



August 3, 2020

Dear BUA community,

I hope that this note finds you and your loved ones well. Last week, I had the pleasure of seeing so many of you during Zoom calls for the 10th, 11th, and 12th grade parents, as well as on individual calls for our new families. I am so grateful for the warm welcome and for the chance to get to know all of you. Building relationships through a screen may be less than ideal, but it is more important than ever.

I am excited to share BUA's preliminary reentry plan for the fall 2020 semester and our vision for welcoming students back to BUA on September 2.

Reentry Plan Website

While I will share some highlights in this letter, you will find many more details of our preliminary plan in the [BUA Guide to Reentry](#) page on the school's website. This guide reflects our latest thinking. The Reentry Task Force has been working diligently for months, in collaboration with our colleagues at Boston University and in consultation with local, state, and national guidance. As careful as our planning has been to date, we need to remain in a flexible posture; circumstances will change, guidance may shift, and our planning will evolve and deepen accordingly. We will continue to update this guide over the coming weeks and communicate with you about significant changes and additions.

Upcoming Webinar

This **Thursday, August 6 at 8:00 p.m.**, we will host a **town hall webinar** during which we will talk more about our planning and answer your questions. Please register for the Zoom meeting at [this link](#); there is a field for you to submit questions ahead of time.

Academics & Schedule Overview

Throughout our planning, the Reentry Task Force has kept three top priorities in mind:

- Maintaining the health and safety of our community
- Building connection and community, particularly among new students
- Facilitating engaging and rigorous learning

We have also incorporated the feedback we have heard from so many of you through our recent survey and other conversations: a desire for in-person learning; a program that "feels

like school” and preserves moments for student connection, particularly in a new school year; an in-person schedule that brings students to campus fewer than five days per week; a robust option for students to learn from home; and clarity about expectations and safety norms.

While you will find much more detail on the website, the core of our plan involves:

- **In-person BUA classes four days per week (M, T, Th, F)**
- **Remote BUA classes on Wednesdays**
- **All BUA classes held in the BUA building**
- **Option for any student learning from home to join an in-person class remotely**
- **Students enrolled in BU classes will follow the schedules for those classes, which they can also join remotely.**

Currently, our plan entails BUA humanities classes meeting Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, with math, science, and arts meeting on Tuesdays and Thursdays for longer blocks. Ninth and tenth grade students will typically have three class meetings per day, with other periods devoted to community time, advising, health, activities, and other chances to connect.

In developing our program, we have incorporated the requirement of 6-foot spacing between desks. In addition to meeting the density and spacing requirements, the plan has several important advantages:

- Bringing all students to campus four days/week helps build community and connection; this is important for everyone, but particularly so for new students.
- It allows for staggered starts and ends to the day, since some students will not have classes during the first and last blocks of the day, and attendance will not be required in those periods. This alleviates crowding during peak hours.
- For students who are learning from home synchronously, a three-class-per-day schedule is a sustainable Zoom experience.
- The schedule allows for advising, lunch, and other community moments.
- In the event that we need to transition to full remote learning, the schedule allows for a smooth transition.
- Pedagogically, longer blocks on Tuesday and Thursdays lend themselves to the kind of inquiry we foster in our math, science, and arts classes.
- Remote-only Wednesdays respond to a parental preference for a schedule where students are not on campus all five days, reducing the number of commuting days.
- A remote learning day on Wednesday allows for potential deep cleaning of the facility on that day, as necessary.

BUA has also developed a corresponding fully remote learning plan, which roughly follows the in-person plan described above.

More detailed information about all-school gatherings; physical education and athletics; arts; student activities and clubs; and many other pieces can be found on the [BUA Guide to Reentry](#) webpage.

Building Hours and Access

We have also adjusted our building hours and protocols to accommodate students and families:

- The main BUA building will be open from 7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday.
- The Gym/BUA annex will be open from 7:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, including on Wednesdays.
- Students taking BU classes are welcome to be in the gym on Wednesdays to join those classes remotely or to wait during periods between classes. The gym will be set up as a large classroom, with appropriately spaced desks.
- Students are encouraged to limit their time on campus to when they have in-person classes or activities and/or if they need access to on-campus resources. This will allow for staggered arrival and departure times.

Commuting to Campus

The most common questions we are receiving from our families involve commuting to campus. Here are some updates on our efforts to address your concerns, with more to come:

- We will be following up with those families who expressed interest in carpooling shortly to connect you to other interested families in their area.
- BUA is working with BU Parking & Transportation Services to identify active student pick-up and drop-off areas that take into consideration vehicular traffic flow, physical distancing requirements, and student safety. We anticipate more cars arriving to campus this year and want to make that process as convenient as possible.
- Those planning to use public transportation should review changes to service and passenger protocols on the [MBTA website](#).
- BUA students interested in driving themselves to campus will be able to purchase a parking permit for the semester. More information will be shared with families in the coming weeks.

Health and Safety Planning Highlights

The health and safety of our students, faculty, staff, and broader BUA community is our main priority. While we cannot eliminate risk, the measures and protocols that we are putting in place are designed to significantly reduce the possibility of virus transmission.

Our most important health and safety guidance comes from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). We are also incorporating BUA policies and

protocols, CDC guidance, and other resources. As a unit of Boston University, BUA will adhere to and benefit from the University's multi-pronged approach to safely resuming on-campus activities. Because of that affiliation, we will be able to provide health and safety measures that very few secondary schools can offer. We are also deeply grateful to the BUA parents in the medical and public health fields who are partnering with us to share feedback to improve our planning.

You will find many more details in the [BUA Guide to Reentry](#). For now, here are some of the key features of the risk mitigation plan:

- Physical spacing (6ft+) in all classrooms and common areas, with appropriately spaced tablet desks in classrooms
- A requirement that students, faculty and staff wear face coverings that cover the nose and mouth. Students will supply their own face coverings, and BUA will maintain a supply of extra masks should they be needed.
- Regular hand hygiene protocols, facilitated by touchless hand sanitizing stations and several additional handwashing stations
- A daily electronic self-assessment screening system for all students and faculty to be completed at home in the morning
- Weekly COVID testing on the BU campus for all students, faculty, and staff who will be coming to campus
- Contact tracing systems organized by BU and in conjunction with local officials
- Isolation space and protocols for any student who exhibits symptoms or tests positive while on campus
- Enhanced cleaning protocols, including nightly electrostatic virucidal spraying of all rooms
- Improvements to HVAC systems and plumbing, including enhanced air filtration to MERV 13 standards
- One-way hallways and staircases in several locations, with corresponding signage
- Strict limits on visitors to campus
- Smaller student common spaces will be temporarily repurposed. Physically distanced seating will be set up in Sargent Gym in a classroom-like configuration.
- Additional swipe-card access reader to the door adjacent to the Bridge Lot, in the lower BUA hallway near Dr. Harvey's classroom, to allow for lower density in the highly-trafficked front and side doors
- For the time being, 9th/10th graders will eat lunch in the BUA building rather than the GSU. They may bring their meals or pre-purchase through BU catering -- a service we will help facilitate for our families.

Many of our daily routines will, by necessity, change. This is a time that requires flexibility from all of us, and we appreciate your patience and understanding.

Shifting Landscape

Our preliminary decision to return to in-person learning in the fall is informed by our conversations with Boston University, guidance from city health officials, state guidance through DESE, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' reopening plan, which is currently in Phase 3. We will be tracking a number of metrics to assess conditions at BUA, at BU, in the surrounding area, and statewide. Any future decisions about suspending on-campus learning will be made accordingly, in collaboration with BU's Medical Advisory Group and COVID response teams, as well as city and state officials. We will keep you informed as things change.

Your Partnership

I want to acknowledge the importance of your role in this process and my deep gratitude not only for the trust you place in me and the school, but also for your flexibility and willingness to adjust your family's plans and routines. I continue to be humbled by the positive, collaborative spirit of this community.

Going forward, we all have a shared responsibility to one another. In the coming weeks and months, we will rely on each other's conscientiousness and responsible decision-making to keep our community safe, and to preserve the in-person teaching and learning we have been working towards. In the [BUA Reentry Guide](#), you will see a section that discusses **Community and Family Expectations**. Thank you for attention to those norms.

Our Promise

The upcoming academic year will not look or feel like any of us imagined it would. Returning to campus and in-person learning will entail compromises, patience, and flexibility on all our parts. What I can promise is that your children will have the rigorous, joyful educational experience that is BUA's hallmark. They will forge meaningful connections with their teachers and peers. If at any point we need to revert to a fully remote model, BUA will pivot to provide a robust and engaging online learning experience.

I will continue to share updates as we iterate and refine our reentry planning. I appreciate your thoughtful input in the process thus far, and look forward to answering your questions at **Thursday evening's town hall webinar**. Above all, I am deeply grateful to be a part of this extraordinary learning community and eager to get a chance to be with our students in September.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christopher Kolovos". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Chris Kolovos
Head of School