

Boston University Office of the Provost

TO: Boston University Real Estate Graduate Student Tenants

FROM: Daniel L. Kleinman, Associate Provost for Graduate Affairs
Michael DiFabio, Senior Associate Vice President for Real Estate

DATE: July 29, 2020

SUBJECT: Undergraduate Quarantining and your Apartment Building

We are writing today to respond to some confusion and concern about Boston University's approach to quarantine housing for on-campus students this fall. We understand that rumors and misinformation are circulating about BU apartment buildings being used to house undergraduate students who have tested positive for COVID-19. We want to assure you that this is not the case.

As you know, Boston University is developing a comprehensive set of public health protocols in order to make the campus as safe as possible for all members of our community this fall, including a robust on-campus COVID-19 testing facility to provide regular, ongoing testing of all students. If a student living in a BU undergraduate dorm tests positive for COVID-19, they will immediately be moved into an isolation room. All of the isolation rooms for undergraduate COVID-19 positive students are located on the Fenway Campus. **No undergraduate students who have tested positive for COVID-19 will be relocated to housing in graduate student apartment buildings.**

As we all now understand, one key tool in the fight against COVID-19 is contact tracing and quarantining of close contacts. At BU, we have set up a contact tracing team that will be working to identify close contacts to positive test cases. When a close contact is identified, they will be tested as soon as possible; if a residential student tests positive, they will be moved into isolation on the Fenway Campus. If a residential student tests negative, we will take the precaution of moving them into quarantine – a private room with a private bathroom – for 14 days, during which time they will be regularly tested and monitored. Most of the undergraduate housing at BU is dormitory-style, with shared bathrooms and extensive common spaces. Due to the limited availability of private rooms with private bathrooms on campus, some of the identified quarantine units for students who have tested negative for COVID-19 are located in buildings that also house graduate students. **Again, no undergraduate student who has tested positive for COVID-19 will be isolated in buildings where graduate students rent apartments.**

We want to reassure you that this system has been carefully reviewed by our Medical Advisory Group with a constant focus on maintaining the safety of all students at BU. Students assigned to quarantine housing are not permitted to leave their private unit until they are released from quarantine. Quarantine units will be supplied with food, beverages, and other essentials to ensure that there is no need for students to leave during their stay. The units and any adjoining common spaces will be cleaned and sanitized before students arrive and following their departure. **If any student violates their quarantine, they will be removed from campus housing; we will carefully monitor students in quarantine to ensure they are not violating these rules.**

We recognize that, despite these reassurances and robust public health precautions, some of you

may still be uncomfortable living in a residence that contains some quarantine units. Any graduate student who decides they would like to live elsewhere this fall will be released from their BU rental agreement without any financial penalty.

This is a stressful and challenging time for all of us. At BU, we are working hard to make the transition back to on-campus education as safe and comfortable as possible, and we are hopeful that all of our students will remain healthy. We do want to note, however, that should a graduate student in a BU rental apartment test COVID-19 positive, we will provide support for that student as they isolate in their apartment.

We are sorry about any anxiety the quarantine issue has caused, and we hope that this memo provides some helpful clarification and reminds you that all of these decisions have been made by medical experts with a focus on the health and safety of all our students.

If you have any additional questions about your rental unit, please contact Michael DiFabio at mdifabio@bu.edu.

Boston University

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