

Meeting Minutes 7/15/2020

- **Introductions**

- Those Present:

- Sanaya Shroff
 - Mounika Vutukuru
 - Abby Rendos
 - Bryanne McDonough
 - Natalie Vaisman
 - Diane Lebo
 - Shay Alshuaib
 - Dean Stan Sclaroff
 - Associate Dean Malika Jeffries-EL
 - Dean Ken Lutchen
 - Senior Associate Dean Sol Eisenberg
 - Associate Provost Daniel Kleinman

- **Address original letter**

- Response to letter:

- Memo was updated with clarifications on health insurance
 - (Dean Sclaroff) Doctoral students are key to the BU community and BU is invested in our success, shared interest in our safety and success, experience both teaching and research responsibilities
 - (Dean Sclaroff) Survey of all students (35k were contacted): undergraduates - 70% would prefer to come to campus and have some in-person component
 - BU is fundamentally a residential university so it is challenging to not allow undergrads back to campus because of their tuition contribution to the functioning of the university
 - Committed to our health and safety
 - (Dean Lutchen) Since the letter was written, various things have changed

- **Responsibilities of an R1 University and comparing BU's response to other universities**

- Safety is paramount, current guidelines do not promote safety
 - (Sanaya) University has responsibility to reduce public health burden on Boston society, and outbreak is imminent with students returning to campus
 - Potential transition to online again due to outbreak → may cause even more disruption to education than needed
 - Responses/Ideas:
 - (Dean Lutchen) BU has made a commitment to give an in-person component to as many classes as possible and undergraduates

have expressed interest in being present for those in-person components (not just coming back to be with friends)

- (Dean Lutchen) Graduate students are critical component of teaching and research and our funding is tied to those responsibilities
- TAs are asked to have the same obligation as the faculty
 - (Sanaya) Undergrads are allowed to learn from everywhere, graduate students and faculty members would like to have the same option
 - Majority of faculty said they are not comfortable with working in person based on BU survey
 - Majority of GWISE members said they are not comfortable with working in person with the current guidelines in place based on our own survey (see full survey results in Teaching section)
 - 68% of polled students do not feel comfortable returning to campus for learning or teaching
 - <10% responded that they would be comfortable going back to in person teaching/learning
 - This is something that can be mitigated with more communication and details on what the protocols will be & how to enforce them
 - Most graduate students feel online learning can be improved by allowing professors and GTFs the proper time to plan, and resources to execute
 - Would be helpful to develop programs and guidelines for remote learning to allow for these courses to continue without issue
- BU is testing every member of the BU community twice before classes start
 - Logistics still need to be communicated
- Contingency Plan for Outbreak
 - Students may be quarantined which is why remote is useful
 - (Provost Kleinman) BU has public health experts that are in conversation with admins
 - Close contact with mayor's office
 - Without a vaccine, need regular testing, contact tracing, social distancing and this plan is being implemented
 - Governor's guidance will be followed by BU. Currently, the governor is encouraging teaching in person. Would need to go back to remote teaching if there is an outbreak & it is required by the state (will follow Governor's guidance)

- Better prepared when there is time to plan for remote learning, believes it will be an easier transition this time because it has occurred before
 - Believe plan could be used as a model for other institutions
- MIT/Harvard/Northeastern plans for Fall 2020 Compared to BU
 - FAQs for other schools' policies here: [MIT](#), [Harvard](#), [Northeastern](#)
 - Still paying international student stipends (regardless of TA or RA)
 - Providing more flexibility for remote teachers/GTFs
 - Resources provided for adapting to remote teaching
 - Surveys conducted on student/staff body and were made publicly available → data driven policies
 - Various student surveys and faculty surveys
 - Dedicated websites for the GTFs with the tools and resources needed to teach online
 - Is the hybrid model possible given the institution's goals?
 - Remote learning and teaching are being allowed in these Boston schools and are not at odds with the universities goals
 - Response (Provost Kleinman)
 - Tax laws in the US and tax laws in their home country and other regulations, and tax treaty between US and home country are an issue
 - Anyone that engages in paying someone overseas is at risk for penalty (in the past there was a \$1M penalty in France)
 - Plans to review these policies and how risk can be mitigated
 - BU tried to have conversations with other universities to understand their risk analysis
 - Anti-trust violation
 - Dangerous for both student and university bc of penalties
 - Response (Mounika): None of the other 3 universities have cited tax laws or regulations
 - For international students: setting up wire transfers, sending the money to a US bank
 - Other universities must have a different risk analysis
 - Response (Provost Kleinman): going to explore the issue further, but doesn't see a way to alter the policy
 - Response (Dean Lutchen): trying to put policies in place to keep students, faculty, and staff safe
 - Testing protocol will be very useful for this
 - Pay to GTFs is provided for teaching, if they are not teaching they cannot receive stipend, however there are exceptions from the CDC

- Communication has not been as extensive as admins would like because of the quick timeline, has caused worry for students and staff
 - Would like to get students and faculty more engaged and communicate more
 - 4% of universities that don't depend on tuition bc of massive endowments including Harvard and MIT (also R1)
 - Difficult to compare BU to universities with massive endowments
 - (Mounika) BU is more comparable to NEU which has also differed in its policies heavily
- Response (Associate Dean Jeffries-EL): Some other institutions sent out letters to incoming students & said they would welcome students in the spring if they cannot make it to the US
 - Any student who is unable to return to BU, the money is being deferred (not being taken away)
 - Methods of other universities are creative but use loopholes and are risky
 - NEU is being sued for charging full tuition for remote learning when its a residential campus
- 80% of universities in the nation have decided to have some in-person component

- **Teaching Concerns and Experiences**

- (Sanaya) Results from GWISE Graduate Student Survey
 - Remote teaching rated as slightly worse than in person because of a) less student engagement and b) more work/hours for those teaching
 - Current model requires nearly double the time spent teaching due to having to upkeep remote **and** in person sessions (42 % of GTFs spent longer than the allotted 20 hrs per week)
 - Even in person, student engagement will be extremely limited due to social distancing and anxiety
 - Majority of graduate students (68%) do not feel comfortable returning to campus for learning or teaching -- <10% responded that they would be comfortable going back to in person teaching/learning
 - This is something that can be mitigated with more communication and details on what the protocols will be & how to enforce them
 - Most graduate students feel online learning can be improved by allowing professors and GTFs the proper time to plan, and resources to execute
- Response from Admins:

- Graduate student survey contrasts undergraduate survey where majority would like to return and experience in-person aspects
- Info on how to enforce the rules in the classroom will be coming out
- (Provost Kleinman) There is some data on the relative efficacy of in-person vs. remote teaching/ learning. There is little research on hybrid teaching/ learning.
 - Reluctant to use data on student/faculty impressions instead of direct measures on learning
 - Decision based on philosophy, not data
 - Decision to implement LfA is based on the idea that BU is fundamentally a residential university, where in-person education is central.
- (Dean Lutchen): can teach remotely, but is it better?
 - Residential campuses have the advantage of in-person components and discussions which are important to education
 - Administration identified that labs are difficult to complete online
- GWISE graduate student experience with teaching during the pandemic
 - (Mounika) taught EK307 fully remotely to 50+ students
 - Many students were able to use their kits at home and learned a lot from having this access
 - Lab was successful remotely, still engaging, in some ways better than the in person lab
 - (Shay) taught systems physiology in Spring and Summer
 - During transition, educating was difficult and caused GTFs to take a lot of extra time to complete change the curriculum and prepare online teaching
 - During summer, saw more motivation and it forced students to come up with their own ideas and projects
 - Difficult to do these labs with social distancing, how can we prevent students from interacting and how can we enforce these policies?
 - International students are being discriminated against which hurts the reputation
 - (Bryanne) taught in spring computing for astronomy

- Some aspects were more interactive and zoom allows for remote control of student screens
 - Involved in planning an astronomy lab for Fall 2020
 - In-person education is preferred, but this type of in-person education is highly different and it reduces collaboration and instruction capabilities
 - Hybrid model is more work (more than intended 20 hrs) and lowers quality of both the remote and in-person
 - Commitment to residential education should be less important than commitment to health and safety of students (both undergraduate and graduate)
- **Communication of Considerations and On-going Planning**
 - (Dean Sclaroff) appreciates the work and survey that was conducted by GWISE to communicate these concerns
 - Safety protocols should be communicated more and need to be
 - How to deal with students who do not wear a mask - this will be clarified soon
 - Trying to be methodical and plan effectively, but sometimes communication isn't as regular and complete as it would ideally be
 - CAS benefits greatly from talent abroad
 - Expressed that admins are trying to find workable solutions and fight for international students
 - (Dean Lutchen) work is still ongoing with how to conduct labs and what methodology will work
 - Working with range of possibilities of how to deal with enforcing masks/social distancing
 - Trying to find out if its possible to provide the education to the remote and in-person students at the same time
 - Still a work in progress
 - Students desire in person experience
 - (Associate Dean Jeffries-EL) policies impact POC
 - Low income students, many of whom are POC, are negatively impacted by remote learning due to issues in the home environment (lack of private space, lack of WiFi, food insecurity, babysitting, etc)

- Response: (Sanaya) want people to have the choice to do what is best, that way people can choose to move to a different environment that's better for them
 - Responsibilities to child care, parent care on the part of GTFs and faculty may suffer due to mandatory in person teaching.
 - University needs to be willing to make accommodations to allow everyone to prioritize their health and personal situations during the pandemic (which is an unprecedented situation).
- **Effect of Policy on Graduate Students**
 - (Sanaya): these rules are causing students to divert away from BU because there are large health and safety costs in addition to large reputation costs
 - Potential for legal action related to deaths/health risks
 - (Mounika) forced to take on parent care, GTF duties, still able to complete significant amount of research remotely, but forced to return tomorrow due to new policy
 - These policies do not provide inclusion which is essential to diversity & inclusion which the university promotes
 - Been at BU for many years
 - (Shay) trust is reduced because of these policies and international reputation is already suffering
 - Been at BU for many years and wants reputation to be upheld
 - Response (Stan Sclaroff): appreciate GWISE's commitment to BU and will be taking these ideas and discussions into further planning and plan to communicate more
 - Response (Daniel Kleinman): will continue to discuss and take our personal and data-driven comments into consideration
 - Response: would like to improve transparency & communication
- **Results/Conclusions**
 - **GWISE will send a follow up list of questions that need answers (from our survey) that summarize our teaching and health/safety concerns**
 - **GWISE will send meeting minutes for review**
 - **Admins will keep our issues in mind going forward**
 - **Admins will address follow-up list of questions**