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TO: Boston University Faculty and Staff
FROM: Jean Morrison, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer 
DATE: October 11, 2013
SUBJECT: Effects of the Government Shutdown on Boston University

As you would expect, the shutdown of the federal government is having a tangible impact on Boston University in a number of areas, most importantly on our federally sponsored research funding and student financial aid. We are following events very closely in my office, assessing the impacts using oftentimes-imperfect information, and developing solutions where we are able to.

We will update you regularly as we learn more. The shutdown is, we are learning, not a blanket shutdown. Because different elements of the federal government have responded in varying ways and at differing operational levels, we are monitoring relevant agencies and programs closely so that we can offer the best guidance possible to members of our community who may be affected. Below please find a review of the two areas about which we are primarily concerned. Please note that we have provided points of contact so that you can seek guidance and ask questions. In doing this, I must reiterate that we are working to ensure that we have reliable information, but please recognize that as circumstances change in Washington, we will be working to understand the changing landscape.

Federally Sponsored Research

The impact of the shutdown on sponsored research varies by federal agency and program. Based on communications from the agencies and in consultation with University leadership and the Federal Relations office, I offer the following guidance to the BU research community:

Grant Activities: Generally, activity conducted under grants that were awarded in federal fiscal year 2013 or prior can proceed without interruption. Many routine functions cannot be performed because of the limited availability of agency systems and personnel. These include:

- the submission of progress reports

- no-cost extensions
- prior approval requests.

Please be prepared to resume these activities when the government reopens.

Contract Activities: Some of our researchers working under federal contracts have been issued partial or full stop-work orders. We are in regular contact with affected Principal Investigators. For those who have received stop-work notices, we have instructed investigators to cease all non-personnel purchasing activity. While we cannot currently request payment from agencies, personnel salaries and wages supported under these contracts should continue to be charged to the related funding source until further notice. We hope (and expect) that when the government reopens, we will be able to bill the contracting agencies for work performed.

Proposal Submissions: We encourage investigators to submit grant and contract applications directly to federal agencies with no further delay—when allowed for by the agency. There is some variation in the availability of federal systems and personnel. For example, the National Science Foundation FastLane system is unavailable for proposal submissions, and while [Grants.gov](https://grants.gov) is operational, the National Institutes of Health has “strongly encouraged” applicants to withhold applications until the shutdown is over. Many of the research entities of the Department of Defense are operational and open for proposal submissions. Sponsored Programs is available to provide direct guidance and support in the submission of sponsored award applications, particularly for agencies that would have had submission deadlines during the period of the shutdown. Please contact your [OSP Research Administrator](#) for support.

During this period of uncertainty we encourage individual investigators to maintain contact with their program and contract officers, to the extent they are available and responsive.

If you have questions relating to research funding that fall outside the guidance offered above, please call or email Andy Horner, Vice President for Research Finance and Operations, at 617-353-2290 / ahorner@bu.edu.

Student Financial Aid

Loans and Grants

Undergraduate, graduate, and professional students who have approved applications for federal student loans or who were awarded federal financial assistance grants, such as the Pell grant, will not see any changes to their student accounts as a result of the government shutdown. In addition, students awarded Federal Work Study funding will continue to be paid. Our current understanding is that students will continue to be able to apply for new federal loans.

For questions about the status of your federal financial aid, please contact the Financial Assistance office at finaid@bu.edu or 617-353-2965.

Military benefits/ROTC

Enrolled BU students receiving funding through the **ROTC program** will not be affected. Boston University is ensuring that funds are available to cover any shortfall in federal funding for this program.

Active duty military and veterans received their fall tuition assistance payments in September, as did veterans receiving benefits through the Department of Veterans Affairs. Our understanding is that if an application for benefits has been approved, funds will be available; however, students will not be able to apply for new benefits. This applies to all service branches. Veterans receiving tuition funding via the Post 9/11 GI Bill should not be affected; however, we are uncertain about the status of funding for future monthly housing allowance payments.

For questions about the status of your military benefits, including Survivor and Dependent Assistance and Reserve Education Assistance, please contact Thomas Swift, manager of veterans' services in the Office of the University Registrar, at 617-353-3678 or veterans@bu.edu.

We appreciate your patience and understanding as we work together to navigate a challenging period for our nation. Because of our operational strengths we are able to adjust and adapt to the current situation in ways that we hope minimize difficulties for our students and faculty.

If you have other questions about the impact of the shutdown, please contact my office at provost@bu.edu or 617-353-2230 and we will put you in touch with the appropriate individuals.

Cc: Robert A. Brown
University Leadership Group
Provost's Cabinet