

STUDENT CHAPTERS OF EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

**Chapters of Excellence Program
2025-2026 Submission**

for

Boston University Materials Advantage Chapter

contained within

BU MSE-GSA

**(Boston University Materials Science and Engineering Graduate Students
Association)**



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2025-2026 Officers

Boston University Materials Advantage Chapter BU MSE-GSA (Materials Science and Engineering Graduate Students Association)



President:

Emily Ghosh

4th Yr. Ph.D. Candidate
Materials Science & Eng.



Vice President:

Catherine Wang

3rd Yr. Ph.D. Candidate
Materials Science & Eng.



Treasurer:

Savannah Schisler

4th Yr. Ph.D. Candidate
Mechanical Eng.



Secretary:

Miguel Moreno Tenorio

4th Yr. Ph.D. Candidate
Mechanical Eng.



**Peer Mentorship
Co-Director &
MSE PhD**

Representative:

Kaixin Suo

4th Yr. Ph.D. Candidate
Materials Science & Eng.



**Peer Mentorship
Co-Director &
Physics**

Representative:

Benli Jiang

4th Yr. Ph.D. Candidate
Materials Science & Eng.



**Outreach Chair &
GWISE**

Representative:

Corbyn Stosich

2nd Yr. Ph.D. Candidate
Materials Science & Eng.



**MSE Masters
Representative:**

Tyler Critz

Masters Student
Materials Science & Eng.



**MSE General
Representative:**

Aaron Khan

4th Yr. Ph.D. Candidate
Materials Science & Eng.



**Chemistry
Representative:**

Molly Nicknisch

4th Yr. Ph.D. Candidate
Materials Science & Eng.



**Mechanical Eng.
Representative:**

Raina Tung

1st Yr. Ph.D. Candidate
Mechanical Eng.



**Student Chapters
Faculty Advisor:**

Dr. Soumendra Basu
Associate Division Head
and Professor
Materials Science & Eng.
Mechanical Eng.

Student Liaisons to Professional Societies:

Emily Ghosh (President)

MSE: Materials Science & Eng.

Overview: Boston University Materials Advantage Student Chapter

Boston University Materials Science and Engineering Graduate Students Association BU MSE-GSA

The following report pertains to the Boston University (BU) Materials Advantage Student Chapter in the Boston University Division of Materials Science and Engineering (MSE). Our student chapter is housed under the umbrella association BU MSE-GSA: Boston University's Materials Science and Engineering Graduate Students Association. The following report outlines our events and initiatives conducted this year by our association and will refer to our association as "MSE-GSA".

MSE-GSA is a graduate student group focused on building a stronger sense of graduate and undergraduate student community across the Materials Science and Engineering Division of Boston University as well as those who do materials research or are interested in materials science on our campus. We work to build our community through professional development events, such as resume workshops, career fairs for MSE-GSA members, volunteer opportunities, and facility tours. Additionally, we host a variety of networking events, such as our Student Networking Night where representatives from numerous local companies (such as GE Aerospace, Draper, MIT Lincoln Labs, , Saint Gobain, and Commonwealth Fusion Systems) joined us on campus to meet, chat, and answer questions with students. Also, as a graduate student organization, we strive to provide regular social events, such as pizza and coffee during finals and a materials day for graduate students where we do fun experiments that you might not get to do in your lab (think liquid nitrogen). We aim to ensure that our students have access to valuable research and professional development opportunities within our academic community. While we are a division instead of a department, meaning we only have a graduate program for MSE and no undergraduate program, we are open to all departments on campus as we build our association based on *interest* in MSE.

This is our third year as a full graduate student association Materials Advantage Chapter following a successful restart of MSE-GSA two years ago, after a several semester hiatus during which all previous members graduated. Over the 3 years, we have worked to continue building our chapter up through increased resources, social events, connections to other student and administrative groups within our university and the ASM International organization. Our executive board included 3 new roles this year, all of which were interdisciplinary and outreach related thus allowing our reach to extend further within our community. This report outlines some of our key contributions to the divisions and STEM departments at BU as a whole within the last year.



Calendar of Events

2025-2026 Events

- **May 26th - June 6th, 2025: MSE-GSA E-Board Nominations**
- **June 16th - 23rd, 2025: MSE-GSA E-Board Elections**
- **August 29th, 2025: BU MSE PhD and Masters Fall Orientation[†]**
- **Sept 18th, 2025: Joint Technical Talk with ASM Boston - Michael C. Brown of RevBio, Inc.^{††}**
- **Sept 25th, 2025: MSE-GSA Social - Fall Welcome Social Lunch**
- **Sept 25th, 2025: Peer Mentorship Mentor Training**
- **Oct 2nd, 2025: Peer Mentorship Kick-off**
- **Oct 3rd, 2025: MSE Graduate Talk Seminar Series - Emily Ghosh**
- **Oct 28th, 2025: MSE Townhall**
- **Oct 28th - Dec 3rd: MSE-GSA Boston University Crowdfunding Campaign**
- **Oct 29th, 2025: MSE-GSA Social - Halloween Materials Madness**
- **Nov 14th, 2025: MSE Graduate Talk Seminar Series - Zelin Miao**
- **Nov 19th, 2025: MSE-GSA Social - STEM Themed Bingo Night**
- **Nov 21st, 2025: MSE Graduate Talk Seminar Series - Aaron Khan**
- **Dec 2nd, 2025: BU MSE Alumni Networking Night**
- **Dec 10th, 2025: MSE-GSA Social - End of Semester Joint social with Systems Engineering GSA**
- **Jan 14th, 2026: BU MSE Spring Orientation[†]**
- **Jan 30th - Feb 13th, 2026: MSE-GSA Social - MSE-GSA Candy Grams**
- **Feb 2nd, 2026: MSE-GSA x BU Graduate & Postdoctoral Success (GPS) Mentoring Workshop**
- **Feb 13th, 2026: MSE Graduate Talk Seminar Series - Benli Jiang**
- **Feb 19th, 2026: Joint Technical Talk with ASM Boston - Materials Research in Industry and Academia with Dr. Adam Stevenson of Saint Gobain and Prof. Soumendra Basu of BU MSE^{††}**
- **Mar 16th, 2025: MSE-GSA Social - MSE-GSA Pi Day Potluck**
- **Mar 6th, 2026: BU MSE PhD Open House & Graduate Poster Symposium[†]**
- **Mar 20, 24, 27th, 2026: BU MSE PhD Virtual, Masters Virtual, and Masters Open Houses[†]**
- **April 7th, 2026: MSE Graduate & Professional Student Week (GPSAW) Donut Drop-In[†]**
- **April 11th 2026: Earth Day: Invasive Plant Removal - Volunteering with Friends of the Fells**
- **April 14th, 2026: Student Networking Night with ASM Boston, featuring Dr. Michelle Sugimoto of Saint Gobain and Polina Ermoshkina of Commonwealth Fusion Systems^{†††}**
- **April 24th, 2026: MSE-GSA Social - Joint Collab Social with Physics, & Chemistry**
- **April 24th, 2026: MSE Graduate Talk Seminar Series - Savannah Schilser**
- **May 8th, 2026: MSE Graduate Talk Seminar Series - Neila Gross**
- **May 18th, 2026: ASM New England Materials Experience^{††}**
- **May 22nd, 2026: MSE Graduate Talk Seminar Series - Toluwalope John**
- **May 28th, 2026: MSE-GSA Social - MSE-GSA 3D Printed Clock**
- **June 11th, 2026: Coffee with an Engineer: Dr. Joy Perkinson of Draper**
- **June 18th, 2026: Joint Technical Talk with ASM Boston with Dr. Alket Mertiri of Draper^{††}**
- **June 8th - 15th, June 17th - 24nd, 2026: MSE-GSA E-Board Nominations & Elections**

MSE-GSA Hosted (includes BU-internally co-hosted events)

[†] MSE-GSA assisted and/or recruited volunteers for a BU MSE Event

^{††} MSE-GSA assisted in organization, recruited volunteers, increased student attendance in ASM or ASM Boston Event

^{†††} MSE-GSA Primary Host, ASM Boston Co-Host

Chapter Management

Management

MSE-GSA's executive board consists of a President (Emily Ghosh), Vice President (Catherine Wang), Treasurer (Savannah Schisler), Secretary (Miguel Moreno Tenorio), Peer Mentorship Directors (Kaxin Suo and Benli Jiang), multiple group representatives (Aaron Khan, Molly Nicknish, Corbyn Stosich, Tyler Critz, and Raina Tung), and a Materials Advantage Student Liaison (Emily Ghosh). We added a new position, the Outreach Chair and a new group representative, the GWISE (Graduate Women in Science & Engineers) representative (both done by Corbyn Stosich).

The primary responsibilities of each position are as follows:

President: Primary association oversight and direction of association and major events. Works closely with the Vice President for all planning.

Vice President: Secondary association oversight and primary direction for online communications and event coordination. Works closely with the President for all planning.

Treasurer: Oversight and coordination of association's finances

Secretary: Coordination of student, intra-departmental, inter-departmental email communications.

Peer-Mentorship Directors: Directs all functions for Peer Mentorship Program (PMP).

Outreach Chair: Developed connections to other student organizations, connections with Professors and Admin for internal program development such as student town halls and seminars.

Representatives: Provides degree-level representation and connections to other university organizations or groups. *Ex.* Tyler Critz is our MSE Master's representative to ensure participation of the incoming Master cohort members, thus helping our organization develop interest and involvement with the community in the program that typically stays for a shorter time and may not be as well integrated as some of the more senior PhD students. Molly Nicknish is our chemistry representative and shared our events with members of the chemistry community and organized co-hosted events.

MSE-GSA's goal is to build a strong community for graduate and undergraduate students studying or interested in materials science and engineering while providing professional development, networking, volunteering, and learning opportunities. Each month, we try to provide at least one major event to allow students to interact more with MSE-GSA, BU MSE Division, and any of our affiliates. Examples of these kinds of events will be described later in this report.

To ensure we are on track and openly discuss any ideas or concerns with our officers, we hold E-Board meetings roughly every other week with agendas laid out by our President and Vice-President. E-Board meetings are held in hybrid form where officers can join either in person or over zoom to allow for schedule flexibility. The agenda covers various topics such as logistics for upcoming events over the next month or semester, follow ups from previous events, peer-mentorship updates, finance updates, social media posts, emails, website resources, and any pending action items. Each E-Board member is assigned certain items as they arise during meetings based on their position and abilities, with tasks often being collaborated on by 2 or more E-Board members.

Meeting minutes of each E-Board meeting, which contain notes on all discussed topics, assignments, and due dates, are kept in date-specific online documents that live in our organization's BU email Google Drive. Meeting minute Google Docs are shared with E-Board officers after each meeting. Since each officer has access to the email and Google Drive, they can access the meeting minutes and any other documents contained in the Google Drive at any given time.

Currently, our Google Drive serves as our main location for document organization due to ease of access through the BU system. Several other types of documents, such as annual reports, event-related

documentation, surveys, and resource planning, etc., are organized into respective categories and organized by year in our Google Drive. Finance documents are maintained by our Treasurer and administration here as well to track all annual incoming money, itemized expenditures, and balance that is available for future use.

This is our third year of MSE-GSA following a multi-semester hiatus due to COVID. Since then, we have established a stronger chapter presence and are continuing to put efforts towards growth and increased resources for members.

Continuity

Our Google Drive consists of Officer Transition Documents where each current officer lays out their roles and responsibilities, any other information they deem helpful for their role, and an encouragement handover letter with their contact information for the future person in the role. Every year members add and revise the documents to ensure updated directions. The documents are reviewed by the President and Vice-President to ensure agreement amongst the roles. A shorter document is also made that summarizes each role. This ensures that all roles and respective responsibilities are properly defined and provides each role with a defined people of contact in the organization for specific tasks, such as email communication or event space coordination, to avoid confusion or redundancy of work. These documents are given to newly elected officers as part of their training. We aim to continue improving upon these Officer Transition Documents to ensure a smooth transition between executive boards in years to come. Additionally, all prior year transition documents will remain available, thus allowing E-board members access to years of knowledge.

Recruitment

After successfully establishing MSE-GSA in the BU College of Engineering, recruitment for E-Board members was done in the form of open elections. Elections occurred in September 2025), increasing the outreach of our executive board with new roles in the form of representatives from Chemistry, the Graduate Women in Science and Engineering society, and an Outreach Chair. . This year elections will be held adding an application process for core E-board positions (President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary) which will be reviewed by outgoing E-board members and a nomination cycle, nomination acceptance, platform submission, and a subsequent election period. All MSE-GSA members are eligible for nomination to all positions except for the roles of President and Vice President which are restricted to current E-Board members to maintain continuity of chapter knowledge. All MSE-GSA members are eligible to vote in elections. To ensure no conflicts of interest arose, the MSE Division administration will administer our elections.

The implementation of departmental and graduate degree level representation ensures we are addressing concerns or desires of all involved departments and graduate programs with students interested in MSE-GSA activities, not just PhD and Masters students of MSE. Elections for the 2026-27 academic year will occur in mid-June, with nominations and applications beginning early June. The updated list of new officers will be sent to the Materials Advantage team following our elections. We will also run an additional cycle of elections in the 2026 Fall semester for remaining positions and our first year MSE Ph.D. representative.

To be inclusive to all students, all BU MSE division students are automatically members of our association. They can choose to register to be MA or MRS members. Students interested in becoming Materials Advantage or MRS members register during our membership drives or in their own time. Additionally, we have an email sign-up for students outside of our division to be involved with our events.

Attendance

Our events are communicated to students primarily through email, physical flyers, and Instagram posts. Our division administration additionally helps send reminder emails of the information to MSE students as well as other STEM divisions and departments. Through our emails, flyers, instagram posts, and word-of-mouth, our events consistently have 12-35 students attend. This does not include students who did not register but attended or registered students who were unable to attend for various last-minute circumstances.

Our MSE division student population consists only of graduate students as we do not have an undergraduate program. While our reach extends to departments with both graduate and undergraduate students, our attendees are primarily graduate students in the MSE division or in MSE-related research groups. Our MSE division consists of nearly 100 graduate students, with roughly 17% attending MSE-GSA events. The remaining attendees come from outside of our division. This year, MSE-GSA's event participation increased particularly with members of the chemistry department (increase from 0 to an average of 2 chemistry students per event attending this year) and mechanical engineering departments (an increase from 1 to 7 mechanical engineering students) showing that having representatives for different departments does in fact extend our reach. We also saw an increased attendance from undergraduates this year!

Our goal is to provide resources and opportunities to students they might not have otherwise seen. We hope in future semesters to improve our events and resources based on student feedback and be able to continue increasing attendance from students across multiple departments.

Newsletter

One of the main ways we keep MSE-GSA members informed of upcoming talks, networking opportunities, and socials, was a monthly newsletter. In addition to emailing our members separately, this year we have worked more closely with the department marketing team. This change aligned with increased faculty/department participation in event organizations particularly with our Grad Talks Series and Townhall. With the involvement of the department, we have more consistent flyer posting and may reach students that read department emails but not ones from MSE-GSA directly. We were also able to work closer with other departments directly with the help of our department reps. This allowed further outreach into other departments that would otherwise not have access to our emails.

Fundraising

Despite widespread funding restrictions across academic institutions, MSE-GSA remains committed to ensuring that all students have equitable access to professional development and community-building opportunities, including networking events, facility tours, and conference participation. This commitment became especially important as our internal funding allocation was reduced from \$5,000 to \$500 during the past year. In response to these new financial constraints, we implemented several strategic changes to our budgeting and fundraising practices: (1) Developed an actively-maintained master budget sheet and standard event budget template which were reviewed through semesterly audits to ensure accountability and financial sustainability. (2) Participated in Boston University's crowdfunding campaign program for a 2nd consecutive year, increasing our fundraising goal from \$1,000 to \$2,000. Coordinated outreach efforts involving social media campaigns and engagement with alumni, faculty, staff, and students attracted 38 donors (increased from our 14 donors last year) and raised \$2,597 and secured an additional \$500 donation from ASM Boston, effectively tripling both donor participation and total funds raised. We additionally received several smaller donations throughout the year from individuals who missed the official campaign, helping support supplemental event expenses such as refreshments. (3) Continued applications to and use of AIST Materials Advantage Pizza Grants each semester. (4) Reduced expenditures on social events by organizing more joint and interdepartmental programs, aligning with our goal of increasing outreach, collaboration, and inclusivity while sharing costs across organizations. (5) Developed lower-cost community-building events, ex. potlucks and cookie exchanges, which maintained student engagement while operating within our reduced budget.

Through careful financial planning, expanded fundraising efforts, and creative programming, MSE-GSA successfully adapted to a challenging funding environment, increasing our funds from a starting negative budget in September 2025 to a positive budget as of June 1st, 2026.

Technical Programming

Our technical program for this year included a variety of research presentations, ranging from technical talks from industry and academic professionals via our continued collaboration with the local professional ASM International chapter, ASM Boston, to our fellow graduate students via collaboration with our BU MSE Division, allowing our members to be exposed to presentation opportunities and insights in industry and academic research.

ASM Boston Engagement - Co-Hosted Technical Talks

This year, we continued working with our local professional chapter of ASM International, ASM Boston, to provide our chapter members with technical programming including talks from academia and industry in various fields of Materials Science. Facilitation of this partnership has been done through our President, Emily Ghosh, who also serves on the ASM Boston Executive Committee and was the ASM Boston Chair and a Student Board Member of ASM International Board of Trustees for this past year. Our chapter has additionally utilized our alumni network to host talks discussing transitions from academia to the professional world, providing valuable insight to our students as they prepare for post-graduation life.

For the last 3 years, MSE-GSA has partnered with ASM Boston to host technical talks at Boston University (BU). Centralizing the technical talks at BU has not only helped increase student attendance, but also helped to foster conversations between students, academics, and industry professionals. While Boston is a hub for scientific research and conferences, conference presentations can be daunting for new students to attend. By co-hosting ASM Boston talks on our campus, we give students the opportunity to become accustomed to attending conference style presentations, encouraging students to become more interested in attending presentations outside of BU



Technical talks were held at the BU Photonics (PHO) Building and at the Center for Computing and Data Sciences (CDS) Building. The Photonics Building is one of our primary STEM research hubs on campus, making it an ideal central location for students to come to talks after classes and work. CDS, as another central location on campus, is a new 17-story clean energy building providing large, bright and welcoming event spaces where attendees can also enjoy high-rise views of Boston, Cambridge, and the Charles River that would require tickets to see in other parts of Boston.

One of the main concerns communicated to us by ASM Boston in the past is that student engagement is low, even when held at a university. Efforts were made to encourage attendance through student communication and have talks in more fun environments, however long distances between schools and venues, as well as associated travel and registration costs, made it difficult for students to attend technical talks. By co-hosting ASM Boston talks on BU campus and working with ASM Boston to lower student attendance costs, MSE-GSA has helped encourage more student attendance and interest in the ASM International organization, with 5-15 students regularly attending the technical talks.

For the technical talks, MSE-GSA worked with ASM Boston to organize speakers and official advertisements while MSE-GSA, with the aid of BU MSE, organized the catering, facilities, student registrations, and other venue logistics. These technical talks included Dr. Michael C. Brown of RevBio, Inc., a



double feature seminar about Materials Research in the Industry and Academia featuring Dr. Adam Stevenson of Saint Gobain and Prof. Soumendra Basu of Boston University (the Associate Head of BU MSE and the faculty advisor of MSE-GSA), Dr. Michelle Sugimoto of Saint Gobain, Polina Ermoshkina of Commonwealth Fusion Systems, and Dr. Alket Mertiri (to occur on June 18th 2026) of Draper.

Topics covered included biomaterials for implants, ceramic processing and associated supply chain, electrochemical cell research and development, and materials development and failure analysis for fusion energy. MSE-GSA and the BU MSE Division are also fortunate to have several active alumni who are willing and eager to participate in our events and engage with students. While the Career Development section will describe additional involvement of our alumni, we were fortunate to schedule alumni Dr. Sugimoto and Dr. Mertiri to speak with students about their research as well as their experience transitioning from academia to industry, providing students with a valuable insight on trajectories post-graduation.

Graduate Talk Seminar Series

The BU MSE Division hosts MSE Seminars roughly twice a month, inviting speakers from various institutions to give talks about their research. These talks serve as a way for BU students and faculty to learn about research outside of BU. However, these talks can be sometimes intimidating to students as they are primarily attended by faculty and, while not true, students fear appearing unknowledgeable when asking questions. Thus student attendance is often low. To help encourage students to attend regular seminars

This year we worked with BU MSE Faculty Prof. Joerg Werner and the MSE Division to host a seminar series specifically for PhD candidates to present to peers, faculty, and anyone interested in their work. These events acted as a good alternative to conference talks as students haven't had the same travel and conference opportunities as they had in past years due to schoolwide budget cuts. Students would put together a 30-45 minute presentation on their work with a question period for the audience. These participants received an official invitation letter from the division along with being promoted on the BU Materials Science website.



In total, 6 PhD Candidates from MSE and Mechanical Engineering presented their work to audiences of 15-35 students. Speakers included Emily Ghosh, Zelin Miao, Aaron Khan, Savannah Schisler, Neila Gross, and Toluwalope John. Overall students really enjoyed this opportunity and the chance to learn more about their peers from all different fields in MSE. We hope to continue this series in the future and have already had more students asking to present in our next cycle.



MSE Grad Talks
Materials Science and Engineering
Graduate Students
give conference-style presentations
 3rd and 4th year/Post-prospectus students give a 20-30 minute
 (+ questions) presentation on their MSE research

Fridays 2:30-4pm
 2:30pm – Social
 3pm – Talk

Want to learn more?

Contact: Corbyn Stosich, MSE-GSA Outreach Chair
 at msegsa@bu.edu

MSE-GSA
 Materials Science and Engineering
 Graduate Student Association
sites.bu.edu/msegsa

BOSTON UNIVERSITY College of Engineering
 Division of Material Science & Engineering



Poster Session at the MSE Open Houses

While our graduate talk series were aimed at giving our upper level graduate students (3rd-4th years) opportunities to present their current research, MSE-GSA and the BU MSE Division wanted to give newer PhD and Masters students similar opportunities to showcase their work. To do so, MSE-GSA worked with BU MSE Division and MSE Faculty to host a Research Poster Symposium at the Spring MSE PhD Open House. Students within each research group worked together to create posters describing their groups' research to prospective students, allowing current students to not only practice their poster presentation skills in a less-stressful environment, but also help show prospective students what kind of work they could participate in if they joined our program while meeting current graduate students who could help directly answer their questions about research groups at BU.

Coffee in an Engineer

As part of our continued efforts to provide our student members with networking and career development opportunities, we want to encourage students to meet with Materials Scientists and Engineers from various fields in academia and industry. From our networking events, as described in the next section, we have found that students enjoy speaking in casual conversations with engineers, not only in a one-on-one setting, but also in a group conversation with other students. This year, one of our last events will be a "Coffee with an Engineer", where we are inviting a Lead Materials Engineer from Draper, Dr. Joy Perkinson, to speak with students about her work and open roles in her team over coffee, snacks, and lunch. Dr. Perkinson has worked heavily with research groups at BU over the last few years and can thus set an example for how we can further utilize our connections to provide more resources to students. This event will occur in mid-June with anticipated success. We hope to run similar events in the future as part of a "Coffee with an Engineer" series.

Career Development

While our technical Programming included opportunities for students to grow their skills towards professional development, our primary Career Development events focused on providing students opportunities to network with professionals, both from Boston-area companies and our BU MSE Division alumni.

Networking Events

After successfully running large networking events the last two years, we decided to host 2 Networking Events this year: (1) Alumni Networking Night with our MSE Division Alumni, and (2) a 3rd run of our Boston-area company Student Networking Night. These events were used to bridge the gap between working professionals and students looking to enter the workforce.

Motivation

Career fairs can often be daunting. As graduating students prepare to enter the workforce, they have many questions about the application process, best ways to make themselves stand out in the ever-growing applicant pool, and what the work will be like once they find a position. With time constraints and stressful environments of career fairs, there is little opportunity for students to discuss these concerns with employers.

As a student group of professional societies, we want to utilize connections to societies like ASM Boston and our connections to BU MSE Alumni to allow students a chance to directly speak with working professionals. To do this, we created our Student Networking Night last year and held our second run of the event in the Fall semester. Rather than a traditional career fair, our Alumni Networking Night and our 3rd Annual Student Networking Night provided informal environments for students to ask questions that they normally could not ask at a career fair or in an interview.

Alumni Networking Night

This past Fall, we invited our recent and past MSE Division Alumni to join us for an evening reception at the top floor event space of our BU Photonics building. This event was organized to coincide with the Fall Meeting of MRS (Materials Research Society), which is hosted in Boston each Fall a few miles from campus, to encourage alumni in attendance at the conferences to meet with or reunite current and previous students. While this was an unstructured social event, it allowed students the opportunity to approach alumni, strike up a conversation to introduce themselves, and learn about life after graduation all while enjoying a free buffet dinner. Students thoroughly enjoyed meeting our alumni, with the event attracting many of our first year students, and the event provided a welcoming environment for our alumni to show our appreciation for their support of our students.



Student Networking Night



Our largest event this year was the Student Networking Night. Industry representatives from Boston area companies were invited to speak with students in 1:1 chats, allowing students to engage with industry professionals working in fields they desire to enter upon graduation. This is our 3rd year running this event after a successful 2 runs the last and previous year. While last year's run of this event was kept internal to BU students, this year we partnered with ASM Boston to co-host and advertise to both ASM Boston members and all Boston area university-level students.

Industry Representation

Through connections made from previous runs of the event, alumni, and our students' previous work experiences, we brought together representatives from various companies in the Boston and Greater Boston Area. The representatives included engineers, managers, and a patent-law professional. Each company hosted Company Chat Stations where students could meet individually with representatives. The participating companies included Applied Materials, Commonwealth Fusion Systems (CFS), Draper, GE Aerospace, Lila Sciences, MIT Lincoln Labs, Saint Gobain, [SES.AI](#), and a station for Patent Law, providing a total of 15 representatives. Expertise of the representatives included, but was not limited to, materials characterization, metallurgy, computational analysis, and aerospace design.

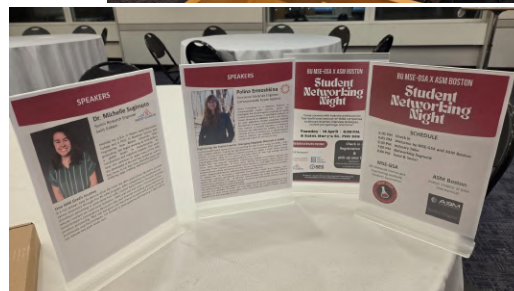
Company representatives were also invited to give a short technical talk at the beginning of the event to help to provide a technical program to the event and introduce students to research conducted at companies. After an introduction of the event from the ASM Boston Chair/MSE-GSA President, Emily Ghosh, and the MSE-GSA Vice President, Catherine Wang, representatives from Saint Gobain and Commonwealth Fusion Systems presented technical talks to start the event program during the first segment, denoted as “(1) Technical Talks” in Event Format below.

Pre-Event Actions

Prior to the event, MSE-GSA members and other BU STEM departments students were invited to register. At registration, students submitted their resumes and were asked to rank their top 5 choices of Company Chat Stations available to them to attend. Students were from Materials, Engineering, Biomedical, Electrical, Computer, and Robotics Engineering Ph.D., Masters, and Undergraduate students.

A 1-hour segment of the event, denoted as “(2) Networking Segment” in Event Format below, was divided into five 12-minute time slots where each student was assigned 2-3 time slots to speak with company representatives based on their chosen preferences of stations. Between their assigned times, students could mingle with other working professionals present from ASM Boston and other student attendees or visit a “floating station” as described in a later paragraph. Due to high interest in some stations, a waitlist for each station was made based on the order of registration. In the event that a student was not able to attend, the next available student from the waitlist could take the available slot. Once the assignments were set, the master schedule was sent to all registrants with names of the representatives they would meet with so they could learn about the representatives prior to the event. Representatives were sent the same schedule to be aware of how many students they were meeting with and when. Upon arrival, students were given individualized schedules indicating their specific time slot assignments and associated company representatives.

In previous years, student registration was open until a certain date and students were assigned stations based on order of registration. However, due the limited number of representatives and time allotted for networking, many students were on waitlists or only able to meet with 1 representative during the networking portion, resulting in large amounts of idle time even after conversing with other professionals in attendance or visiting a resume station. To address this concern, this year, we made the following modifications: (1) Time slots were increased in duration to allow for longer conversation and transition time to the next station. (2) The number of registration spots was limited to 35 students to ensure everyone had an equal opportunity to speak with at least 2, if not 3, of their top 5 choices in stations. Students were assigned in order of registration, meaning the earlier a student registered, the more likely they were to get their



top choices. (3) Students were provided with individualized schedules for their assigned time slots. (4) A ranked waitlist was created for each station based on order of registration. Waitlist positions were numbered (ex. “W3”) based on the student’s position in the line. We informed students if/when they were taking off waitlists. (5) We included two “floating stations”, Applied Materials and Draper, where students could freely join a group discussion with the representative with other students. This allowed for more conversations, minimized idle time between time slots, and provided an overall fulfilling and productive experience. Examples of the master and individual student schedules are shown here:

Event Format

The event was divided into 3 segments: (1) Technical Talks, (2) Networking Segment, and (3) Social. This event was held in the BU Photonics Building where the event space was set up to allow easy flow between event segments while also giving ample seating during each segment. Registration occurred at the venue entrance.



The Networking Segment’s Company Chat Stations were at several large round tables. This allowed for informal style conversations where students could sit next to representatives and representatives could display trinkets and additional information. Behind the stations were high-top tables, buffet style hors d’oeuvres, and beverages where the Social segment of the event occurred. The MSE-GSA E-Board members announced the event, transitioned between each segment, and assisted attendees with questions throughout the evening.

Company	CFS
Rep / Time Slot	Polina Ermoshkina
T1 7:00	Devin Prashan Desilva
T2 7:12	Chaitanya Ayyappan
T3 7:24	Alexander Rocca
T4 7:36	Ethan Andersson
T5 7:48	Aaron Khan
W1	Jairaj Narendran
W2	Turibius Rozario
W3	Fatimah Alowa
Alexander Rocca	
Time Slot	Rep/Company
T1 - 7:00PM	Thomas Buas (GE Aerospace)
T2 - 7:12PM	-
T3 - 7:24PM	Polina Ermoshkina (CFS)
T4 - 7:36PM	-
T5 - 7:48PM	-
Waitlist	
W3	Bryce Tappan (SES.AI)

Event Organization

As part of our efforts to work through budget restrictions, we were able to cut costs significantly through venue and catering modifications. As part of our collaboration with ASM Boston, MSE-GSA performed the organizational tasks of venue logistics, student pairing, company representative searches, and speaker recruitment. ASM Boston kindly donated a significant portion of the funding for the event and advertised our event to the general professional and student public.

Reception and Continuation

In total, nearly 55 people participated in the event. The event received generally positive reception from all attendees as well as BU Faculty whose students were in attendance. Surveys were sent to students following the event. Students appreciated the experience, want to have similar events in the future with more time given to the networking segment, and hope to see similar and additional companies represented. They were also welcomed to write anonymous thank you notes which we sent to each of the representatives. We contacted close to 20 companies during planning of this event. Those who could not attend have requested to participate in next year’s iteration and all companies that did attend this year and last year expressed interest in returning for future iterations of the event. Starting this year representatives have been actively pooling participants of the event so that during next year’s iteration, a LinkedIn group can be set up specifically for MSE-GSA Networking Night. This will allow for this long running event to have a platform for attendees to connect and make the process of inviting attendees more streamlined.



Service

One of BU MSE-GSA's main goals is to foster a strong community for all students interested in materials science. To do this, we focus energy on student support within BU MSE as well as other avenues in the greater Boston University community.

Peer Mentorship Program (PMP)

As part of our initiative to help students in the MSE Division, we have a Peer Mentorship Program (PMP) designed for first year graduate students. The program pairs first-year or new students with upperclassmen graduate mentors for the entire academic year. The goals of the program are to alleviate some of the stress and anxiety typical to new graduate students, to inform MSE students of resources and opportunities at BU and around Boston, and to build a stronger community within the MSE Division.

Sign-Ups and Advertising

In the Fall semester, Spring semester, and Summer, we advertise the PMP to prospective and incoming Master's and PhD students. Mentorship programs like this are common at the undergraduate level at various academic institutions including BU, however, graduate students rarely receive this kind of attention. Our mentorship program is unique as it's the only one in the BU College of Engineering that is catered specifically for incoming graduate students to the MSE program. The support system that the PMP can provide to students is a major factor that can convince prospective students who are on the fence about coming to BU. To advertise the program, the PMP directors present a slide deck and 2 minute pitch on what the PMP program provides to prospective students during the PhD and Master's open houses as well as to incoming students during orientation in the Fall. Incoming students receive this information via email form to remind them of sign ups. Additionally, in the Summer, the PMP is advertised to grad students on campus. Advertising to returning grad students is important to get a good number of mentor sign-ups. Past mentees make great mentors because they are familiar with the mentor-mentee relationship and often have great suggestions to improve the program for incoming classes.

Early in the Fall semester, multiple emails are sent out reminding students of the PMP to all MSE grad students. The sign-up deadline is later in September so that students may be less overwhelmed, and the emails do not get lost in the sea of other welcome emails. Sign-ups are also opened up early in the Spring semester to account for any new PhD or Masters students who may have joined the programs later or did not have a chance to sign up previously.

Pairing Process

Mentors and mentees are paired primarily by a preference scale and other factors in the mentee sign-up form. These factors include type of program (PhD or MS options), academic/research concentration, international/domestic student status, non-academic interests, first language, academic/career history, and familial status. Mentees can rank these factors based on importance to them and mentors who align with these factors are prioritized for the pairing. A database of all mentors' interests allows the assigned mentor to refer to another mentor to answer mentee questions not answerable by the assigned mentor - this network of mentors helps create a knowledge and experience base that can address a wide variety of mentee needs. Each mentor is assigned one to three mentees and they may meet with them one on one or as a group.

Meetings

A mentor training session is held in the beginning of the fall semester to prepare the mentors for the program. Ground rules are set on what the mentor should and should not help with and they are provided with resources that they may direct their mentees towards if they need more help. The main goal of the mentor is to help the mentee acclimate to the program, BU, and Boston. They may also help the mentee find a research lab

home or internship. However, they are not a TA or therapist, and the mentor should direct their mentee towards the appropriate resources in such cases.

Mentors have regular check-ins with their mentees throughout the two semesters. Generally, this is in the form of 2-3 coffee chats per semester. The division offers coffee, tea, and snacks for students to use freely during these meetings. There can be more or less such meetings, and it will be dependent on the specific relationship between the mentor and mentee. The mentors are provided with a bank of questions that they can ask to get to know their mentee as well as gauge how they are adjusting to the program and Boston. Mentors can also give guidance on summer research on internship opportunities, which will be a bigger focus in the Spring semester, especially for masters students.

Student Feedback Surveys

Halfway through the Fall semester, mentors are checked-in with, either as a group or a quick message individually, to see if there are any issues that could be solved logistically. Perhaps a mentor has too many mentees or a mentor-mentee match is not working out. The quick check-in makes sure that these issues can be resolved early on. At the end of the Fall semester or the beginning of the Spring one, mentors are asked for feedback on what has worked or what has not. At the end of the Spring semester, both the mentors and mentees are asked for their feedback on the PMP over the whole year.

MSE-GSA and BU Graduate & Postdoctoral Success (GPS) Mentoring Workshop

Mid-way through the academic year, the PMP offers a mentoring workshop held in collaboration with the Graduate & Postdoctoral Success team. The workshop offers a chance for mentors; first-time and returning, to gain some official training and provide new perspectives on how to approach the role of the mentor and tips on how to become a better mentor. Not only does this encourage the PMP to grow and potentially increase the quality of mentors in the program but it also offers the student valuable skills that can be taken into their own professional careers.

Socials to Engage Students with the Mentors (Their Own and Others)

A fall PMP kickoff event serves the purpose of introducing new mentees as well as getting to know other mentors and mentees in the program. Expectations of the program are discussed and food and drink are provided to attendees. Additionally, a closing social for will be held at the beginning of June to gather all the attendees once more at the end of the academic year.

ASM New England Materials Experience



The Boston and Central Massachusetts chapters of ASM International present an ASM New England Materials Experience every year at Boston University and Worcester Polytechnical Institute (WPI). At Boston University, we work with ASM Boston and BU MSE Division to host the event, bringing in nearly 15 student volunteers to serve as module assistants to industry professional Module Leaders and to help accompany high school students at education modules. This year volunteers were current MSE-GSA members as well as GWISE students, non-MSE students new to MSE-GSA, and students from Northeastern University. Taking place in the BU Photonics Center and the BU Engineering Product Innovation Center (EPIC), this event invites high school aged students from various Massachusetts schools to rotate through 6 modules, including Spartan Materials Forming, Polymers & 3D Printing, Microscopy, Cryogenic Phenomena, Shape Memory Alloys, and Corrosion &

Batteries. In each module, students learn exciting knowledge from the Module Leaders and graduate assistants about the science behind each module before diving into the hands-on activities. For example, in Shape Memory Alloys, students are introduced to Nitinol, a metal alloy that has the ability to change shape and revert back to its original shape with the application of heat. Following this introduction, students are encouraged to examine stints, springs, and more objects created from shape memory alloys, deform them, and watch them come back to their original shape. At the end, each student is given a hand-crafted miniature Nitinol spring to take home as a keepsake. It was fantastic to see the high school students enthusiastic about learning materials science!



Aid Open Houses and Orientations

Each year, MSE-GSA is invited to the BU MSE Division open houses and admitted students day to showcase the benefits of being involved in MSE-GSA and the PMP while enrolled at BU. As part of our commitment to building a supportive environment for all students interested in materials science, we showcase our many different types of events, from social to professional development to networking as well as our connections to professional societies and consortiums like Materials Advantage. At the Open House, we talk about our socials, facility tours, ASM Materials Experience, and the Student Networking event to showcase the versatility of our events. We also introduce our E-board and provide our social media to provide incoming students with friendly faces and resources they can utilize prior to attendance. This initiative helps new students transition smoothly into graduate school life, ensuring they feel connected and well-informed from the start. This year, in response to students' feedback, MSE-GSA hosted a graduate student panel that gave incoming students the opportunity to openly ask questions and hear answers from current graduate students. By sharing responses in a group setting, the panel also promoted inclusivity by allowing students who may be less proactive or outgoing to still have access to helpful answers and shared information. Our main goal by being involved with the events is to get all materials researchers excited about joining our community, doing research, and becoming a part of BU!



Materials Science & Engineering Student Town Halls

This year we worked to bring back a town hall for our division as it stopped being hosted following the pandemic. This was a great opportunity to provide a safe, anonymous space with faculty we trusted for all students to bring up any issues or commendations for the department. MSE-GSA worked with our MSE Division Director and Graduate Program Manager, who served as program and faculty liaisons, to help mediate the discussion and ask for feedback of our own to work from. There were a lot of difficult conversations held and overall students commented on their appreciation to have those honest discussions and give feedback. We have also seen a lot of work done both on the division side and the MSE-GSA side in response to questions, comments, and concerns during this event, and it ultimately has led to a strengthened community. We hope to continue regular town halls in the future to work towards creating a collaborative and beneficial environment for all members of the community.

Social Activities

BU MSE-GSA's main events include three different types: Networking, Professional Development, and Social. We aim to provide our students with 4-5 socials a semester. Within this section, we will discuss our efforts to provide members with engaging and exciting social events to connect with each other, relax, and build their community on campus within and outside the MSE Division.

Monthly Socials

September - Fall Welcome Social



To kick off the academic year, we hosted a Fall Welcome Social Lunch to welcome MSE-GSA members back to campus and share our upcoming events schedule for the Fall semester. While this event was hosted during lunch with free Mediterranean food and pizza provided to all attendees, we held the event for over 2 hours to ensure any student who wished to attend was able to attend. In total, we had over 30 students attend, including many first year PhD and Masters students. Welcome socials not only help us spread word about our events and encourage future attendance, but also help incoming and current students start off the year knowing a student community exists for them to join and meet new people outside of the class.

October - Halloween Materials Madness

This year in celebration of Halloween, we brought the MSE community together for a night of bonding, food, and candy related materials science experiments. During the event we hosted a candy building competition, starburst slime making, and a skittles water color station. To cap the night off we ended with our tradition of making homemade liquid nitrogen ice cream. We were able to get a solid turnout across both the masters and PhD programs in the MSE division, and the candy building competition was a hit that we'll be sure to bring back next year. Overall, the event went smoothly and was a great bonding opportunity in the middle of the fall semester to strengthen and facilitate connections within the MSE division.



November - STEM Themed Bingo Night



For our November social, we brought students together to play materials science themed bingo. Students from various STEM departments across BU attended, helping foster the interdisciplinary participation MSE-GSA encourages. To make things more fun and themed, bingo cards consisted of materials science related items or concepts, instead of numbers. We served pizza and gave out various prizes across 6 rounds of bingo. This social's costs were covered by the AIST Pizza Grant for Materials Advantage chapters, which allowed us to ensure that we had enough pizza for about 35 members who stopped by during this event.

December - End of Semester Joint Social with Systems Engineering (SE) Graduate Students Association



Another Division at BU is Systems Engineering. While both Divisions are small and thus housed under the same administrative and in the same building, there is often a lack of communication between the Divisions' student bodies. To encourage collaboration and communication between the divisions' students, MSE-GSA joined with the Systems Engineering Division Graduate Student Association to host an End of Semester Winter Social. At the social, attendees brought and exchanged homemade cookies and sweets to share with their fellow students, mingle over hot chocolate from our hot chocolate bar, and took home "Good Luck with Finals" care package gift bags put together by the student association leaders which contained teas, candies, stickers, various MSE and SE Division swag, and hand drawings from the students leaders. Overall, this was a fruitful event that we hope fosters more collaboration with our fellow Division.

February - Candy Grams

As a method to strengthen the community in our MSE division, we brought back our candygram event for Valentine's day this year! Students, professors, faculty, and staff were invited to fill out a form to send a recipient of their choice a custom Valentine's message. Each candygram came with a custom note, a few pieces of candy, stickers, and a themed pen and notepad. It was great to see our small community come together to send messages of appreciation to one another. During this event we sold about 200 candygrams, an increase from last year! The cost of this event was fully covered by the candy grams we sold. Ultimately, this event was zero cost and strengthened our community in the midst of the semester.



March - Pi-Day Potluck

To celebrate Pi (π) day (3/14), we hosted a potluck social the Monday after Pi day and our university spring break, encouraging people to bring anything Pi-themed: savory pies, sweet pies, and other round items. About 20 people attended, some brought food, and there was enough for people to take home leftovers. Overall it was a great way to bring people together to socialize over good food.

April - Joint Collab MSE-GSA, Physics & Chemistry Social



To truly appreciate the interdisciplinary nature of MSE, MSE-GSA continued organizing the "collab" social with other BU departments. This year, we expanded the "collab" social in collaboration with graduate students from both Physics and Chemistry. Together with the physics graduate student organization (Physics Graduate Student Council) and chemistry graduate student organization

(ChemUnity), we provided pizzas, snacks, beverages and board games. The research in BU Physics and Chemistry covers a wide range and many of them have overlap with materials. However, at BU, MSE is a

major in College of Engineering, while Physics and Chemistry is in College of Arts & Sciences, people from MSE, Physics and Chemistry won't have many opportunities to even meet each other on BU campus. This collaboration event gave people from the three communities an opportunity to know each other and potentially find new research collaboration opportunities. Additionally, at the event planning stage, when we (MSE-GSA) reached out to the Physics Graduate Student Council and ChemUnity for the potential collaboration, the collaboration proposal was echoed by our BU physicists and chemists. After the event, we received positive feedback from all three communities. Currently, all three graduate student organizations (MSE, Physics, Chemistry) would like to continue the collaboration in the future.

April - Earth Day: Invasive Plant Removal - Volunteering with Friends of the Fells

This year for Earth Day month (April!), we held a volunteer event with local community group The Friends of the Fells. This group is an environmental volunteering group that helps to keep the Middlesex Fells Reservation clean, organized, and biologically diverse while educating the greater Boston community how to do their part as well. We took a group of volunteers from the division to the Fells and pulled garlic mustard, an invasive species that threatens to take over space from other local ground plants. This event was very educational and was enjoyed by members of our community.



May - 3D Printed Clock Social



To finish out the year, MSE-GSA hosted a 2nd annual hands-on workshop combining 3D printing and basic electronics assembly, using resources available on campus, to have students assemble and take home their own 3D-printed Hollow Clock. The event was aimed to introduce students to the material properties involved in 3D printing, show school resources, and to make campus life more engaging and enjoyable for students by offering a creative and fun learning experience outside the classroom with fellow members of the MSE-GSA community. A total of 10 graduate and undergraduate students from various departments participated, a good turnout for a post finals event!

Students learned about 3D printers in BU's Engineering & Product Innovation Center (EPIC) and how to assemble simple electronic gadgets. This event was well received in its first run last year, and it was exciting to once again everyone fully engaged, with many participants sharing how rewarding it felt to create something by hand. From the event, students expressed interest in utilizing EPIC's resources in future projects, a resource that is free to use for engineering students at BU. Overall, it was a fun and meaningful event that sparked creativity, curiosity, and a strong sense of community. We look forward to hosting this and more hands-on activities in the future!

Example Advertisement Flyers from our Monthly Socials



Faculty Advisor Letter of Support



College of Engineering
Division of Materials Science and Engineering

15 St. Mary's Street
Brookline, MA 02446

Tel: 617.353.2842
Fax: 617.353.5548
www.bu.edu/mse

May 24, 2026

SUBJECT: Letter of support for 2026 Chapter of Excellence Award

I am the Faculty Advisor of the Boston University (BU) Materials Advantage Student Chapter. I am writing this letter in support of their application for the 2026 Chapter of Excellence Award.

The BU Materials Advantage Student Chapter is a proud winner of the Chapter of Excellence Award in 2024 and 2025. This was mainly due to their significant efforts to re-energize the chapter after substantial attrition in student leadership in the previous years.

This year, the current leadership team has not rested on their laurels and have worked even harder to keep the momentum going. Student involvement in chapter activities increased this year in student-led social events. These events, along with mentorship programs and efforts by the e-board has increased student enthusiasm for the chapter. Mentorship efforts include the peer mentoring program, where incoming students are paired with senior students to quickly learn about navigating their graduate experience successfully both inside and outside the classroom; and interest in leadership positions on the e-board. This year the chapter emphasized cross-department student communication that led to an increase in the participation of non-MSE students in chapter activities, making the Materials Advantage Student Chapter a model for student led chapters at BU.

I also want to bring attention to the initiative of the BU Materials Advantage Student Chapter in responding to budgetary pressures all universities are facing given the current funding climate. In the past years, the Division of Materials Science and Engineering (MSE) at BU had funded several chapter activities. But this funding has been significantly restricted due to the aforementioned budgetary pressures for the past two years. Undaunted, the chapter raised money through crowd funding for a second year in a row, with an increased level of fundraising this year. This has allowed the chapter to maintain its activities without significant MSE help.

The chapter leadership team has continued to be involved with all incoming student open houses and orientations informing new MSE students about the different ways they can connect to the existing students and learn about various resources available to them. The chapter leadership has increased its own outreach through networking and alumni connections, as well as working with the Career Development Office (CDO) to engage more companies in chapter events.

Finally, this year, the chapter has worked with MSE to introduce student speakers in the MSE seminar series. Scheduling of external speakers for the MSE seminars occurs well before the start of each semester, and often there are several gaps in the schedule. This year, the chapter scheduled MSE graduate students to fill in the gaps. The student speakers are typically senior PhD students who have completed their prospectus and are scheduled to graduate within a year. The seminars allow the students to present their research to a general audience, with emphasis on both the motivation of their research and the implication of their research results. The students find this experience to be an excellent warmup for their actual dissertation defense and the larger MSE faculty and student body learn about the research going on at BU MSE in more depth. These students seminars have been highly successful, with a lot of faculty and student engagement in O&A after the presentations.

To conclude, I am very impressed by the energy, drive and commitment of the leadership of the BU Materials Advantage Student Chapter. I strongly endorse their application for the Chapter of Excellence Award.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at basu@bu.edu, in case you need any additional information regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Soumendra Basu".

Soumendra Basu
Faculty Advisor, BU Materials Advantage Student Chapter
Professor and Associate Division Head, Division of Materials Science and Engineering
Professor of Mechanical Engineering