

THE CAMPAIGN

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New Alumni Center Is on the Drawing Board

WHEN MANY ALUMS THINK OF BU's most cherished buildings, the Castle is near the top of the list. The distinctive mansion at Bay State Road and Granby Street marked its 100th anniversary last year.

For almost three decades, the Castle was the home of BU's presidents. Marriages, Scarlet Key ceremonies, and bar mitzvahs have been celebrated in its spacious rooms, and at least three Hollywood movies were filmed in the building, which blends Tudor, Georgian Revival, and Classical Revival architecture. In the Pub, popular with students, staff, and faculty alike, students have forged friendships, conquered courses, and laid out life plans.

Today, the Castle is well on its way to becoming the Alumni Center for BU's 300,000-plus graduates. The cost of the conversion is estimated at \$7.6 million, with \$5 million of that amount projected to come from philanthropic support. Several major gifts have already been received, among them \$1 million from trustee Sid Feltenstein (COM'62).

Wayne J. Positan (CAS'70), president of the Boston University Alumni Association, says the need for such a center is clear. "We have always lacked a central place on campus for alumni to gather, whether it's for a scheduled meeting or simply to hang out for a few hours," he says. "We'll have a home on campus,

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Project will
transform
100-year-old Castle

and I think that's terrific."

Converting the Castle into an alumni center is not a new idea. Shortly after his arrival at BU, President Robert A. Brown noted the relative dearth of facilities designed for alumni activities and wondered if the storied mansion might be used for that. "Now," says Brown, "thanks to trustee Sid Feltenstein and many other generous donors, it's finally coming together."

"I am pleased that the University is making this commitment to its alumni, who every year are becoming more important to BU," says Feltenstein, a pioneer in the restaurant and franchising industries. "And at the same time, I'm proud that the alumni are helping to make it possible." His gift will be recognized through the renaming of the Castle's first floor in honor of his family.

Steve Hall, vice president for alumni relations, says many aspects won't change dramatically. The exterior will be cleaned, the ground-floor spaces restored, and the Pub upgraded, with a commercial kitchen and new indoor and outdoor seating areas.

But some of the work will present a challenge for Finegold Alexander Architects, the firm chosen for the project, Hall says. The entire building must be made accessible to the disabled, and all of the mechanical systems need to be replaced. The upper floors will be transformed to provide meeting spaces and other resources for alums. A major new element will be lunchtime dining for alumni, faculty, and staff.

"We're going to save what's great about the Castle and fix what needs fixing," Hall says. "We're going to make a wonderful old building more useful and appealing to our alumni, and to the entire BU community."

JEFF CRUIKSHANK

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Peter J. Levine Career Development Professorship Awarded



Brian Kulis is an expert in computer visualization applications.

ENG's Kulis makes it easier to analyze Big Data

TO BRIAN KULIS, ADVANCES IN MACHINE LEARNING AND ARTIFICIAL intelligence bring with them the opportunity to mesh theory with real-world applications, like driverless cars and computers that can describe aloud the objects in front of them.

"You want computers to be able to recognize what they are seeing in images and video," says Kulis, a College of Engineering assistant professor of electrical and computer engineering. "For instance, can it recognize all the objects in a picture? Or a more difficult problem would be, can it look at a video and describe in English what is happening in the video? That is a major application area for machine learning."

Kulis' expertise, along with his research in computer vision systems and other applications, brought him to BU last fall, and has earned him the University's inaugural Peter J. Levine Career Development Professorship, being awarded annually to rising junior faculty in the electrical and computer engineering department. The professorship's three-year stipend supports scholarly and laboratory work. It was established by a gift from Peter J. Levine (ENG'83), a partner at the Silicon Valley venture capital firm Andreessen Horowitz and a part-time faculty member at Stanford University's Graduate School of Business.

Kulis is a rising star in the machine learning field and the Levine professorship speaks to BU's recognition of his achievements thus far, says Kenneth R. Lutchen, dean of ENG. Lutchen says Kulis, who last year received a National Science Foundation Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) Award for research into machine learning systems, is expected to be a crucial faculty member of ENG's new master's degree specialization in data analytics.

"We think it will be one of the most popular specializations we have, and it will be accessible not just to students in this department, but also to biomedical, mechanical engineering, and systems engineering students who want to have this same specialization. Brian's expertise is perfectly aligned with teaching this," Lutchen says. **MICHAEL S. GOLDBERG**