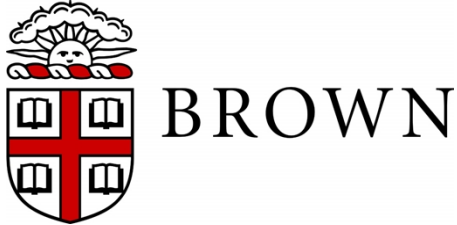


From: "President Christina H. Paxson" <president@brown.edu>  
Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2020 1:21 PM  
To: "community.announce.allbrown@lists.brown.edu"  
<community.announce.allbrown@lists.brown.edu>  
Subject: Important modifications to Brown's plan for the Fall 2020 semester



BROWN

Dear Brown Community Members,

I hope you and your families are healthy and well. I am writing to update you on our plans for the fall semester at Brown. As the weeks have gone by since the July announcement of our three-semester model for bringing students back to campus for the 2020-21 year, I know that many of us have been closely watching the evolving public health situation around COVID-19. Unfortunately, the situation in the country and in Rhode Island has deteriorated over the past several weeks.

Given the current landscape, in consultation with public health experts, we have determined it best to take a phased approach to the start of in-person instruction for the fall semester. In the first phase, we will permit only a limited number of students to return to campus before Labor Day. The majority of returning undergraduate students will start the Fall 2020 semester studying remotely, preferably outside of the Providence area. All undergraduate classes will be taught remotely from September 9 until the week of October 5.

In the second phase, the remainder of students will be invited to return in late September, provided the public health situation has improved, and in-person instruction of small classes will begin. This staggered arrival of students over a longer time period will better position Brown to address challenges, including quarantine and isolation for any students who test positive for COVID-19. This plan also is in keeping with the data-based and public health-based decision making that has driven our planning since the beginning of the pandemic.

These changes do not affect our graduate and medical students who will return to campus before Labor Day (if they are not already in Providence) and, in most cases, will have the opportunity for in-person learning. Additional details about instruction for graduate and medical students, including their participation in the COVID-19 testing program and Rhode Island quarantine regulations, will be shared with those students by the deans of the Graduate School and Medical School.

While safety, always, is our top priority, let me say how sorry I am to be writing this letter. I

know how eager many of our undergraduates are to return to campus, see their friends and take classes in person, and I understand that a delay of even a few weeks is difficult. Please be assured that Brown faculty and staff have worked tirelessly over the last several months to do all that is needed to safely bring students back to campus, but we must confront the reality that bringing students back in smaller numbers is the safer course.

When I announced in July our plans for a three-semester model, I stressed the great uncertainty about how the COVID-19 pandemic would evolve. I also discussed the need for flexibility within our plans, recognizing that it might be necessary to make mid-course corrections and changes if the situation deteriorated across the country or, more importantly, in Rhode Island. Although Rhode Island Governor Gina Raimondo has taken a number of measures to reverse recent increases in COVID-19 cases, it is unclear whether cases will decline or continue to rise in the coming weeks. Also of concern are high infection rates across the country. Brown's quarantine and isolation capacity could be unduly stressed if a large number of returning students simultaneously test positive for COVID-19.

The modified phased approach to bringing students back to campus does not impact the plans announced in July for a three-term academic calendar. The expectation is that first-year students will still arrive for the spring term and continue to the summer term.

Colleagues across campus have been preparing extensively to support the health and safety of students, including setting up an on-campus testing site, training contact tracers, investing in improved air filtration systems, and purchasing additional cleaning supplies. We have also developed a public health education campaign that will encourage all members of our community to do their part to reduce the spread of infection. While we have no control over the current course of the pandemic, we will be ready to bring all of our students back when the situation improves.

### **Criteria for the Resumption of In-person Teaching and Learning**

- All undergraduate classes will be remote until at least October 5.
- If by September 11, COVID-19 cases in Rhode Island have declined from their current level over a 14-day period and the number of students who test positive for COVID-19 is sufficiently low, then we will follow our current plan to offer many smaller undergraduate courses (with no more than 20 students) in person beginning on October 5.
- If these conditions are not met by September 11, the remainder of the semester will be remote. Bringing undergraduate students to campus for less than seven weeks of in-person instruction would create significant logistical and practical challenges, both for students and the University.

### **Move-in and Fees for Delayed In-Person Classes**

- If it is decided on September 11 that in-person classes will begin on October 5, undergraduate students will be invited to move in to their residence halls during the week of September 21. This will allow them to complete any quarantine requirements before attending in-person classes. (See below for the criteria for students to receive permission to return earlier.)

- For undergraduate students who choose to return to campus during the week of September 21, any room and board fees will be pro-rated to account for the shorter time on campus. Students will receive communications in the coming days about how fees will be appropriately adjusted.

### **Receiving Permission to Return to Campus to Live in Residence Halls before Labor Day**

- Undergraduate students in the following situations can apply for permission to return to campus to live in residence halls before Labor Day:
  - Students who live in unsafe environments; students whose living circumstances are such that remote study is difficult; international students who cannot travel home; and students with other exceptional circumstances (to be assessed on an individual basis).
  - Students with previous plans for archival or laboratory research that can only be done on campus.
- Students who receive permission to return to campus to live in residence halls before Labor Day will be invited to move in on their currently-scheduled dates.
- Students who receive permission to return to live in residence halls will be required to fulfill Rhode Island quarantine regulations and enroll in Brown's [COVID-19 testing program](#) to get tested twice per week, free of charge.
- All students will be subject to Brown's updated COVID-19 Campus Safety Policy, which has been expanded from the [COVID-19 Workplace Safety Policy](#) to encompass all teaching, research, learning, work and other activities that are authorized to take place on campus.

### **Guidance for Undergraduate Students with Off-campus Housing**

- Undergraduate students with off-campus housing are discouraged from returning to campus until late September, in time to complete quarantine before in-person instruction begins. Those who choose to return or who are already living in the City of Providence will be required to:
  - Enroll in Brown's COVID-19 testing program and get tested twice per week, free of charge.
  - Abide by Rhode Island's quarantine regulations to protect the health of the Brown and Providence communities.

All students, faculty and staff will receive follow-up communications from members of my senior leadership team explaining further what to expect for the fall term, given these modified plans for the start of the academic year. We know that participation in a COVID-19 testing and tracing program combined with consistent mask wearing, social distancing and increased hand washing is essential for slowing the spread of this virus. Whenever members of the community return to campus, it will be vitally important that we all embrace our shared responsibility in following these new standards.

I know this news is not what our undergraduates were hoping to hear. The uncertainty of what will happen this fall is exceptionally difficult, both logistically and emotionally. I want nothing more than to see all of our students back on campus. However, we must make decisions that

prioritize the health and safety of the Brown community as well as the greater Providence community. I recognize that this year will be unlike any other, but we remain committed to delivering Brown's world-class education.

Sincerely,

Christina H. Paxson  
President