

Thomas Bifano

Director, Boston University Photonics Center
Professor Mechanical Engineering Department
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Education

Duke University Mechanical Engineering & Materials Science, BS, 1980
Duke University Mechanical Engineering & Materials Science, MS, 1983
North Carolina State University, Mechanical Engineering, Ph.D. 1988
Dissertation: "Ductile Regime Grinding of Brittle Materials," Thomas A. Dow, advisor

Appointments

Director, Photonics Center, Boston University, 2006-present
Professor, Mechanical Engineering Dept., Boston University, 1999-present
Vice President and Associate Provost ad interim for Research Boston University, 2024-2025
Chief Technical Officer, Boston Micromachines Corp., Cambridge, MA, 1999-2025
Professor and Chair, Manufacturing Engineering Dept., Boston University, 1999-2006
President, Prism Corporation, Boston, MA, 1995-2000
Associate Professor, Aerospace and Mechanical Eng'g. Dept., Boston University, 1994-1999
Assistant Professor, Aerospace/Mechanical Eng'g. Dept., Boston University; 1988-1994

Research

Microelectromechanical Systems (MEMS); Optomechanical devices; Deformable mirrors;
Manufacturing of optical components; Adaptive optics; Microscopy; Tissue engineering

Honors, Awards Patents

2023 BU Innovator of the Year
2013 BU College of Engineering Distinguished Scholar Award
2010 R&D 100 Award: (MEMS)-based adaptive optics optical coherence tomography
2009 Bepi Colombo Prize, for achievements in research, innovation, and tech. transfer
2007 R&D 100 Award: Adaptive optics scanning laser ophthalmoscope (MAOSLO)
2003 R&D 100 Award: MEMS-based adaptive optics phoropter (MAOP)

Patents

2025 High throughput screening system for engineered cardiac tissues, US12436317
2022 Reverberation microscopy systems and methods, US11226474
2020 Reverberation microscopy systems and methods, US10678037
2019 Solid immersion microscopy system with deformable mirror for correction of aberrations, US10175476B2
2018 Adaptive optics for imaging through highly scattering media in oil reservoir applications, US10018817
2011 MEMS based retroreflector, US7929195
2005 Ion beam modification of residual stress gradients in thin film polycrystalline silicon membranes, US6929721
2004 Micro valve arrays for fluid flow control, US6705345
2003 MEMS-based spatial-light modulator with integrated electronics, US6529311

1998 Process for manufacturing optical data storage disk stamper, US5783371

Professional Service

Conference Chair, SPIE BIOS AO and Wavefront Control for Biosystems, 2015-present
Member, Army Science Board, 2011-2014
SPIE Technical program Chair, MEMS Adaptive Optics I-IX, 2004-2013
Board of Advisors, Schott AG, 2009-2012
Associate Editor, Journal of Micro/Nanolithography, MEMS, and MOEMS 2006-2008
Associate Editor, Int'l J. Mfg. Science and Production 2002-2004
Associate Editor, SME J. Manufacturing Processes 2000-2004
Board of Directors, ASPE, 1994-1996
Chairman Annual and Topical ASPE Conferences, 1994, 1995

University Service

Director, Boston University Photonics Center, 2006-present
Director, Precision Engineering Research Laboratory (BU-PERL), 1990-present
Chair, University Export Control Committee, 2018-present
Member, University Center Directors Committee, 2015-present
Member, Research and Scholarly Activities Committee, 2015-present
Vice President and Associate Provost *ad interim* for Research, 2024-2025
Member, University Strategic Planning Task Force, 2019-2021
Chair, University Research Council, 2008-2011
Chair, Dean Search Committee, College of Engineering, 2005-2006
Chair, Provost's Faculty Advisory Committee on Photonics, 2005-2006
Chair, Faculty Council, Appt., Tenure, and Promotion Policy Comm., 2003-2004
Presidential University Graduate Fellowship Committee 1994-1999
Director, Aerospace/Mechanical Eng. graduate programs, 1988-1991
Faculty advisor to engineering residence hall (Claflin 11), 1990-1995
Faculty advisor to "In Achord," BU a cappella singing group, 1993-1995

Activity Highlights

Director, **Boston University Photonics Center**. Dr. Bifano directs this core facility and academic center of excellence comprised of fifty faculty members and fifteen staff members from eight academic departments. He leads Center programs for education, scholarly research, and technology development. He manages a state-of-the-art facility that includes more than a dozen special-purpose and shared research laboratories and a large business innovation center.

Co-founder, **Boston Micromachines Corporation**, a university spin-off company that was formed to commercialize micromachined deformable mirror technology initially developed in the Bifano laboratory.

Journal Publications

Man, W. & Bifano, T. Electromagnetic deformable mirror fabricated using silicon micromachining and stress-resilient assembly. **Advanced Optical Technologies** 14 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.3389/aot.2025.1511907>

Ewoldt, J. K., DePalma, S. J., Jewett, M. E., Karakan, M. Ç., Lin, Y.-M., Mir Hashemian, P., Gao, X., Lou, L., McLellan, M. A., Tabares, J., Ma, M., Salazar Coariti, A. C., He, J.,

- Toussaint, K. C., Bifano, T. G., Ramaswamy, S., White, A. E., Agarwal, A., Lejeune, E., Baker, B. M. & Chen, C. S. Induced pluripotent stem cell-derived cardiomyocyte in vitro models: benchmarking progress and ongoing challenges. **Nature Methods** **22**, 24-40 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41592-024-02480-7>
- Lou, L., Bacca, N., Ma, M. S., Nautiyal, P., Bifano, T. G. & Agarwal, A. Multiscale mechanics of polydimethylsiloxane: A comparison of meso- and micro-cyclic deformation behavior. **Journal of Applied Polymer Science** **141**, e55546 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1002/app.55546>
- Wu, K., Zhu, X., Bifano, T. G., Anderson, S. W. & Zhang, X. Computational-Design Enabled Wearable and Tunable Metamaterials via Freeform Auxetics for Magnetic Resonance Imaging (Adv. Sci. 26/2024). **Advanced Science** **11**, 2470152 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1002/advs.202470152>
- Ma, M. S., Sundaram, S., Lou, L., Agarwal, A., Chen, C. S. & Bifano, T. G. High throughput screening system for engineered cardiac tissues. **Frontiers in Bioengineering and Biotechnology** **11** (2023). <https://doi.org/10.3389/fbioe.2023.1177688>
- Li, H., Sundaram, S., Hu, R., Lou, L., Sanchez, F., McDonald, W., Agarwal, A., Chen, C. S. & Bifano, T. G. Dynamic Control of Contractile Force in Engineered Heart Tissue. **IEEE Transactions on Biomedical Engineering** **70**, 2237-2245 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1109/TBME.2023.3239594>
- Haber, A. & Bifano, T. Dual-update data-driven control of deformable mirrors using Walsh basis functions. **Journal of the Optical Society of America A** **39**, 459-469 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1364/JOSAA.447879>
- Wu, K., Zhao, X., Bifano, T. G., Anderson, S. W. & Zhang, X. Auxetics-Inspired Tunable Metamaterials for Magnetic Resonance Imaging. **Advanced Materials** **34**, 2109032 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1002/adma.202109032>
- Sinefeld, D., Xia, F., Wang, M., Wang, T., Wu, C., Yang, X., Paudel, H. P., Ouzounov, D. G., Bifano, T. G. & Xu, C. Three-Photon Adaptive Optics for Mouse Brain Imaging. **Front Neurosci** **16**, 880859 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnins.2022.880859>
- Rodríguez, C., Chen, A., Rivera, J. A., Mohr, M. A., Liang, Y., Natan, R. G., Sun, W., Milkie, D. E., Bifano, T. G., Chen, X. & Ji, N. An adaptive optics module for deep tissue multiphoton imaging in vivo. **Nature Methods** **18**, 1259-1264 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41592-021-01279-0>
- Haber, A. & Bifano, T. General approach to precise deformable mirror control. **Optics Express** **29**, 33741-33759 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1364/OE.439306>
- Chen, C., Huang, Y., Wu, K., Bifano, T. G., Anderson, S. W., Zhao, X. & Zhang, X. Polarization insensitive, metamaterial absorber-enhanced long-wave infrared detector. **Optics Express** **28**, 28843-28857 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1364/OE.403105>
- Zhao, X., Wu, K., Chen, C., Bifano, T. G., Anderson, S. W. & Zhang, X. Nonreciprocal Magnetic Coupling Using Nonlinear Meta-Atoms. **Advanced Science** **7**, 2001443 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1002/advs.202001443>
- Lin, P., Ni, H., Li, H., Vickers, N. A., Tan, Y., Gong, R., Bifano, T. & Cheng, J.-X. Volumetric chemical imaging in vivo by a remote-focusing stimulated Raman scattering microscope. **Optics Express** **28**, 30210-30221 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1364/OE.404869>
- Beaulieu, D. R., Davison, I. G., Kılıç, K., Bifano, T. G. & Mertz, J. Simultaneous multiplane imaging with reverberation two-photon microscopy. **Nature Methods** **17**, 283-286 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41592-019-0728-9>

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- Bifano, T. G., Annear, R. & Golini, D. Chemomechanical Effects in Ductile-Regime Machining of Glass. *Principles of Cutting Mechanics: Applications to Ultra-Precision Machining and Grinding*, 71-78 (1993). [https://doi.org/10.1016/0141-6359\(93\)90106-K](https://doi.org/10.1016/0141-6359(93)90106-K)
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- Bifano, T. G. & Dow, T. A. Real-Time Control of Spindle Runout. *Optical Engineering* **24**, 888-892 (1985). <https://doi.org/10.1117/12.7973594>

Graduate Students & Postdoctoral Researchers Supervised

2024 Kevin Man, PhD, MSE
2023 Marshall Ma, PhD, ME
2019 Devin Beaulieu, PhD, EE
2017 Will Shain, PhD, Physics
2016 Hari Paudel, PhD, EE
2015 Yang Lu, PhD, ME
2010 Andrew Legendre, MSME
2009 Alioune Diouf, PhD ME, Dissertation: MEMS DMs in Next Generation Telescopes
2008 Y. Zhou, PhD MfgE Dissertation: AO two photon fluorescence microscopy
2008 J. Stewart, PhD EE Dissertation: Segmented DM for astronomical imaging
2008 D.J. Kim, PhD EE Dissertation: Integrated Drivers for Large Scale MEMS Arrays
2008 M. Gingras, MSMfgE
2008 J. Castillo, MSEE
2007 J. H. Kim, PhD MfgE Dissertation: Manufacture of a Reflective Spatial Light Modulator
2007 G. Thompson, MSMfgE
2007 M. Lewis, MSME
2005 S. Kratz, MSMfgE
2005 J. Perreault PhD EE Dissertation: High Resolution MEMS Deformable Mirrors
2005 D. Sumorock, MSEE
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2001-02 Hocheol Lee, Postdoctoral Researcher
2001 C. Reheman, MSMfgE
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2000 M. Bancu, MSME
2000 D. Malkani, MSME
1999 N. Vandelli, Ph.D.ME Dissertation: MEMS Microvalve Arrays for Flow Control
1999 P. Shanbhag, MSME
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1998-99 Nicholas Rosen, Postdoctoral Researcher
1998 R. K. Mali, PhD, ME Dissertation: Surface Micromachined Deformable Mirrors
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1993 Y. Yi, PhD, ME Dissertation: Ultraprecision Grinding of Ceramic Mirrors
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