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TO: Charles River and Medical Campus PhD Students

FROM: Jean Morrison, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer 

DATE: March 11, 2021

SUBJECT: Creation of Pandemic Fund to Ensure PhD Student Completion

The COVID-19 pandemic has created many stresses for PhD students. Perhaps most significantly, disruptions to research progress whether in the lab, field, studio, or archive may lead students who were otherwise making appropriate academic progress to need an additional semester or year to complete their degrees.

It is crucial to ensure that current BU PhD students who have had their progress impeded by the pandemic will be able to complete their degrees. While individual PhD programs and the schools/colleges in which they are housed are the primary source of academic and financial support for our PhD students, in rare circumstances, programs and schools/colleges may not have adequate resources to support all students whose progress has been hindered by the pandemic. Consequently, the Office of the Provost has established a fund to support PhD stipend extensions necessitated by the disruption of the pandemic.

Here are the key things you need to know:

- There is a formal application process, which is detailed on the [Graduate Education website](#).
- In order to be eligible for this fund:
 - Students must have exhausted their existing five-year stipend guarantee provided by their PhD program and school/college;
 - Students must have been making appropriate academic progress prior to the onset of the pandemic and provide evidence that their progress was delayed by the pandemic; and,
 - PhD *programs* must show that students have exhausted funding opportunities typically provided by their PhD program beyond the five-year funding guarantee and that the program has made a good faith effort to plan for these funding challenges by limiting or pausing new enrollments.

The details governing this fund – who is eligible and how students can apply – can be found on the [Graduate Education website](#).

We hope that this fund, along with the extensive efforts underway in your home departments and schools/colleges, will provide the support needed for you to complete your PhD degrees.

Cc: Academic Deans
Provost's Cabinet