Dear Members of the Harvard Community,

We write to inform you that for the first three weeks of January we will take steps to reduce density on campus by moving much of our learning and work remotely. Please know that we do not take this step lightly. It is prompted by the rapid rise in COVID-19 cases locally and across the country, as well as the growing presence of the highly transmissible Omicron variant. It is reinforced by the guidance of public health experts who have advised the University throughout the pandemic. As always, we make this decision with the health and safety of our community as our top priority.

- Only students who have previously been authorized to remain on campus or those who receive authorization from their Schools should plan to return to campus during this three-week period. Authorization from Schools will be based on compelling individual circumstances or immediate need for campus presence during the January term.
- Individual Schools will communicate directly with students regarding the status and arrangements for January programs and academic activities that are impacted by this move to remote learning. Some programs will continue in person, for example those with essential in-person laboratory or patient-centered clinical requirements. Updates regarding these programs will be provided by individual School and program leaders.
- Online library services, book request services, and some library facilities will be available during this three-week period.
- Faculty, staff, and researchers, if possible, should work remotely during this time.

Public health experts anticipate the increase in COVID-19 cases to continue, driven by the Omicron variant, which we have now confirmed is already present in our campus community. The Omicron variant is expected to become the dominant variant across the country in the coming weeks, potentially peaking in the first few weeks of January.

We are planning a return to more robust on-campus activities later in January, public health conditions permitting. We will continue to monitor the situation and provide updates on these plans as soon as we are able.

As we communicated earlier this week, the increase in COVID-19 cases and the presence of the Omicron variant demand our attention. It is critical that we all take steps to reduce risk of contracting and transmitting COVID-19 by getting a vaccine booster, along with masking, minimizing contact, distancing, and testing.

Your commitment to keep Harvard healthy this past semester has been remarkable. Together we can continue to maintain the health and safety of our community, while pursuing the research and teaching mission of the University. We wish you a safe and restful winter recess and holiday season.

Sincerely,

Lawrence S. Bacow
President
Alan M. Garber  
Provost

Katie Lapp  
Executive Vice President

Giang T. Nguyen  
Executive Director, Harvard University Health Services