

Boston University Arts & Sciences

2030 strategic plan

progress report

BOSTON
UNIVERSITY

Progress Report

Fall 2023

The Arts & Sciences 2030 Strategic Plan outlines a vision for the College:

- Cutting edge research and teaching that anticipates and addresses the world's challenges.
- Excellent disciplinary strengths that serve as the essential foundation for interdisciplinary collaboration.
- Nimble organizational structure that catalyzes and advances interconnection and productive partnerships with the University's professional schools.
- Graduates prepared to create and adapt, to be thoughtful leaders, thinkers, and doers, able to envision a better future and poised to make it happen, using their liberal arts and science educations.

To advance and operationalize this vision, the plan defines a set of overarching strategic priorities that focus and guide our actions and an initial set of strategic initiatives to be implemented. The following report outlines our progress towards implementation.

Strategic Priorities

- 1** Enhance disciplinary and interdisciplinary collaborations and connections in research and education within Arts & Sciences and across BU.
- 2** Cultivate and advance a diverse and inclusive community capable of recognizing, analyzing, and responding to exclusion and injustice with equitable solutions.
- 3** Foster, harness, and apply the power of innovation, creativity, and imagination across our research and teaching endeavors.
- 4** Leverage the power of a liberal arts and sciences undergraduate and graduate education by taking knowledge, ideas, and experience into action.
- 5** Build bridges with Boston and the world outside the academy through communication, public scholarship, alumni networks, collaboration, and outreach.



Strategic Initiatives

- 1** Expand the BU Center for the Humanities
- 2** Establish the Center for Innovation in Social Science
- 3** Establish the A&S Society of Postdoctoral Fellows
- 4** Foster recruiting and growing our talent
- 5** Reinvigorate graduate education
- 6** Cultivate Arts & Sciences in Action
- 7** Deepen investment in infrastructure



Integrating Our Strategic Priorities

1

Enhance disciplinary and interdisciplinary collaborations and connections in research and education within Arts & Sciences and across BU.



Interdepartmental collaborations at BU—like Statistics Professor Emily Stephen’s relationship with statistics and neuroscience—allow faculty to innovate and elevate each other, achieving greater advancements in their fields than they could alone.

bu.edu/cas/connecting-the-dots-how-does-a-statistics-professor-map-the-human-brain/

Alisa Bokulich founded the Phi-Geo Group, a team of faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates dedicated to exploring research in the philosophy of geosciences—currently the only one of its kind in the world. They meet weekly, often with visiting geoscientists, biologists, and climate scientists, and hold discussions about recent papers in the field.

bu.edu/articles/2023/are-we-really-in-a-sixth-mass-extinction/



Priorities

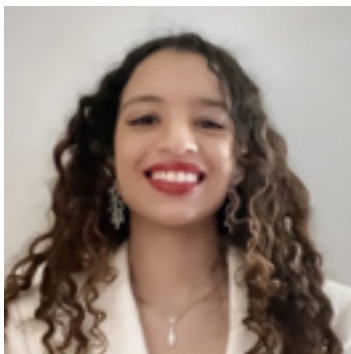
2

Cultivate and advance a diverse and inclusive community capable of recognizing, analyzing, and responding to exclusion and injustice with equitable solutions



“We have this philosophy in the class that in order to make science and education more inclusive, you first have to acknowledge the history of it. Once you’ve acknowledged that foundation and you can see the inequalities around you, that’s when you can really start thinking about how a more inclusive and anti-racist environment can be built in science, in medicine, in education, in whatever area you’re going into.” —Melisa Osborne, Research Scientist and Segrè Lab Manager

bu.edu/articles/2022/institutional-racism-in-science-and-healthcare-class/



“Your identity—knowing where you belong and where your community is—is so important. It’s important to have these conversations of race and knowing where you belong, even if you don’t fit like a cookie cutter mold.” —Charlot Valerio (CAS ’26)

bu.edu/cas/diaspora-chats-panel-explores-racial-identity/

Priorities

3

Foster, harness, and apply the power of innovation, creativity, and imagination across our research and teaching endeavors.

“Child anxiety is one of the most prevalent and impairing problems that children and adolescents face, and by developing psychological interventions for these problems, there is so much potential to have a positive impact on people’s lives. Furthermore, by engaging community partners (school nurses, educators, pediatricians, etc.) we can collaboratively develop new ways to expand access to care.” —Donna Pincus, Feld Family Professor of Teaching Excellence in the Department of Psychological & Brain Sciences, Director of the BU Child and Adolescent Fear and Anxiety Treatment Program



bu.edu/cas/arts-sciences/article/professor-donna-pincus-is-demystifying-child-anxiety/



“The new major is designed to introduce a diverse range of voices into the curriculum right at the beginning. This better matches the rest of our course offerings as a department, which have diversified in recent years. The course itself is fairly experimental — we hope it will be a new way to engage canonical works of literature, from Beowulf to the present.” —Joseph Rezek on BU’s new co-taught course in the English major, Associate Professor of English, Director of the American & New England Studies Program

bu.edu/cas/arts-sciences/article/70037/

Priorities

4

Leverage the power of a liberal arts and sciences undergraduate and graduate education by taking knowledge, ideas, and experience into action.



"They teach themselves, that's the experiential learning. You can't get this in a classroom... That's what the founders would have wanted, it's a different kind of education." —Deborah Kahn, Associate Professor of Medieval Art, on her course exploring Mount Auburn Cemetery

bu.edu/cas/arts-sciences/article/studying-history-at-its-roots/



"As a non-profit we are limited in our time and resources to dive into the many topics and socio-environmental issues happening in our watershed. This partnership and the work the students are doing has jump-started CRWA's efforts in looking into the impacts and mitigation strategies for urban heat islands." —Dira Johanif on the Metrobridge partnership between BU and the Charles River Watershed Association, Project Partner at CRWA

bu.edu/cas/arts-sciences/article/solving-real-world-environmental-problems/

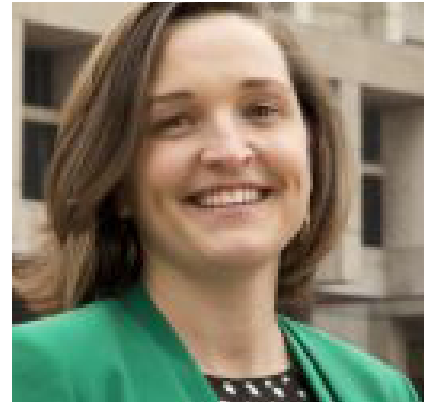
Priorities

5

Build bridges with Boston and the world outside the academy through communication, public scholarship, alumni networks, collaboration, and outreach.

“Some people will go work in government, love it, and stay. It’s equally important that people go and have firsthand experience and exposure to government if they care about policy. That experience can stay with them even if they remain in academia.” —Katharine Lusk on the Initiative on Cities’ interns at City Hall, co-director and founding executive director of the Initiative on Cities

bu.edu/cas/arts-sciences/article/building-a-better-boston/



“This research study causes transformational change. Perhaps not in an explicit, huge way, but it can cause a domino effect. It’s a small ripple in the ocean.” — Renata Nunes (CAS ‘20) on the Religion and Political Attitudes Among Boston-Area Brazilians project

bu.edu/cas/arts-sciences/article/putting-boston-area-brazilian-americans-on-the-map/

Strategic Initiatives

Expanded Charter for the BU Center for the Humanities (BUCH)

The BU Center for the Humanities ([BUCH](#)) was founded in 1980 through a major National Endowment for the Humanities challenge gift. BUCH has grown to be recognized nationally as a model humanities center. The existing activities of the Center include faculty research fellowships, programming, student internships and awards, and public outreach. Through an expanded charter, we seek to build on the existing strength of the BUCH and position BU to become an internationally recognized leader in the integration of humanistic scholarship across research, teaching, and engagement activities.

AY 21/22

- Delivered annual programming, awarding research fellowships to senior and junior faculty scholars, supporting graduate student research and internships, and providing scholarship support for undergraduate summer internships.
- Enhanced community engagement with public lectures, readings, and podcasts, etc.
- Launched The One and the Many, a humanities-based summer program for low-income high school students from greater Boston who are first-generation college students, with a three-year, \$325,000 grant from the Teagle Foundation.
- Convened a five-person faculty charter committee in Fall 2021 to prepare a draft of an expanded charter for BUCH; a draft was written by late Spring 2022, which was based on the Committee's consultation and assessment.
- The Charter proposes the creation of three focused initiatives on humanities leadership; digital humanities; and humanities in the world.
- The expanded charter also reflects on the structures and resources needed to effectively expand the Center's activities to incorporate these areas.
- Established \$1 million endowment for undergraduate and graduate student experiential learning in the humanities, with a gift from Demir Sabanci (CAS '93).

AY 22/23

- Continued to deliver robust programing, research support for junior and senior faculty, and hands-on opportunities through the summer internship programs for undergraduate and graduate students.
- Presented draft expanded BUCH charter to the faculty for feedback and finalization.
- Appointed Juliet Floyd, the Borden Parker Bowne Professor of Philosophy, as the new Director of the BUCH in Spring 2023.
- Created two new Associate Director positions: Associate Director of Digital Humanities will be held by Margarita Guillory, Associate Professor of Religion, and Associate Director of Humanities Leadership will be held by Daniel Abramson, Professor of History of Art and Architecture.

AY 23/24 — The Year Ahead

- Digital Humanities Initiative will introduce programs to foster connections and collaborations in digital humanities, including meetups and a “digital creators” gathering to showcase digital creativity on campus.
- Leadership Initiative will introduce an intern presentation and networking event.
- Humanities in the World Initiative will introduce semesterly “Directors Dinners,” convening local and global humanities leaders.



Progress Report

Strategic Initiatives

Center for Innovation in Social Science (CISS)

This new Center brings BU's impressive range of strengths in the social sciences into a shared community, enhanced by research incubation, support, and promotion. CISS is dedicated to forging collaborative multidisciplinary faculty research and training future generations of undergraduate and graduate students and postdoctoral scholars in the social sciences and related fields. Using state-of-the-art methods and approaches, the Center will advance the promise of the social sciences to improve human lives.

AY 21/22

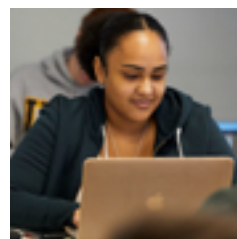
- Appointed inaugural Director, Deborah Carr, and recruited center administrator.
- Formed [Steering Committee](#), to establish policies, procedures and programming.
- Appointed [faculty affiliates](#) representing a dozen CAS departments/programs and over ten BU schools and centers, over 110 have been appointed as of August 2023.
- Established [website](#), weekly [Digest](#), and [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#) presence, to share events, opportunities, publications, and social science news.
- Launched [academic-year undergraduate research internships](#). Twelve interns (and 10 faculty mentors) have now completed the program.
- Initiated [pilot grants](#) to support interdisciplinary research projects, student RAs, and summer ["mini-grants"](#) for faculty and student research and travel. In total 51 were awarded. One student grant recipient went on to secure an external grant in AY 22/23.
- Organized professional development [workshops](#) for graduate students and faculty on topics including: [non-academic careers](#); [journal editors' tips on publishing](#); [federal and foundation grants](#); and [social science/data science collaborations](#).
- Coordinated topical research working groups and grant feedback networks for faculty.
- Partnered with Provost's Office and Graduate School to support and secure placements for [social science PhD](#) summer internships. (Meet interns [here](#).)

AY 22/23

- Moved CISS into dedicated space in Fall 2022.
- Launched postdoctoral scholars program; [two postdocs](#) will join CISS in Fall 2023.
- Hired a grants administrator to support and grow the grant activity handled by Center.
- Submitted 22 (\$3.3M) external grants. Total of six (\$1.2M) were funded.
- Provided post-award support for 35 existing grants totaling \$4.5M.
- Launched programs to promote and support external grant activity, including [workshops](#), individual meetings with PIs, [grants "Q&A"](#) webpages, interdisciplinary team formation (one of these teams just won a \$200k grant).

AY 23/24 — The Year Ahead

- Recruit and appoint an external advisory board.
- Launch [HUB co-curricular](#): Social Science Research Fundamentals for undergrads.
- Scale up intern programs, through strategic partnerships with other BU units (e.g., Writing in the Disciplines, Innovate@BU, BU Spark!, etc.).
- Continue expanding externally funded research; work with DAR to secure philanthropic support; Welcome inaugural postdoctoral scholars and visiting scholars.
- Launch CISS YouTube channel featuring faculty and student research.



Progress Report

Strategic Initiatives

Arts & Sciences Society of Fellows

The Arts & Sciences Society of Fellows is a new community of current BU faculty and incoming postdoctoral scholars committed to innovative research and teaching; vibrant interdisciplinary scholarship; and advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in the academy. The objectives of the Society are to establish BU as a leader amongst our peers in addressing historic gaps in the faculty pipeline by proactively recruiting first-rank scholars from diverse backgrounds; to bring fresh new ideas to campus; to advance the postdocs' research and teaching; and to help raise the College and Graduate School of Arts & Sciences' profile as a home for inclusivity and scholarly development.

AY 21/22

- Launched the inaugural call for applications in October 2021 and received more than 600 applications. Selected inaugural cohort of five postdoctoral scholars.
- Appointed ten Faculty Fellows to shape and build the intellectual community of the Society and establish a robust mentoring program.

AY 22/23

- Welcomed inaugural cohort of five postdoctoral scholars in Anthropology, Archaeology, Classics, History of Art & Architecture, Religion.
- Developed professional and academic development programming to support the Postdoctoral Scholars, in addition to advancing their independent research activities.
- Celebrated the recruitment of two Postdoctoral Scholars to tenure track positions at CUNY and Loyola Marymount University; both will complete their second year in the Society before moving into their tenure-track positions.
- Held second year of recruitment with similarly large application numbers. In Fall 23, five new postdoctoral fellows will join the Society, in African American & Black Diaspora Studies, Earth & Environment, English, Physics, and Sociology, along with five additional Faculty Fellows.

AY 23/24 — The Year Ahead

- Develop mentoring programming that integrates inaugural cohort and second cohort.
- Continue to recruit outstanding, interdisciplinary scholars, who are committed to advancing diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Work with BU Foundation Relations and DAR to develop a plan for external funding to support Society's activities.



Progress Report

Strategic Initiatives

Recruiting and Growing Our Talent

Establish Arts & Sciences as a home for outstanding students, faculty, and staff, where community members are valued stakeholders in shaping Arts & Sciences' mission, personal and professional growth/development is promoted, and achievements are recognized and celebrated, thereby becoming a recognized model and leader amongst our peers. This will be done by continuing to recruit top talent, including endowed professorships for faculty and access to scholarships for students; strengthening our professional and career development opportunities, including a new expanded mentorship program for faculty and staff; and enhancing the mechanisms to promote and acknowledge the contributions and achievements of our community members.

AY 21/22

- Bequest gift created Laurence A. Bloom Professorship in Economics, and prominent labor economist, Kevin Lang, was selected to be inaugural holder.
- Gift established the Jon Westling Professorship of History, and leading American historian, Nina Silber, was selected to be inaugural holder.
- Gifts totalling more than \$2 million supported scholarships and student access activities, including a major gift to establish the Eleanor Cohen Gruber (CAS'61) and Martin J. Gruber Scholarship Fund.
- Relaunched the annual staff appreciation and awards event.
- Redesigned college newsletters and social media, to share more engaging stories on the contributions and achievements of our community members, including alumni.

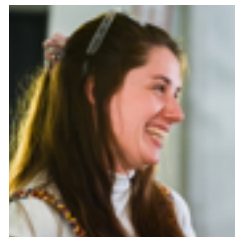
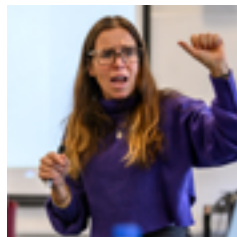
AY 22/23

- Organized a year of College 150th Anniversary activities as an opportunity for the entire A&S community (alumni, students, faculty, and staff) to come together.
- Relaunched CAS/GRS alumni awards with presentation ceremony in Fall 2023.
- Expanded informal community gatherings for new staff, such as new staff breakfasts and announcing new staff in the bi-monthly newsletter.

- Leveraged standing calendar events as opportunities to bring community members together (e.g. first faculty meeting, closing faculty meeting, staff appreciation party) and invited administrators to relevant Chairs and Directors meetings.
- Launched a process for enhanced mentoring support for faculty, both junior faculty and mid-career faculty, and staff.
- Began a multi-year, interdisciplinary faculty recruiting initiative in Artificial Intelligence in collaboration with the Faculty of Computing and Data Sciences.
- Dalton Family Professorship in Environmental Data Science & Sustainability was established; an international search for the inaugural holder of the professorship commenced in collaboration with the Faculty of Computing and Data Science.
- Gifts totalled nearly \$1.5 million for scholarships and student access activities, for example, the Concetta & Fernando Conte Endowed Scholarship and the Biagio Conte, MD (CAS'52) Italian Studies Fund.

AY 23/24 — The Year Ahead

- Start three-year, interdisciplinary faculty recruiting initiative in Quantum Science, Engineering, and Computing (QSEC) in collaboration with the College of Engineering.
- Prepare and launch enhanced mentoring programs for faculty and staff, and strengthen the on-boarding process for new faculty and staff.
- Build on broader community engagement momentum created by the 150th Anniversary celebrations.
- Continue fundraising efforts for professorships and scholarships.



Progress Report

Strategic Initiatives

Reinvigorating Graduate Education

Enhance the stature of the Graduate School's programs and ensure we prepare our graduates for success and leadership beyond BU. This will be done by taking an integrated approach to graduate education that extends beyond research and scholarly training to provide an environment in which all our students thrive, with access to stronger services and resources for student wellness, health, and financial well-being while pursuing their studies, and access to career-focused skill building and experiences for after degree completion.

AY 21/22

- Created a new Assistant Director of Graduate Affairs & Student Support position to promote student well-being.
- Partnered with the BU Professional Development & Postdoctoral Affairs program to promote the BADGR micro credential program.
- Instituted relocation assistance grants to help first generation, low income (FGLI) admitted graduate students in moving to Boston.
- Implemented 10-month stipend funding model for all incoming PhD students.

AY 22/23

- Implemented Graduate Research in the United States Fellowship (GRUF) for PhD and MFA students to provide funding for domestic research opportunities and the Graduate Internship Funding Program (GIF) to support students in putting their education to use beyond the classroom in internships that would have been unpaid.
- Advanced the diversification of the student body by participating in initiatives such as the [GEM](#) scholars, attending conferences hosted by organizations serving minoritized populations ([ABCRMs](#), [BDN](#), [NOBCChe](#), [POSSE](#), [SACNAS](#), etc), and participating in University-wide outreach and recruiting coordinated by the Provost's office.
- Streamlined the fee waiver process to remove the financial burden of applying to BU for first generation, low income and/or students from under-represented groups.

- Created alumni fellowships to enhance our financial aid package to help recruit top diverse talent to our program.
- Increased the number of Dean's Fellowships to recruit top talent to our doctoral programs in the Natural Sciences.
- Developed new trainings for faculty on eliminating unconscious bias in the review of applications to ensure an equitable review of all applicants.

AY 23/24 — The Year Ahead

- Work with the Office of the Associate Provost of Graduate Affairs to implement the recommendations of the BU Taskforce on Graduate Education.
- Develop a whitepaper on a new PhD funding model and doctoral program sizes, including articulating the value of PhDs to our community.
- Develop fundraising activities supporting graduate education, with focus on graduate student fellowships and scholarships.
- Continue to be proactive in facilitating student well-being.



Progress Report

Strategic Initiatives

Arts & Sciences in Action

This group of initiatives aims to empower our undergraduate students to explore and engage in the tremendous range of possibilities within Arts & Sciences, maximizing their liberal arts degree experience, and preparing them for whatever the future might hold.

Experiential Learning (EL) Connector: The principal initiative for A&S in Action is the creation of a EL Connector, a new undergraduate resource center to support our students in navigating the diverse range of experiential learning opportunities available within A&S, across BU's professional schools and campus offices, and in the Boston-area and world at-large. The EL Connector will promote and complement the value of liberal arts education by supporting experiential learning for A&S students throughout their undergraduate careers.

AY 21/22

- Secured a \$2.5 million anonymous endowed gift to launch the EL Connector.

AY 22/23

- Appointed inaugural EL Connector Director, Erin Salius, PhD in December 2022, following a rigorous and competitive search process.
- Launched a series of programs following consultations with students, including peer mentoring, summer internship support, and career panels, as well as a website, newsletter, and social media to build awareness about the EL Connector.
- Continued to fundraise for the EL Connector's activities.

AY 23/24 — The Year Ahead

- Hire Program Manager to lead expanded mentoring and ambassador programs.
- Continue to build programming for mobilizing philanthropic funds raised to help students access low or non-paid experiential learning activities, especially internships.

- Enhance awareness and access to the EL Connector with refreshed branding and expanded website, including filter capacity to help students find EL opportunities.
- diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Work with BU Foundation Relations and DAR to develop a plan for external funding to support Society's activities.

Fostering Interdisciplinary Teaching: Other activities include fostering interdisciplinary teaching, through an initiative to support the creation of team-taught courses that bring the best of interdisciplinary teaching to our students.

AY 21/22

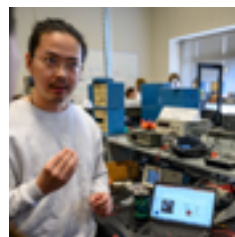
- Launched call for applications for pilot, in Spring 2022.
- Received six applications and selected two undergraduate courses for Fall 2023: Bodies, Science, and the Environment, bringing together Political Science, History, and Earth & Environment, and Introduction to Environmental Humanities, bringing together English, Anthropology, and Earth & Environment.

AY 22/23

- Courses developed and advertised for pre-registration.

AY 23/24 — The Year Ahead

- Offer the new two new courses and coordinate with Provost-level team-taught, interdisciplinary course initiative for fostering further creation of co-taught offerings.



Progress Report

Strategic Initiatives

Infrastructure

Enable cutting-edge research and teaching through focused investment in the necessary physical structures, including teaching spaces and research laboratories across all disciplines. Provide a centralized data infrastructure, ensure access to shared equipment and research support, as well as enhanced library and digital infrastructure.

Physical Structures: Ensuring appropriate space that supports and advances our strategic priorities in teaching and research.

AY 21/22

- Opened renovated space for the new Center for Innovation in Social Science.

AY 22/23

- Moved Computer Science and Mathematics & Statistics into the new building.
- Worked with Provost to develop plans that will bring together neuro and brain science faculty, students, staff, and labs within the building vacated by CS and MS.
- Developed design concept and plan for A&S Experiential Learning Connector, and updated space program for an expanded BU Center for the Humanities (BUCH).

AY 23/24 — The Year Ahead

- Complete renovations and move the neuro and brain science faculty into new space.
- Develop conceptual design for teaching labs used for introductory chemistry courses.
- Continue to assess and collaborate with Provost on addressing pressing strategic space needs, including new home for BUCH, Economics, and Linguistics.

Digital support: Increase access to digital resources in the social sciences and humanities.

AY 21/22

- Second year of pilot digital initiative with BU Libraries: Granted faculty access to Adam Matthews Digital database for the social sciences and humanities.

AY 22/23

- Provided access in Fall 2022 to Drama Online and Sage Research Methods for faculty to test out; both were incorporated as permanent BU Libraries subscriptions.

AY 23/24 — The Year Ahead

- Continue work with BU Libraries to provide increased access to digital resources for the social sciences and humanities.

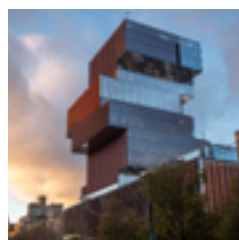
Research Support: Enhance College support for grant seeking and grant management.

AY 22/23

- Hired grants administrator in the Center for Innovation in Social Science.
- Appointed ad hoc committee to assess College support for STEM Research, including support for multi-investigator, interdisciplinary grants. Report received in Spring 2023.

AY 23/24 — The Year Ahead

- Hire a Director for Research Administration to implement the STEM Research Committee's recommendations.



Progress Report

University-wide Initiatives

In addition to these initiatives, Arts & Sciences is playing a pivotal role in the initiatives outlined in the University-wide 2030 Strategic Plan. For example, major University initiatives like the Center for Antiracist Research, the Faculty of Computing & Data Sciences, the Initiative on Cities, and the Sustainability Initiative are led by Arts & Sciences faculty. Arts & Sciences is an essential leader in undergraduate education, including the BU Hub, as well as a key partner for the University Libraries and the home for the Humanities at BU.



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