



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

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Dear Members of the Boston University Community,

We are now five weeks into the BU graduate student union (BUGWU) strike. I write to share some updates on the strike activity and bargaining.

First, I want to acknowledge and address the impact of the strike on campus. There is no doubt that the strike has created some disruptions, and I deeply appreciate all the work from our faculty and staff to recognize that our students deserve our support in doing what's necessary to continue our educational mission during this period.

Thankfully, over the past five weeks, the scope and impact of the strike has waned, as more and more BUGWU members have chosen to return to work. **At this point, over 80% of the students in the unit are back to work.** We understand that only a small fraction of the students in the bargaining unit are attending BUGWU membership meetings at this point – approximately 175 students (out of a unit of approximately 3,300) attended the general membership meeting and voted to continue the strike last Tuesday.

We remain focused on supporting students affected by the strike. It is paramount that we continue to enable our students to realize the learning goals of their classes and receive grades at the end of the semester. Failing to do so can affect student summer and post-graduate employment or educational opportunities, student receipt of federal government tuition support, and international students' visa status – *real consequences for our students*. **We must ensure our students are not adversely affected by the strike action.**

To this end, we have robust continuity of operations plans in place in most departments, as well as contingency plans to address any gaps in the summer to the extent BUGWU members continue to strike this summer. We are deeply grateful to all for the work and efforts many of you have put into continuity of operation plans. We also remain hopeful that the strike settles sooner rather than later.

With regard to the negotiations, on Thursday, April 25, BUGWU accepted our invitation to engage in federal labor mediation – a positive step. We are also pleased to have reached agreement on six additional contract articles. We hope that mediation will facilitate discussion between the parties to resolve our differences and come to agreement. We are committed to continuing to work in good faith with the unit toward resolution.

Finally, I want to address some of the misinformation that has been circulating. As Associate Provost for Graduate Affairs Daniel Kleinman noted in his [April 25 letter to faculty](#), over the past few weeks, BUGWU has repeatedly and directly distributed misinformation to students and faculty.

We want to address head-on BUGWU's allegations that we are not providing an appropriate and robust educational experience to our students during this time. In the early period of the strike, many faculty and staff went above and beyond to pivot in record time to provide a quality educational experience to the students who were affected by BUGWU's job action. The methods we have encouraged have been flexible but based on a variety of core pedagogical approaches to grading, teaching and learning. **We are grateful to and stand strongly behind the methods and supports our faculty and staff have chosen to support our students during this time.**

BUGWU has also encouraged our faculty to refrain from grading our students in solidarity with their movement. Faculty do not have the right to strike or sympathy strike – and we are profoundly disappointed that BUGWU would focus their efforts on wanting to inflict consequences on our students for the union's benefit. **None of this will have any impact at the bargaining table.**

In general, we are not going to engage in a back and forth to refute every piece of misinformation as doing so will unnecessarily heighten the tensions within our community. Our [website](#) and [FAQs](#) are updated frequently and are the best way to learn about what is happening and what our expectations are.

We are steadfast in our commitment to maintaining BU as a vibrant environment for teaching and learning through this work stoppage. We also hope that federal mediation will move us toward resolution at the bargaining table. I am grateful to all of you for your efforts, big and small, to support our educational mission during this time.

With great appreciation,



Kenneth Lutchen
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