



Boston University Graduate Program in
Urban Biogeoscience & Environmental Health

EXTERNAL ADVISORY BOARD MEETING EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

November 9, 2020

The Fall 2020 BU URBAN External Advisory Board Meeting held on November 9, 2020 convened 26 people over Zoom, including External Advisory Board Members, BU URBAN leadership, members of BU's upper administration, university partners, URBAN trainees, and our external evaluation team. During the meeting, we (1) oriented new board members to the BU URBAN Program, (2) facilitated connections across the BU URBAN leadership team, professional evaluation team, upper administration at BU, and URBAN trainees, and (3) generated ideas for leveraging the talents of external advisory board members going forward.

We provide below an overview of the meeting, including updates and key takeaways, action items, and a call for continued support and guidance. We invite everyone, including External Advisory Board Members, university leaders, and program evaluators to join us in strengthening BU URBAN in the years to come

ATTENDEES

- **Jacqueline Ashmore**, Exec. Director, Institute for Sustainable Energy
- **Tarek Azzam**, UC Santa Barbara, Evaluation Team Lead
- **Dennis Carlberg**, Assoc. Vice President, BU Sustainability
- **Kathy Fallon Lambert**, Director, Science-Policy Exchange
- **Newsha Ghaeli**, President & Cofounder, Biobot Analytics
- **Lucy Hutyra**, BU URBAN Assoc. Director
- **Malika Jeffries-El**, Assoc. Dean, Graduate School of Arts & Sciences
- **Natalie Jones**, UC Santa Barbara, Evaluation Team
- **Shawn Jones**, Technical Advisor, Advanced Energy Initiatives, Center for Sustainable Energy
- **Daniel Kleinman**, Assoc. Provost for Graduate Affairs
- **Evan Kuras**, BU URBAN Program Manager
- **Jon Levy**, BU URBAN Assoc. Director
- **Katharine Lusk**, Founding Exec. Director, Initiative on Cities
- **Zeyneb Magavi**, Co-executive Director, HEET
- **Daniel O'Brien**, Director, Boston Area Research Initiative
- **Maria Belen Power**, Assoc. Executive Director, GreenRoots
- **Rishi Reddi**, Director of Environmental Justice, MA Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs
- **Michael Sorenson**, Assoc. Dean of the Faculty, Natural Sciences
- **Pamela Templer**, BU URBAN Director
- **Crystal Williams**, Vice President, Assoc. Provost for Community & Inclusion
- **Quinton Zondervan**, Cambridge City Councillor



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UPDATES AND KEY TAKEAWAYS

BU URBAN Outcomes and Progress

26 current trainees

20 academic publications in 2019-2020

In addition...

- New research collaborations among BU faculty resulting in grants and publications
- New efforts to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion: interdisciplinary recruitment cluster, Broadening Participation Award, and Mission, Vision, Values and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion statements

Trainee Presentations

Five trainees presented their ideas for internships on topics including soil health (Sarah Garvey), wastewater epidemiology (Beth Haley), extreme heat (Leila Heidari), air pollution (Arden Radford), and energy-health (Yasmin Romitti). Board members suggested promising connections with recently funded grants, MA state agencies, and various local and national organizations.

Evaluation Update

The evaluation team completed a survey of faculty and will soon launch surveys for trainees and for internship hosts. The team found that BU URBAN leadership is responsive to trainee and faculty feedback through structural change.

EAB and BU Leadership Perspectives

Participants appreciated the value of BU URBAN as being interdisciplinary, solutions-oriented, experiential, and connected to work happening on the ground in multiple communities.

Going Forward, We Welcome Your Help in the Following Areas...

- Creative ideas for institutionalizing BU URBAN (or its constituent parts) beyond our NSF grant
- Connections to organizations that may be interested in hosting BU URBAN interns
- Involvement in workshops and panel discussions in Spring and Summer 2021
- Promotion of BU URBAN for purposes of recruiting a new and diverse group of trainees and for fundraising
- Stay in touch and see you in the spring! We welcome your input throughout the year

18 public talks and articles in 2019-2020

17 competitive grants awarded since Fall 2018

13 completed internships since Fall 2018

ACTION ITEMS

URBAN Internships:

Consider creating a website to facilitate matches between trainees and partner organizations (see MassCEC Clean Energy Internship Program); consider recurring slots at organizations committed to hosting trainees; build new partnerships with industry and startup companies (e.g., Greentown Labs); recognize that internships are a privilege and prioritize recruitment of students that are BIPOC or come from environmental justice communities.

Long-term Sustainability:

Connect with faculty and staff working on the implementation of the BU strategic plan, especially with efforts related to interdisciplinarity and new funding models; look for synergies with the Sustainability Research Institute; explore opportunities for major gifts or other funding for internships (e.g., foundations, private sector)



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