

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SERVICE

FALL 2020 ACADEMIC CONTINGENCY PLAN

Dear GSS Community,

As the nation is faced with the continued spread of COVID-19, Fordham University Graduate School of Social Services (GSS) has been actively engaged in thinking through how best to prepare our students as professional social workers in Fordham's tradition of *Cura Personalis* - Care for the whole person.

On June 30, **Father McShane announced the Fordham Forward: Campus Reopening Fall 2020 plan**. This plan confirmed that in the fall Fordham University will fully reopen and invite students back to campus. The undergraduate colleges both at Rose Hill and Lincoln Center intend to use a **flexible hybrid model of instruction** which will contain a mix of synchronous and asynchronous elements, enabling classes to be taught fully or partially online. This will also allow the University to pivot to fully online learning if changes in public health circumstances should make that necessary.

The needs of GSS graduate students differ quite a bit from those of the undergraduate student population. The combination of coursework and weekly Field practicum requirements mean that course schedules must consider the needs and availability of students as primary considerations. For these reasons, ***GSS will move all on-campus courses fully online for the fall 2020 semester. This arrangement will be for the fall semester only.*** However, GSS will continue to monitor the evolution COVID-19 and assess the best ways of supporting the complex needs of our students throughout the 2020-2021 academic year.

Coursework in Classroom

BASW and MSW fall 2020 on-campus courses will move fully online. Courses will be offered in the same 15-week structure that on-campus students are familiar with. Each week courses will include a 90-minute live synchronous class session and supplemental assigned asynchronous (independent) learning. The course schedule, the time of day and day of the week, will remain consistent with that provided at the time of students'

course registration. *Please note:* Students enrolled in the GSS Online MSW Program will continue their coursework in the same format and on the same schedule as that prior to COVID-19.

Ph.D. courses for the Fall 2020 semester will be offered in the same 15-week structure as before but will be held with live synchronous sessions during their regularly scheduled time with supplemental asynchronous work assigned for each course.

Field Education

Given the realities of a global pandemic, every school of social work and every MSW student across the country has found themselves navigating unprecedented new challenges, most especially with respect to Field placements. However, Field practicums remain an essential part of social work students' education and GSS has taken on the new challenges by creating a flexible Field learning experience for students. The newly developed Field resources and supports align with the temporary COVID-19 changes to Field requirements made by the accrediting body, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), and the New York state Department of Education.

All GSS Field Seminars will be on-line during the fall 2020 semester. GSS will continue to develop both in-person and remote Field placement opportunities in accordance with national, state, and local public health requirements as well as agency partnership capabilities. While changes in conditions and opportunities are likely to continue to impact Field education, GSS remains committed to ensuring all students are provided with a robust Field learning experience. And as always, the health and well-being of all of our community members remain our highest priority.

Finally, while online classes may be new to some students, GSS has many years of experience providing quality online social work education. The majority of GSS faculty have experience in both online course development and online teaching. Our faculty, staff, and administrators are thoughtfully preparing a fall 2020 semester that will provide every GSS student with a supportive and rewarding academic and Field learning experience.

Thank you and I wish you all a healthy and safe summer.

All the best,



Debra M. McPhee
Dean