Boston University Office of the Provost

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

TO:	Boston University Faculty and Staff
FROM:	Jean Morrison, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer
DATE:	November 1, 2019
SUBJECT:	Appointment of Professor Azer Bestavros as Associate Provost for Computing & Data Sciences; Call for Nominations for the New Director of the Hariri Institute

This past summer, I announced a search for the inaugural Associate Provost for Computing & Data Sciences, who will lead the Faculty of Computing & Data Sciences, a newly-created, interdisciplinary academic unit. We've spent the last few months engaged in a rigorous review process, and after having evaluated many very strong candidates, I am delighted to announce that **Professor Azer Bestavros** has agreed to take on this vital new leadership role, effective December 1, 2019.

As Associate Provost for Computing & Data Sciences, Professor Bestavros will work closely with me, senior academic leaders, and faculty in establishing the policies, operating principles, and strategic issues that will guide the initial efforts of the Faculty of Computing & Data Sciences. Slated to be housed in the new Center for Computing & Data Sciences, this new unit will enable BU to build a collaborative and interdisciplinary interface between our traditional academic units and the faculty and students interested in computing and data sciences. Professor Bestavros will lead the unit and serve as a member of the Council of Deans.

Professor Bestavros is the William Fairfield Warren Distinguished Professor in the Department of Computer Science, Founding Director of BU's Rafik B. Hariri Institute for Computing and Computational Science & Engineering, and Chair of the BU Data Science Initiative. A member of the BU faculty since 1991 and past chair of Computer Science, Professor Bestavros is recognized as both a faculty leader and an international thought leader in the rapidly evolving nexus of computing and data science fields. His research in networking and distributed systems led to pioneering work on web push caching protocols for content distribution networks, self-similar Internet traffic characterization, game-theoretic cloud resource management, and safety certification of networked systems and software. His currently active projects are focused on design, development, and real-world deployment of scalable secure Multi-Party Computation in support of privacy-preserving big-data analytics. As of this year, funded by over $40M from government and industry sponsors, his research has yielded 19 PhD theses, eight issued patents, two startups, and hundreds of refereed papers with over 20,000 citations.

Professor Bestavros has also served as co-chair of BU's Council on Educational Technology & Learning Innovation and of the Task Force to Envision to Envision Data Science at Boston

University, and has led BU's role in the conception of the Massachusetts Green High-Performance Computing Center, co-chairing its research, education, and outreach mission since 2010. In addition to his designation in 2017 as William Fairfield Warren Distinguished Professor, the University's highest distinction for senior faculty, Professor Bestavros is a past recipient of BU's United Methodist Scholar/Teacher of the Year award and co-recipient of the ACM Sigmetrics Inaugural Test of Time Award. He holds bachelor's and master's degrees in computer science from Alexandria University, Egypt, and a master's and doctorate in computer science from Harvard University.

Professor Bestavros's credentials and body of research, his record of strong, collaborative leadership within the University and internationally, and his recognition of BU's transformative potential in this area make him an ideal fit for this newly created position.

Please join President Brown and me in congratulating Professor Bestavros on his appointment and in wishing him well in this leadership role. We look forward to working with him as he engages people across the University in building the new Faculty of Computing & Data Sciences. Our next step will be to launch three committees that will provide advice on key policy and strategy questions for the Faculty of Computing & Data Sciences: one on faculty appointments, one on curriculum, and one on opportunities to add other programs or capacities into the new academic unit.

With Professor Bestavros moving into this new role, we are now seeking nominations and applications for the position of **Director of the Hariri Institute for Computing and Computational Science & Engineering**. The Director provides leadership for all aspects of this interdisciplinary, University-wide center whose mission is to *initiate*, *catalyze*, and *propel* collaborative, interdisciplinary research initiatives for a better society by promoting discovery and innovations through the use of computational and data-driven approaches, and advancing computing sciences inspired by challenges in engineering; social, health and management sciences; and the arts.

Founded in 2012, the Institute includes centers, initiatives, and labs that work in collaboration to support a portfolio of ambitious research projects and forward-looking educational and outreach initiatives. Since its inception, the Institute has experienced substantial growth in size, scope, and impact, fueled by the momentum of its founding centers for research in computational sciences and cybersecurity and by the energy of the various initiatives and industrial partnerships it has developed, including the Cloud Computing Initiative, the Artificial Intelligence Research initiative, the Digital Health Initiative, the Cyber Security, Law, and Society Alliance, and the Red Hat Inc. and Honda Research Institutes Collaboratories at BU. More than 12 rounds of seed funding totaling over $1.3M have incubated research spanning nearly all of BU's schools and colleges. As a direct result of its investments, since 2012 the Institute has secured in excess of $24M in government funding and $25M in direct and in-kind industrial funding for its projects and initiatives, and has enabled in excess of $72M of sponsored research across BU.

The Director of the Institute is appointed by the University Provost for a renewable 5-year term. The Director reports to the Vice President and Associate Provost for Research, reflecting the function of the Institute as a university-wide research organization. As the head of the Institute, and in collaboration with the Associate Provost for Data Sciences, the Director takes primary

responsibility for the strategic direction of the Hariri Institute, and for all of its executive decisions. The Director represents the Institute on various university committees and coordinates its plans with university units and programs as appropriate, including consultation with deans of cognate schools and colleges. The Vice President and Associate Provost for Research oversees the budget of the Institute, and convenes periodic meetings between the Director and cognate deans to assess the activities of the Institute, and to leverage and support the strategic plans of the Institute as they relate to those of cognate schools and colleges.

The next Director of the Hariri Institute will have the opportunity to lead the Institute by exercising intellectual leadership and collaborative problem solving in an environment of shared decision making. Responsibilities of the Director include bringing groups of faculty together to pursue large-scale collaborations and sponsored projects; acting as a resource for junior faculty to advise and connect them with prospective collaborators and resources; managing Institute signature programs, including the Research Incubation Award and the Junior Faculty Fellows programs; overseeing all core programs and activities that are the purview of Hariri Institute centers and initiatives; working with faculty members on resourcing new initiatives that they want to incubate at the Institute; working with the leadership of other university centers and programs on development and oversight of joint programs and projects; developing the budget and prioritizing the allocation of shared resources across the centers, initiatives, and programs of the Hariri Institute; overseeing direct reports as well as the core administrative staff that supports all of the Institute centers and initiatives; and engaging the Institute's Steering Committee and its External Advisory Board in strategic planning.

Competitive candidates will have:

- Excellent scholarly credentials;
- Experience in a significant administrative role that includes budgetary oversight;
- The ability to articulate a compelling vision for the Institute;
- Demonstrated ability to work collaboratively with colleagues from different academic fields and with administrative units around the University; and,
- A commitment to creating and sustaining a vibrant, diverse community of students, staff and faculty.

Candidates must be associate or full professors, with a preference for the latter. The appointment is for a 5-year renewable term, beginning December 1, 2019. Applications should include a CV and a brief letter summarizing the candidate's interest in and qualifications for the position.

Please submit nominations and applications to Sarah Flanagan, Office of Research (flanagan@bu.edu). Please direct all inquiries about the position to Gloria Waters, Vice President and Associate Provost for Research (gwaters@bu.edu).

Cc: Robert A. Brown
       Gloria Waters