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## **S. Res. 003**

Calls upon the Boston University administration to better accommodate the needs of undergraduate students during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic by providing students who are unable to attend in-person lectures due to extenuating circumstances with recorded lectures

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### **IN THE SENATE OF THE BOSTON UNIVERSITY STUDENT GOVERNMENT**

September 27, 2021

Dhruv Kapadia, Savannah Majorwitz, and Richard Segalman submit the following act;

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### **AN ACT**

Be it enacted by the Senate of the Boston University Student Government,

**Whereas**, undergraduate students who test positive for COVID-19 are forced to quarantine, isolate, and miss in-person classes for 10 days; and are simultaneously expected to keep up with work and ask for notes from “friends in class”

**Whereas**, faculty members are not allowed to host, record, or post virtual lectures for undergraduate students during the Fall 2021 semester

**Whereas**, COVID-19 cases continue to exist on Boston University’s campus, with the rise of the significantly more dangerous Delta and Lambda variants making its way through the BU community

**Whereas**, missing class due to extenuating circumstances and being expected to keep up with work can have a negative impact on mental health and well-being

*Be it Resolved*, That the Boston University Senate hereby approves of proposed policy changes as outlined herein

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## Article I: Policy Proposal

1. The Boston University administration must encourage faculty in all colleges and departments to record and post lectures for students unable to attend in-person lectures due to the following extenuating circumstances:
  - a. COVID-19 infection
  - b. Family emergencies
  - c. Medical emergencies
  - d. Sickness
  - e. Missed COVID-19 test appointment (yellow badge)
2. The Boston University Administration must permit faculty in all colleges and departments to record lectures and other class material to provide to students in the event that a lecturing member of faculty must isolate due to COVID-19 and are unable to teach their classes in person.
3. Aforementioned policy proposals are stipulated by the following details:
  - a. Faculty should have the ability to restrict such video recordings if students are deemed to be violating or abusing said accommodation
    - i. This decision can be made at the personal discretion of faculty
  - b. Password protected Zoom recordings may be utilized to further regulate student access and ensure continued in person attendance
  - c. Professors with access to previously recorded lectures from past semesters may use these resources as an alternative to recording new lectures in the Fall 2021 semester
    - i. As permitted by syllabus/course structure changes

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## Article II: Community Support

### 1. Change.org Petition

The Boston University administration must offer accommodations for undergraduate students as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to spread within the BU community. Despite our student body's [high vaccination rate](#) of 96.0%, the university continues to experience an average of 10 positive cases per day (with September 15th being an outlier of **36 positive cases**). Large mask-optional events and gatherings, often facilitated by administration and large student organizations, run the risk of spreading the virus amongst the student body. Undergraduate students who do test positive for COVID-19 must quarantine, isolate, and miss in-person classes for 10 days.

It is understandable that students infected with the virus must go into isolation housing and miss

in-person classes as a means to keep others safe and minimize exposure, but it is inexcusable that the university expects quarantined students to keep up with over a week's worth of missed work without recorded lectures. In a town hall for faculty and students on August 19th, University Provost Jean Morrison acknowledged the reality of breakout cases, saying that "[the administration] anticipates there will be some students who will either need to isolate or be in quarantine." However, the university's current "system" inadequately addresses the burden of missing more than a week of classes. According to Morrison, "students should make sure they have a friend in class, they can share notes, they can refer to the syllabus, keeping up on materials assigned to be done independently." While Provost Morrison [encourages](#) "students and faculty to do what they have always done when dealing with illness that keeps them out of the classroom," the system currently in place is unsustainable.

Given the dramatic changes the pandemic has caused in almost all aspects of life, it is safe to say that COVID-19 is not the typical illness students are used to dealing with every fall and winter. Masks are mandated indoors. Vaccinations are required for all students. 10 day isolation periods await students who contract it. This is not a normal illness. It is a highly infectious disease that has killed millions of people across the world and continues to mutate.

So why should we "do what we have always done"?

While the administration has sought to address these concerns, it has not done enough to accommodate the needs of students. An email sent to the student body by Provost Morrison on September 17th, 2021 outlined the administration's policy for students maintaining academic continuity while in isolation due to COVID-19. In its first piece of guidance, the email said that "each school/college has an Academic Continuity Coordinator who can support [students] in making arrangements to keep up with your academic work." The specific roles and responsibilities of this position were never described. Outside of this, the remaining bullets outlined basic procedures that any responsible student would follow in order to attempt to keep up with missed work.

Circumstances change and we must learn how to adapt. Last year, Boston University touted its highly efficient hybrid model of learning, Learn from Anywhere (LfA), due to the severity of the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, as breakout cases continue to arise on campus, there are little to no accommodations in place for students who are forced to isolate, quarantine, and miss in-person classes. The expensive infrastructure that allowed us to conduct LfA classes continues to exist in classrooms and lecture halls across campus. Why not use it? As long as the COVID-19 pandemic continues, we believe the University must allow the following:

**Encourage faculty in all colleges and departments to record and post lectures for students unable to attend in-person lectures due to the following extenuating circumstances:**

- a. COVID-19 infection**
- b. Family emergencies**
- c. Medical emergencies**

- d. Sicknesses**
- e. Missed COVID-19 test appointment (yellow badge)**

We are not asking for Boston University to increase restrictions on students. We are not asking for a return to LfA. And we are not asking for a costly solution to a simple problem.

Instead, we are asking for the Boston University administration to encourage the use of an already-existing system to sufficiently accommodate its students' basic academic needs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Make your voice heard. Please sign and share this petition.

Sincerely,

Dhruv Kapadia  
Executive VP of the College of Arts and Sciences Student Government

Hessann Farooqi  
Vice President of Boston University Student Government

Shashwat Shah  
Chairman of Boston University Student Government Senate

Savannah Majarwitz  
Lead Senator of College of Arts and Sciences

Richard Segalman  
Chairman of Expect More Committee

## 2. Quarantine Learning Student Survey

- a. A survey was put out to the student body on September 22, 2021 by the Senate Expect More Committee with support from Boston University Student Government and College of Arts and Sciences Student Government.
- b. The Survey was made available to the student body through several social media accounts on Instagram and Facebook.
- c. Within 48 hours of the survey launch there were over 600 responses, currently there are over 700 student responses on the survey.
- d. The survey as revealed an overwhelming position of the student body on the current BU COVID academic policy:
  - i. 97.6% of students (694) feel that the current academic policy is not fair towards students
  - ii. 99.6% of students (708) agree that BU needs to change the policy to allow

for enhanced learning accommodations for student in isolation/quarantine

1. 98.5% of students (700) feel that recorded lectures should be allowed and provided for students in isolation
2. 87.8% of students (624) feel that if students are forced to miss class by the university, BU should guarantee that students can make up all missed assignments and exams.

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**Article III: Cosponsors (include Name, Student Government Position, School)**

- Hessann Farooqi, Vice President Boston University Student Government, College of Arts and Sciences
- Shashwat Shah, Senate Chairman Boston University Student Government, College of Arts and Sciences
- Jacob Aznavoorian, At-Large Senator, College of Arts and Sciences
- Maggie Borgen, Senator, College of Communication
- Mitali Kasliwal, Senator, School of Hospitality Administration
- Isabel Wheat, Senator, College of Fine Arts
- Kyleigh Gunn, Senator, College of Arts and Sciences
- Alex Brumfield, Senator, College of Arts and Sciences
- Prisha Sujin Kumar, Senator, College of Health and Rehabilitation Science: Sargent College
- Charlotte Stant, Senator, College of Arts and Sciences
- Adam Shamsi, Senator, College of Arts and Sciences
- Senthil Meyyappan, Senator, College of Arts and Sciences
- Janes James, Senator, College of Arts and Sciences
- Stephanie Partida, Senator, College of Arts and Sciences
- Johnson Peow, Senator, College of Arts and Sciences
- Nick Chen, Senator, College of General Studies
- Neha Shabeer, Chief of Staff, College of Arts and Sciences
- Vivian Dai, Director of Social Advocacy
- Michael Arellano, At-Large Senator, College of Arts and Sciences
- Natalie Asitimbay, Senator, College of Arts and Sciences

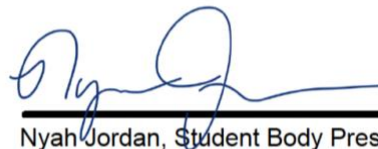
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**Article IV: Endorsements (include Student Organization Name, Name, Position)**



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Shashwat Shah, Senate Chair



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Nyah Jordan, Student Body President

