The Computing & Data Sciences Faculty Fellows Program

With the establishment of the Faculty of Computing & Data Sciences (CDS), the former Data Science Initiative (DSI) operated under the auspices of the Hariri Institute for Computing was integrated into CDS. An integral part of DSI was its Faculty Fellows program, which was conceived to develop a cohort of exceptional interdisciplinary faculty members with strong potential for long-term impact at BU. The launch of CDS provides an opportunity for the resources associated with the original DSI Faculty Fellows program to be used to complement and expand BU’s footprint in computing and data sciences beyond CDS. Starting in Spring 2022, the rebranded “CDS Faculty Fellows Program” detailed below will endeavor to connect newly recruited faculty members who pursue novel computational and data-driven research across BU with the faculty members and programs in CDS—a proposition that should also make BU more attractive to prospective faculty members.

Overview of the CDS Faculty Fellows Program

Faculty members selected as CDS Faculty Fellows will receive a 3-year secondary appointment in CDS, pursuant to rank and title of their primary academic appointment, subject to Provost approval. Fellows are subject to privileges and responsibilities as outlined for secondarily appointed faculty in CDS. While expected, renewal of secondary appointment in CDS is contingent on continued engagement and contribution to CDS’ research, education, and outreach priorities.

Each CDS Faculty Fellow will be provided with the following resources:

- A total of $50,000 in discretionary funding in support of the Faculty Fellow’s research. These funds will be housed in and administered by CDS, subject to the following:
  - Allowable expenditures include salaries and fringe for postdoc, graduate and undergraduate students working under the supervision of the faculty fellow; direct costs associated with professional software or data engineering support staff; direct costs associated with research-related travel and meeting expenses; and direct costs of equipment or services associated with research projects, including CPU cores purchased through BU’s Shared Computing Cluster (SCC) [any buy-in CPU cores will be added to CDS’s shared cluster].
  - Funding of the Faculty Fellow’s salary (such as over base summer salary or supplemental sabbatical salary) is not allowable.
  - At the end of the CDS Faculty Fellow’s term (at the end of Year 3) or as soon as the Faculty Fellow’s appointment is interrupted by a sabbatical or an unpaid leave, all unused funding will remit back to a pooled CDS account.

- A total of $15,000 to be made available to the Faculty Fellow’s home department towards the costs of a substitute instructor in order to free up the Faculty Fellow to teach or co-teach a new or existing course, or a research seminar in CDS. Such an arrangement must be approved by the chair of the home department, and by the Associate Provost for CDS at least one semester in advance.
Faculty Fellow Eligibility and Nomination Guidelines

All full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty and non-tenure track faculty of professorial rank are eligible for nomination.

While all such faculty are eligible, priority will be given to nominations that are part of an effort to recruit, retain, support, and otherwise propel the career of newly appointed tenured or tenure-track faculty members at Boston University. Special attention will be given to individuals from traditionally underrepresented race, ethnicity, and genders in computing and data sciences. CDS Faculty Fellow awards, or commitment of forthcoming nomination, may be included in offer letters to prospective faculty members by departments, upon approval by the Associate Provost for CDS.

Nominations are expected to come from academic department chairs and should be directed to the Associate Provost for CDS at cds-ap@bu.edu. Multiple nominations from the same department are discouraged. Nominees not selected may be renominated for future consideration. Nominations are strictly confidential, and nominators are strongly encouraged not to inform internal nominees that they have been or will be nominated.

Nomination letters should not exceed three pages and should speak to the nominee’s current research portfolio, track record of interdisciplinary collaborations, and potential impact on computational and data-driven research at BU. In addition, nominators are encouraged to provide details about specific activities or initiatives that the nominee is well-positioned to pursue in CDS. An updated CV of the nominee (for current faculty members) or the full application dossier of the nominee (for prospective faculty members) must accompany the nomination.

CDS Faculty Fellow Selection Process and Deadlines

CDS Faculty Fellow nominations will be reviewed and decided on by the CDS Executive Leadership Team (ELT). While the number of available fellowships will vary from year to year, we expect to have an average of five new fellowships per year (subject to availability of continued funding). This allows for a constant rotation, keeping the total number of active fellows at an average of around 15 fellows at any given time.

To account for new faculty hiring windows across related disciplines and searches, nominations will be reviewed on a rolling basis, with a review window opening on February 1 and closing on April 30, or when all CDS Faculty Fellow lines for a given year have been filled. Award notices for successful nominations will be sent by the Associate Provost for Computing & Data Sciences to the nominating department Chair as soon as the review is completed, but no later than May 1. CDS will endeavor to complete its review of nominations for prospective faculty as soon as possible to allow for award details (in case an award is made) to be included in offer letters or otherwise shared with faculty candidates.

A public university-wide announcement (including the profiles of the chosen cohort of CDS Faculty Fellows) will be made each year at the beginning of the Fall semester.
Questions and Contacts

Any member of the BU community with questions about this program is encouraged to reach out to Azer Bestavros (best@bu.edu), Associate Provost for CDS, or Chris DeVits (cdevits@bu.edu), Director of Administration for CDS.