

BFIT 10.29.20 Student, Alum and Community Forum Transcription

Held via Zoom 6:00 p.m.-7:30 p.m.

Overview

- At 5:55 p.m. Dean of Students, Jackie Cornog Opened the Zoom Room and facilitated the meeting.
- BFIT CEO, Aisha Francis, PhD, gave an opening statement summarizing the strategic plan options of the college (to remain independent or to merge).
- BFIT CFO, Scott Steele, reviewed the last two years of financials from the college and demonstrated that the college lost \$4M last fiscal year and may lose as much as \$4M this fiscal year as well because of low enrollment.
- The floor was open to questions, answers, and comments from participants.
- At 7:37 pm, the meeting ended.

Takeaways

- There were 76 participants in this forum including 11 Trustees of the college, 4 senior staff representatives and 61 community members, most of whom were alumni of the Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology.
- Many alumni shared personal negative experiences with Wentworth. Some reported attending both BFIT and Wentworth, and the common denominator was the caring staff and sense of belonging at BFIT that wasn't there at Wentworth. At least one speaker had applied to Wentworth and been rejected and told by their staff that she should not pursue engineering. She applied to an engineering program at BFIT and was successful. Many participants spoke to the fact that the loss of BFIT would spell fewer high-quality college options for vulnerable students who are excluded from being recruited by other colleges or are rejected by them when they do apply.
- Other concerns had to do with the affordability of the new enrollment model or and participants expressed concern that working-class students like those at BFIT would be priced out if there is a merger.
- Alumni spoke to understanding the financial situation and encouraged the college to stay the course by developing stronger industry partnerships and seeking financial assistance from businesses and industries who hire graduates.
- The move to Nubian square was especially meaningful for alumni and to those community members from Roxbury who were on the call. As one alumnus said, "Wentworth is in Roxbury but no one in Roxbury goes to Wentworth." BFIT's physical presence in the neighborhood is of critical importance in the eyes of the community.

Questions and Comments from Attendees of 10.29.20 Community Forum

Kelly Hassett (alumni): A lot of you know my story, but for those who don't, here it is.

(Narrative about winning academic awards to get into college, but not being good enough for her dream school, Wentworth. She was told she wasn't good enough. She chose BFIT and got her associates and bachelors, and was her commencement speaker.) We're all concerned about the money, but I want to remain a BFIT alumni, not a Wentworth alumni.

Angela: Kelly wrote a letter to me sharing this story, and that story has been shared with the board of directors along with a few others that we received.

Jed Nosal: I also remember Kelly and her remarks – and Wentworth lost in not having her. It's important that BFIT maintains its accessibility and affordability. It would be a breach of our mission if we ended up in a place where someone with Kelly's skill and determination didn't have the same opportunity. One thing from the board's perspective is making sure we maintain the accessibility to the students we've historically served. If we fail on those things, I agree with Kelly that it would be a loss.

###

Tara Montgomery (alumni, 2011, architecture/construction mgmt.) I was an older student from outside of Boston and a retail job. I had difficulty with financial aid qualifications – you have to be over 24 to be an independent student. So I started I was 25. I was looking for a way to study architecture and work part-time – BFIT was the school. Everyone who works there genuinely cares about your well-being. I don't think that's possible in a big school setting. I say that because I transferred to Wentworth after BFIT and saw what their campus experience was. So I saw both sides of small vs large school. Wentworth is also accredited as a 4-year university now, and that's above a 2-year technical school I think. Correct me if I'm wrong. But I would never have been able to accomplish what I have since moving to Boston without BFIT first. People can still transfer to Wentworth if they want to. We don't have to merge for that.

Jed: You've described something that we consider at the board level as the distinguishing factor of BFIT amongst our peers: student support and environment to succeed. From the board's perspective that's something we don't want to lose regardless of the direction we head in. It's part of what some people call the "secret sauce." It's why Jackie is calling out 40-50 people that she knows by name on this call. The culture you describe is something we understand has been important to our success.

###

Will Cobb (2019 alumni) – Wentworth is in the middle of Roxbury, but no one in Roxbury goes to Wentworth. If we collaborate, will Wentworth take all of our students?

Jed: It's a good question – and we don't want to talk specifics about partnership opportunities here. But the idea is that the type of programs and platforms that BFIT offers are desirable. Our pathway from education to good-paying jobs and industry partnerships is the future of education. You've hit on a fair observation: people want to talk to us because we're successful at that. I don't know if that specifically answers your question. But your observation is a fair one.

###

Chris Espinoza (ex-employee, current academic advisor): I have a couple concerns around this conversation. With a merger, we are losing an important resource to our local communities. I worked in Boston for 8 years at different colleges and 10 years in student advising. There are

few schools that go out of their way to support first-generation students of color and give them the support they need to be successful. BFIT does that. A merger with a larger school will not have that. It's one of the biggest fears I have in this conversation, because those students risk losing the most and need the most support. I advise students at Wentworth now, and they don't have the support that BFIT gives. I've worked at BFIT and I've worked in other institutions. Something doesn't feel right about this.

###

AISHA: Before we go much further, I should acknowledge two recent news items and provide some context.

- 1) The story in the Globe in September – We were in partnership talks. As we've discussed, we have to find a way to remain a college in a way that's cost effective. There are high fixed costs that come along with being a college, and when we look at ways to cut costs it's tough to find areas. So, one other option that many colleges consider is consolidating – either departments or merging overall. Information about those talks, which were taking place privately, as is custom, is what came out in that story.
- 2) More recent news that in the Globe that we were issued a Notation of Concern by our accreditors – What does this mean? Our accreditors, NECHE, do this—issue a public notation—when the commission thinks there is something awry. In our case it is because of the financial challenges we are talking about today. This notation does not affect our accreditation right now. It does not place us in probation either. It does not take away from the legitimacy of your degrees. The accreditors know that our building will sell, and they know we will have more revenue in the future. When we receive more revenue of a certain amount, the notation will be removed.

Will Sexton, Alumni – Have you tried any events to raise more revenue?

Angela: There has been a challenge of COVID, but we are planning a signature event. Our first one was for November, and that was cancelled. Signature events take two to three years to gain popularity, but it is something we've considered.

###

Unknown: Sale of the land and purchase of new property will help, when it goes through?

Scott: It will, but not fully if we don't have a new business model to reduce fixed costs. Without that, we will still lose money.

###

Larry Griffin (alumni): For fundraising, is there any focus on partnering with various professional associations? There are a number of national partnerships with optometry, automotive, and HVAC – anything there?

Another question: The sold verse the pending build. Because COVID has put us in a jam, has the SOLD on the existing building vs the delayed build on the new land putting us in a vice and possibly squeezing us out of existence?

Another question on NDAs: NDAs imply this could be that there are forces moving above this nice discussion we're having now. I'm going to go out on a limb and suggest names for where money might be available – Microsoft, Amazon, people who have deep pockets who won't want to see BFIT go under.

Jed: We've been planning for years to put BFIT on stronger financial footing. And our plans date back to 4 or 5 years to monetize the Berkeley St campus and take advantage of the real estate prices. It took a lot to get through the processes (ownership of building, land, etc.) that we got through a year ago. As a board we want to be ahead of this and in a place where we are financially sound and not having to tap that asset. As Aisha indicated, our plans have been to monetize the building and find new owned land – that's where our focus has been. At the same time, what Scott talked about was the need for a viable business plan that makes sure we don't take on multi-million dollar losses every year that can't be met through philanthropy. We've brought in Angela who is a Rockstar to help us with this.

###

Deanna (alumni): I would hate to see BFIT go. I was a first-time college graduate and received my associates and bachelors there. And the staff is outstanding. Opposed to somewhere else where they don't know your name, they care about their education at BFIT. Without BFIT I don't know where I would be this day. Each mentor and professor, everybody who contributes to BFIT made me know I matter – again I would hate to see it go.

Question: I would like to know what would happen to the campus activity board (CAB) if there was a merger? Is that organization still strong? CAB is important, it needs to keep going. It's an important campus group.

Jackie: Again, I'm so glad you are here. It's been so good to see you. You are right Deanna, CAB is really important. It's still around, but it's not as active as it was when Chris Espinoza was here staffing it. That's true. We'll try to bring it back.

###

Rich Jennings: (alumni 1967, former department chair of automotive technology): There was a question about alumni on the Board of Trustees. While there are no alumni on the Board of Trustees, I would nominate Chris Morse as serving in that role. He is an alumni of sorts. When I was a student there, his father was on the board. My education at BFIT was transformational. You leave from there with skills that you don't even realize you have in order to be successful. I have several points to make.

Financing: My experience is that all of the auto-dealers I know (Herb Chambers, Ernie Boch & his father, Ray Cilolo) are sole proprietors. The money we need probably won't come from them. In the meeting last week with Councilor Janey, there was conversation about expecting industry to be giving us money instead of taking it in the form of the school's investment in

students without their help. Sole proprietors will not do that. You need public companies – Microsoft, Gillette, etc. to pitch in. Those are the people that can frontload our burden as we keep BFIT afloat.

Another point: Is it possible to float a bond for a short term to create the bridge-loan to create the money needed in order to work through the sale and transform so that we are in a position to work the debt down?

###

Tito Jackson: I got an honorary degree from BFIT. And I value that tremendously. I think that alumni should feel stabbed in the back by a merger. Aisha and others came to me and others more than a year ago to ask for the blessing of Nubian Square community as the school sought to move there. I couldn't fathom you guys getting a windfall like you are discussing and then walking away from this institution, its legacy, and its alumni afterwards. From the perspective of a community leader, to think of that amount of resources leaving an institution that primarily serves black and brown males, is more than disappointing. I will work my hardest to ensure that institution doesn't move in that direction. What I am saying is give the school a chance. I'm in the private sector now – we don't make investments into institutions that say they are going out of business. If the aspirations of the institution are to not continue independently, then you won't be successful fundraising, which you clearly need to do. If this is all the case, then it's false to say you are moving forward because you are really not trying. You have great staff and students. Stay the course and you'll come out on the other side with the financial resources you need. Do the right thing: declare that you'll stay in business.

And I do have one question that has to do with the board: How many are Boston folks? How many are people of color? What are their philanthropic efforts? How many are alumni?

Aisha: Wow, thank you Tito. I did not ask you to say all of that, but I appreciate it. Let me try to answer some of your questions quickly.

As for Board composition: We have 5 people of color on the board, most of them are newer to the board. I don't know how many board members live in Boston, but I know we have 1 who lives in Roxbury – she happens to be the newest member of our board. She is Chenita Daughtry who is on this call. Some board members are responding in the chat about where they live. It looks like we have two or three who live in Dorchester. I don't think we have that many who live in Boston. Angela is going to look now. We don't have any alumni on the board. It's something we've discussed a need for. That's a void that I identified two years ago when I began here at the Chief of Staff. I wanted to address it then. It is one of the first things I talked about in terms of Board governance. So, 50% of our students are from Boston, 50% are not. We can't forget the 50% who are not from Boston. But we don't yet reflect our student base in the composition of our board.

Angela: The list of board affiliations that we have does not indicate home addresses for all of the board members. So we're not able to answer that question right now. Board giving could be better and we are working on that.

###

Jeanette Callahan (Roxbury resident, and BFIT partner): There's a lot of tension around the merger. What is the tension around, is it connected to the endowment, or the sale? If you will net an endowment of about \$45 Million and you don't have one now, why isn't that enough to help the institution carry on?

Jed: What we're trying to accomplish is a sustainable business plan. Even with a large endowment, if we are operating at a loss, then the endowment will end. We need to be sustainable for 50 to 100 years. When the board talks about partnership, it's because we are exploring sustainability under the umbrella of a larger institution that will save all of the money and preserve the endowment in order to protect the interests of students. That's the concept. I can't tell you 100% if it will work, but I can say that's what the board is thinking about. It's a tall order, and it's something we don't take lightly. We're also looking at independent options as well.

Jeanette: Just be careful to count the true costs of what type of partnership you are pursuing. It might not result in a fiscal loss, but it could be a loss of BFIT which is irreplaceable.

###

Regis Lino-Kelley (alumni, 2019, and commencement speaker): I was able to get a job at the MBTA – and I had the ambition and skillset, but no degree to get paid what I deserved for the work I was doing. I got my associate and bachelor, and got my internship through BFIT – working at the Harvard engineering lab helping Harvard students design and assemble their projects. Some of the things that concern me if BFIT is a staple of the community for African Americans and Hispanic people. Having BFIT go away would deteriorate our opportunities here for people who live in Dorchester, Roxbury, and Hyde Park. Merging with Wentworth or another school will not help these kids adapt the way that BFIT offers. And costs. I would like to know if you guys do merge, how will the cost difference be for the students? Because Wentworth is double or triple what BFIT costs – and it's a much bigger school.

Jed: Thank you for participating. Hearing your success story makes what we do meaningful. On the issue of cost: Current students do not need to worry about that. There is a process that would happen: both boards would have to approve, and it would go through various state approvals, so there won't be a sudden announcement of BFIT students not being allowed or able to attend. For tuition: from the board's perspective, whatever model we go with, one of our priorities is to maintain access and affordability. That means maintaining our tuition model – we haven't raised tuition in 8 years. We're committed to having a high quality product at an affordable cost. We are committed to making sure whatever pathway forward, we maintain the access.

###

Louisa (current BFIT student): Thanks for doing this. Before BFIT I went to Marlborough College in southern Vermont. BFIT was my college round 2. At the end of my last school year at Marlborough they merged with Emerson. Marlborough was so small that they had trouble making a merger work in their favor. In the end, Emerson got their endowment and assets. Emerson changed the name of their programs – maintained only maybe 10 staff from Marlborough. Yes, Marlborough students were admitted to Emerson, but not with their same financial aid packages. So a decent number were unable to afford to transfer. They were stuck

without a degree and with student loans – what an ugly financial situation. Having seen this awful merger process once, I'd hate to see it happen again. How do we know this won't happen with Wentworth and BFIT?

Jed: Thank you Louisa. At the board level, we see and are aware of what's happened around New England when it comes to mergers and transactions. We are looking to avoid that.

Jackie: Louisa, I know you have shared this concern with me multiple times. Thank you for being here to share it publicly. It is an important point to have on record. I know you are also concerned that they are not that many students here tonight. It's true, but we did advertise this event to our students heavily. We are thankful that you are here and the other students who came. Most of the audience is alumni and together your voices really do make an impact. Keep speaking up.

###

Closing Statements from the CEO:

Aisha: It's clear that there's so much more to say, though our time is coming to an end. As many of you have requested, we'll look for a way to have another Forum like this. I'm putting out a link to a new feedback forum we've created on our website. That link is now in the chat. I want to get link to as many people as possible through multiple channels. And will be working with our communications team to do that. Thank you for being here. We were expecting 40 people today, and at our height we had 76. We had 9 board members attend, that about half our board. [Later corrected to 11 board members]. Thank you to everyone. Thank you to our board members, alumni, and community members for joining us.

BFIT 10.29.20 Student, Alum and Community Forum Chat Log

18:24:14 **Jackie Cornog**: ajohnson@bfit.edu Angela Johnson

18:27:02 **Aisha Francis, CEO BFIT**: <https://www.bfit.edu/bfit-office-of-institutional-advancement/>

18:27:25 **Aisha Francis, CEO BFIT**: <https://www.bfit.edu/new-millennium-fund/>

18:34:35 **Daniel Farbowitz**: that's pretty messed up

18:35:52 **Daniel Farbowitz**: Thanks for sharing!

18:36:10 **turahn dorsey**: Thank you, Kelly.

18:36:34 **Brett Wellman**: Thanks Kelly for sharing!!

18:37:04 **Will Cobb**: THANKS KELLY FOR SPEAKING UP FOR US

18:37:25 **Jackie Cornog**: Agreed! Thank you Kelly!!!!

18:38:02 **Marisa Meldonian**: Thank you, Kelly, for sharing

18:41:05 **Steven Lawrence**: I've often noted to colleagues and friends and people in the education world that BFIT hiring seems to have emphasized caring-ness and human-ness in addition to subject expertise and teaching experience.

18:41:24 **Steven Lawrence**: Tara is speaking eloquently to this.

18:42:08 **jason**: thank you for sharing as a student I appreciate what your both saying

18:42:09 **Will Sexton, Alumni**: Thank you Tara!!! Nice to see alum from almost a decade ago show up and be heard!

18:42:09 **Tito Jackson**: Thank you Tara for sharing!

18:42:17 **Abra Berkowitz**: BFIT HAS THE BEST ALUMN!!!!

18:42:21 **turahn dorsey**: thank you, tara.

18:42:30 **Jackie Cornog**: Thank you Tara!!

18:42:39 **Daniel Farbowitz**: Thanks Tara, it validates our work as faculty to hear you say that.

18:42:42 **Jackie Cornog**: @Abra Amen!

18:42:53 **Brett Wellman**: Thanks Tara!! And Thanks for sharing your experience w/ Jackie Hodgson (Americorps) she'd be thrilled to know you thought of her 10 years later!

18:43:02 **Taty Ramos**: Thank you Kelly

18:43:09 **Taty Ramos**: Thank you Tara

18:43:40 **Jason Baker**: Thank you Mrs. Cornhog and Everyone else. #BFIT4LIFE

18:44:02 **Jonathan Newton**: On the same note I am hard of hearing and with the smaller classes and excellent teachers I was able to thrive. I had previously gone to UMASS lowell and struggled to make it through the auditorium style classes. The school and atmosphere at BFIT has given me the success I have.

18:45:46 **Jason Baker**: Please note I have my camera and mic off because I'm currently in a training, but wouldn't give up an opportunity to rep for the school. Though you can't see me I'm still here.

18:48:21 **Steven Lawrence**: Thanks Jason. I am helping an 85-year old family member cook and organize dinner, which is why I have my camera and mic off. Glad to be here.

18:48:31 **Daniel Farbowitz:** Really insightful!

18:48:52 **Steven Lawrence:** Yes. Feels like family. The staff and faculty and deans are top notch. An actual community.

18:49:48 **Will Cobb:** THANKS CHRIS

18:50:01 **Marisa Meldonian:** Thanks for sharing, Chris

18:50:01 **Steven Lawrence:** Thank you, Chris.

18:50:09 **Richard Jennings:** Thank you Chris, from Sally

18:50:26 **Brett Wellman:** Thanks Chris for your insight as a former employee and now as an educational partner!

18:50:47 **Rooterson Louis Charles:** Thank you Chris

18:51:06 **Will Sexton, Alumni:** Thank you Chris for your wonderful words!!!!

18:52:32 **Daniel Farbowitz:** even wealthy athletes

18:52:46 **Daniel Farbowitz:** Get the Pats to help us out!

18:56:27 **Jonathan Newton:** What programs have been cut if anyone knows?

18:57:49 **Abra Berkowitz:** Thanks, Angela! Good to see you!

18:58:09 **Louisa:** Electrical Technology was cut

18:58:59 **Lakiya:** When did they cut electrical?

19:00:13 **Richard Jennings:** Electrical is still alive as a certificate program.

19:00:16 **turahn dorsey:** Thank you, Winston

19:00:30 **Jackie Cornog:** Electronic Engineering Technology, not Electrical Tech, Biomedical Engineering Technology, Mechanical Engineering Technology, Technology Business and Management

19:00:39 **Steven Lawrence:** Thank you, Winston.

19:01:00 **Anna Yu:** It's always great to hear from alumni, thanks Winston!

19:01:08 **Daniel Farbowitz:** Thanks Winston!

19:01:16 **Brett Wellman:** Thanks Winston! So good to see you again!

19:02:06 **Jonathan Newton:** Thank you for the info and I agree with Winston the opportunity BFIT offers is one of a kind.

19:02:22 **Daniel Farbowitz:** 🍌

19:03:13 **Tara M. Montgomery:** The birth of BFIT and its history was a very important reason I was so passionate as a student.

19:03:32 **Will Cobb:** TITO SPEAK TO THEM

19:04:37 **Steven Lawrence:** Thank you Tito. Realness is what is needed.

19:04:40 **Karen Craddock:** On behalf of The Wellness Collaborative Inc. we are pleased to have partnered with BFIT to have developed and offered a support forum during this moment of crisis, and we can attest to the sincerity of focus and attention to the overall wellbeing and wellness of the members of their community including students, staff and faculty. Hearing this discussion it is clear this includes a vision and plan for strong fiscal wellness as an institution as well

19:04:56 **Judy Pagliuca:** Why isnt enrollment higher given the need?

19:05:00 **Steven Lawrence:** Aisha can right the ship.

19:05:43 **Judy Pagliuca**: It would make a big difference to the business model if the community/public schools embraced the school and referred students.

19:05:44 **Steven Lawrence**: There's that word again... scrappy! It's great.

19:06:05 **Will Sexton, Alumni**: Thank you Tito! Great words!

19:06:27 **Brett Wellman**: Thanks Tito for sharing and for your ongoing and continued support and passion for BFIT.

19:06:40 **Abra Berkowitz**: Thank you, Tito! And thanks to Aisha for her leadership and convening us here.

19:06:55 **Daniel Farbowitz**: Great questions!

19:07:01 **Jonathan Newton**: And how many are Alumni (board members)

19:07:21 **Steven Lawrence**: Thank you, Tito.

19:08:27 **Will Cobb**: no locals on board

19:09:12 **Jonathan Newton**: Thank you for answering the question

19:09:33 **Tara M. Montgomery**: Instead of partnering with WIT, how can we partner with the high schools and getting more students to enroll?

19:09:49 **Will Cobb**: good question

19:09:56 **Will Sexton, Alumni**: ^agreed

19:09:59 **jason**: good question

19:09:59 **Steven Lawrence**: Right. We don't need to be provincial. To be competitive, we need to have a larger identity.

19:10:04 **Abra Berkowitz**: My grandfather is from Roxbury and went to BFIT (then Franklin Institute) after World War II to become a plumber.

19:10:22 **Brett Wellman**: @ Abra, you're a legacy:)

19:10:22 **Daniel Farbowitz**: No kidding!

19:10:25 **Tito Jackson**: I would be willing to continue to work with BPS to get more student enrollment.

19:10:28 **Jonathan Newton**: commuted 2 hours on the train and subway daily. Was more than worth it. The staff and students are not equal.

19:10:41 **Tito Jackson**: I was the chair of education on the City Council.

19:11:20 **Tito Jackson**: Jeanette Callahan was my Sunday School teacher too!

19:11:31 **Mozhgan Hosseinpour**: does BFIT has alumni associations

19:12:01 **Regis Lino-Kelly**: I'll like to speak as well

19:12:22 **Jackie Cornog**: @Mozhgan @Angela can answer the alumni question

19:12:39 **Aisha Francis, CEO BFIT**: @Regis, thanks. we will certainly get to your statement.

19:12:53 **Taty Ramos**: That would be great Mzhgah

19:14:12 **199099**: I would like to say a few words (Deanna)

19:15:26 **Judy Pagliuca**: The endowment will deplete in about 10 years. And then the school will be forced to close if they can't raise the funds to close the gap thereafter, the merger helps to close the gap thru savings on building and other shared costs. .

19:15:44 **Kelly Hassett**: maybe at the end, can we know what happened to the students who were enrolled in degrees that have been cut? is there a plan for them to complete their degrees?

19:16:03 **Will Cobb:** THEN WE WILL LOSE THE SCHOOL TO THE BIG GUYS

19:16:28 **Judy Pagliuca:** We do not want that to happen, we want the mission to endure.

19:16:33 **Brett Wellman:** @ Judy - what suggestions are there to increase and strengthen the endowment? Has the board created a plan for this?

19:16:53 **Tito Jackson:** You would only lose the school if you dont invest the funds and scale so that it is profitable or at least break even.

19:16:55 **Steven Lawrence:** Jackie, 199099 needs some assistance in changing their name and would like to speak.

19:17:03 **Steven Lawrence:** Yes, there needs to be a part 2.

19:17:28 **Daniel Farbowitz:** sounding good!

19:17:31 **Jackie Cornog:** @Steven thanks

19:17:39 **Jonathan Newton:** Agree Jackie need part 2

19:17:40 **Richard Jennings:** I'd like to say something, please.

19:17:48 **Steven Lawrence:** Great human being. So glad she is speaking.

19:18:02 **Kelly Hassett:** Deanna is amazing speaker

19:18:25 **Kelly Hassett:** I agree part two may be a good idea if the board is willing to entertain us again

19:18:34 **Steven Lawrence:** Deanna's presence in the lobby, and in the other common areas has been every bit as inspiring and community-oriented as her awesome student-ship.

19:18:48 **Tara M. Montgomery:** I completely understand what Judy is saying. We need to preserve the business for longer than 10 years. And with the state of the world, the need for flexible education is critical. Would BFIT lose its identity under a merger? the history of BFIT is sincerely a motivator.

19:19:09 **Brett Wellman:** Thanks Deanna for sharing!

19:19:29 **Tara M. Montgomery:** Thanks Deanna! knowing I was supported was paramount for me.

19:19:31 **Daniel Farbowitz:** With so many thoughtful, engaged student and alumni, I am so hopeful for the future of BFIT.

19:19:40 **Will Sexton, Alumni:** Thank you Deanna!!!!

19:19:43 **Steven Lawrence:** I feel the same, Dan.

19:19:48 **Steven Lawrence:** Thank you, Deanna!

19:20:04 **Steven Lawrence:** Chris Espinoza is da bomb!

19:20:26 **Daniel Farbowitz:** Great stuff, Deanna!

19:20:51 **Jackie Cornog:** Deanna! One of my best advisees!!!!

19:20:58 **Lakiya:** Good job Deanna, I'll tell Mandy how well you did:D

19:21:14 **Shawn Ayala:** BFIT alumni are amazing! Thank you all for joining and sharing.

19:21:31 **Steven Lawrence:** Social access is not a small thing. It's one of the any benefits of what BFIT offers.

19:21:41 **Judy Pagliuca:** As a board member, I would never support a plan that did not safeguard the mission.

19:21:41 **Daniel Farbowitz:** I wish we could do this every day

19:21:47 **Steven Lawrence:** Agreed, Shawn!

19:21:57 **Jackie Cornog:** @daniel Agreed!

19:22:11 **Steven Lawrence:** Judy, that's a wonderful thing for us to know.

19:22:29 **Jackie Cornog:** @Judy thank you.

19:23:44 **Daniel Farbowitz:** Such a great share Regis!

19:24:06 **Brett Wellman:** Thanks Regis!! So good to see you again!

19:24:17 **Tito Jackson:** Great Job Regis!

19:24:26 **Steven Lawrence:** Thank you, Regis! You reminded us of what matters.

19:25:02 **Tara M. Montgomery:** Would the BFIT identity be dissolved with a merger?

19:25:53 **Tara M. Montgomery:** wowzers

19:27:31 **Jonathan Newton:** So is there a way to increase tuition without increasing out of pocket costs via grants from partners or other companies?

19:27:34 **Steven Lawrence:** That's because we all care.

19:27:41 **Tara M. Montgomery:** sure do.

19:27:44 **199099:** BFIT PRIDE

19:27:47 **Steven Lawrence:** Thank you, Dr. Francis.

19:27:52 **Tara M. Montgomery:** Thank you to all the Board for your time.

19:27:55 **Aisha Francis, CEO BFIT:** <https://www.bfit.edu/strategic-planning-feedback/>

19:27:58 **Judy Pagliuca:** great faculty and staff!!

19:28:02 **Will Sexton, Alumni:** There is such camaraderie in the BFIT community

19:28:19 **Steven Lawrence:** Thank you for saying that, Judy. It has not been clear for some of us for a while.

19:29:16 **Aisha Francis, CEO BFIT:** Correction that we had 11 Trustees on this call. So thank you all to each of those volunteer leaders who have joined us tonight.

19:30:08 **Jonathan Newton:** Maybe look into this case and see the short comings etc. ?? Marlborough school in southern Vermont?

19:30:13 **Steven Lawrence:** Thank you, Louisa.

19:30:14 **Daniel Farbowitz:** 🙌

19:30:30 **Will Sexton, Alumni:** Thank you so much Louisa

19:30:31 **Steven Lawrence:** 🙌

19:30:43 **Taty Ramos:** Thank you Louisa

19:30:44 **Wilfredo Reyes:** Well put Louisa

19:30:47 **Brett Wellman:** Thanks Louisa!

19:31:17 **Jeanette Callahan:** Another concern is that with a merger with an institution that does not share the same mission, I am concerned that BFIT will become an adjunct department that will be viewed as "second tier" and will dilute its overall effectiveness as a small independent mission based institution.

19:31:25 **Daniel Farbowitz:** Thanks for speaking up Louisa!

19:31:45 **Steven Lawrence:** Trustees as Servants is a good book.

19:31:47 **Steven Lawrence:** <https://www.amazon.com/Trustees-as-Servants-Robert-Greenleaf/dp/0982201257>

19:32:18 **Karen Craddock:** Thank you Aisha and BFIT, and your commitment to maintain mission and grounded strengths

19:32:21 **Will Sexton, Alumni:** Jeanette's concern is very valid ^^^^

19:33:42 **Shawn Ayala:** That's right!

19:34:40 **Steven Lawrence:** We should not become an adjunct college. There must be a core. Adjuncts, of course, are colleagues we value. But, there must be a core.

19:34:55 **Jeanette Callahan:** Love working with Jackie and Aisha and the amazing students at BFIT. The Wellness Collaborative looks forward to being neighbors to BFIT in Nubian Square. As a fellow community organization committed to fiscal health and wellbeing of the students as well as the institution, wanted to solidify our support for BFIT going forward.

19:35:49 **Tara M. Montgomery:** Thank you Rich.

19:36:06 **Brett Wellman:** Thanks Rich for your passion for BFIT and your ongoing partnership and support!

19:36:20 **Jonathan Newton:** Companies like Wayne J Griffin, the Local IBEW etc.

19:36:24 **Kelly Hassett:** thank you Rich, and Jackie. I look forward to hearing from everyone again

19:37:00 **Jackie Cornog:** Thank you SO MUCH everyone and especially BFIT students and grads. I miss you. I appreciate you. I wish you well. Please stay connected!

19:37:25 **199099:** Love you Dean Cornog

19:37:34 **Brett Wellman:** ^^^ yes!! Its so great seeing and hearing from our alumni. This is why we are here

19:37:41 **Shawn Ayala:** Be safe all, and have a great night!

19:37:44 **Daniel Farbowitz:** Clear eyes, open hearts

19:37:46 **Will Sexton, Alumni:** Thank you for putting this forum together!

19:37:54 **Steven Lawrence:** Goodnight!

19:37:54 **Kelly Hassett:** good night rest well. I miss all of you

19:37:55 **Will Cobb:** PEACE OUT

19:37:58 **Will Cobb:** GO VOTE

19:37:59 **Jonathan Newton:** good night Thank you for putting this together.

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