thereafter.

University Planning

How are we shaping the planning for the University’s future? As you know, we started a comprehensive exercise last winter with each College and School submitting a planning document that was shared and discussed in the spring with the University leadership. Early in the summer, Provost David Campbell and I assembled the University Strategic Planning Coordinating Task Force under the leadership of Dr. Douglas Sears, Associate Provost and Assistant to the President; the membership of the group is appended to this email.

The charge to the Task Force is deceptively simple: study the strategic plans developed by our seventeen Schools and Colleges this past academic year—plans which reflect a great deal of inclusive discussion—and, using this raw material, propose Boston University’s priorities for
the next decade. By proposing priorities, the Task Force will be laying the groundwork for decisions about resource needs. Although decisions about resources are inherently difficult to make, the establishment of clear priorities is, nonetheless, vitally important. Once the University’s priorities have been established, they will become the foundation of the case for philanthropic support that will be needed to reach our goals. The completed strategic plan will become our roadmap for fundraising and, in a more detailed form, the guide for the provosts, deans, and vice presidents as they develop and allocate space, propose and manage budgets, design ever more flexible and usable management tools (information technology, data analysis, etc.), recruit and mentor faculty, and recruit, enroll, and support students.

The Task Force has worked diligently through the summer months, and we expect a draft document outlining its recommendations by the middle of October. When that document is received, we will post it for comment by the faculty. I expect the discussion of this plan will be a major topic at our Faculty Assembly on November 1st.

President’s Council on Boston University and the Global Future

Another important piece of our strategic plan is coming together through the efforts of the President’s Council on Boston University and the Global Future, which is ably led by Dean Jay Halfond of Metropolitan College and Professor Ronald Richardson of the African-American Studies Program. Established last winter to advise us on how BU should plot its future as a global university in the years ahead, the Council has considered initiatives in education, research, and services, as well as the enhanced international outreach that Boston University would need to develop in order to move in this direction. The Council has maintained a website (www.bu.edu/globalfuture), and its draft report is posted there for comment. Your feedback can be sent to futurebu@bu.edu or posted on the website’s Global Future Forum blog. We also will be discussing this report at the Faculty Assembly meeting in November.

Faculty Diversity and Inclusion

One of the most important objectives for the University is to increase the diversity of our students and faculty and to improve the inclusiveness of our community for all its members. Through the good work of the Faculty Council’s Equity and Inclusion Committee, many opportunities for improvement have been identified. With Provost David Campbell, I have established the Council on Faculty Diversity and Inclusion to work with the administration on these critical issues. The Council will be co-chaired by Provost David Campbell, Dean Gloria Waters of Sargent College, and Professor Roscoe Giles of the College of Engineering and will include faculty representatives from our Schools and Colleges. The membership of this group will be announced later this week.

In the coming year, the new Council will address how best to ensure that salaries, promotions, and leadership opportunities are given equitability to all faculty on the basis of merit. It will also examine policies and practices for faculty hiring and promotion and make recommendations on how to enhance the recruitment and retention of women and minority faculty members. Finally, I hope that the Council will recommend policies and programs that are sensitive to the need to balance the academic careers and family life of faculty members.
I am very indebted to our colleagues who have agreed to serve on the Council. Their recommendations will be very important to the University as we move forward.

One important focus of our efforts this year has been a gender-blind and merit-based review of faculty salaries. This review included not only the allocation of our traditional merit-based salary pool but also the additional allocation of $1 million of annually recurring salary support. The results of this process are reflected in the faculty salaries that went into effect on September 1, 2006.

The process toward gender-equity in our salaries is measured by the ratio of the average salaries of women to men at each rank on the Charles River Campus. Based on this year’s salaries, these ratios are 90% for Professor, 95% for Associate Professor, and 93% for Assistant Professor, compared to 87%, 93%, and 92%, respectively, last year. We will continue to aggressively review the equity of faculty salaries; however, smaller changes in the salary differences are expected until we are successful at increasing the representation of women faculty across all our disciplines, especially fields with higher market-based salaries. Developing best practices for achieving this goal is an objective of the Council on Faculty Diversity and Inclusion.

The University’s annual review of faculty salaries has been completed with the increases represented in salaries beginning September 1, 2006. The average salaries on the Charles River Campus increased to $122,029 for Professors (up 3.7% from last year), to $82,199 for Associate Professors (up 5.2%), and to $69,799 for Assistant Professors (up 5.9%). A detailed analysis by School and College will be available shortly.

Capital and Budgetary Planning

Our budgetary and financial planning is aligning to support our academic goals. I am very pleased to report that because of the dedicated work of many people throughout the University, we closed our fiscal year (ending June 30, 2006) with a balanced budget for the 35th year in a row. This has allowed for transfers to Schools and Colleges for items such as overhead sharing, grant cost sharing, faculty start-up reserves, and transfers for self-supporting academic programs. The year’s transfers totaled almost $54.3 million and were divided as follows: $16.5 million went into funds that were returned to academic units, as described above, and $37.8 million went into funds that will be used as capital to support the renovation and renewal of our campus.

The last fiscal year saw healthy growth of the Boston University endowment, which ended the year at $946 million based on a 21.8 percent gross annual return of our pooled endowed assets. Although comparative data for the endowment performances of all institutions will not be available until the end of this year, it is clear from the information available that Boston University’s performance will be well above the average of our peers.

Last year also was a good year for fundraising at Boston University. Gifts received totaled $98.1 million by our traditional accounting, which is the University’s second-best year on record. As you may know, last spring we welcomed Scott Nichols as our new Vice President for
Development and Alumni Relations. The growing energy and commitment of his staff give me confidence that we will build upon our momentum and substantially increase philanthropic giving to the University in the years ahead.

We are already beginning our budgetary planning for the next fiscal year (beginning July 1, 2007). In recent years, developing the University’s budget has been difficult because of the need to lower expenditures in order to close gaps. Decisions that we made during the especially challenging budget process last year are now bearing fruit, and our projections for next year are much improved. We are starting this year’s planning process with an approximately balanced budget, which includes projections for substantial growth in academic programs and expenditures. I remain optimistic!

New facilities for our academic enterprise, academic programs, student services, public space, and student residences will be key to improving the quality of Boston University. In addition, new priorities for capital projects will emerge from our strategic planning process. All of these projects will have to be supported by University funds and by the generosity of our friends and alumni.

Notable Announcements

Three capital projects that have been completed or will begin construction this year are particularly noteworthy. First, the School of Hospitality Administration (SHA) moved into its new location at 928 Commonwealth Avenue. The building’s $6 million renovation was funded in major part by a successful capital campaign led by Dean Jim Stamas. Second, the University has received the permitting from the City of Boston and authorization from the Board of Trustees to build the second undergraduate student residence in the John Hancock Student Village. This two-tower residence will house 960 students and will be located behind the Agganis Arena on Agganis Way; the project was announced on BU Today (http://www.bu.edu/phpbin/news-cms/news/?dept=4&id=40429&template=4).

Lastly, the long-awaited project to improve traffic and the landscape along Commonwealth Avenue has begun, supported by a combination of State and Boston University funds. As you can see at www.bu.edu/cap, the project will much improve pedestrian walkways between Kenmore Square and the BU Bridge and pedestrian safety both crossing Commonwealth Avenue and accessing the Green Line. Unfortunately, the project is scheduled to take about two years to complete! Updates on the project are available at the website noted above.

I am also pleased to report that, through the generous donations of our friends and trustees, we have been able to increase the resources available for faculty. Trustee Richard D. Cohen established an endowed professorship in the School of Management; Michael Shwartz, Professor of Operations and Technology Management, has been designated the first Richard D. Cohen Professor in Management (http://www.bu.edu/phpbin/news-cms/news/?dept=644&id=40480). In addition, Trustee Peter Paul has created 10 new career development professorships, each given for a non-renewable, three-year term, as a way to help
launch the academic careers of some of Boston University’s brightest young faculty members. The first four Peter Paul Career Development Professors are:

Brooke Blower, Assistant Professor of History, College of Arts and Sciences
Sucharita Chandran, Assistant Professor of Marketing, School of Management
John Connor, Assistant Professor of Microbiology, School of Medicine
Marah Curtis, Assistant Professor of Social Welfare Policy, School of Social Work


Finally, I would like to express my thanks to the many faculty members who have generously given of their time to help me understand the enormous strength and diversity of the University during my first year here. It has been a year with a very steep learning curve, and the time has passed quickly. Now we are beginning to see signs of progress, but there is much to do. Wonderfully, there is a vast amount of energy among our faculty, staff, students, and friends to help move the University forward as a great, private, urban, research university.

Sincerely,

Bob Brown

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University Strategic Planning Coordinating Task Force

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