



March 15, 2020

Dear Brooks School Community Members,

I want to begin this letter by expressing both my hope that all of you are well during this challenging time, and my sadness to be at a point in time when dramatically altering our school's routine and schedule for the spring is upon us. On the one hand, we are remaining hopeful that we might find ourselves in circumstances before the school year ends that allow for a return to what we are familiar with and hold dear at Brooks. On the other hand, we are currently uncertain about when we might be able to return to that familiar and dear mode safely and confidently. A temporary and dynamic new normal seems likely to be with us for a while.

I am entirely confident in our community's capacity to overcome all disruptions known and still unknown to us, and believe beyond a shadow of doubt that there is opportunity in this challenge to be at our best in ways we never imagined we would have to be. I am certain we will learn a lot and do well together during this indefinite period of time. Yet, I also lament what will be lost during this stretch when we will need to be vigilant as we adhere to restrictions and practices aimed at ensuring public health and safety. I know we will do our best to support one another as we continue forward, and am grateful to be part of a community that has that inclination in its DNA. I thank all of you for the part you will play in helping us find our way through this challenge together.

As I suspect you know, the United States is now in a national state of emergency, and concern associated with the growth of novel coronavirus (COVID - 19) is mounting in the Boston area. Our approach and thinking is evolving on a daily basis, and we will continue to do all we can to share where we are in our planning as expeditiously as possible. We continue to be guided by local, state, and federal public health agencies, a number of independent school organizations, and will continue to act with an abundance of caution. To do all we can to ensure the health and safety of our community is and will be the overriding objective in all decision-making.

It is likely that the frequency of our updates will grow as we go forward, and we will be in touch again no later than Wednesday, March 18, with additional information. At this point, we are in position to share the following:

- We will not have students return to school on Wednesday, March 25, and classes will not resume on Thursday, March 26. For planning purposes, students should be prepared to begin academic work remotely on Monday, March 30. We will share updates to this plan as they materialize.

- The faculty will be asked to meet on Wednesday, March 25, in accordance with social distancing protocols we are establishing. We will spend the balance of that week finishing our plans to continue academic work remotely.
- We are remaining hopeful that a return to campus might be possible at some point in April, but we are not in position to provide a date now. We will share updates to this thinking in subsequent communications over the days and weeks ahead.
- In our view, wherever possible, students should be with their families at this time. Thus, we are asking all international students to begin making plans to return to their homes and/or to their families for what may be the balance of the school year. We will do all we can to assist with any logistical challenges with this planning in order to ensure all students get home safely.
- In the event that we determine it to be both safe and prudent to have students return to campus at some point in April, we will continue to work remotely with any student who is not able to return to campus as a result of travel restrictions, or due to any apprehension about returning. We are committed to ensuring that students are able to complete the academic year -- remotely, on campus, or some combination of the two, depending on what circumstances permit.
- While students will not be required to collect any personal items that are currently on campus, we appreciate that international students who are going home may want or need to come to campus to gather their belongings before departing. We ask that all of those arrangements be made by contacting [Andrea Heinze](#) or [Willie Waters](#) and scheduling a time to come to campus.
- We also appreciate that domestic boarding and day students may want or need to come to campus to collect personal items in dormitory rooms, school lockers, or elsewhere. We ask that all domestic boarding and day students refrain from coming to campus to collect those items until after Wednesday, March 25. Between now and then, the school will establish a plan for students and families to come to campus to collect those items, centered on social distancing guidelines. We will provide dates and times for students and families to do so in subsequent communications. No student should be on campus at any time without explicit permission.
- As noted in our communication of March 11, all spring athletic trips that had not already departed by that point in time were canceled. The crew team completed its trip on Saturday, March 14.
- The ISL Heads of School met via phone on Thursday, March 12, and agreed that no teams will hold practices when their schools are not in session. Thus, there are to be no practices of any kind until further notice.

In an effort to do all we can to mitigate risk associated with COVID - 19, the following measures will take effect immediately and for an indefinite period of time:

- All school employees who have the capacity to work from home should begin doing so.
- We will be suspending work on campus of all vendors and contractors whose work is deemed non-essential at this point in time.
- We are suspending all professional travel for school employees.
- We are suspending all on-campus admission office visits and interviews.
- We are closing all indoor and outdoor athletic facilities, including the school's fitness center.

As a reminder, the following measures and requests are ongoing and remain in place:

- We continue to appreciate everyone's help updating this [FORM](#) with all student

and employee travel information. We are mindful of the fact that there are a growing number of areas in the world and country with confirmed cases of COVID - 19. Thus, the more information everyone shares about international and domestic travel, the better equipped we will be to ensure the health and safety of the community.

- We have canceled all events that had been scheduled on campus during the break and have suspended indefinitely all spring rental agreements with outside groups who use our facilities. We will be adhering to Massachusetts Governor Baker's executive order to not host groups in excess of 250 people, and will likely be establishing thresholds considerably lower than that.
- We are proceeding with plans to thoroughly clean the campus ahead of our first day of faculty meetings on Wednesday, March 25, and the Health & Wellness Center and dining hall will be stocked with appropriate medical supplies and extra food, respectively, in order to remain equipped for the range of scenarios we might face this spring if we are able to have students back on campus.
- We continue to emphasize the importance of practicing good hygiene: washing hands regularly, covering our coughs, and doing all we can to reduce the risk of spreading illness.
- We continue to ask all members of the community who are not feeling well to stay home.

We understand that each communication we send generates a next round of questions. We want to do our best to address those questions to the fullest extent possible. Here is a reminder of who you should be in touch with depending on the type of question you have:

- **Health and Wellness** - Please contact Health and Wellness Center Director [Tracey Costantino](#) at 978-725-6207.
- **International travel, Campus Visiting, and Dormitories** - Please contact Associate Head for Student Affairs [Andrea Heinze](#) at 978-725-6264 or Dean of Students [Willie Waters](#) at 978-725-6293.
- **Academic Program** - Please contact Associate Head for Academic Affairs [Lance Latham](#) at 978-725-6252 or Academic Dean [Susanna Waters](#) at 978-725-6355.
- **Faculty Matters** - Please contact Dean of Faculty [John McVeigh](#) at 978-725-6262.
- **Human Resources** - Please contact Director of Human Resources [Beth McNeff](#) at 978-725-6318.

In the coming days, we will provide additional updates regarding our approach to doing all we can to minimize exposure to COVID - 19. The community's full engagement with the steps and measures outlined above, and protocols and procedures still to be developed, will be essential to achieving the goal. We ask for your cooperation and patience as we keep moving forward, and invite your questions.

Thank you all for your support. Take good care.

Best,

John R. Packard
Head of School

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