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Subject: 2020 GSSW Graduation Celebration
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To: elizabeth.ohara@du.edu

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Dear graduating social workers,

I know that you are not ending your graduate student experience the way you had hoped, first with remote instruction and now with Commencement postponed, and we at GSSW share your disappointment.

By now, you should have seen the announcement by Chancellor Haefner that the June 2020 Commencement ceremony has been postponed to June 2021. Please know that if you have finished your MSW degree requirements, you are still graduating—you are still earning your master's degree this year! What is missing this June is the Commencement ceremony, the official in-person celebration.

GSSW still wants to celebrate you and your accomplishments, and I am pleased to share that GSSW has planned a *virtual* celebration of your accomplishments and this milestone in your life. It is scheduled for **Friday, June 12, 2020, from 10:00am to 11:30am** (mountain) via zoom and livestream.

We are honored to host Colorado's Poet Laureate and social worker, [Bobby LeFebre](#) as our keynote speaker. We will also have moments of unique recognition that we hope you will help us create. More details are forthcoming on the logistics and your opportunities to contribute. For now, please hold this date and time and share it with your loved ones.

I am so sorry for your loss of an in-person celebration right now. I am sorry that you and your loved ones will not be in the festive company of your fellow students—hearing the traditional “Pomp and Circumstance” graduation march, seeing you dressed in your regalia, reflecting on the moments of pain and sacrifice and incredible accomplishment as you pursued your graduate degree.

As a first-generation college student myself, I appreciate that pain, sacrifice, and sense of accomplishment. Only one of my grandparents finished elementary school, and my parents attended one-room schoolhouses. Education, unfortunately, is still not an opportunity to which we all have access. Just over 10 percent of the U.S. population has a graduate degree—and you will be one of them. We are all fortunate to have attained our MSWs. Please do not let COVID-19 diminish your sense of accomplishment and gratitude.

As we head into June, I hope you find unique and creative ways to honor your hard work and achievements with your loved ones. Please also join the faculty and staff for the virtual celebration that we have planned for you on June 12. We look forward to congratulating and celebrating you.

Thinking of you,

Amanda Moore McBride, PhD, MSW
Morris Endowed Dean and Professor

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