

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SERVICE

FALL 2020: Faculty, Administrators & Staff

Dear GSS Faculty and Staff,

As the nation is faced with the continued spread of COVID-19, I understand there are challenges that our GSS faculty and staff face in trying to balance both work and personal responsibilities. Many of you may have questions about plans and requirements to be on-campus given our academic courses will be conducted remotely. ***GSS will move all on-campus courses fully online for the fall 2020 semester. This arrangement will be for the fall semester only.***

Provost Jacobs will be sending a communication to full and part-time faculty regarding fall 2020 planning. However, not all Fordham faculty will receive that communication as he has acknowledged that a number of the professional graduate schools have developed school-specific plans and communications. However, in his letter to faculty, he expresses his deep respect for the essential role of Fordham faculty in the intellectual life of the University. He asks that each of us carry out our work this year with these three core values as our guiding principles:

1. **The health and safety of the community are paramount.** Our actions should not put ourselves or anyone in the community at undue risk during the pandemic.
2. **Teaching and learning are at the heart of our mission.** Within the Flexible Hybrid model adopted for 2020-21, the faculty are responsible, as they always have been, for deciding in each of their courses how to create a rich and effective learning environment within the context of their discipline and the learning goals of their course.
3. **Fordham offers a distinctive, transformative Jesuit education for all of its students.** We must not compromise the personalized and relational aspects of

the student experience; the connections that students seek with their instructors and one another; and the powerful sense of community that is derived from residential education, albeit with the modifications necessary for public health.

There will be times when these principles are very difficult to reconcile, but Provost Jacobs asks that all faculty keep the above three principles in mind when making pedagogical decisions; balancing the health of the community with our need to provide a relational and interactive academic experience for students.

There are many GSS activities in addition to academic courses and it is important that we ensure that those activities continue without interruption. We are currently reviewing which tasks that can effectively be done remotely and which may require on-campus in-person activity. Please be reassured that protecting the health and safety of all members of our community guide all personnel and operational decisions.

All GSS staff and faculty who believe they are in a high-risk health category are asked to contact the Office of Human Resources and Management to inquire about accommodations. Please refer to **the detailed instructions on this page**.

In closing, I want to acknowledge the collective contributions of our faculty, administrators, and staff that are so essential to GSS. Thank you for all that you do. Be well.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "DmCPhee". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Debra M. McPhee
Dean