

**Professor Jean Morrison, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer**

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**TO:** Boston University Faculty and Staff

**FROM:** Jean Morrison, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer  
Beth Loizeaux, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Affairs

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**DATE:** July 5, 2017

**SUBJECT:** Appointment of Professor John Celenza as Director of the  
Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP)

This past winter, we launched a University-wide search for the next Director of the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP). We are delighted to announce the appointment of Dr. John Celenza, Associate Professor of Biology and Director of the Program in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology in the College of Arts & Sciences, to head UROP, effective July 1.

Since its inception in 1997, UROP has connected more than 4,000 BU undergraduates to a range of extraordinary research experiences across the natural sciences, medicine, the arts, humanities, and social sciences, both here in Boston and abroad. Under the leadership of its outgoing director, Professor Paul Lipton (Neuroscience), UROP has broadened the range of disciplines it serves, developed new partnerships with units across campus, instituted annual awards to recognize outstanding student researchers and faculty mentors, and expanded the annual Undergraduate Research Symposium. With Professor Lipton's decision to step down this summer in order to assume the role of Associate Director of the Kilachand Honors College, it was critical that we identify a leader with the scholarly credentials, energy, mentoring experience, and strategic vision necessary to direct and further develop UROP as the visible hub of undergraduate research on campus.

For more than two decades, Professor Celenza has been a respected educator and researcher at BU. He has taught thousands of students in genetics lecture and laboratory courses and served as a mentor for dozens of undergraduate researchers in his plant biology laboratory. Since 2004, he has served as Director of CAS's undergraduate Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Program, advising and helping to prepare hundreds of aspiring scientists for postgraduate careers, and working collaboratively with staff and faculty to develop curricula and course offerings that further strengthen an already successful program.

Throughout this time, Professor Celenza has been deeply connected with the work of

UROP, both as a mentor on many student projects and as a member of the UROP award review committee for the last 11 years. An internationally recognized biologist, whose research explores plant growth, defense, and metabolism, Professor Celenza has published dozens of widely cited articles in premier science journals and is a regularly invited presenter and lecturer at conferences around the world. He is a graduate of Adelphi University in New York, received his Master's and Ph.D. in Genetics and Development from Columbia University, and did postdoctoral research at the Whitehead Institute for Biomedical Research before coming to BU.

Through extensive conversation with Professor Celenza about his aspirations for further developing the program's multidisciplinary reach and impact, it is evident that his enthusiasm and portfolio of high-quality research, influential mentoring, and collaborative leadership are an ideal match for leading UROP. Moreover, his commitment to creating and supporting opportunities that align with the new BU Hub curriculum and requirements present a host of truly exciting possibilities for the program and its future within the University's scholarly ecosystem.

Professor Celenza officially assumed his duties as Director of UROP on July 1. Please join us in congratulating him on this appointment and welcoming him to this new role and in thanking Professor Lipton for his energetic leadership and outstanding contribution to UROP's development and the achievement of its students during his successful Directorship.

cc: Academic Deans  
Provost's Cabinet