



Dr. Jean Morrison, University Provost

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TO: Boston University Faculty, Staff, and Academic Deans

FROM: Jean Morrison, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer 

DATE: October 22, 2012

SUBJECT: Future Plans of Dean Linda Wells

Dean Linda Wells has informed President Brown and me of her plans to step down from her position as Dean of the College of General Studies (CGS) at the end of the 2012-2013 academic year. Following a sabbatical leave, she will continue to work on behalf of Boston University in a role to be focused generally on student career development and alumni relations. Dean Wells has served BU for 33 years as a faculty member, division chair, and as Dean of CGS since 2000. Throughout her tenure, Dean Wells has been a tireless advocate for excellence in interdisciplinary, liberal arts, undergraduate education at Boston University and a champion for the unique two-year program of study offered at CGS.

Dean Wells arrived at Boston University in 1980 as a junior faculty member in CGS, teaching humanities courses in literature, film and ethical philosophy. She received both her B.A. and M.A. in English from Colorado State University before earning a Ph.D. in 19th- and 20th-century American and British Literature from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Dean Wells' passion and special ability to bring out the best in others quickly earned her the respect of faculty and students at BU, and she went on to serve as Chair in the Division of Humanities and Rhetoric prior to her appointment as dean. A nationally acclaimed author of dozens of scholarly articles and papers, Dean Wells' research today focuses on African-American literature and culture and on identity and work. Her service to the University, and to higher education more broadly, has extended far beyond the classroom. From 1997 to 2007, she served as Special Faculty Assistant to BU Provost Dennis Berkey, directing the University's accreditation review. She has received numerous teaching and community service awards and, since 2010, has served as a Commissioner for Institutions of Higher Education through the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). In addition, she provides leadership to several regional organizations devoted to supporting the developmentally challenged.

Dean Wells has overseen a period of tremendous growth and vitality in both CGS and the University. Just as BU has seen its national profile rise as a research leader, so, too, has CGS emerged as a respected hub for undergraduate education. Dean Wells has led a host of critical efforts aimed at enhancing the student experience, from ensuring greater stability for faculty and the establishment of the Center for Interdisciplinary Teaching and Learning, to broadening the college's curricular offerings, instituting new study abroad programs, and overseeing major

improvements to the CGS building and learning facilities. The result has been a marked improvement in student satisfaction rates, high quality instructional programs, and student retention and graduation rates that are among the highest in the University's history.

We are all extremely grateful for Dean Wells' productive and dedicated service to the University and look forward to the contributions that she will continue to make in her new role at BU. Replacing her remarkable leadership at CGS, meanwhile, will be challenging. In the coming weeks, we will form a Dean Search Advisory Committee to begin the search for the next dean of CGS.

Cc: Robert A. Brown
Provost's Cabinet