

**March 9, 2020**

Dear GSS Students,

I know we are all concerned about the COVID-19/Coronavirus and its potential impact. The safety of our students, faculty, and staff are our highest priority. Thankfully there are no known cases of COVID-19 at the Graduate School of Social Service or Fordham University. Nevertheless, in the days and weeks to come, it is anticipated that the COVID-19 virus will spread fairly rapidly to all regions and communities across the country. Earlier today the President of Fordham University sent a message to all of the Fordham community announcing that:

*Face-to-face classes will not meet on campus, effective 1 p.m. today, March 9, until further notice. (Classes will resume online/electronically Wednesday through Friday, March 11 through 13.) Deans will be providing guidance to students from their school/college.*

### **GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SERVICE (GSS) COURSE CONTINUITY PLAN**

GSS will move on-campus (Lincoln Center and Westchester) classes online. However, in order to provide faculty and students with sufficient time to prepare, **GSS will suspend all on-campus classes through the end of the week (Monday, March 9th thru Saturday, March 14th)**. Class instruction and resources will be prepared for online delivery and classes will resume in an online format, at their regularly scheduled days and times, after Spring Break, beginning Monday, March 23rd. GSS will send detailed instructions to all affected students prior to March 23rd. **Please note**, that all classes in the MSW Online Program will not be affected and will continue as usual.

This action is being taken as a precautionary measure. The intent is to minimize gatherings and events that bring groups of people together, such as face-to-face classes. Please note that Fordham University is not closed. Only on-campus events are

canceled and classes will be moved online. Otherwise, all University offices and operations will continue as usual.

Faculty and administrators of the GSS have created a GSS Emergency Management Team and have developed plans in response to this change of academic instruction and suspension of group activities. Below, I have included responses to some of the most pressing issues and questions we have received thus far.

## **FIELD PRACTICUM**

We cannot anticipate all circumstances in the communities where our students and Field agencies reside. However, the below policies should cover the majority of student needs if they experience a disruption of their Fieldwork. The policies apply to both on-campus and online students.

All MSW students, on-campus and online are expected to **continue with their Fieldwork**.

If a student's Field agency is closed due to COVID-19, then, of course, individual students placed at that agency will not be able to continue with their Fieldwork until the agency resumes normal operations. In such cases, GSS will ensure that a student receives Field credit and they will not be required to make-up lost hours **up to 30 days**. Each student will be expected to contact their Field Instructor and Field Advisor to develop a plan on how best to inform their clients. Professional guidelines and best practices should be followed regarding any suspension of activities or termination of the worker-client relationship. The GSS Field Department must also be contacted and updated on the status of the student and the agency. It is the responsibility of the student to follow-up to ensure this communication occurs.

## **STUDENT HEALTH**

Any student experiencing symptoms (which may be similar to the flu or common cold, and may include fever and coughing) should **NOT** come to campus or go to their Field placement agency. Students should immediately **call**, not visit, the **University Health Services (UHS)**, or the **nearest hospital Emergency Room** for further instructions:

- **Lincoln Center: (212) 636-7160**
- **Rose Hill: (718) 817-4160**

After business hours, contact the Department of Public Safety at (718) 817-2222. Someone will be available to take your call at this number 24/7.

## COVID-19 RESOURCES

GSS Administrators and faculty leaders are meeting frequently to stay informed about COVID-19. GSS will continue to send alerts and communication to faculty, students and staff should we receive any new information or need to further alter plans and procedures.

Fordham University President and Senior Administration are maintaining daily contact with federal, state, and city health authorities regarding all aspects of the Coronavirus. Further, the University has been issuing frequent updates via email and will continue to post any new information on the University's [dedicated COVID-19 website](#). Here you can find information/resources on:

- [About the Coronavirus](#)
- [University Coronavirus contacts](#)
- [Course Continuity Planning](#)
- [Student Accommodations](#)

We understand that the spread of COVID-19 is a serious matter and a source of anxiety for many. We urge you to seek information about the Coronavirus from trustworthy sources such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([CDC](#)), the [New York City Department of Health](#), and your healthcare provider. Further, we ask any individual who does visit campus to please take every precaution by following the guidelines set by the [CDC](#). These include covering coughs and sneezes, frequently and carefully washing hands with soap and water.

Please be assured that the safety and wellbeing of every member of the GSS community is our top priority.

Sincerely,

Debra M. McPhee, Ph.D.  
Dean