

Boston University Office of the Provost



Professor Jean Morrison, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer

One Silber Way
Boston, Massachusetts 02215
T 617-353-2230 F 617-353-6580
www.bu.edu/provost

TO: Boston University Faculty and Staff
FROM: Jean Morrison, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer
DATE: April 13, 2023
SUBJECT: Appointment of Melissa Holt as the Next Director of
Kilachand Honors College

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This past winter, we [announced](#) an internal search to identify a new director of Kilachand Honors College. We sought candidates who would bring the intellectual leadership, strategic vision, and track record of excellence in interdisciplinary scholarship essential to this signature liberal arts program at Boston University. After a rigorous search that considered several strong candidates, I am delighted to announce the appointment of **Dr. Melissa Holt** as the next director of the Kilachand Honors College, effective July 1.

Dr. Holt is associate dean for faculty affairs and associate professor of counseling psychology and applied human development in the Wheelock College of Education & Human Development. For over two decades, her scholarship has focused on adolescents oppressed by identity characteristics, as well as the systems and programs designed to help prevent and mitigate bias-based harassment. Her research has been supported by grants from the National Institutes of Justice, the Anti-Defamation League, the Spencer Foundation, and others. She has authored numerous books, book chapters, and widely cited journal articles on counseling psychology, youth mental health, and bullying.

Dr. Holt also played a critical role as the inaugural chair for the counseling psychology and applied human development department following the merger between the School of Education and Wheelock College. Her leadership and dedication to the program guided the department to a cohesive and strengthened program for Boston University. She subsequently stepped into the role of associate dean for faculty affairs where she has continued to provide service to the college for the past two years.

Professor Holt has served as a Provost's Mentor Fellow and was honored in 2020 with a Leadership Award for the Counseling Psychology and Applied Human Development division of the American Educational Research Association. She is affiliated with various national and international organizations focused on supporting youth, including the American Psychological Association, The American Educational Research Association, the Bullying Research Network,

and the World Professional Organization on Transgender Health. She holds a doctorate and master's degree in counseling psychology from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, and a bachelor's degree in psychology from Tufts University.

Through extensive conversations about her ambitions for Kilachand Honors College, it was quickly clear that Professor Holt's leadership and scholarly credentials, thoughtful vision for the college's future, attention to diverse voices and perspectives, and enthusiasm for innovative approaches to undergraduate education suit her exceptionally well to serve as its director. Moreover, Professor Holt has demonstrated her ability to work collaboratively with faculty and deans across the University and to meaningfully connect with students and their families – critical attributes for this interdisciplinary, liberal arts living-learning community within a major research university.

Professor Holt will assume the directorship of the Kilachand Honors College on July 1, 2023. Please join us in congratulating her as she prepares to take on her new role. Please also join us in thanking Professor Carrie Preston, who has served as director since 2017, for her exemplary intellectual leadership and administrative service to Kilachand Honors College and in wishing her well as she returns to her responsibilities as a member of the faculty as associate director of the newly created BU Center on Forced Displacement.

Finally, I would like to express gratitude to the members of the Kilachand Honors College Director Search Advisory Committee, listed below, whose considerable efforts were vital to the success of the search. We look forward to building on the accomplishments seen at Kilachand Honors College over the last six years and to furthering its stature as a premier intellectual destination and living-learning community for BU's finest faculty and top students from around the world.

Cc: Robert A. Brown
Provost's Cabinet

Kilachand Honors College Director Search Advisory Committee

Alan Cohen, Research Professor of Markets, Public Policy & Law, Questrom School of Business; Professor of Health Law, Policy & Management, School of Public Health

Joanna Davidson, Associate Professor of Anthropology, College of Arts & Sciences

Linda Doerrer, Professor of Chemistry, College of Arts & Sciences

Megan Kagstrom, Assistant Director for Marketing, Media, and Communications, Kilachand Honors College

Nathan Phillips, Professor of Earth & Environment, College of Arts & Sciences

Jerry Whitmore, Jr, Clinical Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, Wheelock College of Education & Human Development

Muhammad Zaman, Professor of Biomedical Engineering, College of Engineering