



# FISHER COLLEGE

*Office of the President*

August 13, 2013

Mr. Peter Meade  
Director  
Boston Redevelopment Authority  
One City Hall Square, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Boston, MA 02201

Dear Director Meade:

Over the past several months, as required by the City of Boston, Fisher College has undertaken the first Institutional Master Planning process in our 110-year history. In four well attended community meetings and through dozens of other meetings and exchanges with area residents, community leaders and elected officials, it became clear that elements of the proposal would need to be modified in order to balance concerns over Fisher's presence in the neighborhood and our need for predictable and managed growth in order to remain competitive in today's higher educational landscape.

While several specific parts of the IMPNF have drawn questions and criticism from our neighbors, the overriding opposition from the community has been to the conversion of three investment properties on the south side of Beacon Street into new student dormitories. These properties are numbered 115, 139, and 141 Beacon Street. Given the volume of letters and other feedback that the City and Fisher have received in opposition to this part of the plan, we have decided to eliminate this set of three projects from the IMP and retain ownership of the buildings exclusively as investment properties.

Further, since there is a great deal of anxiety surrounding what could happen under future leadership of the College, we will continue to work with our neighbors and the IMP Task Force to develop a detailed set of good neighbor principles which can be appended to the IMP as a memorandum of understanding through which Fisher College will commit to no further institutional expansion in residential Back Bay and Beacon Hill beyond the properties it currently owns. While we must always consider strategic real estate investment in Back Bay as a vehicle for our endowment and fiscal health, in the future we will only consider the neighborhood's commercial areas for new dorms or other institutional uses.

This commitment, to be memorialized in the IMP itself, is meant to assure the City and our neighbors that Fisher College recognizes the unique character and characteristics of our Back Bay location and realizes that expansion beyond our current portfolio of properties should be carried out in areas which can better accommodate such growth. To that end, while we are still proposing a modest increase of 48 dorm beds on the north side of Beacon Street – where the majority of our students are housed today – we are also undertaking a careful review of several alternative scenarios for future growth in other areas of the City.

As we look forward to the issuance of the IMPNF Scoping Determination by your office, we realize that BRA staff and City Departments may require more time to assess this substantive change to the Plan than the typical 15 days provided for under Article 80D. My staff has been in touch with the BRA Project Manager to communicate our comfort with your office having a reasonable extension of time to issue the Scoping – we suggest September 9, 2013 as the new deadline - in order that you may reconcile the changes described above

with your response to public and interdepartmental commentary on the balance of the Plan. Do let us know if this additional time will be sufficient for your staff to complete that task.

As we move into the next phase of the IMP process, we want to thank the BRA for its thoughtful management of the process to date and for your willingness to work with Fisher College to develop a flexible and responsive plan which will strike a balance between Fisher College's successful growth and the needs and desires of the City of Boston and its residents.

Sincerely,



Dr. McGovern, President

Cc: Hon. Thomas M. Menino, Mayor  
Hon. Jay Livingstone, State Representative  
Hon. Michael P. Ross, District 8 City Councilor  
Hon. Felix Arroyo, City Councilor At-Large  
Hon. John R. Connolly, City Councilor At-Large  
Hon. Stephen Murphy, City Council President  
Hon. Ayanna Pressley, City Councilor At-Large  
Katelyn Sullivan, BRA  
IMP Task Force Members  
Howard Kassler, Chair, Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay  
Steve Young, Chair, Beacon Hill Civic Association