

BEACON

INSIDE

Nurse/Manager

Dean Katherine Gregory on the state of her field

American Dreams

How BC helped two Eagles write their life stories

Championship Drive

Leading the powerhouse BC lacrosse team



2

A Living Legacy

The A. James & Alice B. Clark Foundation is opening doors for first-generation students at the Carroll School of Management.

8

A First for Finance

Thanks to a visionary gift, the newly christened Seidner Department of Finance has made BC history and joined an elite group of similarly distinguished departments nationwide.

COACH SPEAK

6 Acacia Walker-Weinstein

BC lacrosse has become a powerhouse in the sport. Find out how.

THE IDEA EXCHANGE

16 Beyond the Bedside

Katherine Gregory discovered her calling after caring for earthquake victims at the age of 13. As dean of the Connell School of Nursing, she’s leveraging her experience to deepen and expand education for tomorrow’s nurses.

HELLO, MY NAME IS

20 Beth Thompson

The formative education mission of Boston College attracted Beth Thompson to the Heights and also aligns perfectly with her personal values.

BEACON BOOK CLUB

23 Sueño Americano

Hosffman Ospino’s selection rings true to his own story.

BEACON

SPRING 2025 - ISSUE 12

beacon.bc.edu

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT FOR
UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT
Andrew K. Davidson

EDITORIAL
Eric Bushnell, MA’22
Jill Caseria, P’26, ’28
Kevin Coyne
Dan D’Onofrio
Allison Donlan
Diana Griffith

PRODUCTION AND DESIGN
Sheila Frazier
Bob Monahan
Christian Montenegro
Emily Parent, P’28
Jacqueline Tynes

PHOTOGRAPHY
Frank Ammaccapane
Christopher Churchill
Caitlin Cunningham
Scott Eisen
Tony Luong
Simran Malik
Michael Manning
Gabriel Mob
Danny Mortimer
Lee Pellegrini
Eddie Shabomardenly

CONTRIBUTIONS
Doug Carter
Nick Darling
Scott Hultman
Bianca Whitworth Luzon
Helena Shaw
Megan Tiede ’02
Sam Wallace

Please send correspondence to
scott.hultman@bc.edu

 Boston College Alumni

 @bcalumni

 @BCAlumni

 @BostonCollegeAlumni

SOARING HIGHER

The Campaign for Boston College

BEACON, published twice yearly by the Office of University Advancement at Boston College, celebrates the significant advances made possible by generous and forward-thinking philanthropic investments in the University as well as the beneficiaries of that support.

University Advancement is grateful for the individual and organizational benefactors whose partnership brings remarkable progress toward fulfilling BC’s academic and societal mission.

© 2025 Boston College, Office of University Advancement. All public rights reserved.

Education is a Gift

BY ESTHER CHANG '02, JD'07



When my dad left China in 1949, the year that Mao Zedong defeated China's national government, he did so as a member of the Kuomintang, leaving behind everything and making a life for himself, first in Taiwan and then eventually in the United States.

As immigrants, my parents raised me to believe that I should earn what I need in life and be responsible for myself. They also understood that education is absolutely indispensable to achieving those goals. That's why I consider education to be the most important gift that one can give another.

I know this from experience: Without financial aid, Boston College wouldn't have been affordable for me.

My BC education—both as an undergrad and at the Law School—has been incredibly impactful throughout my life. It has helped me discern who and what I want to be. It has taught me not only the skills I need to be a successful lawyer but also the value of paying it forward to future generations.

Boston College has blessed me with so many opportunities to enrich my life and the lives of others. It's been an honor to serve BC on Reunion committees, with my local alumni chapter, on the Council for Women of Boston College, as president of the Law School Alumni Board, as a member of the Boston College Alumni Association Board of Directors, and in my newest role on the *Soaring Higher* Campaign Executive Committee, to name but a few.

Naturally, as an attorney, I have thought a lot about my legacy and what I want to leave behind. I believe we humans become our best selves when we place the needs of others first—not just our family and friends, but also those who follow in our footsteps. That's one of the main reasons why—even at a young age—I made a commitment to support BC through my estate.

I hope that my legacy matches my own story of access leading to opportunity. Giving the greatest gift of all is the least I can do to say thanks.

Esther Chang of Chicago, Illinois, received a bachelor of arts from the Morrissey College of Arts and Sciences and a juris doctor from BC Law School. A prolific volunteer, Ms. Chang is a member of several University and Law School committees focused on alumni engagement, fundraising, academic initiatives, and more. She is a partner at Willkie Farr & Gallagher LLP.

A Living Legacy

The extraordinary devotion of two parents is the inspiration for the A. James & Alice B. Clark Foundation's landmark investment in financial aid.

BY ERIC BUSHNELL AND ALLISON DONLAN

Mingling with guests in Stokes Hall at a Spring 2024 celebration of the Carmine and Maria Del Guercio Scholarship, Joe Del Guercio '94 excitedly introduced his older brother, Carmen. "He's CEO of the Maryland Food Bank!" Joe radiates with admiration when he talks about his family. He's proud of his brother's accomplishments—but most of all, he's proud of his parents.

Joe Del Guercio is president and chief executive officer of the A. James & Alice B. Clark Foundation, which has made a \$10 million investment to establish a new endowed scholarship at Boston College. Named in honor of Joe's late parents, Carmine and Maria, the scholarship will support a cohort of 12 first-generation undergraduate students with high financial need studying in the Carroll School of Management.

Joe is himself a first-generation graduate of the Carroll School. His parents, both immigrants from Italy, never received beyond a first-grade education. "They came here the same way a lot of other people did," Joe reflected, "[for the] American dream—

a better life." They settled in Westfield, Massachusetts, where Carmine worked as a carpenter and Maria worked in an envelope factory. "They did everything in their power to save every penny and every dime so that I could get the best education," says Joe. When Joe was accepted to BC he didn't receive a scholarship. "I got into other schools with lots of financial aid, and [my parents] said, 'We don't want you to make your decision based on money. We want you to go where you're going to be the happiest and most successful.' That, to me, was BC." Joe's parents continued to save, and he graduated without student debt. "In many ways, I got a scholarship from them," he says. Joe attributes his achievements to the parents who gave him so much—and now, he's in the business of giving back.

Since graduating from the Carroll School, Joe has led a successful career, including as president and chief executive officer of Clark Enterprises and at the Clark Foundation. Joe describes founder A. James Clark's approach as "[looking] at this philanthropy as investing" in the future.

"[Mr. Clark] always felt very strongly about supporting the people that worked for him. He would have felt strongly, and the board felt strongly, that when the time was right, supporting something that was important to me ... would be something they really wanted to do," Joe says. The Foundation "really is all about education," he continued, "and putting a scholarship program together at Boston College for first-generation students [... is] consistent with everything we've done." The Foundation's signature engineering education program, the Clark Scholars Program, provides scholarships at 11 other prestigious colleges and universities, including Duke University, Johns Hopkins University, the University of Maryland, and the University of Pennsylvania, among others.

During his remarks at the Del Guercio Scholarship celebration, Joe expressed his appreciation for the Clark family and Foundation. "I am especially grateful to the Clark Foundation Board, Courtney Clark Pastrick, Bob Flanagan, and the late Larry Nussdorf for their



Maria (left) and Carmine Del Guercio (right)

mentorship since I joined the Clark family nearly 20 years ago, and for their generosity and commitment to making this investment.”

University President William P. Leahy, S.J., expressed a similar sentiment during his remarks at the event when he described the scholarship as part of the “living legacy” of the Clark Foundation and Del Guercio family. “Future generations are going to be able to attend Boston College because we’ve been able to provide financial aid ... and they in turn will do things like the Clark family and the Del Guercio family.”

For Joe, the event was a joyous culmination: “I knew at some point the sacrifices, dreams, and prayers of my parents, the support of my friends and family, and the generosity and values of Mr. Clark and the Clark Foundation would come together. And today is that day; I could not be more happy and grateful.”



Joe Del Guercio '94 (right) and his brother, Carmen (left)

“Future generations are going to be able to attend Boston College because we’ve been able to provide financial aid ... and they in turn will do things like the Clark family and the Del Guercio family.”

— University President William P. Leahy, S.J.





MEET THE INAUGURAL DEL GUERCIO SCHOLARS


In August 2024, the first cohort of Del Guercio Scholars arrived at the Heights. Thanks to the generosity of the Clark Foundation, Nathan Ayalew, Bryce Trumbull, and Marissa Garnica are now part of the Del Guercio family’s inspiring legacy. All members of the Class of 2028, these students will remain Del Guercio Scholars for their four years at BC, with three new students joining them from each incoming class.

Nathan, a first-generation student from Washington, DC, was inspired to pursue business by following in his father’s footsteps and plans to concentrate in finance. In his Portico class—a business ethics course required for all first-year students in the Carroll School—Nathan appreciates the way his professor, Rachel Spooner, facilitates open class discussions. Portico is just one example of what Joe calls the “balanced, broad-based education” that drew him to the Carroll School. Elsewhere on campus, Nathan participates in the Investment Banking Association and plans to get involved in other student organizations related to the business world, such as the Real Estate Club. Nathan is pleased to join his sister, a sophomore, at the Heights, and is enjoying making new connections.

A first-generation student and Massachusetts native, Bryce is another aspiring finance concentrator. The friendly, helpful community spirit at Boston College was a major deciding factor when Bryce chose to submit his Early Decision application, and he’s still feeling it today, bonding with classmates and others in his residence hall. In the classroom, his theology course is a particularly impactful part of his first-year curriculum, sparking him to think about the subject in a new way. Bryce is also eager to give back, having joined the University’s chapter of charity: water. In addition to embracing BC’s motto of “Eagles for others,” he also embodies Joe’s idea of philanthropy being “rewarded a hundred times over” when one person who benefits from another’s generosity decides to return the favor.

Marissa, coming to Boston College from New Jersey, is a first-generation student originally from Peru. Echoing Joe’s own appreciation for and commitment to his family, she speaks highly of her mother, who has worked tirelessly for Marissa and her siblings: “I’ve been given so many opportunities in my life that I’m so grateful for.” As a first-year, Marissa is eagerly exploring all of the options that BC has to offer, but is considering pursuing business law. Beyond the Carroll School, she enjoys learning about a breadth of topics—her Engaging Catholicism course offers a fresh perspective that differs from her experience at a Catholic high school. On campus, she is involved with the Organization of Latin American Affairs and is interested in the Jenks Leadership Program, which prepares undergraduate students to take on leadership roles in service to society.

Nathan, Bryce, and Marissa met with Joe on campus earlier in the fall semester. Struck by Joe’s story and his dedication to giving back, Marissa felt she was “seeing that all the hard work does pay off ... I’m on the right path; it’s going to work out for me.” Joe reflected that it was “one of the highlights of [his] career so far” to get to know the scholars and is “really excited” to see where their passions take them. “You can tell they’re going to make a big difference in their lives, their families, their communities.” ■



“People just began to trust that the program was going somewhere, and they wanted to get behind us.”

—Acacia Walker-Weinstein

Acacia Walker-Weinstein

In 2024, Boston College lacrosse appeared in its seventh-straight NCAA championship game and claimed its second title, along with its second ACC championship. Here, Head Coach Acacia Walker-Weinstein talks about the program's emergence, the players she recruits, and where she's set her sights.

BY KEVIN COYNE

Since you took the reins in 2013, BC lacrosse has experienced an incredible run of success. What are you most proud of?

The truth is the girls own this team, not me. A player-led team is every coach's dream; the coaches can strive to move forward, while the leadership and culture are carried over by the squad. I think that's what I'm most proud of—we're not dragging these girls along, they're carrying the team and sustaining success, year in and year out.

What's the identity of Boston College lacrosse?

What makes BC lacrosse special is the kind of kid who comes here. We recruit type A competitors who are never content: unselfish, high-motor, hard-working. We ask a lot of our girls, and you wouldn't believe what they sacrifice—of their social lives,

the chance for an ordinary college experience—to try and win a national championship.

They want to win, but they also want to crush in the classroom, have a hand in the community, and serve alongside their teammates. They also want to have fun. And when you have a whole team of well-rounded, balanced kids like that, good things happen.

How have you seen donor support impact the program?

There's been stages to it. As we started winning more and capturing the BC community's attention, people just began to trust that the program was going somewhere, and they wanted to get behind us.

Early on, I knew if we were going to get anywhere, we needed a better locker room to retain and attract top talent. A generous donation from someone in

our BC family allowed us to transform it. The most significant step was when a donor enabled us to pay [our] staff: we got [Associate Head Coach Jennifer Kent] into a full-time, paid position, and increased the pay of our second assistant [coach]. That really cemented our place as a legit program in the ACC.

Without the donations of the people around the country, and frankly, internationally, we wouldn't be able to win championships.

How do you keep the squad hungry after achieving so much?

These girls are deeply, intrinsically motivated. Singular moments of success are not what these girls are seeking. They want long-term success, consistent success, and they're always looking for more—like me. As long as there's still more out there for us, we're coming for it.

NEON FREIGHT TRAIN

"It was our first NCAA Final Four, playing Naval Academy at Gillette Stadium, and we were absolutely underdogs," says Coach Walker-Weinstein. "I wanted our girls to look up in the stands and see their families and friends—for connection and support—and I wanted something that said 'we're not afraid to be here.'"

"So we bought about 500 neon shirts and gave them out to all of the families.

Turns out some of the families also bought a few hundred shirts; before we knew it, there were thousands of people in neon yellow in the stands."

That night, BC edged out a 16–15 victory, advancing to the final. Since then, neon yellow has become a staple of BC lacrosse, unapologetic and loud in the stands at every game. ■



A First for Finance

The Seidner Department of Finance named in honor of University Trustee Marc Seidner '88, P'24, after a historic gift.



Seidner Department of Finance students
pictured in Fulton Hall with faculty members
Philip Strahan (third from left) and Nadya
Malenko (second from right), and Department
Chair Ronnie Sadka (far right).



BY DIANA GRIFFITH

It's long been one of the most popular majors—and the most popular of all minors—across all of Boston College. Within the Carroll School of Management, it claims the largest faculty—including the University's sole Nobel laureate. Now, thanks to a visionary gift from University Trustee Marc Seidner '88, P'24, the newly christened Seidner Department of Finance has made history as BC's first named department, joining an elite group of similarly distinguished departments nationwide.

The largest in Carroll School history, the gift is a recognition of the department's widespread reputation for excellence in research and teaching. It consistently ranks in the top 10 of *U.S. News & World Report's* undergraduate program surveys and, as the John and Linda Powers Family Dean Andy Boynton '78, P'13, proudly notes, it recently claimed the number nine spot worldwide in the prestigious *Shanghai Ranking*.

"We're ahead of Duke, Washington University, Cornell, Berkeley—that's pretty heady stuff," Boynton says. "That just shows where this department is now. You can see it in the quality of our faculty; they're the academic elite. And this gift is both a recognition of the department's growth and a way to continue and even accelerate that growth."

Leading the charge is the department's chair, Haub Family Professor Ronnie Sadka, whose vigorous and ongoing hiring effort has attracted dozens of top scholars and substantially raised the program's research profile. He also spearheaded efforts to introduce new management minors designed for non-management students, to extend the "tenure clock" to support tenure-track faculty's development, and to introduce new opportunities for finance faculty

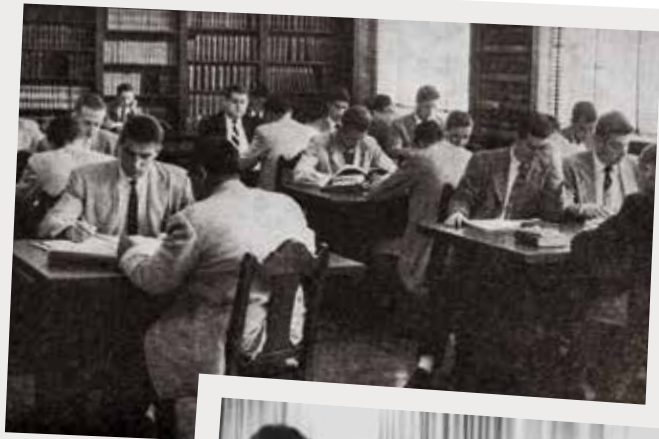


"My great hope and expectation is that the [Seidner Department of Finance] builds upon its proud history of matriculating outstanding students and equipping them to manage an increasingly complex global market system and environment while continuing to make a real difference in the world and in the lives of others."

—Marc Seidner '88, P'24, University Trustee

CHANGING WITH THE TIMES

BC's College of Business Administration opened in 1938 with just 72 undergraduates taking classes in downtown Boston. The fast-growing program moved to Fulton Hall in 1948, gained accreditation in 1956, and was named the Wallace E. Carroll School of Management in 1989.



1955
Finance and other business students hit the books in the school's library in Fulton Hall. (Guidepost, May 1955; John J. Burns Library)

1991
A finance class meets in Fulton Hall. (Sub Turri, 1991)





to share research with peers across BC and in other institutions.

Behind each initiative is the school's commitment to offer each student a rigorous, transformative academic experience, says Sadka: "We have the privilege of our students' attention for just four years, and that is a responsibility that we take very seriously when we think about teaching at the Carroll School."

From Good to Great

Finance has been a cornerstone of the Carroll School's curriculum, initially supported by a small but respected faculty focused on banking and corporate finance. The department grew slowly until the 2008 economic crisis, which led to a surge in student demand that, in turn, prompted a rapid expansion of both faculty and

58%
increase in number of
students concentrating in
finance from 2013 to 2022

#9
in *Shanghai Ranking*,
out of all undergraduate
finance departments
worldwide

39
faculty members, the
largest in the Carroll
School of Management

specialties. Today, the department boasts 39 full-time faculty members, up from 15 in 2008.

Philip Strahan, the John J. L. Collins, S.J., Chair in International Finance, credits Boynton, Sadka, and other administrators for managing the department's rapid growth so that it was strengthened instead of strained. "We started to bring in younger academics and we've broadened our areas of expertise so that we have real breadth and depth not only in the fundamentals but across new fields; take for example Paul Schmelzing, who is a financial historian, and Paul Romer's work in innovation and ideas."

One of these strategic early-career hires was Wargo Family Faculty Fellow Nadya Malenko, who joined in 2011 fresh from earning a doctorate at Stanford University. "When I first came

to BC, people told me it was a collegial group, but I didn't really appreciate what they meant," says Malenko, who recently returned to BC after teaching at another university for two years due to family reasons.

"We have something really unique here, people who truly respect each other and all work towards the same goal. Not that we don't disagree," she adds with a laugh. "But we talk, we listen, and we learn from one another. The group has such thoughtful and smart people, and it functions very well—which is more rare than you'd think."

Part of what sets the Seidner Department apart is its dedication to faculty development. The Carroll School supports research through internal grants, undergraduate and graduate research assistants, and frequent opportunities to discuss and refine research through seminars, conferences, and other scholarly gatherings. Likewise, the school offers an array of initiatives on teaching, including extensive peer

"We have the privilege of our students' attention for just four years, and that is a responsibility that we take very seriously."

—Haub Family Professor Ronnie Sadka, Chair of the Seidner Department of Finance, and Senior Associate Dean for Faculty

mentoring, professional development, and a number of awards and other opportunities for recognition.

The department's collaborative spirit is intentionally cultivated, says Sadka, which sets it apart from some academic environments. "Being part of a team is not something that's really taught in PhD programs, and not something that is rewarded at every university," says Sadka, noting that academia typically focuses only on solo activities such as writing, publishing, and presenting. "In our department, our faculty go to lunch together, they meet to talk shop together, they are

in constant communication and that is where it happens, the spark of an idea, a new research question, a novel course topic, an unexpected solution—that's part of what makes our department special."

The Role of Recognition

Recruiting and retaining the right faculty has never been an easy task, says Sadka, and the competition has only intensified as the department's stature has risen. "Look, we're a top-10 school, a top-10 finance department—we're on the map. And even so we still lose [faculty] to places like Berkeley, to Yale, and other Ivies."

That's where the recognition that comes with being the first named department at BC, and one of only a few nationally, can make a difference. "It sends a clear and resonating signal to other universities, potential faculty members, and future students," says Boynton. "Particularly with faculty, they want to work with great people, and they want to be great scholars. A gift like this shows them just how special this group is."

The gift is the latest in a lifetime of giving from Seidner and his family. The chief investment officer for non-traditional strategies at Pacific Investment Management Company (PIMCO), Seidner was inspired by his own BC experience and the department's evolution into "one of the premier undergraduate finance programs in the country and the world." Though an economics major himself, Seidner forged deep ties with the Carroll School early in his finance career, beginning as a volunteer



In 2019, Marc Seidner '88, P'24, served as moderator of the 14th Carroll School Finance Conference.



“We have something really unique here, people who truly respect each other and all work towards the same goal,” says Wargo Family Faculty Fellow Nadya Malenko, right, seen here chatting with Sadka and Philip Strahan, the John J. L. Collins, S.J., Chair in International Finance.

helping to plan and promote the school’s annual Finance Conference, now a flagship event that will celebrate its 18th year in May 2025.

“Here he was—very successful in the finance world—willing to roll up his sleeves and help put this conference together,” recalls Boynton. “We built an authentic working relationship, and that’s been the foundation for everything that’s come since, from his first endowed faculty fellowship to this extraordinary gift.”

In addition to broadly supporting the department, Seidner’s gift expanded his family’s faculty fellowship into the Seidner University Professorship—the first of its kind at Boston College—which is held by Nobel laureate Paul Romer.

Named, endowed faculty positions such as this have played a vital role in the department’s upward trajectory. Established by generous alumni, parents, and friends, these funds

provide high-performing faculty with the resources to advance their research and teaching agendas, as well as the heightened recognition that counts as currency among academics.

For Malenko, endowed fellowships enabled her to acquire necessary datasets, hire a graduate research assistant with whom she coauthored a paper, and travel to conferences to present and refine her research. Once published, her research attracted attention from both academic and mainstream media, and requests to speak to industry and policymaker groups.

For accomplished senior faculty such as Strahan, being appointed to a named, endowed professorship is a prestigious honor that recognizes their contributions to their field. “Having the Collins Chair has been a great honor, and it has absolutely helped advance my research,” says Strahan, who like most finance faculty has

been approached several times by universities seeking to lure him away. “Why did I stay? I’ve been treated so well here; I couldn’t see any reason to go somewhere else.”

While the Seidner Department of Finance has made remarkable strides, maintaining and building upon its success will require continued investment and support from the BC community. As Sadka notes, “Everything that makes our department great—from hiring outstanding faculty to supporting student research to updating our curriculum—it all requires financial support. That’s why the *Soaring Higher* campaign is so important for us and for all of BC. We need help from the BC community—we just can’t do it without their support.”

AUTHENTICALLY PAUL ROMER, SEIDNER UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR

A celebrated economist and winner of the Nobel Prize, Paul Romer is not in the business of hawking cryptocurrencies. But that's how it appeared when, in 2018, someone used his name and photo in a fake Twitter account. It wasn't the first time his identity had been spoofed online, and it got him to thinking: How can we safeguard our personal and professional reputations in the digital age—and what is at risk if we don't?

As someone who has always been drawn to the seemingly unsolvable, Romer began to envision a way forward.

"I partly started looking into this issue of digital signatures because I wanted a way to protect myself, but it's more than that," says Romer. "Whether it's a social media post, an email, or a research paper, you can't trust anything unless you know who is behind it, who vouches for it. Digital authenticity is critical to research, business, and to the transmission of ideas that propel growth."

Romer joined the BC faculty in 2023 as the Seidner University Professor—the first such honor at BC—in the Carroll School of Management's newly named Seidner Department of Finance. Through the school's Center for the Economics of Ideas, he is working with students and fellow faculty to develop next-generation tools that can meet the growing demand for digital authenticity.

Here, the professor, described by some as "academic royalty," explains the economics of ideas, shares his thoughts on trust, and opens up about his new home at the Heights.

Where did the idea for the Center for the Economics of Ideas come from?

The first step in harnessing the power of ideas is to recognize and then distribute them. When I first wrote about how different the economics of ideas are from the traditional economics of physical objects, people didn't get it. Now, everyone sees how important new ideas are to economic activity. At the center, we focus on the practical steps needed to get better

"Digital authenticity is critical to research, business, and to the transmission of ideas that propel growth."

—Paul Romer, Nobel Laureate

at producing and distributing ideas. Discovery is not the only bottleneck that limits progress; it may not even be the main one. Consider vaccines: a new discovery won't save lives unless lots of people get a shot in the arm, and that requires trust.

What drew you to Boston College?

As academics, we teach and we produce what we economists call public goods, which are research papers that become part of a scholarly dialogue. BC offered me the chance to shift towards creating a different kind of public good: open-source software, the kind of free software that can serve as the foundation for further research and economic activity.

And the Seidner University Professorship—it's more than financial support for my work, it's a mark of significance or achievement that I can use to then go out and bring more people into the effort. I was very pleased that [Dean] Andy Boynton and [Provost] David Quigley got what I'm doing and were willing to back me.





There's always a little bit of risk when you're affiliated with someone who's trying something new and different; it's much easier to stick on the well-trodden path. But people here at BC really get it, and it's great to have that support when you want to go out and innovate.

How does your work fit into a business school's finance department?


It's a very natural set of questions to ask here, because companies have long grappled with how large numbers of people can interact with financial and other information in safe, trustworthy ways. More generally, people in finance are active researchers, and I want to test these new tools in real research scenarios. My work draws on many different disciplines, and I've found the perfect home here in the Seidner Department, where I can collaborate with colleagues who are experts in business analytics, organizational behavior, and how people interact.

So much of your career is focused on the economics of ideas—what is your personal take on ideas?

One of the things I most want to convey to both my colleagues and my students is just how satisfying the world of ideas can be. It's so satisfying to learn something new—like at 63, I decided to learn how to write computer programs. It took a while, but I get great satisfaction out of coding these days. I also read history, and I spend quite a bit of time thinking about where humans are going in the next century or millennium. There's something nourishing about being committed to ideas, and it's too bad so many people get discouraged by rough patches in their own interactions with ideas. I hope my work helps more people discover not just how to contribute [to], but how to enjoy the world of ideas.

How do you relate to BC's Jesuit, Catholic identity?

Though I don't come from a Catholic background, I appreciate that people here are attentive to issues like purpose, mission, and reflection. These are often lost in the day-to-day shuffle but are crucial for protecting valuable things like science, and also just for living a good life. Far too many people fail to appreciate the personal benefits of committing to something larger than ourselves. If all we're committed to is ourselves, we end up undermining ourselves; we do things that don't work, we aren't happy, we're stuck on the treadmill. Reflection is part of how we watch out for that. I was pleased to see that here at Boston College, people are comfortable talking about purpose and mission, and as a result, they haven't lost it. And so, I'm happier here at BC than I've been in quite some time. ■

A portrait of Dean Katherine Gregory, a woman with shoulder-length brown hair and a warm smile. She is wearing a dark blue blazer over a maroon top. The background is a blurred office setting with framed pictures on the wall.

“I think we do an incredible job here at the Connell School in the area of student formation, helping our nurses deepen that sense of empathy and care for the whole person of their patients.”

—Dean Katherine Gregory
Boston College Connell School of Nursing

Beyond the Bedside

Ranked the nation's #9 undergraduate nursing program in 2024, Boston College's William F. Connell School of Nursing is charting a dynamic course with Dean Katherine Gregory at the helm. In the constantly shifting landscape of healthcare and higher education, she remains clear eyed in her focus: equipping Connell School students and faculty with everything they need to thrive.

BY KEVIN COYNE

It's often said that nursing is a kind of vocation. Such is certainly the case for Katherine Gregory, PhD'05, RN, FAAN, who, nearly four years ago, returned to the Connell School of Nursing to step into the office of dean. In a 30-year career spent at the crossroads of nursing, innovation, and education, she has blazed a trail characterized by deep care for her patients as well as the nurses she's trained. As dean of the Connell School, she's woven the same qualities into the student experience and programs at her alma mater.

"I was happy at my previous role at another mission-driven organization, making a difference in the nursing care that patients and families received," says Dean Gregory. "But I wasn't able to influence nursing education the way I am here. I wanted to be a part of that educational mission.

"Beyond that, of course, [were] the people. BC has a vibrant community of scholars—certainly in nursing and health—that extends across the entire University. It says a lot that we have faculty who have been with us for

over 20 years. Our faculty, staff, and students make this a wonderful place to work and be a part of the academic community."

When did you know you wanted to be a nurse?

When I was three years old I told my mother I was going to be a nurse. I grew up in a family of nurses—my grandmother, my aunts—and always knew I wanted to do something in healthcare. I love science, but I also love people, and so nursing is a great way to bring those together. But my real formative experience started in the seventh grade, when I became a candy striper (a hospital volunteer) during the summers at a hospital in Syracuse, New York, where I grew up. I helped the nurses take care of patients, and seeing them in their roles showed me nursing up close.

When it came time to choose a college major, I knew nursing was for me. It really is a calling that many of us don't necessarily choose; it chooses us. That was true for me, and I wouldn't change a thing.

What specific experiences from those summers drew you to nursing?

So many, but there's one I will carry with me forever. After the Armenian earthquake [in 1988], our hospital took care of some of the victims. There were two patients in particular, both children, whom I developed a really long-standing relationship with. The boy's name was Ara, and the girl's name was Rose. I helped take care of them throughout their hospitalization, and have kept in touch with them for many years after.

What makes a good nurse?

I think there are three main elements. The first is exceptional observational, assessment, and communication skills. An outstanding nurse is able to take in a lot of information, interpret it, and communicate it efficiently. The second is a kind of objective prioritization. Nurses have to reprioritize work all day long, so they have to be able to do that in real time as patients' conditions change and so on.



And the last is empathy—being able to see a circumstance from another’s perspective. I think we do an incredible job here at the Connell School in the area of student formation, helping our nurses deepen that sense of empathy and care for the whole person of their patients.

Those traits—empathy, prioritization, efficient analysis—seem difficult to teach. How does the Connell School approach that?

All of them stem from getting to know the patient and the family. Helping our nurses develop a holistic perspective of the patient, the family, or even the community that they’re caring for is instrumental in that regard.

What’s unique about Connell School students?

They’re incredibly academically talented, but they also fiercely want to be nurses, to use this education to impact human health and public health in a way that I think is really special.

Our students are so well integrated across campus. They take the full core curriculum, which doesn’t happen in every nursing program. It gives them exposure to philosophy and theology, the liberal arts, and the social sciences, ensuring they receive a comprehensive Jesuit education while also contributing to their excellence as nurses. I always say our nursing education is scientifically rigorous, but uniquely embedded in the liberal arts. I think

that’s why so many people want a Boston College nursing education.

What are some of the most pressing issues facing the field of nursing, as well as the Connell School?

In nursing education, it’s absolutely faculty. We have an access problem—meaning there are far more people who want to study nursing than we are able to provide access to, and that’s because we simply don’t have enough faculty to grow our programs.

And for good reason: most people seek nursing because they want to take care of patients, and it’s challenging to convince them to come back and teach. They don’t think about nursing as a path to teaching or research, which then creates a gap in the number of faculty who will help grow the population of nurses.

Additionally, in Boston we’re competing for faculty not just with other renowned universities, but also world-class hospitals, academic medical centers and labs, and other institutions.

There’s been much talk of the crisis in the nursing workforce. How does the Connell School equip students to cope with the stress and burnout that often accompany the work?

The COVID-19 pandemic showed us what was already starting to happen in hospitals and healthcare writ large: that

TAKING CARE OF THE CARETAKERS

How can donors make a difference at the Connell School?

Faculty retention is an area where donor support can make a profound impact. Fellowship funds, research funds, and endowed professorships are the coin of the realm in higher education and academia; they provide the resources expert faculty are seeking to stay in their roles and continue to flourish in the classroom. With the competition for high-caliber faculty so fierce, these opportunities make it possible to recruit and retain top-tier faculty, who then influence the education, academic programs, and student experience across our schools.

Likewise, the Dean’s Innovation Fund helps me retain faculty by investing in their research and scholarly work while also deepening the student experience. With these flexible resources, I can support a number of initiatives within the Connell School—from student immersion experiences to global health and community partnerships—which have proven invaluable for our students and faculty.

How can BC address the bottleneck in nursing education?

It’s about expanding resources and opportunities to encourage excellent nurses who are in practice to come back to graduate school, get advanced degrees, and eventually enter the

ranks of faculty. Anything we can do to defray the cost of that—through research support, scholarships, faculty fellowships—will make an enormous difference in overcoming this faculty shortage.

Moreover, we have to help nurses see the impact they can make by bringing their clinical experience and expertise into the classroom, where they can share that with future nurses. As an expert clinician, your impact is at the patient or family level—maybe 10 to 15 patients in a week. But when you come into the classroom, you’ll make an exponential impact in the lives of hundreds of students over the course of a semester, training generations

is, the work environment and demands of patient care are challenging, to put it mildly. Too often our nurses are burnt out, at the end of their rope. They need an opportunity to focus on self-care. We know [some ways] that nurses can find renewal [are] through Jesuit formation, through mentorship, and through wellness initiatives that we hope to bolster here at BC.

It would be one thing if we were just training nurses to enter practice, but our mission is to educate nurses with the knowledge and critical thinking they will need over the entire trajectory of their practice. BC nurses are unique in that they receive an education that includes how to be reflective, to be attentive, and to be caring for themselves so they can care for others.

To read about a gift that aids nurse wellness and resiliency, turn to page 25.

What are some of your proudest moments in your time in this role?

Without a doubt, seeing our students walk across the stage at Commencement and receive their degrees. It comes with such pride, because not only do we know how hard the students have worked, we also know that behind every student is a whole network of support from our faculty and staff in the Connell School—to say nothing of our students’ families, for many of whom this is the first college degree in their family. So

#1

Top ranked master’s nursing program in Massachusetts*

98%

First-time pass rate on National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX)

99%

Employed, in graduate school, or engaged in a service or fellowship program one year after graduation

* U.S. News & World Report Best Nursing Schools

we have such a deep sense of pride and gratitude on those Commencement days.

What upcoming programs or initiatives are you excited about?

We’re incredibly excited and have great enthusiasm for our newest major, global public health and the common

good. That really has brought a new energy to our school: we have new faculty who’ve come to us with very interdisciplinary backgrounds, which has advanced public health and nursing education at the undergraduate level. That program is housed here at the Connell School and partners with the Schiller Institute for Integrated Science and Society, collaborating very closely with our colleagues in Schiller to administer that major.

At the graduate level, we’ve long been distinguished for our advanced practice nursing education, our nurse practitioner programs, and our certified registered nurse anesthetist program (the Connell School remains the number one ranked graduate nursing program in Massachusetts). For the past two years, we’ve been working hard to develop a possible nurse midwifery program.

Over the past few years, I’ve seen us grow into a school that’s public health–, primary care–, and service-oriented. That’s not exactly a new development, but it’s increasingly important that we place a renewed emphasis on the public health imperatives that nursing serves. Whether it’s acute care, primary care, or community-based care, we need to focus on our mission of nursing for public health and the greater good.



of nurses who will go on to provide outstanding care for patients and families.

What role has philanthropy played in the Connell School’s continued ascent?

I see our donors, friends, and family as essential partners in our academic mission. Without the support of our whole community, we can’t provide our renowned mentorship and advising programs, offer our nursing students high-fidelity simulation, send them on global service learning opportunities, and so much more. ■

Beth Thompson

New VP for development's commitment to service makes her a perfect fit for Boston College

Beth Thompson wasn't looking for a new job. She had spent the last two decades in development at the Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences and "truly loved" it. So what drove her to consider, and eventually accept, the role of vice president for development at Boston College? As often happens in these cases, it was learning about BC's mission, especially how intellectual development combines with student formation.

A graduate of Smith College, Ball State University, and Simmons University, Thompson has a stellar record of building teams and relationships with university leadership. She believes strongly in service to others and making the world a better place, which makes her a perfect fit at BC.

From the perspective of an outsider, what are BC's biggest strengths?

I think we're at a time in our society where we need a lot more of that kind of search for truth, that self-reflection that's not just about chasing something but thinking "What am I meant to be doing and how am I meant to be of service?" It feels to me like BC's biggest strength is something I heard over and over again from people I've talked to, that it's steadfast in those values and in that mission.

And how does that align with your personal value system?

I've always felt it was important to give back to society. In my personal life, our family is very involved with our church. We do volunteer work there and also at times with the foster care system to provide support to families considering foster care and adoption.

Is giving back what inspired you to enter development?

I didn't know that I was going to be a fundraiser—that's not a field that people tell you about when you're growing up! When I went to college, I was amazed to meet so many students from vastly different life circumstances and to see how education could transform our lives and outcomes, our families and communities, and even the world. I can't imagine working in a different industry.

What are some commonalities you see among the BC alumni in your personal network?

They have been incredibly caring, intelligent, hardworking, focused on accomplishing what they're charged to accomplish, but without ego and without the need for fanfare.

Why did you decide to cross the Charles River and come to BC?

Up until now, I hadn't seen an opportunity that compelled me in a distinctive way [to leave Harvard]. But then I learned about this opportunity, and the mission, and the idea of intellectual development coupled with formation; with reflection ... [about] where you should be applying your gifts in the world, ... how you can serve others, and ... what gives you joy in doing that.

The steadfastness of BC's enduring values made me really want to understand how it actually happens in this institution. Because sometimes people talk about it, but it's not actually lived. I knew that it must be real because of what I had heard [about BC]. I'm excited to get to know the alumni community, the parent community, the faculty and staff, the team. BC is an incredible place and I'm eager to learn more about it! ■



GETTING TO KNOW BETH

HOMETOWN
Belmont, Massachusetts

YEARS IN HIGHER EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT
30

PREVIOUS ROLE
assistant dean of development, Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences

HOBBIES
volunteerism, audiobooks, long walks with her three bernedoodles: Annika, Lucy, and Olive

FAVORITE BC TRADITION
Marathon Monday—“I’ve done the Boston Marathon a couple times and as you run by Boston College, it’s amazing.”



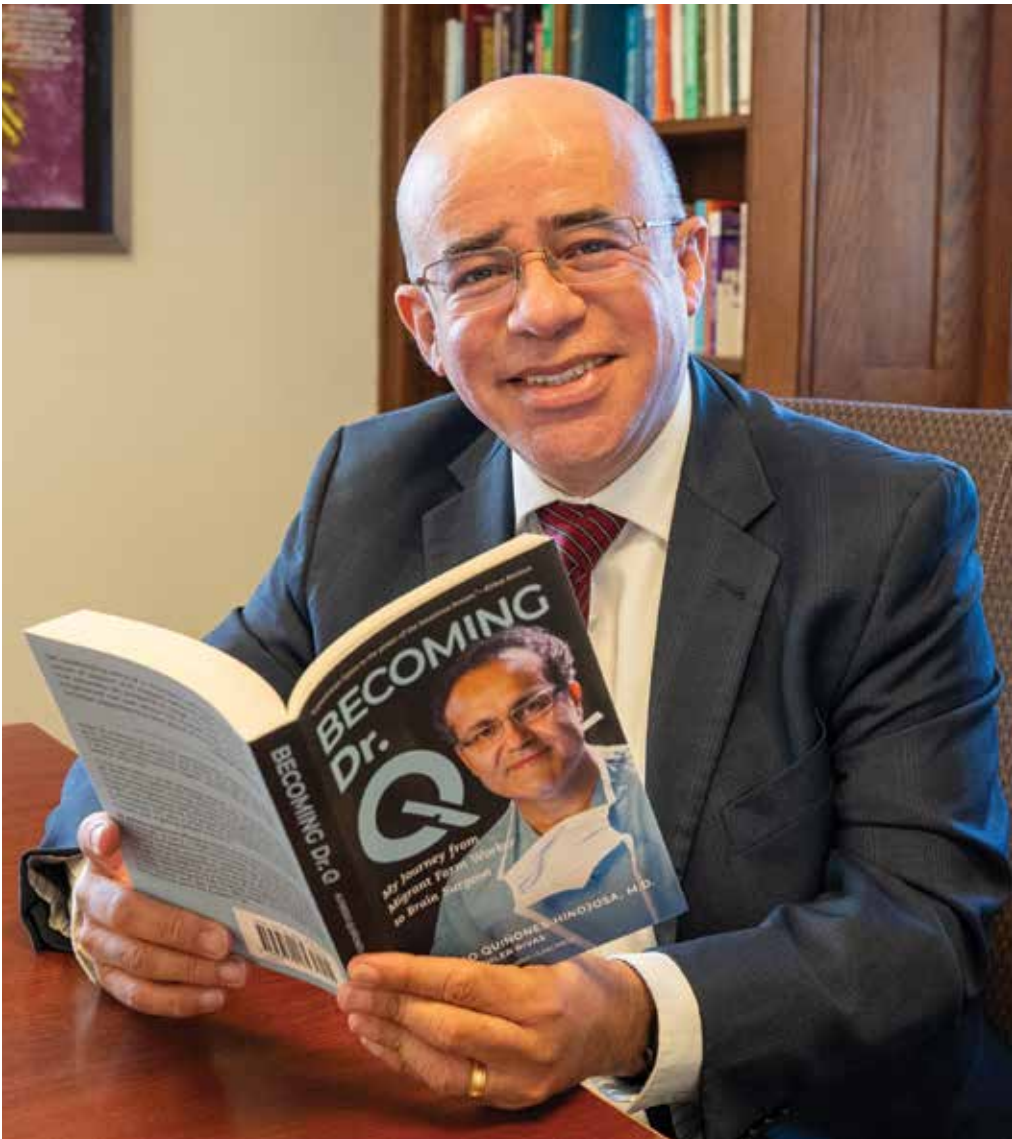
Sueño Americano

The legacy of William B. Neenan, S.J., at Boston College is beyond measure. For nearly 35 years, he personally curated the “Dean’s List” and shared it with the BC community. We honor and continue that treasured tradition through Beacon Book Club.

In this edition, Hosffman Ospino, MA’03, PhD’07, professor and chair of the department of religious education and pastoral ministry at the Gloria L. and Charles I. Clough School of Theology and Ministry, shares *Becoming Dr. Q: My Journey from Migrant Farm Worker to Brain Surgeon*.

“When I first read Alfredo Quiñones-Hinojosa’s autobiography, I was truly inspired. I could relate to his life story, marked by struggles and achievements that together shape his character,” says Ospino. “The story of this brain surgeon is the story of countless immigrants who arrive in this nation every year to make it stronger. Some do it in hospitals, schools, and labs. Others do it in fields, kitchens, and factories.”

At a time when nearly half of all U.S. Catholics self-identify as Hispanic, Ospino—a native Colombian—has conducted groundbreaking studies on Hispanic Catholicism and led several national projects, including *Haciendo Caminos: Theological Education for New Generations of U.S. Latino/a Catholics*. He is also director of *Nuevo Momento: Leadership and Capacity Building for Ministerial Organizations Serving Hispanic Catholics*, funded by a \$15 million grant from Lilly Endowment.



Hosffman Ospino, professor and chair of the department of religious education and pastoral ministry at the Gloria L. and Charles I. Clough School of Theology and Ministry.

“I am an immigrant who has lived in the United States most of my life. It is in this nation where I have become the person that I am today: husband, father, theologian, professor, researcher, and someone who strives every day to make this country better. I do so as an immigrant in a nation of opportunities,” reflects Ospino.

He continues: “Immigrants are integral to the fabric of U.S. society. There are countless Dr. Q’s in our schools and neighborhoods ready to live up to their potential with the appropriate support. Dr. Q was blessed to have a strong support network that believed in him and helped him to arrive where he is today. I am similarly blessed. First as a student, now as a professor, Boston College helped me write my life story.” ■





SOARING HIGHER

The Campaign for Boston College

Goal
\$3 billion

Raised as of
February 28, 2025:

Financial Aid
\$495 million

Academics
\$625 million

Student Life
\$521 million

GOAL: \$1.1 billion

\$1.15 billion

\$750 million

RECENT NOTABLE GIFTS

Cordani Family Scholarship

Boston College is proud that 3,000-plus alumni and 85 faculty and staff have served our country as members of the United States military. Additionally, more than 150 veterans are current BC students at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. Supporting this important segment of the BC community is a priority of **Sherry L. and David M. Cordani, P'25, '28**, who have established a current-use fund that will provide need-based financial aid for qualified undergraduates, with a preference for veterans.

"This scholarship has allowed several of our undergraduate student veterans and active duty students the opportunity to get a Jesuit education at Boston College when they otherwise would have had to choose another school," says Mike Lorenz, director for military and veteran support. "The measure of the scholarship's impact is not just in the numbers, but in the classrooms and labs where veteran students can focus on contributing to this community and to others."

Tapley Fund for Resilience and Mentorship in Nursing

Established by **Susan '00 and Andrew Tapley**, this fund supports the William F. Connell School of Nursing's efforts to address the resilience of nurses and provides mentorship and intentional wellness initiatives as a solution for sustaining them.

"It would be one thing if we were just training nurses to enter practice, but our mission is to educate nurses with the knowledge and critical thinking they will need over the entire trajectory of their practice. We do this through a scientifically rigorous nursing education that is embedded in the liberal arts," says Katherine Gregory, Dean of the William F. Connell School of Nursing. "BC nurses are unique in that they receive an education that includes how to be reflective, to be attentive, and to be caring for themselves so they can care for others."

To read more from Dean Gregory, turn to page 16.

Frank Faggiano Strength and Conditioning Space

A native of Manchester, New Hampshire, the late Frank Faggiano '62, P'96, was the starting third baseman for the Boston College baseball team, leading the Eagles to back-to-back College World Series appearances in 1960 and 1961. He was also the founder of the Diamond Club, which now bears his name. To honor Frank's tremendous dedication to the program, **Lindsay and Mark A. Faggiano '96** have made a gift to BC Athletics to create the Frank Faggiano Strength and Conditioning Space within the Pete Frates Center at Harrington Athletics Village.

"Coached by the great Eddie Pellagrini, Frank Faggiano carried out the mission of 'always make it better for the next guy.' Now Frank and this mantra are permanent parts of the Frates Center," says Todd Interdonato, head coach of BC baseball. "When first speaking with Mark and Lindsay about their vision for this gift, it was clear they wanted to keep Frank at the forefront, which was inspiring to hear. When the decision was made to create a space to help better our players' daily routines as students, develop them as athletes, and properly honor Frank, it was the perfect match." ■

(facing page) In the second year after its public launch, Boston College celebrated the *Soaring Higher* campaign with alumni on both coasts and even overseas. Events in Southern California, New York City, and London featured remarks from University President William P. Leahy, S.J., a faculty panel, and a social gathering for the Eagles in attendance. Additional regional offerings are planned for the coming years.

BOSTON COLLEGE

OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT
CADIGAN ALUMNI CENTER
140 COMMONWEALTH AVENUE
CHESTNUT HILL, MA 02467

PRESORTED
NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
BOSTON, MA
PERMIT NO. 55294

