



July 31, 2020

MBA Class of 2022,

I am reaching out to follow up on Dean Erika James' message this morning on Wharton HQ about the Wharton MBA fall semester shifting from its hybrid format to a remote model, and also the University's similar [announcement today regarding their updated plans for the fall](#). **The purpose of this note is to provide further clarification on several aspects of this change, including the impact for international students, updates on testing and contact tracing and further guidance on individuals planning to come to Philadelphia for the fall.**

I want to start by stating that the MBA Program staff and I share in your disappointment. For the past several months, we concentrated our efforts on creating plans for an in-person experience for you, but as the developments unfolded over the last two weeks, it became clear that what we could deliver would not be sustainable amid the shifting situation, nor worth the heightened risk for those of you

attending. It is now evident that rather than plateauing during the summer, as many health experts expected, COVID-19 has instead gained momentum. Since late June, [1.5 million new cases of COVID-19 have been confirmed in the United States](#), with the confirmed case count soaring from 2.4 million on June 25 to 3.9 million on July 22. All of Penn recognizes the challenges this creates, and are adapting plans to accommodate.

In-person Courses: While the MBA program instruction will take place largely online this Fall, we will provide academic requirements in-person where it is essential to have an in-person experience in order to meet curricular and/or pedagogical requirements. **First-year international students can get a support letter from the MBA Program to confirm they are attending a hybrid program in Fall 2020. Please see additional, updated information on the [International Student & Scholar Services website](#) for more details.**

Enhanced Virtual Learning: Wharton Computing has been hard at work to ensure that virtual learning will be maximized for MBA students and faculty. They are now supporting Zoom in addition to Blue Jeans (which has features that will enhance the virtual classroom such as expanded view of participants, embedded polling, raised hands, etc.). The Vice Dean of Teaching and Learning, Brian Bushee, has produced an extensive guide for faculty on delivering an

online class that is drawn from student and faculty feedback from the Spring semester. We will schedule a session with Brian for next week in order to bring you more information about our enhancements in this area.

Wharton MBA Financial Relief Fund: As Dean James shared this morning, **there will be no adjustments made to tuition for the academic year.** The school has established the Wharton MBA Financial Relief Fund to provide students additional financial assistance for 2020-2021. The MBA Financial Relief Fund will support MBA students who have incurred unexpected expenses directly related to the COVID-19 disruptions including moving expenses, travel, insurance, covering multiple rents, technology to support virtual access, and other urgent needs as appropriate. **All students are encouraged to complete the Wharton MBA Financial Relief Fund [application](#) on or before 11:59PM ET on August 23.** Applicants will be notified by the first day of fall classes, September 1.

Student Campus Compact: You should review the [Student Campus Compact](#) which applies to all Penn students in Philadelphia, regardless of whether you are living on or off campus, and will be strictly enforced. Today's announcement from the University offers [additional clarification](#) on the Compact and how it will be enforced. Please also note, that if you are uncomfortable with the requirements of the Compact, you should not return to campus

Testing and Contact Tracing (PennOpen Pass): Campus access will require students to use the tracking program, PennOpen Pass, as a daily symptom checker to reduce the risk of COVID-19 to the Penn community. Penn is requiring anyone coming to campus with any regularity to perform daily symptom checks using PennOpen Pass before the start of each day including weekends, **regardless of whether they are reporting to campus on that particular day**. Specifics on contact tracing and PennOpen Pass can be found in the University's update, and further information is forthcoming.

Co-curricular and Student Life: We are motivated in thinking about the ideas we can put into place to create what we are calling the Remote Plus experience. Though today's announcement means we will not have Wharton-sponsored co-curricular activities in person on campus, as the Wharton Proud community, we remain committed to making the remote experience inclusive, engaging and educational. **The Office of Student Life, in conjunction with the WGA Leadership, will be in touch in the next few days to get feedback on what sorts of engagement would be on the top of your list.**

"Remote Together" Launch: We're going to be actively connecting first and second year MBAs in whatever city they happen to be in to study together, to prep for interviews, and to socialize in what we are calling "pods". We're also connecting those pods to

the local alumni. Alumni clubs have been active all summer inviting students to their programming, including alumni clubs in NYC, Brazil, Singapore, Dubai, Chicago, Shanghai, New Jersey, and the Northern Capital Region. Working with our offices of Student Life and Alumni Affairs, we're going to bring recent alums together with current first and second year students for facilitated and self-directed activities – in person where it's allowed, and virtually when it's not. We're also going to be working through the clusters and Student Life Fellows to build strong connections between students here in Philadelphia and their classmates around the world. More to come as we get a better idea of where people are planning to be for the Fall.

Fall Semester Survey: We recognize this decision could impact each of you in different ways including your intended location for the Fall semester. **The deadline for you to let us know your plans has been extended to Friday, August 7 at 9:00AM ET.** We understand that some of you may need to alter your response to [the survey](#), if so, please email mbaprogram@wharton.upenn.edu.

Staff Support: Our MBA Program staff continues to be teleworking and accessible to provide helpful information and advice as you prepare for the Fall semester. You can reach out to staff via email and also connect with us on Wharton HQ.

Finally, we are not only disappointed because this was not what we had envisioned for the Fall semester, but also because we will miss seeing you on campus. We look forward to seeing you virtually as we work together to stay connected with each other and as a community.

Stay safe and well,

Dean Howie

Vice Dean, MBA Program

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