Boston University Office of the Provost

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TO: Boston University Faculty and Staff

FROM: Kenneth Lutchen, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer ad interim
Gloria Waters, Vice President and Associate Provost for Research

DATE: May 6, 2024

SUBJECT: Celebrating BU's Award-Winning Faculty; Recipients of the 2024 Gitner Family Award for Innovation in Teaching with Technology and the University Provost's Scholar-Teacher of the Year Award

Each spring, we have the pleasure of honoring BU faculty whose work has been recognized through an impressive roster of national and international distinctions, as well as announcing the recipients of two of our most prestigious University-wide teaching awards: the **Gerald and Deanne Gitner Family Award for Innovation in Teaching with Technology** and the **Boston University Provost's Scholar-Teacher of the Year Award**.

First, we want to congratulate the 127 faculty members who this past year were recognized nationally and globally with major honors. In diverse fields that span the arts and humanities, sciences, business, mathematics, the health fields, and engineering, these faculty have been honored for their pursuit of foundational new knowledge and solutions to societal challenges. They have been awarded with Fulbright, MacArthur, and Simons fellowships; elected by their peers to the National Academy of Inventors and American Law Institute among a host of prestigious scholarly and industrial societies; and received National Science Foundation CAREER Awards, US Department of Energy Early Career Research Awards, National Institutes of Health Outstanding Investigator Awards, and many other significant awards from federal and private funding agencies. We invite you to visit our website for a full list of this year's honorees, as well as those we've recognized for honors going back to 2018.

Next, we are delighted to announce the recipients of the 2023-2024 Gitner Family Award for Innovation in Teaching with Technology and University Provost's Scholar-Teacher of the Year Award. Each year, these awards give us a chance to recognize some of the most innovative and creative members of our academic community and the outstanding work they are doing to advance the practice of teaching.

2024 Gerald and Deanne Gitner Family Award for Innovation in Teaching with Technology

Supported through the generosity of BU alumnus Gerald Gitner (CAS '68), his wife Deanne, and their family, the Gitner Award recognizes the faculty member or team that best exemplifies innovation in teaching by use, development, or adaptation of technology. The award celebrates innovation that results in positive learning outcomes for undergraduate students and that is recognized or adopted by faculty colleagues within or outside Boston University. The recipient of this year's Gitner Family Award for Innovation in Teaching with Technology is **Dr. Bobak Nazer, Associate Professor of Electrical & Computer Engineering, College of Engineering.**

Professor Nazer has been cited for his efforts to make the College of Engineering's required – and especially challenging – Probability, Statistics, and Data Science for Engineers course more accessible for students through the creation of a novel, pedagogically supported pre-lecture video series and flipped classroom model.

Prior to Professor Nazer's innovation, students across sections had drastically different course experiences. Recognizing that students and faculty lacked equitable access to quality learning materials and support, Professor Nazer developed a 49-episode video series for students across all sections that use animated handwriting for text and illustrations to create visual engagement, while remaining concise with varying speed markers for concepts, definitions, and examples to maintain student attention. Recognizing how fast the videos move, Professor Nasser created accompanying PDF files and formula sheets to assist students with note taking for each concept. Each video's production was intentional and iterative, taking up to 20 hours to create and being re-worked following feedback from students in the course.

The new resources and altered course design were enthusiastically received by students, while the video series has now been viewed over 120,000 times in over 50 countries and recognized with a feature in the American Society for Engineering Education's *Prism Magazine*.

For Professor Nazer's leadership and thoughtful development of exciting new learning tools to support engineering students, we are delighted to confer to him the 2024 Gerald and Deanne Gitner Family Award for Innovation in Teaching with Technology.

2024 Boston University Provost's Scholar-Teacher of the Year Award

The University Provost's Scholar-Teacher of the Year Award recognizes outstanding scholars who excel as teachers inside and outside the classroom and who contribute to the art and science of teaching and learning. The embrace of this dual role – scholar and teacher – is at the heart of Boston University's mission, and this year it is our pleasure to recognize **Dr. Fallou Ngom, professor of anthropology in the College of Arts & Sciences, as our Scholar-Teacher of the Year**.

Professor Ngom has been cited for his ability to continually produce seminal knowledge and fresh perspectives in the Ajami literatures of Africa, while bringing that same innovation and enrichment to the learning environments he creates for students. Professor Ngom is among the world's leading scholars in Ajami texts and is credited with helping shape the fields of African studies and Islam in Africa. The author of numerous acclaimed volumes, Professor Ngom leads the African Ajami Library, the largest digital archive of its kind in America, which has logged more than 637,000 visitors globally since its founding. He maintains an active research program

and has garnered extensive honors, including a 2011 Guggenheim Fellowship and the 2017 Melville J. Herskovitz Prize for best scholarly work in African studies.

Professor Ngom likewise remains grounded in his work as an educator and mentor for Boston University students. Students repeatedly speak to the time and care he invests in their development both in and beyond the classroom, noting his passion for melding his teaching with the themes and materials from his ongoing research and cultivating an environment of constructive feedback, exploration of unfamiliar ideas, and academic excellence. Since arriving at BU, Professor Ngom has created 11 popular courses, reimagined two others, and developed a hybrid dual literacy training model, the only one of its kind in the country.

For his pioneering efforts in his discipline through groundbreaking scholarship, creative course development, and unstinting dedication to his students, we are delighted to present the 2024 Provost's Scholar-Teacher of the Year Award to Professor Fallou Ngom.

If the award winners we salute today demonstrate anything, it is the caliber of talent we have at Boston University and the imagination, diversity of approach, and commitment to excellence they bring to their craft. Please join us in congratulating these members of our community for their outstanding efforts and accomplishments over the last year. We would also like to give special thanks to the Provost's Faculty Teaching Awards Committee, whose membership is listed below, for their many hours of work helping to evaluate and identify this year's Gitner and Scholar-Teacher of the Year winners.

Provost's Faculty Teaching Awards Committee

Chair:
Amie Grills, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Affairs

Members:
Toni Armstrong, PhD candidate, Graduate School of Arts & Sciences

Stephanie Byttebier, Senior Lecturer in Rhetoric, College of General Studies (2023 Metcalf Award for Excellence in Teaching recipient)

Joanna Davidson, Associate Professor of Anthropology, College of Arts & Sciences (2023 Metcalf Award for Excellence in Teaching recipient)

Karin Hendricks, Associate Professor and Chair of Music Education, College of Fine Arts (2023 Metcalf Cup and Prize recipient)

Veronica Hui, Undergraduate Student, College of Engineering (2023 Dean Elsbeth Melville Scholarship winner)

Grace Kim, Clinical Associate Professor of Counseling Psychology & Applied Human Development, Wheelock College of Education & Human Development (2023 Provost's Scholar-Teacher of the Year Award recipient)

Renato Mancuso, Associate Professor of Computer Science, College of Arts & Sciences (2023 Gitner Award for Innovation in Teaching with Technology recipient)

Alexis Pfalzgraf, Undergraduate Student, Frederick S. Pardee School of Global Studies (2023 Harold C. Case Scholarship winner)

Romy Ruukel, Interim Executive Director, BU Digital Learning & Innovation; Director, The Shipley Center

Russell Stone, Assistant Provost for Academic Assessment

<u>Staff:</u>
Kristen Vellinga, Senior Administrative Coordinator for Undergraduate Affairs, Office of the Provost