

**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](http://www.bu.edu/provost)

**TO:** Boston University Students, Faculty, and Staff

**FROM:** Jean Morrison, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer  
Crystal Williams, Vice President and Associate Provost for Community & Inclusion

**DATE:** October 27, 2020

**SUBJECT:** Opening of the Newbury Center; Appointment of Maria Dykema Erb as Inaugural Director

Each year, many of Boston University's talented graduates have the added distinction of being the first in their families to have attended college. These students arrive from vastly varied backgrounds and are consistently among our community's most engaged, exemplifying the BU spirit through determination, intellectual curiosity, and intense pride in their academic and professional pursuits. At the same time, it is important to recognize that success for first-generation students often comes with unique challenges, as many face barriers of access, inclusion, and adaptation to campus life.

BU has taken significant steps in recent years and months to reaffirm our commitment to equity and inclusion. **Today, we are excited to formally announce another key piece of this commitment in the creation of the Newbury Center at Boston University.**

Designed in partnership with support services across the University, the Newbury Center will open in January 2021 in the center of our Charles River Campus, at 755 Commonwealth Avenue (adjacent to the Mugar Library and George Sherman Union), and will serve as a support hub for first-generation BU students from matriculation through graduation. The Newbury Center will offer programming and services to support academic, social, and post-graduation success, from cohort and mentoring programs, to family outreach and engagement, and assistance connecting students with internship and study abroad opportunities. The Center will report to Vice President and Associate Provost for Community & Inclusion Crystal Williams.

The Center is named for and endowed by a \$6 million contribution from the former Newbury College, which closed earlier this year after 57 years of operation in Brookline, and whose history was one of opportunity for students of all backgrounds. We are extremely proud to have the Newbury College mission live on in this important new center.

**We are likewise excited to announce the appointment of the Newbury Center's inaugural director, Maria Dykema Erb, M.Ed.** Maria comes to BU from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC), where she has been Co-Director of Diversity & Student Success

in The Graduate School since January 2016. Maria has more than 28 years of experience in diversity and inclusion work, student recruitment, academic advising, retention, outreach, and student life. At UNC, she has spearheaded a series of high-profile efforts aimed at access, including the Carolina Grad Student FIRSTS initiative for first-generation graduate students whose parents or guardians have not completed a post-baccalaureate degree. In 2019, UNC was recognized nationally by the Center for First-generation Student Success as a First-gen Forward Institution for its “commitment to advancing first-generation student success.” Maria has subsequently served as the lead for the First-gen Forward Mid-Atlantic Regional Community.

Prior to her role at UNC, Maria was Associate Director for Student Access and Success in the Multicultural Center at Elon University, where she oversaw the Watson Odyssey Scholars Program for first-generation and limited-income background students. She has additionally served as assistant director of the University of Vermont’s ALANA (Asian, Latinx, African, and Native American) Student Center, directing the Summer Enrichment Scholars Program, a summer bridge program for students of color, first-generation, and/or from limited-income backgrounds. Maria’s work has been recognized with a host of honors, including the UNC Diversity Award for Intergroup Collaboration, the UNC Student Affairs Campus Partner Award, the University of Vermont’s (UVM) ALANA Student Center Outstanding Staff Member of the Year Award, and the UVM Woman of the Year Award. Maria received her M.Ed. in interdisciplinary studies from the University of Vermont and her bachelor’s degree from the University of New Hampshire.

Maria is a collaborator and community-builder by nature. She brings tremendous energy, experience, and empathy to this new directorship, and a special ability to connect with students and, in turn, connect them with opportunities that will help them thrive. Please join us in welcoming Maria to the BU community and in celebrating the opening of this critical new center and extension of Boston University’s founding mission.

We would also like to extend special thanks to Newbury College for its extraordinary generosity and to our First-Generation Planning Group, who developed the vision for and advocated for the creation of this new center. Finally, thanks to the Newbury Center Director Hiring Committee for their work in bringing Maria to BU.

### **First Generation Planning Group**

**Kenneth Elmore**, Associate Provost and Dean of Students

**Raul Fernandez**, Associate Dean for Equity, Diversity & Inclusion, Lecturer, Wheelock College of Education & Human Development

**Elizabeth Loizeaux**, former Associate Provost for Undergraduate Affairs

**Christine McGuire**, Vice President and Associate Provost for Enrollment & Student Administration

**Laurie Pohl**, Program Director for Higher Education Administration; and Professor of the Practice, Wheelock College of Education & Human Development

**Crystal Williams**, Vice President and Associate Provost for Community & Inclusion

**Newbury Center Director Hiring Committee**

**Suzanne Kennedy (Chair)**, Associate Provost *ad interim* for Undergraduate Affairs

**Mike Dennehy**, Executive Director of College Access & Student Success, Wheelock College of Education & Human Development

**Kenneth Elmore**, Associate Provost and Dean of Students

**Laura Johnson**, Assistant Provost for Undergraduate Advising

**Christine McGuire**, Vice President and Associate Provost for Enrollment & Student Administration

**Crystal Williams**, Vice President and Associate Provost for Community & Inclusion