

**Subject:** April 3 update to the GSDM community on coronavirus  
**Date:** Friday, April 3, 2020 at 2:09:47 PM Eastern Daylight Time  
**From:** owner-dent-faculty-list@bu.edu on behalf of GSDM Office of the Dean  
**To:** GSDM Office of the Dean  
**CC:** Hutter, Jeffrey W  
**Priority:** High  
**Attachments:** image001.png

**Boston University** Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine  
Office of the Dean

Dear colleagues,

Over the past three weeks, the day-to-day reality for every member of the Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine has been turned upside down, and we have all had to adjust to a new normal at the same time we are grappling with the concern, anxiety, and uncertainty caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

I know this has been an incredibly challenging time, and I know that – unfortunately – there are more challenges to come, as we learned this week that Gov. Charlie Baker has extended the “stay-at-home” order for our state until May 4, 2020. Boston University President Robert Brown touched on the impact that the crisis is having university wide in his March 31 update. Knowing that you all likely have questions about how this new state guidance will affect you, your work, and your studies, I have included what I believe are the answers that I have currently in the below updates.

But before getting to those updates, I wanted first to say how proud I am of all of you, and how thankful I am for the dedication and commitment you have each shown over the last few weeks. I am thankful for our faculty, who have worked around the clock to shift our curriculum online and to learn new tools and technologies to support their instruction. I am thankful for our staff, who continue to do whatever it takes to support their teams and our school. I am thankful for our students and our residents, who have demonstrated incredible professionalism and poise as they continue to pursue their education. I am thankful for our alumni, who have been reaching out daily to learn more about the school’s response and how they might be able to help. And I am thankful for the leadership of our Boston University as they provide continued guidance and support to GSDM and all the schools and colleges of our great university.

I feel truly honored to be a part of the GSDM community – thank you for demonstrating each and every day what it is that makes this school so special.

Now, please read on for updates about the school’s institutional response. I also encourage you to follow GSDM on social media ([Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#)), as we are frequently sharing information and resources on those platforms as well.

We also know that you may have questions that are not covered in this update, so we have created [a web form](#) through which you can submit additional questions; we will be reviewing the submissions daily, and will address frequently asked questions in future communications

and in an online FAQ document.

### **Graduation Requirements**

As you know, I established a Task Force, co-chaired by Dr. Celeste Kong and Dr. Cataldo Leone, charged with developing plans for final-year predoctoral students and postdoctoral residents to complete their education, consistent with accreditation and licensure requirements. The Task Force members include program directors of predoctoral divisions and postdoctoral advanced education programs, the class officers from both the DMD 4 and DMD AS 2 classes, and residents from the postdoctoral advanced education programs.

The Task Force held its first meeting on Friday, March 27, 2020; it was a very productive meeting focused on predoctoral students. Several options were discussed that would provide substitutions and simulations for certain types of summatives that could occur either virtually or when we return to the school and the Simulation Learning Center (SLC). Members of the Task Force were also involved in a meeting of the Advanced Education Committee held on Thursday, April 2, 2020; it also was a very positive meeting focused on postdoctoral residents.

For both students and residents, we are committed to providing all necessary components of their academic program year, regardless of methodology, delivery method, or time required, to ensure they access, learn from and understand the full curriculum of their respective program.

I am anticipating that the Task Force will provide me with a preliminary report next week and a final report in mid-April.

### **Commencement**

As I shared last week, we are hard at work on identifying alternative arrangements for the 2020 Commencement, following the university's postponement of commencement weekend. Currently, the two options under consideration are a postponement of our own in-person commencement ceremony to be held in conjunction with the university's rescheduled event, or a virtual celebration of graduating students and residents' accomplishments in mid-May.

I held a Zoom meeting earlier today (4/3) with the DMD and DMD AS class officers as well as program directors and residents from each of the postdoctoral education programs to review these options and gather their feedback. This afternoon we will be sending out a survey to all predoctoral and postdoctoral members of the Class of 2020 to gather their input. Once we have the survey results in hand, we plan to move quickly to make a decision on our alternative arrangements. Ultimately, since our 2020 Commencement ceremony is for the students and residents in the Class of 2020, the final decision about how to proceed will be based on their input.

### **Admissions**

This is an unsettling time for our entering students and residents, many of whom may be trying to finish other programs under the same online learning circumstances that we're navigating. Additionally, many of our incoming students currently live outside the U.S., and may have questions about when or if they will be able to travel to Boston to begin their education.

With this in mind, we reached out last week to all entering students and residents, and asked them to share more information about their current circumstances with us. Our Admissions team is now following up with individual students or residents to offer targeted support and assistance.

## **Alumni Affairs**

As I mentioned above, our alumni have been checking in frequently to learn more about the school's response to the coronavirus pandemic. Our alumni affairs team has been working very hard to share information and resources with our alumni, and to offer our support to them wherever it might be needed.

The next issue of our monthly alumni newsletter, *Outlook this Month*, will be distributed on Sunday, April 5, 2020, and will focus on the school's response to COVID-19 thus far.

## **Clinical Operations**

We will continue to offer telemedicine-only emergency care at both 635 Albany Street and 930 Commonwealth Avenue until May 4, 2020, to match the extension of the stay-at-home order announced by Gov. Charlie Baker on Tuesday, March 30.

While we hope to resume normal operations in early May, this date is subject to change pursuant to new orders from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health or the Massachusetts Office of the Governor.

Our patient treatment center staff are keeping patients updated on the status of their appointments. As soon as we have a better sense of when we will be able to resume normal operations, these staff will begin the process of rescheduling all cancelled appointments.

## **Business Operations**

All GSDM faculty and staff should continue to work remotely until Monday, May 4, 2020. If you have a question about your individual work situation, please contact your manager. If you have any other questions, please contact the Office of the Dean or Tim McDonough ([tmcdonou@bu.edu](mailto:tmcdonou@bu.edu)).

We will continue to monitor the situation, as it is possible that we may need to further revise this date, and we will share additional information with the community as it becomes available.

## **Research Operations**

All GSDM research labs have shifted to basic maintenance only, ensuring safety and preserving future capabilities. While our research activities have been curtailed dramatically, I am extremely pleased to announce that we have received notification recently of significant grant award:

- Dr. Ruslan Afasizhev received notification that his new RO1 application has secured funding from NIAID; this five-year grant will bring \$2,133,000 in funding to the school. This will be the third ongoing RO1 grant directed by Dr. Afasizhev.

Please join me in congratulating Dr. Afasizhev. While I know the current disruption to our research activities is difficult, it is wonderful to see that we continue to secure funding for future research efforts.

## **Academic Operations**

Our faculty, students, and residents continue to show creativity and flexibility as they work to adapt our curriculum to an online environment. I am very pleased that, by all accounts, the transition to online teaching and learning has gone smoothly, which is a testament to the leadership of our Academic Affairs office as well as to the dedication of our faculty and the commitment of our students and residents.

### **Newton Pavilion**

Anyone who has been to campus over the last week may have noticed increased activity at Newton Pavilion. I did want to share that Gov. Baker announced last week that the state is reopening the Newton Pavilion facility, and will be using it to provide additional services to the Boston homeless population, particularly those individuals affected by the coronavirus. The re-opening is being done in partnership with Boston Medical Center, Boston Health Care for the Homeless, a number of Boston area shelters, and the city's COVID-19 response team.

### **Additional Resources**

I urge you again to bookmark the following sites and visit them frequently as they are excellent resources for the latest information about the university and the school's response to COVID-19.

[Boston University COVID-19 Information](#) – The university created this website to gather together frequently asked questions about the coronavirus as well as to share resources and information that will help students, residents, faculty, and staff continue to be safe, comfortable, and productive.

[BUMC COVID-19 Information](#) – This BUMC website provides links to information concerning the BU Medical Campus preparedness and response as well as to important resources for faculty, staff, students, and residents.

[GSDM COVID-19 Information](#) – This webpage will serve as a repository for all communications that go out from GSDM leadership to the school community. It also contains links to the BU and BUMC COVID-19 websites.

Thank you again for your continued patience and flexibility as we navigate this unprecedented situation together. I am, as always, so honored and proud to be your dean. For you and your loved ones, Mrs. Hutter and I wish you the best of health and we look forward to having the opportunity again to be with you in person.

Sincerely,

Dean Hutter

