TO: Boston University Faculty

FROM: Kenneth Lutchen, University Provost & Chief Academic Officer

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SUBJECT: Observations regarding ChatGPT from AAU Provosts Meeting

The Boston University AI Task Force, launched earlier this month, will officially begin its work this week. As we embark on this important University-wide effort, I want to share some insights I recently gained at the annual meeting of Association of American Universities institutional provosts, where a special session was devoted to AI in higher education.

1. **Safeguarding Intellectual Property**: There is concern that by entering data you have collected or creative pieces you have authored into ChatGPT or similar programs, you might jeopardize the intellectual property rights or copyright to that content. The AI Task Force will specifically seek to address this question and incorporate guidance in its recommendations. Until then, I am recommending that all members of our community be cautious on entering data or creative work into ChatGPT.

2. **Setting up Resources for Faculty and Staff:** Several institutions have deployed units similar to BU's Center for Teaching & Learning (CTL) and Digital Learning & Innovation (DL&I) to partner with faculty and organize workshop series – offered at multiple times – on what ChatGPT is, its potential for misuse, how to detect when students are using it, and how it can be constructively engaged for teaching and research. Generally, these workshops have been designed and are run by staff experts in learning science who partner with faculty leaders across campus in specific disciplines to develop content. Here at BU there are already similar efforts under way, and the AI Task Force will work to assess these programs and derive recommendations for the best way faculty can benefit from them. Specific information on these efforts can be found on the CTL and DL&I websites.

3. **Preparing a Generation of Writers, not Editors:** Perhaps the most common worry shared at the recent AAU conference was the risk of AI programs like ChatGPT turning students from "writers" into "editors." We discussed how the ability to write is an essential tool for engaging critical and creative thinking and for self-assessment on knowledge of topics. If we are not careful, future generations of students will emerge unable to write from scratch or produce original scholarship, instead learning only how to edit the output of ChatGPT. With

that said, it is conceivable that future versions of ChatGPT-like products can be designed to actually help create better writers.

4. **They're All Using It:** You should assume that a preponderance of students will use ChatGPT for out-of-class assignments, whether you want them to or not. This has been an observation shared universally by fellow provosts, and something we should all be mindful of. The task force will be prioritizing this issue as it formulates recommendations. In the meantime, we should all be thinking creatively about the impact of this technology on how and what we want our students to learn.

I look forward to sharing more information and guidance in the months ahead as the task force carries out its charge and we enlist the expertise of our community in developing resources, approaches, and best practices for faculty.