



5 Questions

with

REV. MICHAEL MCFARLAND, SJ

Q: As you begin your term as Board Chair, there is a new slate of members joining as well. What opportunities does this present?

We have seven extraordinarily talented and accomplished trustees joining this year, on top of five equally impressive ones last year. They bring expertise in a wide variety of fields, including finance, media, marketing, law, strategic planning, and information technology. They also have an inspiring passion for BC High and deep ties to the community. Of equal importance, they add much-needed diversity to the school's leadership. They will help us provide guidance and advice on all the important issues facing the school this year and beyond. The previous board helped stabilize the school and put it in a solid position after a difficult period of transition. We are now ready to move forward and realize the tremendous potential BC High has.

Q: The breadth of your experience in Jesuit schools is second-to-none, with a history of being in leadership roles during remarkably difficult times. What is it that inspires you about joining BC High during the unprecedented climate that we face today with the global pandemic and Black Lives Matter movement?

A time of crisis tests the character and values of individuals and organizations. The current situation, as difficult as it is, is an opportunity for BC High to show what it stands for. Through the pandemic and the accompanying economic collapse, the faculty, administration and staff have shown extraordinary dedication, creativity and commitment to caring for students and their families by finding ways to maintain high quality education, keep everyone safe and help those in need. I am confident that that will continue through this year.

As painful and conflicted as it has been, I firmly believe that we are in a moment of grace with the Black Lives Matter Movement and the events leading to it. It has forced us to confront our long and sinful history of racism and injustice in our country, in which, to be honest, BC High has shared. We have a moral obligation to respond by working to change the attitudes and structures that have sustained those injustices. The board and the administration are fully committed to taking decisive action to make BC High a place where all people are welcomed, respected and treated equally. We want to be a model for what it takes to build a just society. Our Jesuit mission demands this of us.

Q: What do you see as the short-term priorities for the Board?

We need to support President Regan and her administration as they work to enhance the quality of the academic programs and the student experience while keeping everyone safe through the COVID-19 crisis; create and execute an effective plan for diversity, equity and inclusion; strengthen enrollment; and build a sustainable short-and-long-term budget. At the same time, we need to work with them to create a compelling vision for the future of BC High and build a strategic plan around it.

Q: And, thinking more strategically at the long-range view, what does BC High look like in the future?

Our goal is for BC High to be the standard-setter for Catholic secondary education in Eastern Massachusetts for its rigorous academics, its commitment to the education of the whole person, mind, body and spirit, its global horizon and its commitment to the community in an urban setting. We can achieve that with a single-minded focus on our Jesuit mission.

Q: How can our alumni, parents, and friends support the Board, the administration, and most importantly, our students?

BC High is a blessed with a loyal and passionate community of alumni, students, parents and friends. They are one of our greatest assets; and they will be an indispensable partner in achieving our goals. Their ideas and experiences are welcome as part of our deliberations about the future of the school. That said, they also have to understand that the administration and the board will have to make difficult decisions about strategic directions and practical implementations; and it will not be possible to satisfy everyone. I hope they can accept that these decisions are being made in the best interest of BC High, its students present and future, and all our stakeholders, and support the directions taken whatever their own perspective is. Also we need them to promote BC High as the place to go for a first-rate, faith-based, globally focused education. Finally, and most important, we will not be able to reach our goal of offering the highest quality student experience while keeping BC High affordable unless we strengthen our resource base. The generous support of our alumni, parents and friends will be essential in achieving that.