



HARVARD LAW SCHOOL STUDENT BODY SPRING TERM TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-TWO



RESOLUTION NO. R.-205-014

AUTHORED BY: Austin Powell

SUPPORTED BY: Faith Jackson

A RESOLUTION TO: EMPHASIZE THE NEED FOR COVID POLICIES THAT PRIORITIZE STUDENT MENTAL AND PHYSICAL WELFARE, AND DEMAND STUDENT INPUT ON COVID POLICIES AND OTHER POLICIES THAT IMPACT STUDENT LIFE

THE STUDENT BODY OF HARVARD LAW SCHOOL ENACTS:

WHEREAS, Harvard Law School first announced in March 2021 that students would return to in-person classes in the fall of 2021, and Harvard Law School Student Government has emphasized that there must also be a return to opportunities for socialization; and

WHEREAS, Student Government members have encouraged the Dean of Students Office to allow student organizations to use their funding for safe social events that are otherwise limited to those who can pay out-of-pocket; and

WHEREAS, the Dean of Student Services has consulted Student Government when interested in wordsmithing emails on COVID policy, and has asked for Student Government labor in both encouragement and enforcement of mask and other COVID policies; and

WHEREAS, on the other hand, the Dean of Students Services has only consulted with Student Government when policies have been finalized and changes have already been made; and

WHEREAS, Student Government has had to flag issues around COVID policies that would adversely impact students, yet those issues have gone overlooked or were merely triaged after the period when student input could have prevented them; and

WHEREAS, HLS Administration's decisions have often directly contradicted student feedback, such as when Student Government advocated for student organizations to be able to spend budget at local restaurants to build community amongst their members at a time when eating options on campus were extremely limited, and the Dean of Students Office shortly after announced a policy where organizations could not sponsor or host any indoor events; and

WHEREAS, after members of Student Government emphasized to the Dean of Students Services the disparate impact this would have on students who could not afford to pay out-of-pocket for social and networking events, highlighting that student organizations fundraise extensively to bridge that gap between wealthier and less wealthy law students, the policy was eventually revisited; and

WHEREAS, Student Government advocated to the Dean of Students Office for the approval to have retreats and other community-building events and reached a compromise where these events would be allowed but strict policies including one-person-per-room limits would be in place; and

WHEREAS, integration of this valuable student input resulted in multiple organizations executing successful retreats, even in limited forms; and

WHEREAS, Student Government proactively brought this issue to the Dean of Students Office and believes that when the office is planning to make COVID policies that impact student life drastically, student input from Student Government and other student leaders should be considered; and

WHEREAS, COVID policies that foster student mental, as well as physical, welfare require must include opportunities for students to socialize safely; and

WHEREAS, COVID policies that prioritize welfare also include decisions on the classroom policies; and

WHEREAS, in addition to advocating for policies to allow students to congregate in safe ways at places on and off campus, Student Government has repeatedly asked the Dean of Students Office to consider both reforming class recording policies and streamlining the process for requesting recordings; and

WHEREAS, Student Government's advocacy on recording policy began even before the COVID pandemic, and has included requests for a less strict recording policy, more approved reasons for recordings including all instances of sickness, and a simpler, more consistent process for requesting recordings; and

WHEREAS, since the beginning of the pandemic, students have vocally questioned HLS's recording policy (Appendix 1) and its implications for students in a variety of circumstances beyond their control; and

WHEREAS, Dean of Students Office Fall 2021 recording guidance has confused students on what kind of COVID vs. flu and cold symptoms are covered by the recording policy; and

WHEREAS, the Dean of Student Services has emphasized the protection of professor autonomy while defending the current recording policy; and

WHEREAS, professors simultaneously have repeatedly reported to students that they would like to offer recordings more often but are prevented from doing so based on limitations imposed by the Dean of Students Office; and

WHEREAS, at least one Student Government Representative was sick with COVID and did not receive recordings in a class where they later learned from the Dean of Student Services that the professor opted out of the recording policy; and

WHEREAS, the Dean of Students Office has on one hand has allowed professors to opt out of HLS-wide recording policies in favor of more their own, more restrictive regulations, yet on the other hand professors report being prevented from creating their own, more generous recording policies for their classrooms; and

WHEREAS, student advocates have found that the nexus of responsibility for recording policy is constantly being shifted between professors and the Dean of Students Office by the other party; and

WHEREAS, this confusion is only heightened by the fact that school-wide class recordings were mandated for the first two weeks of the Spring 2022 semester (Appendix 2), the type of policy which student advocates were told would be an impossible intrusion on professorial autonomy; and

BE IT RESOLVED, that Harvard Law School Student Government demands that the Dean of Students Office create a process by which Student Government and student leaders are given at least two weeks' notice before changes in COVID policies and other policies impacting student life are finalized, with a designated period for student feedback on the potential consequences of the policy for students; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Student Government demands that the Dean of Students Office commit to reporting back to leaders who provide feedback on the policies in written communication before the policy is announced, and formalize a process for incorporating feedback from students; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Student Government demands clarity on the timeline between when COVID policies are decided and announced; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Student Government demands students be consulted early and often when COVID policies and other policies impacting student life are being formulated, and not just notified in the moments before new policies are announced.

PASSED IN THE STUDENT COUNCIL: March 23, 2022

VOTE TOTALS:

9 YES

2 NO

0 ABSTAIN

Appendix 1



NEWS

15 Harvard Anthropology Professors Call on Comaroff to Resign Over Sexual Harassment Allegations



NEWS

Harvard Title IX Co Apologizes for State Comaroff Lawsuit



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Hundreds of Harvard Law Students Criticize Plans for Online Fall Semester



Students gather in Wasserstein Hall at Harvard Law School. By [Ryan N. Gajarawala](#)

By [Kelsey J. Griffin](#), Crimson Staff Writer

June 17, 2020

UPDATED: June 17, 2020, 9:11 p.m.

Harvard Law School's announcement that it will continue online instruction for the 2020 fall semester drew scores of criticism from students who say remote learning will lower the quality of their legal education and disadvantage students facing difficult living situations.

Law School Dean John F. Manning '82 wrote in a June 3 **email** to students that the school would hold its fall term online, citing ongoing public health concerns and uncertainty about the availability of COVID-19 testing on campus. In response, a group of students drafted a petition for an alternative model and called for changes to the Law School's proposed policies.

Following the announcement, the school held a series of webinars and posted online responses to frequently asked questions on topics such as tuition, grading, and leave of absence considerations. Several students, however, described the information provided by the school as either vague or insensitive.

"I think finally people are getting fed up with how HLS has been less than transparent in this whole process," Law School student Paul A. Caintic said. "It's just all been handled really terribly, and it hasn't quelled students' worries at all."

Caintic said the webinars included "insulting" comments from administrators, such as advising debt-ridden students to rent an office space if they need a quiet place to study.

Law School spokesperson Jeff Neal wrote in an email that the webinar hosts were responding to a question about studying in disruptive home environments and suggested students could use grants or loans to rent an outside space.

"Ultimately, we indicated that every student must determine which options make the most sense for them, depending on their particular circumstances," he wrote.

Rising second-year Law student Christopher Hall said Assistant Dean for Career Services Mark Weber suggested in a webinar that students should be grateful to experience an online education since the legal profession is

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“We just saw a seismic shift in what is going on in the legal environment in the last 10 to 12 weeks,” Weber said. “The remote environment is going to be much more prevalent because we are already seeing that people can do it. The people who are here are going to be a little bit more seasoned in that environment because that is what it’s going to look like.”

“That’s of course, you know, very difficult to hear and very dismissive of students’ concerns,” Hall said.

Weber wrote in an email that his response was aiming to address student concerns that learning remotely might place them at a disadvantage compared to peers at schools offering in-person instruction.

“Even before COVID-19, the legal profession was becoming increasingly open to remote work,” he wrote. “In my role leading the Office of Career Services, I always want to make sure I share with students how employers are thinking about these questions.”

Hall co-authored a petition to Manning and University President Lawrence S. Bacow calling on the Law School to consider implementing a hybrid semester plan, which would offer classes simultaneously in-person and online. Students would choose individually whether to attend classes in Cambridge or learn remotely, according to Hall.

“The basic outline is classes are offered in a multitude of ways so that they can meet each learner where they currently are,” he said. “It addresses the fact that

The petition — signed by more than 400 students and alumni — highlighted concerns with remote learning, including decreased career advising opportunities, difficulty connecting with peers and professors, and the inability of international students to qualify for work visas for the summer of 2021 without two semesters of in-person classes.

It also featured a survey of nearly 400 students, which demonstrated that more than 80 percent of respondents would choose to defer if the Law School does not amend its policies for the fall.

In a statement responding to the petition, Manning defended the decision to hold a fully online semester. He argued a partial campus reopening under the hybrid plan would pose health risks to students and faculty and offer an unequal educational experience to students watching online broadcasts of classes tailored to the in-person instruction of their peers.

“We understand that fully on-campus courses have advantages over an online experience, but we think that hybrid courses may offer the worst of both worlds,” Manning wrote.

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Students also criticized the Law School’s decision to not offer grading system accommodations or a tuition discount for the online fall semester.

“We all know that an online education is just not worth as much as an in person one,” Caintic said. “The connections you make, the facilities you get to use, the free lunches — those are all things that are going to be lacking from our education now, and yet a penny was not deducted from tuition.”

increase, but that cutting tuition is a University-level decision.

Third-year Law student Michael E. Hornzell also voiced concerns about the school's refusal to record fall semester classes. HLS offered recordings in the spring semester, but the school's website states that students should participate in their fall classes "at the times they are offered."

"For the school to not just build recording in is a bit ridiculous," he said. "It just hurts the students whose internet might go out."

The Law School has pledged to allocate \$1 million to help students facing challenges with internet access or technology. Still, Hornzell said his access to a strong internet connection in the spring did not prevent frequent Zoom malfunctions that resulted in missing several minutes of class at a time.

Caintic said he had similar worries, claiming the inability to watch class recordings at students' convenience would disadvantage those in significantly different time zones or who hold family responsibilities.

"I think it unduly prejudices low-income students, students who find themselves in a difficult home situation, people who have young children who can't afford a nanny, and our international population who again — I cannot stress enough — are being asked to become nocturnal to go to class," Caintic said.

Hornzell said he agrees partial reopening plans such a hybrid semester might pose too many health risks due to the pandemic but argues the University should implement more measures to accommodate student concerns with online learning.

"I feel like they've really fallen flat in their response here," he said. "I respect their commitment to the health and safety of the community members, but there's more to that in a total response."

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—Staff writer Kelsey J. Griffin can be reached at kelsey.griffin@thecrimson.com. Follow her on Twitter [@kelseyjgriffin](https://twitter.com/kelseyjgriffin).

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Appendix 2

From: Burns, Lisa lburns@law.harvard.edu
Subject: [STUDENTS]: Spring Term Information
Date: January 22, 2022 at 11:39 AM
To: students@lists.law.harvard.edu

LB

Good morning.

Please find below information as we prepare for the start of spring term. Included in this email is information regarding a temporary change to the class recording policy for the first two weeks of the term, as well as, information for how to access the Canvas viewing pages to explore classes.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Thank you!

Lisa

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Class Recordings – [HLS policy](#) provides class recordings to individual students for approved absences, including personal emergencies, COVID-related illness, other medical emergencies, and religious holidays. For the first two weeks of the Spring Term (January 24-February 4), we are making a temporary adjustment to the class recording protocol to give students prompt access to recordings during the drop/add period at a time when there is likely to be increased student absences due to [Crimson Clear denial of campus access](#).

For these two weeks, each class will be audio-recorded and posted to the “Course Media” tab of the Canvas course site that is available to all students enrolled in the course. Recordings will remain on the Course Media tab for one calendar week from the date of posting. During these two weeks (January 24-February 4), students do not need to take any action to request recordings for any classes. Please note, however, that HLS’s regular attendance policy applies throughout this period. Absences should be for approved reasons only. Students who experience a medical or personal emergency should be in touch with the Dean of Students Office at dos@law.harvard.edu.

We will return to our Fall Term 2021 recording process as of February 5, 2022. Students who need to request audio recordings for classes on or after Monday, February 7, 2022 should fill out the online [Class Recording Request form in the Services Hub](#). If you have any questions about the recording policy, please email Assistant Dean for Learning Experience & Technology (LXT), Leah Plunkett, at lplunkett@law.harvard.edu. If you experience COVID-19 infection, Crimson Clear denial of campus access, or other medical or personal emergency for which you need support at any time this semester, please email the Dean of Students Office at dos@law.harvard.edu.

ADD/DROP Canvas Viewing Window—Spring 2022

- **CANVAS VIEWING PARTICIPATION:** Open January 20 - 31. During this viewing period, waitlisted students will be able to view a course in Canvas and access Zoom recording information for course meetings that take place during add/drop period.

- **ADD/DROP:** During add/drop, waitlisted students may attend course meetings for a course for which they are waitlisted, provided there are available open seats in the classroom.
- **LIST OF CANVAS SITES:** The full list of upper-level courses is available on the HLS Curriculum page. Look for the [HLS CANVAS LINK](#) on the left navigation menu. You will need your Harvard Key for access.
- For assistance or questions related to accessing the course Canvas pages please submit a ticket in the [Services Now Hub](#).

Waitlist Processing is underway – Please remove yourself from the course waitlists you are no longer interested in so that your classmates may receive the offers they are waiting for. Offers are available for 15-hours. If you are no longer interested in a course, please decline any offers received or remove yourself from the waitlist.

Spring Classroom Assignments – Room locations are currently viewable in the [HLS course catalog](#) and on the course Canvas pages.

Course Schedule Updates – We encourage you to view the [Course Schedule and Updates](#) page periodically to find information about new courses added to the teaching program. In addition, you will find a report which shows classes with open seats.

Cross-Registration (*Upper Level students only*)

The process for cross-registration remains the same with the online petition process available in my.harvard: <https://courses.my.harvard.edu>

- If you are interested in cross-registering into MIT this year, please be advised: MIT is requiring that all students provide proof of COVID vaccination. Upon registering, information for Harvard students will be uploaded to COVID Pass (MIT's in-house COVID monitoring system). You must obtain an MIT ID card and sign-up for an MIT computing account (Kerberos account) as you will need the ID card to swipe into buildings and a Kerberos account is needed in order to upload proof of vaccination.

HLS Syllabi Archive – Check out the [archives](#) to review course syllabi from current and previously taught classes.

Reminders

- ALL Spring Academic Programming begins – Monday, January 24, 2022
- Spring Add/Drop/Waitlist Deadline – Friday, January 28 at 11:59pm EST.
- Please note add/drop/waitlists will continue for any spring courses with a later start date (i.e. after January 28.) The deadline to drop a module course is within 24-hours of the first class meeting via Helios.
- The spring waitlist clearance (the *FIRESALE*) is scheduled to take place on Monday, January 31 – more information will be forthcoming.

- Clinical drop deadline for spring was Friday, December 3, 2021. Any student wishing to drop from their clinic after this deadline must speak with the Office of Clinical and Pro Bono Programs and submit a “Withdrew After Deadline (WD)” form.
- Presidents Day – February 21; All classes meet on regular schedule; University administrative offices will be closed
- HLS Spring Break Week – March 12-20; No classes
- Final day for all Spring Term Academic Programming – April 22
- Spring Term exam dates (We strongly encourage you to plan any spring/summer jobs travel accordingly.):
 - Upper-level and 1L Spring Elective – April 27 – May 6
 - 1L Required Courses – May 9 – May 13

For additional information regarding our schedules and calendars, please see the [2021-2022 Academic Calendar](#) and our [Registration Information](#) page.

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