

Subject: May 20 update to the GSDM community on coronavirus
Date: Wednesday, May 20, 2020 at 6:40:44 AM Eastern Daylight Time
From: GSDM Office of the Dean
To: GSDM Office of the Dean
CC: Hutter, Jeffrey W
Priority: High
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Boston University Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine
Office of the Dean

Dear colleagues,

There have been a number of developments over the last week that will inform our school's institutional response to COVID-19.

First, we learned last week about the gradual, phased approach that Boston University will be using to guide the process of returning to campus. More details about the first phase of this process are available [in this document](#).

Second, Gov. Charlie Baker released on Monday, May 18, more information about the approach the state will take to reopening its economy. The information released contained very good news, both for our school and the dental profession in Massachusetts, and I have outlined below how the state's announcement (as well as the University's new guidance) affects the Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine.

Clinical Operations

Governor Baker's '*Reopening Massachusetts*,' on Monday indicated that, as of Monday, May 25, 2020, dental offices in Massachusetts would be able to provide both emergency care and treatment for conditions that, if deferred, are likely to become emergencies. However, before dental offices can resume in-person patient care, they must submit an attestation to the state that indicates that they meet all of the state's standards with regard to health and safety during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The state's announcement satisfies one of the three key components that will determine when we can resume in-person patient care at 635 Albany Street and the Dental Health Center at 930 Commonwealth Avenue. We must also secure the appropriate PPE – specifically, N95 respiratory masks – to ensure the health and safety of our faculty, staff, students, and residents. And, finally, the university needs to approve our plan for the resumption of clinical activities. Drs. Bendayan and Errante, co-chairs of the Task Force for the Successful Planning of the 2020-2021 Academic Year, in coordination with the Office of the Dean, and the Clinical and Academic working groups are working diligently across these two areas, and we are hopeful that we will be able to resume in-person patient care in early June.

Academic Operations

For ***didactic courses***, all lectures and examinations will be remote for the remainder of the spring semester (which, for GSDM, corresponds to the university's Summer Sessions 1 &

2). According to university guidance on its Phase I recovery plan, GSDM will have flexibility regarding if/how in-person lectures may resume on or about July 1. Although a final decision about how to proceed has not yet been made, plans are in place to have in-person classes and seminars for our entering students and residents.

For **preclinical (SLC) courses**, we anticipate SLC activities to resume within the next two weeks with the understanding that use of the SLC may occur sooner for simulations substituting for DMD 4 and DMD Advanced Standing 2 clinical procedures. This would also allow for students to return to the Boston area and self-quarantine for two weeks.

Business Operations

Based on university guidance, all 'non-essential' faculty and staff who have been working remotely effectively over the last two months should continue to work remotely through the first phase of the university's recovery plan, which is anticipated to run through the summer.

Patrice Freeman-Lau will be reaching out to all managers to gather updated information on their staffing plans. In the meantime, if you have any questions about your individual work situation, please contact your manager. If you have any other questions, please contact the Tim McDonough (tmcdonou@bu.edu) in the Office of the Dean.

Research Operations

The university has indicated that, as part of its Phase I recovery efforts, research activities will resume incrementally in the coming months, consistent with public health and safety guidelines. Several GSDM Principal Investigators have submitted requests for the resumption of in-person research activities. These requests are being carefully reviewed by department chairs and the Associate Dean for Research. Final approval will be given by the Vice President and Associate Provost for Research, Gloria S. Waters, PhD. For more updates on GSDM research, please [click here to view](#) the latest update from the GSDM Office of Research.

Virtual Celebrations for the Class of 2020

As you know, May 15, 2020, was supposed to be the day of our 2020 Commencement, which would have capped off a full week of in-person celebrations of our graduating students and residents. While we were not able to gather together in person, we were able to celebrate our graduates – and their many, many accomplishments – virtually in a number of ways last week. On Wednesday, May 13, we held a virtual Senior Awards Ceremony for the predoctoral DMD and DMD Advanced Standing graduates – [you can view the ceremony here](#). And on May 15, we held a virtual toast for the postdoctoral residents and one for the predoctoral students; videos for those two toasts will be made available later this week.

We also asked all graduating residents and students to submit photos of themselves in their 2020 Commencement regalia, and we were thrilled by the response! [Click here](#) to see what they submitted.

Construction Update

As I shared in the May 8 update, we were given approval by the City of Boston's Inspectional Services Department to remobilize to the Addition & Renovation Construction Project site. Construction workers returned to the site last week to set up provisions for its COVID-19 project specific safety plan. Construction then started on Monday, May 18, 2020 As an integral part of its COVID-19 plan, all construction workers will be screened daily before they enter the dental school building in a mobile screening unit set up on East Newton Street. If they are cleared, they will enter the building through a dedicated construction entrance directly into the basement of the school.

The weekly construction updates resumed as of May 15, so you will be receiving more detailed updates about our construction progress through those emails.

Task Force: Planning for 2020-21

As you know from [previous updates](#), the Task Force for the Successful Planning of the 2020-2021 Academic Year has 74 members across seven working groups. Over the past few weeks, Task Force members have thoroughly reviewed all facets of the School's operations resulting in the creation of a series of more than 50 objectives and 300+ related action plans designed to streamline existing business practices and develop new procedures and protocols to prepare GSDM for its return to normal operations under new guidelines as put forth by Boston University, and by federal, state, and local authorities, and as result of 'things learned' from COVID-19. Final action plans were due from the working groups on Monday, May 18; the Task Force will then provide me with its preliminary recommendations on May 20, 2020, and final report on June 10, 2020.

I believe the Task Force's efforts will create opportunities for continual improvement for GSDM to "be even better" than it was before, and look forward to sharing highlights with the GSDM community after I have received the final report.

Additional Resources

As always, I encourage you to bookmark the COVID-19 information pages maintained by [the university](#), [BUMC](#), and [GSDM](#). Additionally, please do follow GSDM on social media ([Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#)) as we are frequently sharing information, resources, and stories about our community on these platforms.

I want to close by congratulating all members of the Class of 2020 for what they have achieved during their years at our school. It was such a pleasure to see all of your faces in our "virtual" celebrations last week, and I look forward to celebrating you once again at our postponed in-person Commencement later this year.

And to all members of our community, Mrs. Hutter and I continue to keep all of you in our thoughts and prayers and to send our best wishes to you and your loved ones for your continued health and safety.

Sincerely,

Dean Hutter

