

Boston University Office of the Provost



**Dr. Kenneth Lutchen, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer ad interim**

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March 26, 2024

Dear Faculty and Staff Colleagues:

Our graduate student union workers (BUGWU) began their strike on Monday, March 25. While we recognize the BUGWU members' right to strike, we are concerned about the impact this activity will have on thousands of enrolled students and are committed to doing everything we can to minimize disruptions to the educational experiences in our community.

We have an obligation to meet the present moment and to support all our students – including those in the bargaining unit – to keep University operations running during this time. This means making fair and principled decisions about how to keep our operations going during a strike period. Those who work will be paid, and those who withhold their labor in support of a labor strike will not be. Those choices, and the consequences of those choices, are built into our federal labor laws. Each student in the union is free to make their own choice about how they'd like to proceed during a strike period, and the University will not retaliate against any student engaging in lawful strike activity. Refusing to account for payroll during this time is not “supporting our graduate students” – it is making the choice to pay out University tuition (at the direct expense of our enrolled students) or federal grant money (in contravention of our mandated reporting obligations) to graduate workers who are exercising a right to not work during this time.

I understand and respect that this is a difficult situation for all of you. We hope this disruption to our community will be short-lived. We will continue to update our [website](#) so that you can stay apprised of our progress. We have added a negotiation updates [section](#) where we will describe the outcomes of each meeting. We have also updated our [payroll accounting procedures](#) based on faculty and staff feedback and, going forward, will require students to certify their weekly effort through either their usual timesheet process or through a weekly survey.

Our next session with the students will be on Wednesday, March 27, and we look forward to hearing their counterproposals and ideas for how we can move forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "KL", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Kenneth Lutchen  
University Provost and Chief Academic Officer ad interim