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**TO:** Boston University Faculty

**FROM:** Jean Morrison, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be "jm", located to the right of the "FROM:" line.

**DATE:** August 18, 2021

**SUBJECT:** Returning to In-Person Instruction for the Fall 2021 Semester; Recommendations of the Post-COVID to 2030 Residential Experience Working Group

As we wrap up the summer term and prepare for a safe return to in-person teaching and learning this fall, I speak for our entire leadership in saying how grateful we are for the dedication and sacrifice of all of you over the last 18 months. We are excited to welcome you back and to see our campuses once again populated and vibrant with activity, collaboration, and scholarship.

The transition back to in-person teaching will mean the discontinuation of the Learn *from* Anywhere (L/A) model and remote learning for all undergraduate programs and all but a few graduate programs. While we look forward to finally pivoting away from our screens and seeing students back in physical classrooms, labs, and studios, it is important to take stock of what we have learned from our experience with L/A that can potentially improve pedagogical practices moving forward.

To this end, a faculty working group chaired by Associate Provost *ad interim* for Undergraduate Affairs Sue Kennedy spent time during the spring semester evaluating L/A's successes and shortcomings, and developing a series of recommendations about the post-COVID to 2030 residential academic experience. The working group's membership is listed below. I want to thank all of the members for their thoughtful work and to give special thanks to Sue for her leadership. The working group submitted a thorough and detailed report, available on the Provost's Office [website](#), with a range of outstanding ideas that will be explored and considered. We will communicate more on these ideas in the coming months, and will provide opportunities for the community to provide input as they are considered.

In the meantime, I would like to share five recommendations from the committee report that we will be facilitating for the fall 2021 semester. Please keep in mind these are not the totality of what we will be adopting, but rather a set of immediate measures that we believe will support faculty and enhance the teaching and learning experience we offer this fall. These action items include:

- Continuation of the [Faculty Coaches program](#), which was originally designed to support LfA implementation, as a way to provide faculty ongoing, accessible support in using technology to improve the teaching experience;
- Expansion of the Center for Teaching & Learning's and EdTech's efforts to train and support faculty on teaching with technology, including the launch of a new [website](#) through Digital Learning & Innovation and resources to improve capacity and effectiveness;
- The continued use of virtual platforms such as Zoom to bring external speakers to classes;
- Review and expanded funding of and communication about initiatives within schools/colleges and departments exploring teaching with technology; and,
- Review of University-wide faculty teaching awards to ensure they acknowledge and emphasize the critical role of pedagogical innovation.

We look forward to sharing more ideas with you over the coming months and to a continuing conversation about how we can improve the practice and effectiveness of teaching and, in turn, support your work.

We also want to reiterate BU's full commitment to ensuring that the return to campus is as safe as possible. As you know, the university is requiring all students, faculty, and staff to be vaccinated before the start of the academic year, and continues to require the use of masks indoors, including in classrooms and other open spaces. We are in regular conversation with medical experts – particularly with an eye to emerging COVID variants – and will update you on any changes to policies and protocols as warranted.

I hope you have all had a chance to get some well-deserved rest in the last few months, and wish you all the best in the upcoming academic year.

### **Post-COVID to 2030 Residential Experience Working Group**

#### **Chair:**

**Suzanne Kennedy**, Associate Provost *ad interim* for Undergraduate Affairs

#### **Members:**

**Binyomin Abrams**, Master Lecturer of Chemistry, College of Arts & Sciences

**Joseph Bizup**, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Academic Programs and Policies; and  
Associate Professor of English and Director, Arts & Sciences Writing Program, College of Arts & Sciences

**John Byers**, Associate Dean for Faculty: Mathematical & Computational Sciences; and  
Professor of Science, College of Arts & Sciences

**Chrysanthos Dellarocas**, Associate Provost for Digital Learning & Innovation; Richard C. Shipley Professor of Management, Questrom School of Business

**Enrique Gutierrez-Wing**, Master Lecturer of Mechanical Engineering, College of Engineering

**Kimberly Howard**, Associate Professor and Program Director for Counseling Psychology & Applied Human Development, Wheelock College of Education & Human Development

**Daniel Kleinman**, Associate Provost for Graduate Affairs; Professor of Sociology, College of Arts & Sciences

**Natalie McKnight**, Dean, College of General Studies

**Amy Shanler**, Associate Professor of the Practice of Public Relations, College of Communication

**John Straub**, Professor of Chemistry, College of Arts & Sciences

**Lisa Sullivan**, Associate Dean for Education; and Professor of Biostatistics, School of Public Health

**Jonathan Wisco**, Associate Professor of Anatomy & Neurobiology, School of Medicine

**Strategic Priority Sponsor, Vibrant Academic Experience Pillar:**

**Amie Grills**, Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs & Research; and Professor of Counseling Psychology & Applied Human Development, Wheelock College of Education & Human Development