March 22, 2020

Dear GSS Community,

I hope everyone is safe and well. It’s hard to believe that it has only been a little over a week since the COVID-19/Coronavirus has so drastically changed the way we all live and work. I’m extremely proud of how the GSS community has risen to the new challenges we’re all facing and I want to thank everyone for their hard work and support.

I’m attaching a personal video message to all of our GSS students. Also, below I’ve provided a brief review and update on the steps that GSS has taken thus far in response to the COVID-19/Coronavirus pandemic.

Finally, the COVID-19 crisis has been especially hard on vulnerable communities and the organizations that support them. I want to extend a special thank you and appreciation to all of our GSS Field Instructors and agency partners.

Thank you and be safe,

Debra M. McPhee, Ph.D.
Dean

DEAN'S VIDEO MESSAGE TO GSS STUDENTS
**GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SERVICE OPERATIONS**

- All areas and services of GSS remain fully operational. All administrators, staff, and faculty continue their work remotely and are accessible via their Fordham contact information during business hours Monday to Friday.

- All Fordham University and GSS events have been canceled or postponed until further notice.

**GSS CLASSES**

**Schedule**

- GSS suspended all on-campus classes on Monday, March 9<sup>th</sup>, and will resume classes entirely online.

- As of **Monday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020**, all Lincoln Center, Westchester and MollOy campus classes will be delivered online using Blackboard and Blackboard Collaborate.

- All classes will take place synchronously (via web conference) using Blackboard Collaborate. Classes will be held at their regularly scheduled days and times.

- All classes in the MSW Online Program are not affected and will continue as usual.

**Grading**

- For the Spring 2020 semester only, all MSW courses will be graded on a Pass/Fail basis. If an MSW student needs a letter grade this semester rather than a Pass/Fail they must submit the request in writing (e.g., via an email) to the faculty member teaching their class section **no later than Sunday, April 5th**.

**BASW Only:**

- Undergraduate students may opt to designate any undergraduate course in which they are enrolled as Pass/Fail. While normally Pass/Fail courses cannot be used to fulfill core, major, or minor program requirements, that restriction will be temporarily lifted and courses taken P/F this semester can count toward fulfilling these requirements.

- The last day for Undergraduate students to make this decision will be Friday, April 24. Once chosen, the P/F option cannot be rejected in anticipation of a high letter grade; conversely, the likelihood of a low letter grade is not grounds for a belated request for a P/F.
• This option is voluntary. Students who wish to complete their coursework for a letter grade may do so.

• Credit will be granted for a passing grade, and no credit awarded for a failing grade. Since there is no numerical equivalent, the grade is not computed in the student's GPA index.

FIELD EDUCATION

• Field practicum responsibilities for all GSS students have been **suspended from March 12th through April 5th**. Students will be given full field credit during this suspension period (*minus the week of Spring Break*).

• GSS implemented the Field suspension period in order to assess the best way to meet the needs of both our students and our Field agency partners.

• No GSS student is expected to continue with Field placement/agency responsibilities during the Filed suspension period.

• GSS decisions regarding next steps and Field Education will be made and communicated on or before April 5th.

• Students who are on track to graduate this semester will not be penalized due to the interruption by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Reduction of Required Field Hours

• GSS is reducing the required number of Field practicum hours from 1200 to 900. All students will now be required to complete 450 hours rather than 600 for their Foundation/Generalist year and 450 hours rather than 600 hours for their Advanced/Specialist year.

• Students who have already completed a total of 450 hours in their current Field agency, **and have successfully met all required practice competencies**, will not be required to return to their Field placement after April 5th. However, all students are required to consult with their Field Advisor and Field Instructor to ensure that all GSS Field Education Department procedures are followed for placement completion.

• GSS is exploring alternative options for students who have completed less than 450 hours of Field. This may include remote client work, depending on the capacity of their current Field agency.

• GSS will work with all students to ensure they have opportunities to obtain the required practice competencies and Field practicum hours.

RESOURCES

GSS COVID-19/Coronavirus Webpage

GSS Student Guide to Online Learning

GSS Faculty Preparation Guide for Moving GSS On-Campus Classes to Online