




Professor Jean Morrison, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer

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TO: Boston University Students, Faculty, and Staff

FROM: Jean Morrison, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer 

DATE: July 29, 2020

SUBJECT: Academic Calendar for the Fall 2020 Semester and Travel Guidance for Thanksgiving Break

As we prepare for a return to on-campus, residential education in the fall, we know that many of you have lingering questions about the academic calendar for the coming semester, particularly as it relates to holiday travel. We are aware that some universities across the country have adjusted their academic calendars for fall 2020 to accommodate an earlier start and end to the semester. Having put in place robust public health protocols, we believe Boston University is well positioned for a safe and successful fall semester; given this, we believe it is best to retain the option of in-person classes through the end of the semester. This is particularly important for classes with elements that do not easily translate to remote learning, as well as for the members of our community who may be unable to, or not want to, leave campus after the Thanksgiving holiday.

Therefore, after considerable discussion and review, we have decided not to make any changes to the [calendar as currently posted](#). Classes will begin, as planned, on September 2 and conclude on December 10, with final exams completed by December 19. We plan to complete the fall 2020 semester with the [Learn from Anywhere \(LfA\)](#) approach. This approach will provide flexibility, enabling students to participate in courses – and finals – either in the classroom or remotely.

The Thanksgiving break, of course, presents the greatest variable in the semester, as it is a time when so many students normally travel to be with their families for the holiday. And this year, travel also holds the possibility of exposing travelers to potential infection – particularly for those who fly home. In accordance with current public health recommendations, we strongly encourage students who wish to complete their semesters on campus to remain on campus over the Thanksgiving break. We know how important a time this traditionally is for many of you and your families and that this is a hard choice to make. We will be hosting Thanksgiving dinners on campus for those who do plan to stay here and will do all we can to make it a pleasant holiday experience.

Students who decide to travel outside of Massachusetts over the Thanksgiving break (or at any other time during the semester) will be subject to public health regulations, which, depending on your destination, might require you to quarantine for up to 14 days upon your return to Boston. For this reason, if you do make the decision to travel home for the holiday, we recommend not

returning to campus after Thanksgiving break and instead completing the semester remotely, as is possible under the LfA model.

We know what a challenging year 2020 has been for everyone, and understand that this guidance presents a difficult choice for many. We remain committed to providing an active, vibrant, and safe educational experience for all members of our community. We are grateful each day for your decision to place your trust in Boston University and for your willingness to work collaboratively to ensure that ours is a safe community for all who live, work, and study here.