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Dear Colleagues and Students:

For decades the Boston University men's ice hockey team has been a source of tremendous pride for the Boston University community, on and off the ice. Our student athletes have competed at the highest level of collegiate ice hockey and united generations of students, alumni, and friends who cheer for their success and admire their accomplishments.

Today we find ourselves at a crossroads for the men's ice hockey program and the University. As has been extensively reported, two members of our team have been charged with assault this academic year. These charges, if ultimately substantiated, involve reprehensible acts. The Boston University community expects that our student athletes, as representatives of the University, adhere to the same high standards to which we hold all members of our community and which reflect the mission and aspirations of our university.

The charges in these cases understandably lead to questions about whether the hockey team's culture and climate have contributed in some way to the actions of the two individuals. The University must address these questions and, if deficiencies are identified, make appropriate and necessary changes.

I am writing to let you know that I am forming a task force of University trustees, overseers, faculty, and staff which will be charged with studying the culture and climate of the men's ice hockey team and its influence on the behavior of student athletes in our campus community. I stress that the constitution of the task force does not reflect a judgment about the specific facts in the two cases of alleged assault. The determination of both cases must be left to the judicial system.

The constitution of the task force does, however, reflect a University-level judgment that the two incidents indicate something systemic or habitual *may* foster a team climate that does not comport with the highest standards of conduct we seek to maintain for all members of our community.

I launch this task force with the full support of Head Coach Jack Parker, Athletic Director Mike Lynch, and Bob Knox, Chairman of our Board of Trustees. Coach Parker told *The Boston Globe*, "I hope it's a horrible coincidence. I don't want this to be the culture of our team, and if it is, we'll change it." Coach Parker's comment is exactly right.

The membership of the task force, its charge, and its work plan will be announced in the next several weeks. The goal is for the task force to offer the University a thoughtful and impartial assessment of the culture and climate of our team, with a view to answering the question whether that culture and climate could have contributed to actions that, in turn, led to criminal charges. I will ask to have a report from the task force early in the summer so that we can begin to address any issues in the coming academic year.

Working together, we will do whatever is necessary to restore the Boston University community's confidence in the men's ice hockey program. I look forward to reporting to you on our progress.