



## Minutes of the Meeting June 15, 2020

The Boston University Faculty Council convened on June 15, 2020 at 3:00 p.m. via Zoom, per request of University Provost Morrison. Eileen O’Keefe, Chair of the Faculty Council, presided over the meeting.

Officers and Committee Chairs								
X	O’Keefe, Eileen	Chair	Sargent	X	O’Keefe, Eileen	Faculty Policies	SAR	
X	Leone, Cataldo	Past Chair	GSDM	X	Howard, Kimberly A.S.	Graduate Programs	WCEHD	
X	Hoecherl-Alden, G.	Secretary-Treasurer	CAS			Media/Communication		
	Decosimo, David	Academic Freedom	STH	X	Coleman, Fadie T.	Research	MED	
X	Hoecherl-Alden, Gisela	Awards	CAS	X	Hughes, Jeffrey	Student Policies	CAS	
	Williams, Mark T.	Compensation and Benefits	QST	X	J. Robb Dixon	Sustainability	QST	
X	Brady, Steve	Credentials and By-laws	MED	X	Andres, Andy	Teaching Resources	CGS	
X	Cozier, Yvette	Equity and Inclusion	SPH	X	O’Brien Hallstein, D. Lynn	Undergraduate Programs	CGS	
Representatives (R) and Alternates (A)								
X	Abrams, Binjomin (R)	CAS	X	Griffin, Sue, (R)	CAS	X	Pani, Pinelopi, (A)	GSDM
	Alosco, Michael (R)	CAS		Hesse, Petra, (A)	WCEHD	X	Park, Hee-Young, (A)	MED
X	Amato, Felice (R)	CFA	X	Hopper, Clay, (A)	CFA	X	Perls, Thomas, (R)	MED
X	Ampountolas, Apostolos (R)	SHA	X	Huckle, Nicholas, (R)	CAS		Pesanelli, Kelly, (A)	Sargent
	Austin, Judy (A)	COM	X	Hughes, Jeffrey, (R)	CAS	X	Pita Loor, Karen, (A)	LAW
X	Beaton, Jamie (A)	CELOP		Jafarzadeh, S. Reza, (R)	MED	X	Powers, Gina, (R)	QST
	Bor, Jacob (R)	SPH		James, Breehan, (A)	CFA		Quatromoni, Paula, (A)	Sargent
X	Byttebier, Stephanie (A)	CGS	X	Karra, Mahesh, (R)	Pardee		Rafeizadeh, Safoura, (R)	COM
X	Chang, Charles, (R)	CAS	X	Kealy, Sean (R)	LAW	X	Reed, Marnie, (R)	WCEHDt
X	Chogle, Sami (R.)	GSDM	X	Kinraide, Rebecca, (A)	CAS		Schulman, Bruce, (A)	CAS
	Coffman, Christopher (R.)	CGS	X	Kirby Jones, Alison, (A)	QST		Sebastiani, Paola, (R)	SPH
X	Coleman, Fadie T. (R)	MED	X	Lee, Elaine, (R)	MED	X	Seta, Francesca, (R)	MED
X	Coppock, Elizabeth, (R)	CAS		Leider, Christine, (R)	WCEHD	X	Straub, John, (R)	CAS
X	D’Amato, Laura (A)	LAW		Liu, Chunyu, (R)	SPH	X	Sullivan-Soydan, Anne, (R)	Sargent
			X	Lopez, Luz, (A)	SSW	X	Sungu-Erylimaz, Yesim, (R)	MET
	Decosimo, David (R)	STH	X	Lumpkin, William, (R)	CFA	X	Ünlü, Selim (R)	ENG
X	DeNatale, Doug (A)	MET	X	Lynch, Shawn, (A)	CGS	X	Villegas,Reimers, Eleanora(R)	WCEHD
				Mako, Shamiran, (A)	Pardee		Volk, Robert, (R)	LAW
X	Desilets, Sean, (R)	CAS		Manglos-Weber, Nicolette, (A)	STH		Watts, Stephanie, (A)	QST
X	El Hachem, Lea, (R)	GSDM	X	Masters, Joellen, (R)	CGS	X	Webster, Kathryn, (R)	Sargent
	Errante, Margaret, (A)	GSDM	X	McKeen, Bill, (A)	COM	X	White, Roberta, (A)	SPH
X	Feng, Hui, (R)	MED	X	McLaughlin, Donna, (R)	SSW	X	Will, Leslie, (R)	GSDM
X	Fernandez-Val, Ivan, (R)	CAS	X	Merzbacher, Charles, (R)	COM		Williams, Mark T., (R)	QST
X	Field, Thomas, (R)	MED	X	Miller, Margo, (R)	CELOP	X	Yang, Shi, (R)	MED
X	Furman, Jeff, (R)	QST	X	Mochida, Yoshiyuki, (A)	GSDM	X	Zlatev, Vladimir, (R)	MET
X	Gapotchenko, Maria, (A)	CAS		Mody, Makarand, (A)	SHA		Mulvihill, Maggie (A)	COM
X	Gavornik, Jeffrey, (R)	CAS	X	Mustafa-Kutana, Suleiman, (R)	MED	X	Brown, Shelley (R)	Sargent
X	Gopalan, Srikanth, (R)	ENG	X	Myers, Samantha, (R)	CAS	X	Metheny, Karen (R)	MET

**Guests: President Robert A. Brown, Provost Jean Morrison, Prof. Davidson Hamer, Associate Provost Maureen O'Rourke, Chief of Provost's Staff Laura Jenks**

Faculty Council Chair Eileen O'Keefe welcomed President Brown, Provost Morrison and guests. She announced that she would allow 30 minutes for the President's presentation and faculty questions and would give Provost Morrison the floor for her remarks and faculty questions related to her presentation.

## **I. Discussion: Public Health Plan – Testing and Protocols for Covid-19**

President Brown referred to the draft public health memo Faculty Council received prior to the meeting. The memo states that the health and safety protocols will be mandatory protocol for everyone: students, staff, and faculty. He stressed the importance of the public health protocols, and described the measures that will be implemented on campus, such as air purification and the importance of face coverings as critical for controlling infections. Students, faculty and staff will provide daily attestation that they are asymptomatic using a BU-specific proprietary health app. Anyone who tests positive will be contacted by BU and come in for consultation and a second test, to control for false positives. Until the results come back, they will be asked to stay away from campus. The Student Health Center will monitor students and the Office of Occupational Health will monitor faculty and staff.

President Brown further explained that a testing facility at the Rajen Kilachand Center for Integrated Life Sciences and Engineering will administer a test using the RT-PCR method. It will be a self-administered shallow nostril-based test: a swab with a type of q-tip, placed in a vial and handed in for processing. The testing facilities will operate for extended hours, to accommodate all work schedules. The app will notify an individual when they need to be tested and it will report test results within 24 hours.

President Brown defined the different risk groups, based on their level of contact with others, or their risk of infection. The risk groups range from highest, to medium, low, and lowest. The highest group is all residential students and people who come into contact with them; all students and employees who use public transportation; and all people who fall within CDC high risk category, or who have disclosed they have household members who do. The medium risk group consists mainly of students who don't have contact with undergraduates, and many members of faculty and staff who commute by car. The low risk group includes those who will work from home, or will not be on campus.

The working group is still in the process of establishing the testing frequencies for the risk groups, with the highest risk group possibly tested at least weekly and possibly more frequently.. President Brown said the University will have the capacity to test its large population. The working group is also developing a medical intervention protocol for cases that test positive. Those who test positive will be re-tested immediately and students in residences will be moved to an isolation facility. If they are well enough, they can continue their classes online with the LfA framework and have medical care and food services. The University has allocated dorm rooms for this purpose.

President Brown said that with testing, we may not need to quarantine people for 14 days, as that protocol was based on the absence of adequate testing. Student residences will be organized into households of 7-10 students, using same bathroom facilities, and not used by anyone else, but only members of that particular group.

Chair O'Keefe opened up the floor with the observation that faculty question how testing will reduce their individual risk when they return to campus. President Brown answered that there was no simple answer. All of the public health protocols will lower the transmission rate. Testing helps identify who has the virus, while they may not have symptoms. Emerging data indicate that face masks are the most effective in containing transmission of the virus.

A Council member indicated they were pleased to hear about testing and the app, but stated that the nature of classes his program teaches is highly interactive and very different from lecturing. He said he hoped for some flexibility for how different disciplines think about the LfA framework. For example, a three-hour long class in a closed room with a spirited discussion was more risky than an hour-long lecture with students distanced from each other. Provost Morrison responded that classrooms are currently being evaluated to determine how students can be six feet apart, seating configurations, mapping out the spacing requirement for each classroom to determine number of students who can be in classroom at given time. They are also looking at spaces that are not traditional classrooms and mapping courses and student enrollments to physical spaces.

A Council member asked if isolated quarantine rooms will also be reserved for non-residential students. President Brown indicated that the administration was still working on this policy. For example, if there are mitigating circumstances, such as a student is living with someone who is immunocompromised, perhaps they can be housed on campus. The University will dedicate 5% of its housing for isolation purposes. He stated that BU had 11,000 undergraduates on campus, but that the total student population was more than 25,000. The quarantine facility is being built to serve a student population of 11,000, not 25,000.

A Council member stated that the risk categories seem to be framed by how much individuals pose a risk to the BU community. Commuters seemed to be considered lower risk to the community, even though they were a risk to themselves, by taking public transport. President Brown clarified that students, faculty, and staff are considered high risk if they rely on public transportation. Those who commute by driving their own cars, or biking to work, are less at risk.

The same Council member said it is hard to imagine how LfA will be effective with the faculty and students in-class wearing masks. President explained that this can be addressed if faculty use a microphone while teaching and acknowledged that this will be more difficult in classrooms with unanticipated questions or discussions.

## **II. Discussion: Faculty Survey Results and Return to Campus Recommendations**

Provost Morrison reported the results of a recent faculty survey about returning to campus. The survey was sent to more than 5600 faculty in early June and twenty percent (20%) responded. The respondents were 50% male-identified, 49% female-identified, and 1% non-binary. The majority of the respondents, 84%, are from CRC; 14% from MED; 1% from Fenway campus; 1% other and 81% are full-time faculty and 19% are part-time.

Provost Morrison reported that 45% were concerned and 41% were very concerned about returning. 12% were unconcerned and 3% indifferent. The survey indicated that faculty said their concern would be reduced if there is an overall decrease rate of infections in Boston and Massachusetts; if people are required to use PPE on campus, and if there is mandatory testing. Faculty reported that their top concerns are their own health and the health of someone in their household. Other concerns included commuting, childcare, public transportation, and elder care. The survey data will be made available to the University community.

Provost Morrison stated that faculty and graduate teaching assistants will be able to request that they not be in person in the classroom with a Workplace Adjustment Request Form. Provost Morrison said that the form will require medical documentation, but this information will be viewed and held by Human Resources and Equal Opportunity Office, not by the Deans. The Provost will send a memo to the faculty requesting them to complete a Covid-19 Workplace Adjustment Form for Fall 2020. A Review Team composed of members of HR and the EOO will sort the requests into three categories: CDC high-risk categories, “true” ADA, and other issues. The CDC high risk category includes those faculty, or those who have members of their household who are: 65 years old or older, or suffer from chronic lung disease, moderate to severe asthma; serious heart conditions; immunocompromised; severe obesity (BMI of 40 or above); chronic kidney disease and undergoing dialysis; liver disease. If the request falls under ADA, it will be forwarded to the appropriate office. Other issues may include child care, elder care, or transportation concerns.

The Review Team will provide school-specific spreadsheets to the deans with a cover guidance memo. The Deans will decide on modifications for faculty teaching. The possible modifications include: changes in location or timing of the class; special classroom configurations; move the class to the spring semester; teach remotely, or leave of absence without pay.

Chair O’Keefe asked for questions from the floor. A Council member said that the content of the Provost’s presentation addresses many of the concerns he has received from his colleagues and asked when this information will be shared with the faculty. Provost Morrison said the faculty will receive a memo on June 18. The same Council member said his colleagues want to know why they are not allowed to decide for themselves their level of risk, instead of submitting a request; he asked the Provost to address the letter and petition circulated by Profs. Star and Powell; and said his colleagues ask why the University will use the RT-PCR method, rather than a saliva test.

President Brown and Prof. Hamer explained that saliva testing is trickier and for now, the nasal swab is more reliable and cost effective. They anticipate collecting 5000 samples a day.

Provost Morrison responded to the question about the open letter from Profs. Star and Powell. She reiterated that the premise of letter was that faculty were going to be required to return to campus and

teach in person, that faculty had no agency. She confirmed that this was never the case and that Deans would have to sort out what kind of accommodations were appropriate.

A Council member said that wearing a mask is critical to containing transmission of the virus and explained that in China, where social distancing is not possible, infections were lower with people wearing masks. She reiterated that testing should start testing as soon as possible, especially on MED and medical students returning. She said aggressive testing and diligent mask-wearing will give faculty a lot more confidence about undergraduates returning to campus.

President Brown stated there will be clarity on how the testing environment will work before medical students will return to campus July 13.

A Council member asked how the University can mitigate the students' movements and how it can make sure they are isolated before the test results are complete. President Brown said that the move-in, which would normally take a few days, will be phased in for over a month. There is currently no certainty about whether international students will receive their visas, or what standards will be mandated for them.

A Council member asked how personal data for the App will be secured. President Brown explained that the App will require Kerberos authentication and it will be secured like all of the BU websites with sensitive information. He explained that BU is building a separate data repository for testing data, the only data the App will have are whether someone tests negative, whether they don't have symptoms; when tests are needed; and will send testing results. The App would glow green if all is fine, for easy reading. Other universities in Boston will have similar measures. Basically, BU and other institutions will work to create a culture of compliance.

A Council member said CAS faculty would like to expand TfA to include faculty choice and best pedagogical practices. The Council member asked President Brown to speak to the faculty's ethical concerns, as voiced by the petition.

President Brown acknowledged that everyone is concerned and said shutting down the University for a semester is just not viable. He asked the Council member if the faculty are positioning themselves to consider their risk above others; there are thousands of other people who are affected, too. Students and staff will also put themselves at risk. He said the University is trying to give faculty reasonable choices, but no plan will satisfy everyone. President Brown said if the faculty are granted all of the petition's demands and the University effectively went online until January, it would require layoffs of thousands of people, mostly staff.

A Council member asked if reasonable fears will be taken into consideration with workplace adjustments. Provost Morrison said they need to wait and see how many faculty request workplace adjustments.

An FC member said that contact tracing is a key component to the plan and will require an intense amount of work to follow up with students; he asked whether the staffing is in place to manage the work. President Brown said the Student Health and Occupational Health started to design a contact

tracing operation in February. The University will use manual contact tracing, rather than location tracing Apps.

Provost Morrison thanked the Council for their input. Provost Morrison and Associate Provost O'Rourke left the meeting.

A Council member reported that she had attended another faculty meeting earlier in the day and said that faculty expressed despair that some of the communications from the University, which are not inclusive of faculty needs. Many are in favor of teaching from anywhere, not just learning from anywhere.

President Brown voiced his appreciation of raising these issues and admitted that things are complicated, and that there are no concrete answers. He explained that there are factors beyond the University's control, such as school districts' schedules. He anticipates many types of accommodations, once it was clear who needs them. President Brown said he is aware of how many faculty have school-aged children, and he is also aware of faculty age distribution. He stressed that the Administration has been methodical in its approach to the Covid recovery plan

A Council member suggested that the way information has been communicated has created a morale problem in CAS and suggested that transparency coupled with data about the administration's expectations would help alleviate anxiety.

President Brown said that the University is just completing the first round of budget reductions, taking \$250 million dollars out of operating budget. The current data suggested that up to 40% of students will defer at institutions of higher education. President Brown said he doesn't yet know about our students. The University will publish a back to campus guide for them and then ask them whether they are going to return.

President Brown said that he did see a tone coming from the faculty forgetting about others that will get hurt through lay-offs. If the University is not a residential campus in the fall, we will not need all of our employees. President Brown also said that the diversity of the staff is much different from the diversity of the faculty and he is worried about the effect that layoffs will have on the community. He stressed the devastating effect on families if the University has to go the next step, because 40% of the students don't show up. Fundamentally, it will be about whether BU will be able to pay salaries. The first cuts will be staff. The next layer won't be all staff members.

A Council member said he did not think that faculty who raise ethical or personal concerns about returning to campus are advocating to close the campus entirely. Many have real concerns about how effective the hybrid teaching model will be. Another Council member posited that certain courses lend themselves to hybrid teaching and others to online only. The hybrid model is untested and it is uncertain whether it will be successful. The faculty would like the flexibility to decide what works best pedagogically. Some faculty would prefer to be on campus; some feel they are better off teaching online entirely, if they cannot resume normal in-class instruction. President Brown said the Deans will have many options to accommodate their faculty's requests. If students return to campus and all of their classes are taught remotely, that will not work. There needs to be enough of a residential

component to make the experience valuable for the students. For some classes, i.e. large lectures with low interaction, it might make more sense to break down the scale of the class and teach in smaller sections. We need to offer a flexible model of learning for the international students who will not be permitted to enter the country in September.

A Council member said she is concerned that students will expect the campus and the classroom experience to be as it was last year, prior to Covid-19. Classes will feel different with everyone wearing masks and sitting six feet apart, etc. She asked if the students have been polled to measure their expectations for the fall. President Brown said the return to campus guide will be clear and comprehensive. The students will know the public health protocols. President Brown said that what he is hearing from students and from their parents is that they want to return to campus. The same Council member asked what medical documentation faculty need to provide about their household members for the workplace accommodation. President Brown said he is not sure what the working group is proposing at present, but he hopes that we can trust people in this process.

A Council member asked if the working groups have queried peer institutions, such as NYU, about their plans for the fall, which may reflect a stronger response to faculty concerns. Associate Provost O'Rourke had left the call, President Brown responded that AP O'Rourke has looked at what other institutions are doing. Other schools are planning some blended format for instruction, but we do not know the particulars of others' plans and how they are deciding what classes to offer in-person and what to put online.

Director Khosla raised a question that was posed in the online chat: will there be restrictions on faculty travel in the fall and how will this affect their return to campus. President Brown said there will be restrictions on student travel using University funds. The working group has not made any decisions about faculty travel as of yet, but we are still under a travel restriction. Going forward, the University will communicate the government's recommended travel restrictions to faculty, but the state government might also recommend restricting travel to other parts of the U.S.

Chair O'Keefe thanked the Council and President Brown for the discussion. She thanked the Council for their due diligence to voice the concerns of their faculty. The faculty are asking tough and what may seem unpopular questions, but there are no unpopular questions. It is important to hear the faculty's questions and have the discussion. Going forward, we have more information to share with the faculty about the return to campus plan. Provost Morrison's memo will be sent to the faculty on June 18. President Brown said he appreciates the candor of the Faculty Council. The faculty's concerns about the fall are valid and the University will work to get information out to the faculty as it becomes available.

There being no new business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Gisela Hoecherl-Alden  
Secretary-treasurer