

Boston University Arts & Sciences

2030 strategic plan

BOSTON
UNIVERSITY

The background of the document is a photograph of a city street scene. In the foreground, a green and white tram with the number 3806 is stopped at a crosswalk. Several pedestrians are walking across the street. In the background, there are trees with yellow autumn leaves, a tall radio tower, and a large stone building with arched windows. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds.

Boston University College and Graduate School of Arts & Sciences 2030 Strategic Plan

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Arts & Sciences **2030 Strategic Plan**

Introduction

Arts & Sciences at Boston University is a leading liberal arts and sciences undergraduate college and graduate school situated in the historically, culturally, and intellectually rich and vibrant city of Boston. We provide an outstanding undergraduate education enriched by opportunities for hands-on research and experiential learning. We offer a broad range of outstanding graduate programs, with opportunities for students to conduct rigorous foundational and interdisciplinary research. Our faculty are leaders in their respective fields; our students are exceptional scholars and engaged community members; our staff are deeply committed; and our alumni are agile, creative, and thoughtful leaders and citizens. Over the last 10 years, we have built upon these core strengths and pursued the goals articulated in the 2010-2020 CAS Strategic Plan.

The following document outlines our plan for the next 10 years. It is guided and shaped by three overarching principles: capitalizing on our size and strengthening our community; pursuing our vision for the future holistically across Arts & Sciences; and being ready for what's next in an unscripted world. Our size is a defining asset: we are a large college and graduate school of arts and sciences within an even larger university. How we work together, make connections, build neighborhoods, and collaborate with each other is interwoven throughout our priorities and initiatives. In defining our goals, we take a holistic approach to our undergraduate, graduate, and research pursuits. Our programs and activities will build upon one another, and we will continue to firmly ground ourselves in the tradition of the liberal arts and sciences. Together, we will be innovative and adaptable for whatever the future might hold.

Mission



Our Mission

Arts & Sciences stands at the heart of Boston University. Our mission is to employ the full range of arts and sciences perspectives to understand our present and past; to discover, create, and innovate; to educate our students to be informed, adaptable, lifelong learners and leaders; and to be a connected, empowered, and inclusive community. We tackle tough questions while accounting for the human dimension and thinking ethically and critically.

The Destination

Our vision for the future of Arts & Sciences is defined by our cutting-edge research and teaching that anticipates and addresses the world's challenges. Excellent disciplinary strengths serve as the essential foundation for interdisciplinary collaboration. Nimble organizational structure catalyzes and advances interconnection, as well as productive partnerships with the University's professional schools. Graduates are 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 sciences educations.

We strive to be a community of exceptional students, faculty, staff, and alumni that is thriving, equitable, and inclusive—a community where everyone is able to excel; to do their best work; to learn, grow, and participate in shaping Arts & Sciences; and to make their greatest impact. Our collective impact is in the new discoveries, creations, knowledge, and understandings that we achieve and in connecting these achievements with our wider community in Greater Boston and around the globe. We are committed to and actively engaged in advancing the discussion of new knowledge and understanding of facts, both inside and outside academia, through structures and programs that translate our research, ideas, expertise, and student-power through public engagement and public partnerships. Moreover, we strive for thoughtful and culturally-informed collaborative partnerships in research and education that are truly reciprocal with the communities we engage, giving back as partners and with mutual benefit.

Priorities



Strategic Priorities

To reach this destination we will:

- 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.

These strategic priorities align with the five strategic priorities outlined in Boston University's 2030 Strategic Plan: 1. A vibrant academic experience; 2. Research that matters; 3. Diversity, equity, and inclusion; 4. Community, big yet small; and, 5. Global engagement.

It is also important to note that Arts & Sciences remains firmly committed to ensuring that all students have access to our education, regardless of financial need.

Initiatives



Strategic Initiatives

Our strategic planning effort has identified a number of important recommendations for us to advance all five strategic priorities above. These recommendations come from the faculty task forces and faculty/staff working groups, whose ideas inform our plan. Outlined below are seven initial initiatives, several of which incorporate multiple recommendations from the task forces; further initiatives will continue to be developed. We plan to launch these leadoff initiatives now in order to aggressively pursue our work in advancing our five strategic priorities. Each of these initiatives links with and advances all five strategic priorities.

Expanded BU Center for the Humanities (BUCH)

1

Position BU to become an internationally recognized leader in the integration of humanistic scholarship and teaching with the professional schools; provide a vibrant and dynamic home for the humanities community at BU; and enhance contributions and partnerships with Boston-area and national initiatives in the humanities, including public humanities. This will be done by establishing a University-wide Center for the Humanities that builds on the tremendous strengths of the current BUCH, with new and expanded activities, including competitive outside fellowships, annual research themes, a postdoctoral fellowship program, University-wide events, and expanded student programming.

New Center for Innovation in the Social Sciences

2

Advance, accelerate, and amplify the social sciences at BU and our contributions to addressing pressing global challenges by bringing together our impressive range of strengths in the social sciences into a shared community enhanced by research incubation, support, and promotion. This will be done by creating a center that provides a home for cross-cutting research across BU's social science departments, programs, and related programs and institutes.

Initiatives

3

Arts & Sciences Society of Postdoctoral Fellows —

Establish BU as a leader among our peers in addressing historic gaps in the faculty pipeline by proactively recruiting first-rank scholars from diverse backgrounds; bringing fresh new ideas to campus; advancing the postdocs' research and teaching; and contributing to raising the Arts & Sciences profile as a home for inclusivity and scholarly development. This will be done by launching an interdisciplinary community of distinguished junior scholars.

4

Recruiting & Growing Our Talent —

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

5

Reinvigorating Graduate Education —

Enhance the stature of the Graduate School of Arts & Sciences' programs and ensure that 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 their years after degree completion.

Arts & Sciences in Action —

6

Ensure that our undergraduate students have the tools and opportunities to explore and discover the tremendous range of possibilities within Arts & Sciences that will maximize their degree experience and prepare them for whatever the future might hold. This will be done by adopting a holistic approach that integrates our considerable strengths in undergraduate teaching and learning; innovating at the forefront of the University's signature undergraduate general education program, the BU HUB; expanding the range of exciting experiential learning opportunities available to our students; creating a connector for Arts & Sciences students to help identify pathways for leveraging their student experiences; utilizing career development and alumni networks; developing cutting-edge, co-taught, interdisciplinary courses; and adopting inclusivity into introductory-level courses, among other activities.

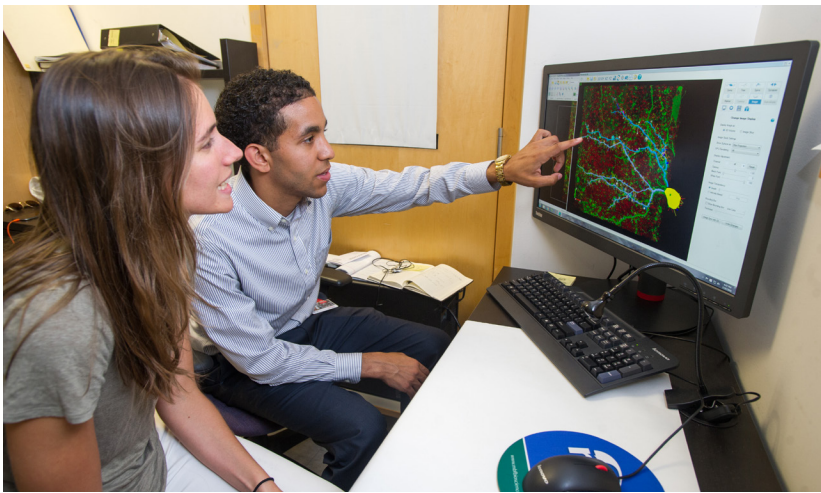
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Deepen Investment in Infrastructure —

Enable cutting-edge research and teaching through focused investment in the structures needed to achieve our top priorities. This will be done by addressing infrastructure needs in areas such as enhancing teaching and research laboratories across all disciplines, providing a centralized data infrastructure, ensuring access to shared equipment, creating appropriate spaces for collaborative work and learning activities, and offering research support, such as library and digital infrastructure.

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In addition to these initiatives, Arts & Sciences has a pivotal role in many of 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 humanities at BU.



By thinking holistically about research and education, disciplines and interdisciplinarity, it is possible to spark novel insights, discover innovative breakthroughs, and imagine new solutions to pressing issues.

The following themes represent some of Arts & Sciences' distinctive research and educational strengths that we leverage to make important contributions to global challenges.

Interdisciplinary

Interdisciplinary Themes

These examples illustrate how the diverse and dynamic work that happens within Arts & Sciences can come together in exciting and impactful ways.

One Planet—One Health

The health of our planet is intimately linked to human health—and vice versa. This cross-cutting theme encompasses a wide range of modern challenges, including but not limited to: the emergence of zoonotic diseases and the impacts of habitat destruction on human health; climate change and the sustainability of humanity; planetary health in the age of space exploration; and the impact of these changes on society and social inequality.

To tackle these issues and to help sustain humanity, we work across disciplines to develop new science. We employ evidence-based analysis, develop new forecasting models, and integrate diverse perspectives and understanding—from fields that range from the social sciences, to ethics and justice, to health and environmental humanities—so that we can comprehensively analyze the impact on all communities.

Social Justice & Ethics

Engaging in ethical inquiry and understanding social justice and human rights are critical to building a more just and equitable world. Arts & Sciences has distinguished faculty in these fields, both in the social sciences and throughout the humanities. The life sciences contribute to our understanding by examining the biological underpinnings of brain function and how they inform human understanding and bias.

All of these perspectives are increasingly important for understanding bias and the unequal impact of technology in computational sciences. The ability to bring together evidence and theory across disciplinary boundaries enables us to identify, understand, and address inequalities in our global world.

Computation, Data and Arts & Sciences— Forefront of Data Science

In a world that is rapidly being redefined by the availability of data and algorithms, it is crucial that we thoroughly understand their capabilities, implications, and appropriate use. Arts & Sciences brings a powerful, interconnected perspective to data science. We work at the forefront of the foundational disciplines of mathematics, statistics, and computing, and we bring the application of mathematical models and computational methods to yield innovative discoveries in a diverse range of fields—from the physical and life sciences, to the humanities and social sciences. Our quest for new knowledge in other fields inspires us to pursue new questions in the foundational disciplines. We are also driven to consider the ethical and social implications in how we apply these models and methods.

With these strong foundations and synergistic relationships, we are poised to rigorously tackle some of the greatest challenges of our time, such as mitigating climate change, eliminating disease, and addressing socioeconomic disparities.

The Human Dimension

Only through deep, immersive study of the human dimension can we engage with the enduring questions about human culture and society in order to bring wisdom and wider perspectives to bear on the most urgent global challenges of our time.

Arts & Sciences has a renowned and diverse humanistic tradition. Through this work, and its integration across Arts & Sciences, we are able to develop richer and more nuanced research and education.

The humanities bridge the past with present realities and imagined futures; the local urban environment with global aspirations, through deep expertise in languages, linguistics, literatures, and translation; individual identities with the possibility of more diverse and equitable communities; a focus on solutions with humanistic and artistic creations; the liberal arts and sciences with the professional schools; and BU with the world beyond the University.

Themes

Epilogue



Epilogue

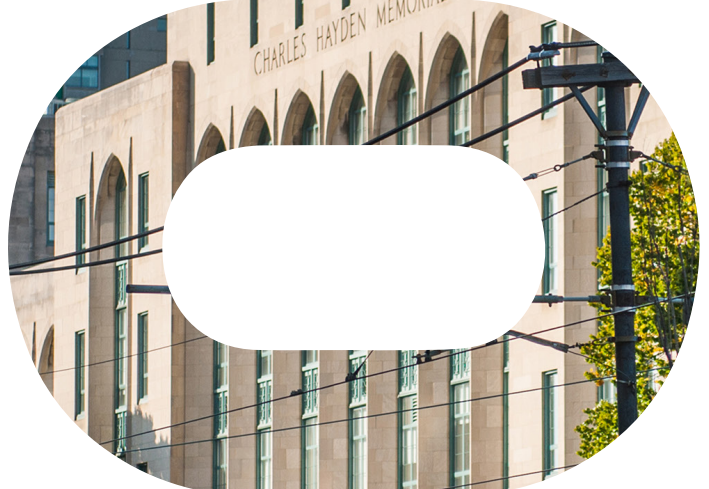
This plan is designed to be a living and dynamic framework in which we map out our vision for the future and measure our progress, updating and adapting as new opportunities present themselves.

Through our strategic planning process with the Arts & Sciences community, we have challenged ourselves to capture the essence of who we are now—our core strengths—and envision the future of Arts & Sciences and our role in society and the world. In answer to this, we have developed a vision and a framework for how we organize ourselves and the activities we pursue over the next 10 years.

As we implement our plan, we will define metrics of success and report back on our demonstrable achievements toward our strategic goals. We will also be aware and prepared to be adaptable and agile, using the plan to guide us into the future of Arts & Sciences at BU in 2030 and beyond.

To read more, visit www.bu.edu/cas.





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