

# Boston University Matriculation

September 1, 2008

Good morning. I'm Steven Karbank, a Boston University graduate from 1979 and President of the Boston University Alumni Association. On behalf of BU's more than **280,000 alumni**, I **welcome you to campus**. I'd also like to **compliment** you on your **good judgment** to have **come** to Boston University. You've chosen **well** and you're in for a **heck** of a 4 years here.

In many ways, Boston University is very **different** now than when I was a student in the 1970's. When I was here, **blackboards, chalk and erasers** were **high tech**. Now there are fancy **computers** and **powerpoint** presentations...and you can take **really cool courses**, like the one entitled "**Cinema Physica**" in which Professor Andy Cohen will teach you about **physics** through films like **X-Men** and **Speed 2**. By the way, an ocean liner **crashing** into a pier at 10 miles an hour is **not** going to send someone **smashing** through the **plate glass window** of a ship's bridge, contrary to what's shown in **Speed 2**.

When I was here, my friends and I hung out in the dorms listening to **Bob Dylan records** and talking about **poetry** and **ideas**. And you, you've got...the rapper **Ludacris?** and **video games?** Well, **so much for progress...**

When I was a senior here, the **faculty** went on **strike** and **finals** were canceled. I wouldn't **bet** on **that** happening anytime soon! These days the faculty and administration work **cooperatively** with one another.

When I was here, there was a **monumental 3 1/2 foot snowfall** that shut down Boston and BU for a **week**. But don't get your hopes up, **global warming or not**, you'll **still experience the worst winters that you can imagine!**

I was here before there was an **Internet**, but we had the **next best thing**: the **BU course catalogue!** It was the size of a **telephone book**. The brief course descriptions served as a kind **table of contents of knowledge**. If you could take **all of the courses listed** in the **BU course catalogue**, then **or now**, taught by the **legion of great BU professors**, you'd be a **genius**, a **walking internet...**but with a **personality!**.

But with or without the internet, one thing that **hasn't** changed at Boston University since I was a student here is the **high quality of teaching**.

In my freshman year, after reading through that **extraordinary BU course catalogue**, I took an **intro Philosophy** course, taught by Professor Abner Shimony. On the first day of class he wrote on the blackboard the **aims** of the course, among which was **to enhance a sense of wonder about the world**. I learned a great deal from Professor Shimony, about logic, about Physics, about language in that course and in others that I later took with him. But most of all it was his **character** that **inspired** me, his **infectious and profound enthusiasm for ideas and for life**. He **did indeed** enhance my sense of **wonder about the world** in a way that was **life-transforming** and **persists to this day** some 30 plus years later.

**Every BU alumnus** can tell you a similar story about being inspired by a professor. And Boston University today is **full** of professors who can have such an impact on you, as long as you're **open to being inspired**.

Two things comments before I finish: While at Boston University, **Don't be shy!** and **Don't leave here with regrets!** This place has **too many interesting people** and **too many opportunities** to **not make the most of them** while you're **here**.

Boston University's alumni wish you the **best of luck** and we trust that you will come to **love this place** as **much** as we do.

**All the best!**