

**From:** [Amanda Moore McBride](#)  
**Subject:** [col-sw-stu-PHD-SOWK] COVID-19: GSSW Updates  
**Date:** Friday, March 27, 2020 6:29:26 AM

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GSSW Doctoral Students,

As we head into the spring quarter, I write to address the changes underway to your experience at GSSW.

GSSW is as committed to the safety and security of the school and our larger community, as we are to providing you with the highest quality educational experience possible during this time. We recognize that the experience you will have in the spring quarter will be different than what you expected when you enrolled in the program.

The following outlines changes that have been made. **Please read this (very long) email in its entirety.** I have tried to be as comprehensive as possible.

Please keep the lines of communication open and let Eugene, Kim, and me know if you have any questions, concerns, or ideas. Please also be gentle with yourself during this exceptional time in human history.

Thinking of you,

Amanda

### **Online Instruction**

#### **Your courses:**

For those of you still in coursework, the entire University of Denver has moved to online instruction for the spring quarter. Most GSSW faculty are trained in online instruction, and have taught in that modality for years. A range of additional supports have been added to adapt courses to be online, including instructional design support, individual consultation by master teachers, and remote learning opportunities.

All spring courses are underway for placement in Canvas, which will include weekly

“synchronous” Zoom class sessions hosted by the instructor. You will still be “in a classroom” with them, albeit virtual, and able to see and interact with all of your classmates. Your faculty will still have all the expectations for readings, coursework, thoughtful conversations, and graded assignments.

### **Your teaching:**

If you are scheduled to teach for the spring quarter, you should be receiving regular updates from Associate Dean for Academic Affairs Leslie Hasche. Please read emails from her office carefully. We hope you feel comfortable with the directions and supports for moving courses online for the spring quarter. Included in those supports are videos and guides for online teaching, which you may find useful. Along with Kim and Eugene, her office is committed to supporting you in effective teaching in an online format.

### **Research**

#### **IRB:**

For those of you currently collecting data, please make sure you have reviewed the University of Denver’s IRB recommendations and policies in response to COVID-19. You can find those recommendations here: [IRB POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS](#)

### **Graduate assistantships:**

While support via graduate assistantships will continue as planned through the spring quarter, the tasks and nature of some of those tasks may need to shift in response to the context of COVID-19. Please stay in close contact with your graduate assistantship supervisor(s) to insure that you understand your responsibilities and work out strategies to continue your work on various projects. While faculty are committed to flexibility in moving projects forward, should you and your supervisor need assistance in thinking through how to do so, please reach out to Kim and Eugene for that support.

### **Events and Gatherings**

#### **Access to campus:**

You are not allowed on campus for any reason. While I appreciate that some of you miss your offices and each other, this is not allowed by order of the Mayor and now, the Governor. If you are in need of equipment or supplies, please contact Eugene. We will do our best to remotely acquire what is needed for you.

#### **Spring Events:**

All events at GSSW planned for the spring quarter have moved remotely, been rescheduled, or cancelled. Please do not schedule an event for on campus in May or June just yet. Again, we do not know the trajectory of the virus, and do not want you to have to undo efforts. It is best to wait.

We do not yet have a decision from the university on commencement. However, for planning purposes, our Offices of Community Engagement, Academic Affairs, and Student Affairs are researching options for a virtual commencement, as well as how we might celebrate our graduates in person in the future.

**Culture and Climate Initiative:**

The Culture and Climate Advisory Group will meet in a few weeks to determine next steps for the initiative. Given our remote work requirements, however, the final session with the Gemini Group is canceled for May.

For now, we encourage you to continue meeting with your small groups. Please consider discussing power, privilege, and oppression in the context of COVID-19. The racism and discrimination has been flagrant and disgusting. We must remain vigilant in our efforts to promote equity and inclusion.

Please remember our [portfolio site](#) for the initiative, which includes a number of resources.

**Virtual Community Engagement and Support for GSSW:**

Some of you have asked how you can help and how we can help and support one another in this time. EAC has developed a brief [survey](#) for your input. It should only take about 5 minutes. It will help us know what you might like during this time of remote work and what you might be willing to do. If possible, **please complete this survey by Monday, March 30.**

**Student Experience****Fee refunds:**

Some student fees are being refunded. Please check your DUPay account for the exact itemized refunds posted to your account. DU has refunded the graduate student activity fee (\$10); the RTD fee (\$45); and if you had previously elected to pay the fee, then the health and counseling fee (\$200).

Even if you did not pay the health and counseling fee, please remember that tele-mental health support is still available to all students through [MY SPP](#). The tech fee remains, because our technological infrastructure has never been more needed and critical to our success.

If you believe you are eligible for a refund that is not yet reflected on your bill (e.g., health services, etc.), please contact DU Student Financial Services at [bursar@du.edu](mailto:bursar@du.edu).

**Parking refunds:**

For those of you who had parking passes and wish to secure a refund for parking, please follow the "Permit Refund Request" instructions posted on the [DU Parking & Mobility website](#).

**Emergency Resources:**

If you are facing an emergency financial situation related to COVID-19, please consider applying for support funds through the [DU Student Assistance Fund](#). Please note that we are also establishing a GSSW Student Emergency Fund, which will be launched as soon as possible. We continue to raise money across our faculty, staff, and alumni for this fund.

If you have not already done so, please [login to PioneerWeb](#) and ensure that your personal information, including emergency contact information, is up-to-date.

**Communication:**

You **must read email** during this time of crisis. It will be DU's and GSSW's official means of communication with you. Continuity of your student experience depends on your cooperation. The [GSSW Student Resource Portal](#) is also updated daily with new information to help you through this crisis.

Please know that your questions, concerns, and ideas are important to us. Please email [GSSWdean@du.edu](mailto:GSSWdean@du.edu). While volume of email and the necessity of crisis response may not allow for a reply to each email, please know that I am reading them all, and aggregating the common concerns, sharing them with DU and GSSW administration, and working toward solutions. It may take time to find solutions, but we will do our best.

### **Virtual office hours and advising:**

The GSSW Student Services Office, including the registrar and student services teams, have set up remote operations. They are all fully staffed, and ready to support you—just as they do when we are all in Craig Hall.

Co-Associate Deans for Doctoral Education Kimberly Bender and Eugene Walls have set up virtual office hours through Zoom which began this past week. Please avail yourself of these times to raise concerns or issues that you are experiencing or just to connect with each other. As always, feel free to reach out to Kim and Eugene between those times if you should need to do so.

### **Mental health support:**

I encourage you all to access the mental health supports that are available to you. What we are all experiencing is extremely anxiety producing. Please take care of yourselves. In addition to supports through the [DU Health and Counseling Center](#), all degree seeking students have free, 24/7 access to tele-mental health support through DU's My SPP: Student Support Program. Please download the mobile app today and [click here](#) to learn more.

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### **Social Work in This Moment**

This is a moment for us as social workers to rise collectively to the challenge of seeing humanity through a global pandemic. It is a fact that some of us will become ill; some of us will have loved ones who become ill. We will **all** be isolated. This will get harder before it gets better, but the measures we are taking now will save lives.

Now is the time to be more social, not less. I challenge you to do something, to act out of love, such that you can look back on this moment and say that you made a difference in someone's life during what is undoubtedly one of the most difficult times in modern history.

I encourage our compassion and grace for one another. This is at its root an existential crisis. It is an affront to life as we have known it, and the future remains unknown. We are scared, hurting, and some among us are ill or are caring for those who are.

Many of us have children, who are now home with us. Some of us are responsible for their learning or keeping them safe during the day. Please welcome the children into your zoom calls; embrace learning about the lives of your colleagues. Please also be sensitive to longer turnaround times and meeting schedules. For example, some staff, faculty, and students simply may not be able to meet in the

mornings, due to childcare responsibilities.

If ever we were to hold space for each other to just be, to just be human, it is now. Please enter meetings, your classrooms, every conversation with compassion for those with whom you engage. And please also give yourself grace. We have never done this before. Our expectations must be tempered; our assessments of ourselves and others softened.

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**Morris Endowed Dean and Professor**

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