



# A Message FROM OUR PRESIDENT AND CEO



At Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology (BFIT), we build an ethnically diverse student pipeline for high-demand technology and trade career paths. For more than 100 years, BFIT has trained the highly skilled technical talent we now recognize as “essential workers”—machinists, IT specialists, electricians, and many types of technicians who continue to keep our communities going in both difficult and prosperous times.

This report focuses on a key transition period for BFIT: January 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021. Like many collegiate institutions, BFIT for years has weathered increasing financial pressures that were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. To position the college to succeed, BFIT in 2020 underwent a strategic planning process that resulted in adoption of the *Future Forward* strategy. This bold strategy reimagines and expands BFIT’s role in creating viable pathways for individuals and families by empowering five key shifts to transform the college:

- 1. Restructure to reshape the institution:** After reorganizing to pull through a difficult and tumultuous time, BFIT seized the opportunity to implement reforms and demonstrate the benefit of accountability and transparency.
- 2. Recommit to program specialization:** As we create and expand programs in automation and clean technology, we are focused on programs that leverage our core specialties but also have an incredible growth trajectory and connect to our institutional value of sustainability.
- 3. Respond to market demand for shorter, more flexible programs:** We added seven new high-demand tech certificate programs since May 2020 and have new pathways so students can “stack” certificates to earn an associate or a bachelor’s degree at their own pace.
- 4. Reach out to build philanthropic support:** We are committed to raising \$30M to secure our future through BFIT’s most ambitious comprehensive campaign. This effort will grow our capital base, support our relocation, build our endowment, and fuel BFIT’s long-term sustainability.
- 5. Realize the promise of a purpose-built campus:** Our campus relocation to Roxbury is key to our growth strategy. Our new state-of-the-art campus will not only give us the space we need to realize BFIT’s full potential, it will also transform the college into an anchor institution for the community we serve. I invite you to join me for a walking tour of our exciting new site and the bustling Nubian Square neighborhood that surrounds it. Visit [BFIT.edu/MovetoRoxbury](https://www.bfit.edu/movetoroxbury) for more information.

Since its founding in 1908, BFIT has created viable economic pathways for thousands of individuals and families, while at the same time building a skilled workforce to meet the ever-changing demands of our economy. Our *Future Forward* strategy is deepening BFIT’s impact and visibility, ensuring the college remains a strong, vibrant institution for decades to come.

*Aisha Francis, Ph.D.*

– Dr. Aisha Francis, President and CEO  
Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

BFIT’s Board of Trustees members represent a wide range of business, employment, education, and civic organizations. The board plays a key role in the college’s governance and strategic planning.

## Officers

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Rahul Yarala  
Anna Yu

\* Joined the Board in 2020





# Academics

## INVESTED IN OUTCOMES

BFIT has offered programs that educate young people for high-demand technology and trade careers for more than 100 years. But we don't rest on our laurels. We continuously evaluate and update our programs, tools, and methods to reflect market and employment conditions.

Here are some of the ways we're remaking BFIT for the future:

- **“Stackable” Programs:** Seven new certificates offer a fast-track to jobs in Computer Information Technology, Electronics Technology, and Engineering Technology/Advanced Manufacturing, with more to come. Students learn job-ready skills and earn a certificate in less than a year, then “stack” credits earned in these certificates to create a clear pathway to an associate degree or even a bachelor's degree.
- **Renewable Energy Programs:** Clean/sustainable energy technology has long been baked into the curriculum for most BFIT programs. We are doubling down on our commitment to prepare students for jobs in fast-growing green energy fields with a new Engineering Technology associate degree with a Renewable Energy concentration, which will prepare students for careers as wind and solar energy system installers and repair technicians.
- **Resources for Adult Learners:** The new Division of Professional and Continuing Education (DPCS) is expanding BFIT's hands-on education model to adult learners, who skew older than the traditional BFIT student. DPCS works closely with the Office of Strategic Partnerships to create and deliver tailored education programs for companies, trade unions, industry associations, and community-based organizations. We welcomed more than 300 learners through these programs over the last twelve months, boosting revenue and access to education for adult learners.
- **Intensive Student Support:** BFIT's graduation rate is two times the national average for two-year colleges in large part because of the work of our Student Services team. In 2020, we embedded Career Services within this department so that all students are now assigned a staff Success Coach who remains their advisor throughout their academic and career preparation path. We also added an additional Success Coach position. Prior to these changes, about half of students had a professional Success Coach as their advisor and others had a faculty advisor. Now 100% of students have a professional coach-advisor. Meeting regularly with their coach builds rapport and trust, and lets students know BFIT is invested in their success. Coaching is key to retention.

BFIT will continue to evolve and adjust the way we deliver quality technical education. The one constant will be our commitment to ensuring our students' success at BFIT and beyond.

# Measuring Student Success

Over the past year, BFIT has doubled down on connecting with alumni, especially graduates of the last decade who are eager to serve as near peers for current and future students. This constituency focus has taken on several forms. An alum, Paul Macrina, Class of 1982, was voted onto the board in 2020. The Admissions team also held a series of virtual career exploration seminars that engaged alums as panelists to help shed light on job roles that are possible with a BFIT degree. And we have been building a cache of alumni success stories like that of Munu Shrestha, Class of 2017, below.



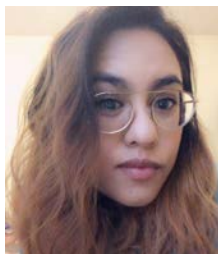
**Jayvonte Odom**  
**Class of 2021 (Construction Management)**

Jayvonte Odom started college as a communications major, but it wasn't the right fit. After taking a few years off, he decided to instead explore construction and engineering programs and wanted a small-school setting.

"I was looking for that sense of community," Odom said. "And right from my first semester, that's what BFIT was."

Odom became an Orientation Leader, a Student Ambassador, a member of the Student Activity Board, was inducted into the Franklin Honor Society, and served as a student speaker for the 2021 Commencement. He also worked full-time as a manager at a café, where he met an executive from Turner Construction. That meeting led to an internship at Turner and then full-time employment there as a project administrator starting in November 2020.

"Obviously, going to school is an investment, but if you can make the commitment, do it," Odom said. "I know that everybody at BFIT will be in your corner."



**Munu Shrestha**  
**Class of 2017 (Opticianry)**

At a BFIT career fair at the end of her senior year, Munu Shrestha received several job offers and accepted a student optician position at Warby Parker. Four years later, she is the licensed optical manager for the company's flagship Newbury Street store and an evangelist for the field of opticianry.

Prior to BFIT, she had been working at a cafeteria and repeatedly changing majors at a community college. A customer recommended she check out the Opticianry program at BFIT. "I've been wearing glasses since I was 5 years old, but I had no idea opticianry was a career," Shrestha said.

The hands-on Opticianry labs built both her skills and her confidence. "I was ready to go into an actual work setting and perform because we had trained for that," she said.

Shrestha found that BFIT professors and staff were incredibly supportive, providing extra help or tutoring whenever she needed it and connecting her with free textbooks through Library Services. She also received a Women in Technology Scholarship to help cover her tuition. "Whatever need I had, it was fulfilled by the school," she said.

Today, Shrestha is happy to serve as a resource for current and future Opticianry students. "I want to give new BFIT students the same opportunities that I got," she said.

## OUR STUDENTS

**57%**

are first-generation college students

**74%**

are students of color

**\$23,800**

average annual family income

**402**

total full-time student enrollment  
(as of Fall 2020)

## OUR SUPPORT

**99%**

of students receive financial aid

**\$5,000**

average scholarship need

**\$2M+**

institutional aid awarded each year

## OUR STUDENTS' SUCCESS

**\$42,000**

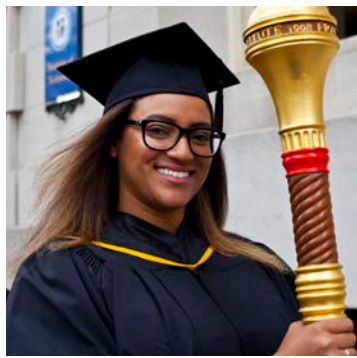
annual median salary one year after  
graduation (working full-time, in field)

**83%**

four-year average job placement rate  
(full-time, in field of choice or  
continuing education)

**2x**

the national average graduation rate  
for 2-year colleges and  
3x the state average



## Strategic Partnerships

BFIT offers a wide range of affordable, flexible workforce development programs in partnership with companies and community partners to ensure that their greatest asset—employees—stay ahead of industry trends to boost productivity and employee satisfaction and support recruitment and retention efforts. The department’s more than 100 strategic partnerships focus on these areas:

- **Find and train the workforce our partners need.** We connect our employer partners with untapped talent to fill their hard-to-place employment opportunities through an employer-driven approach.
- **Support & reward partners’ current workforce.** We help employers maintain a competitive edge by investing in their team to make sure their workforce has the most current industry-recognized skills. Programs may include one-day or multi-day workshops for industry licensing exams or to develop other focused skills.
- **Grow employers’ talent from within.** We increase the skill levels of our partners’ current employees so they can be promoted. We can also help employers meet backfill hiring needs.
- **Build an Apprenticeship.** We do the hard work for our partners, including the curriculum audit required to fulfill apprenticeship classroom hours.

With our industry partnerships, BFIT is creating pathways to prosperity for students, employers, and the region.

### BFIT PARTNERSHIPS TRANSFORM LIVES AND FUTURES

“Hiring BFIT students is a win for everyone. It’s easy to bring on qualified and well-rounded Apprentice Technicians, who are eager to learn, have great skills, and high-performance metrics. Acquiring great talent to build our organization is the only way to ensure our future success. We are proud of the partnership we have had for so many years with the entire BFIT team.”

– Deborah Dempsey, Human Resource Director  
The Village Automotive Group

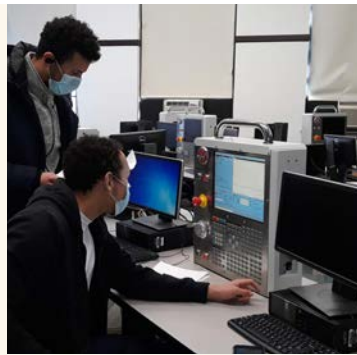


**Calvin Reed**  
**Class of 2021**

Calvin Reed became an apprentice technician at Boston Volvo in December 2019 thanks to BFIT’s partnership with The Village Automotive Group. The program includes a part-time job at a Village Automotive dealership, one-on-one mentoring, and scholarship funds.

“They set up this job for me where I went in with no experience and they were willing to take me on and build me up almost from nothing, which is an amazing opportunity,” Reed said. “It’s not just that I’m doing work for them and they’re paying for some of my education. Everyone at the dealership and in the shop, I feel, wants me to learn and grow.”

The dealership offered him a full-time job after graduation, which Reed eagerly accepted. “It was a no-brainer,” he said. “It’s a dream come true to start my first car job at a high-end dealership.”



## Future Forward

### THE CAMPAIGN FOR BENJAMIN FRANKLIN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

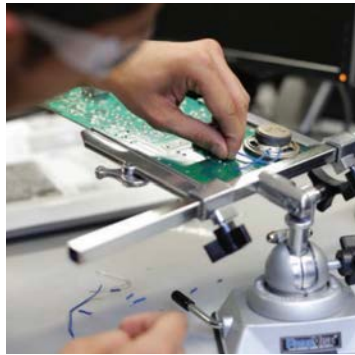
To support our mission-critical work, BFIT's Board of Trustees have pledged to raise \$30M through our comprehensive campaign: **Future Forward: The Campaign for Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology**. This campaign will secure the college's future while providing flexible operating support for our new Nubian Square campus in Roxbury, MA. Growing our capital base offsets our relocation and construction costs, builds an endowment, and fuels long-term sustainability, all while supporting our diverse student body.

The quiet phase of *Future Forward* was launched in mid-2020 with a \$1M seed investment focused on student-centric goals, including increasing scholarships, adding success coaches and faculty, updating lab equipment, and creating more opportunities that pay students a stipend to pursue career-relevant work experiences. Our efforts received a major boost in June 2021 when The Cruz Companies donated \$250,000 to create the Walter Williams Endowed Scholarship Fund, designated to help students from Dorchester, Roxbury, and Mattapan studying Construction Management, HVAC&R Technology, Practical Electricity, or a related trade program. Cruz Companies President and CEO John B. Cruz III said his support will help the college continue playing a vital role in diversifying Boston's talent pool, noting "We are stepping up to the plate. I challenge other businesses and organizations to do the same."

Additional efforts over the last year to lay the groundwork for the *Future Forward* initiative include:

- **Increased Direct Student Support:** Staff collaborated with the Office of Wellness and Support to increase donations to the Emergency Fund to aid students hard-hit by the COVID-19 crisis. As a result, Emergency Fund donations totaled \$242,300 for fiscal 2020—more than double the prior year—and created a foundation for students to continue their education without interruption.
- **Strengthened Partnerships:** A recommitment to corporate partnerships resulted in an increase of donations in kind from Dell USA LP, Gene Haas Foundation, The Hamilton Charitable Foundation, and the state of Massachusetts through the Skills Capital Grant program. In all, just under \$2M has been solicited and committed from Board Leadership and the Hamilton Foundation, which helped set the course for the campaign with a \$1M pledge toward costs for our relocation to Roxbury.
- **Expanded Networks:** BFIT welcomed five new trustees to the college in 2020 (see the Board of Trustees list on page 2), who have already begun to connect the fundraising staff with new networks, foundations, and individuals who will be invited to learn more about BFIT's vision and the *Future Forward* campaign.
- **Added Expertise:** To oversee the college's fundraising efforts, in April 2021 BFIT hired its first Chief Campaign Officer: Courtney Roy-Branigan, who brings over 20 years of expertise in generating revenue and increasing support for nonprofits.

Building on the momentum we have gained this year, we plan to double our annual fundraising through the *Future Forward* campaign.



# Move to Roxbury

## PREPARING FOR OUR NEXT 100 YEARS

BFIT's new, re-imagined campus in Roxbury's Nubian Square will ensure that we continue to be a local leader in curriculum innovation and the school-to-jobs pipeline in high-demand fields, while enriching and contributing to the rich, diverse history of this iconic and beloved Boston neighborhood.

Expected to open in September 2023, our new 65,000-square-foot building on the corner of Eustis Street and Harrison Avenue will offer expanded educational programs designed to meet the increasingly complex needs of in-demand technical jobs of the future. Financed by the sale of our current South End campus, the new state-of-the-art building will feature an advanced manufacturing center, a live automotive service center and auto repair labs (including an autonomous vehicle lab), a walk-in optical shop, and expanded HVAC&R and plumbing labs, among other innovative learning environments and community resources.

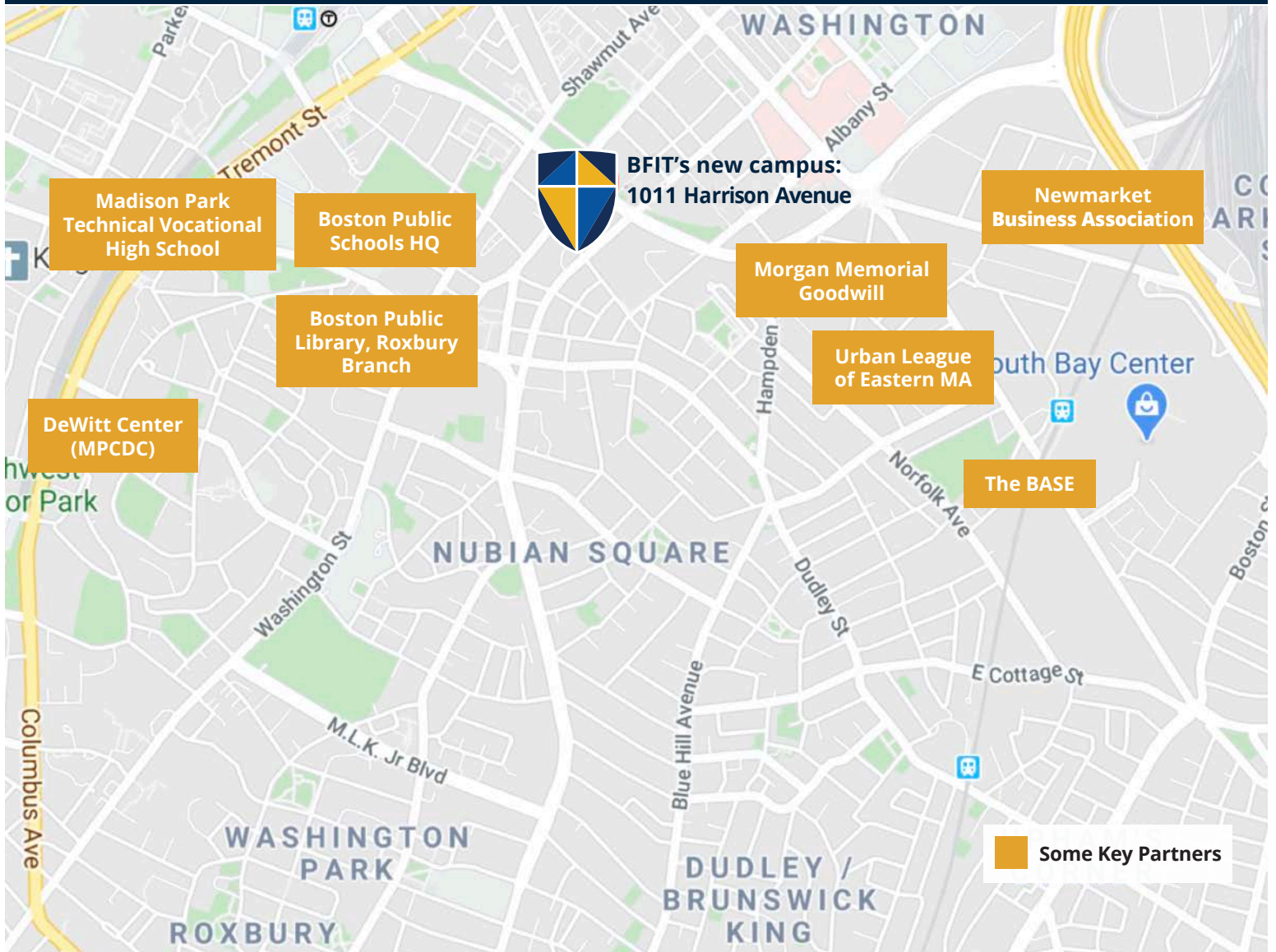
We look forward to joining a network of mission-aligned partner organizations to create an ecosystem of influence, access, and engagement to holistically meet students' needs. Our neighbors will include the Newmarket Business Association, the Dewitt Center, Boston Public Library, the Urban League of Massachusetts, Morgan Memorial Goodwill, and The BASE.

We will also be adjacent to Boston Public Schools (BPS) headquarters and our longtime partners at Madison Park High School. This proximity will strengthen our programmatic ties to BPS and the City of Boston, which already include:

- **College Credits for High School Students:** Since 2006, BFIT has awarded over 9,100 college credits to high school students through our Dual Enrollment Program—a value of \$9M. The vast majority of these students are from BPS.
- **Community College Tuition Free Program:** BFIT was the first private, nonprofit college to join Boston's Tuition Free program, which awards three years of free tuition to income-eligible Boston youth. BFIT has enrolled 82 students in the program since 2019, a value of more than \$500K.
- **City of Boston Summer Youth Jobs Program:** Boston needed an alternative to its youth summer jobs program when the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2020. BFIT quickly developed nine courses—seven for credit—for 200 youth to take virtually. A similar number of youths are expected to take courses through this program during summer 2021.

The Nubian Square ecosystem lends itself to innovation in education and workforce development. BFIT's new campus and *Future Forward* strategy will allow us to serve as a linchpin for these efforts described above, and more that we have yet to imagine and co-create with our partners.

The new BFIT campus in Nubian Square will bring us closer to organizations that engage and empower our students.



## Hands-on Education for High-Demand Jobs

### Certificates

Automotive Technology	HVAC&R Technology
Computer Aided Design/SolidWorks	Network and Systems Support
CNC Machining	Practical Electricity
Cybersecurity	Software Development
Electronics Technology	Web Design Multimedia

### Associate Degrees

Automotive Technology	Engineering Technology (3 concentrations)
Computer Information Technology (3 concentrations)	- Advanced Manufacturing and Automation
- Network and Systems Support	- Mechatronics
- Software Development	- Renewable Energy
- Web Design Multimedia	Health Information Technology
Construction Management	Opticianry

### Bachelor's Degrees

Automotive Management
Electrical Engineering
Health Information Technology (3 concentrations)
- General
- Data Analytics
- Public Health



**BENJAMIN FRANKLIN**  
INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

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