Dear GSD Community,

With the onset of August upon us, we can all look forward to the start of our next academic year and especially to our return to campus. Personally, I can’t wait to see everyone in our GSD community return to Cambridge, and to each other. Our faculty and staff have been working hard to ensure a smooth start—an exciting endeavor, but also one that begets a great deal of care and consideration, with some adjustments necessary to enable a constructive transition. To that end, I am writing now to share important details about planning for the fall semester and some important guidelines that everyone will need to be aware of and follow in order to keep our community healthy and safe.

I am excited to share that on **Monday, August 16, all GSD campus buildings will officially reopen to all Harvard University ID holders**, according to the hours below:

- **GSD Affiliates**
  Access from 5am to 2am, seven days per week, to Gund Hall, 485 Broadway, 7 Sumner, and 40 and 42 Kirkland (20 Sumner has its own schedule and generally closes overnight)

- **Harvard Affiliates**
  Access to GSD buildings will mirror open hours of the Loeb Library (which will open on August 23)

- **First Responders**
  (including HUPD, FMO, Custodial, Security, & LEMT – Local Emergency Management)
  Access to all GSD properties 24 hours per day, seven days per week

With a few exceptions, we are preparing to resume in-person courses at the school, but please note that GSD campus buildings will be accessible to the Harvard community only. Because of that, it will be important to keep your university ID on you at all times, and everyone will be required to follow university guidelines for in-person gatherings when on campus. Among the most important of these guidelines are:

- **Vaccination will be required of anyone planning to enter campus buildings, unless you have submitted an exemption to Harvard University Health Services (HUHS) on medical or religious grounds.** Please submit your vaccination record to HUHS at their [Verify your Vaccine website](https://verify.huhs.harvard.edu), if you have not done so already. Course registration will also be contingent on student compliance with the vaccination requirement. Students who do not have access to a WHO-approved vaccine in their home countries will be able to get vaccinated when they arrive on campus and will be able to register and participate in courses, so long as they are making progress toward full vaccination. More details will be shared with students directly.

- **Regular testing for COVID-19 infection will be required.** Frequency of individuals’ required testing will depend on personal and other factors. Within the coming weeks, each member of the Harvard community will be able to find their required testing frequency by logging into [Crimson Clear](https://crimson.clearwing.com/).
- Social distancing is no longer required at Harvard except for unvaccinated individuals (who will follow the now-familiar 6-feet rule). It is possible that with the continued spread of the Delta variant and rising cases of infection across the U.S. the university will need to implement social distancing measures at some point in the future, but if that happens the GSD is well prepared to transition immediately to social-distanced instruction, and if need be virtual instruction.

- Face masks will be required for anyone inside a GSD campus building, and consumption of food in meetings or in spaces shared by multiple people will not be allowed.

- Room occupancy fire safety limits in all campus buildings must be followed at all times.

Given that our campus buildings will be accessible only to university ID holders and given the requirements above, the school’s public programs and all other events planned by individual departments, programs, offices, and student groups will need to happen virtually.

Chauhaus also will remain closed for the semester, but as of now, campus dining options will be available nearby at the Science Center. Generally, you may wish to bookmark HUHS’s COVID-19 Information & Resources page for the most up-to-date university policies, as well as the GSD’s webpages on fall 2021 academic planning and COVID-related guidelines.

The school will also take a phased approach to resuming in-person courses, to help ensure a safe and smooth reentry of our buildings:

- All courses will be held virtually for the first two weeks of the semester, through September 15.

  Exceptions to this requirement are all studios and several introductory pro-seminars, including the four MDes Domain pro-seminars, which will all meet in-person from the first day of classes. Second year MDes cohorts will have required weekly in-person meetings with their area heads as well. Information about specific courses affected will be shared in the coming weeks.

  All large lecture courses are also now planned to be held virtually for the entire semester. More specific information about which lecture courses are affected will be shared in the coming weeks, as will information about spaces in Gund Hall and elsewhere that will be made available to students who need to participate in courses from their laptops, as well as possible outdoor tables that instructors may wish to use to convene course meetings and other discussions in the open air.

All of these measures enable us to once again learn and work alongside one another under the same roof, while nevertheless continuing to make extensive use of digital technologies to produce and share ideas, collaborate and communicate with each other. So that we can do that as a community, please familiarize yourselves with how to make the most of GSD NOW, which will go live for the fall semester on August 15. This site, which is internal to the school, not only provides the most expansive view on all activity happening across the GSD at any given moment—in person and virtual—but also provides access to virtual courses, reviews, and events and can be used by anyone in groups of any size across students, faculty, staff and researchers to share any kind of media, publicly within the school or privately, especially visual media. Faculty: I encourage you to explore how the GSD NOW’s Trays can
work for your courses, either as a space for collaboration within courses or for sharing media with the rest of the school. **Students and especially student groups:** I encourage you to use GSD NOW to promote student group events, or curate Trays on topical projects, group discussions, or ongoing research.

Finally, to usher in the new academic year with a moment of shared optimism, we will hold an **all-school Welcome Address virtually on Tuesday, August 31 at 5:00 pm EDT.** As conditions permit later in the semester, I anticipate convening the school’s community for an in-person celebration, too, toasting our campus re-entry and so much more. Keep an eye out for more details on that plan and on all of the above in the coming weeks.

I am always overwhelmed by the energy and excitement that the school exudes with the start of a new school year, and I cannot wait to see you all and welcome everyone back to Cambridge. We still have a solid month of summer to enjoy, and a promising academic year ahead.

With optimism and anticipation,
Sarah

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