

**Subject:** [col-sw-emp-staff-appt] COVID-19: GSSW Updates  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 21, 2020 at 1:08:53 PM Mountain Daylight Time  
**From:** Amanda Moore McBride  
**To:** Christine Mafana  
**Attachments:** image001.png@01D617DA.E697DD70, image002.png@01D617DA.E697DD70, image003.png@01D617DA.E697DD70, image004.png@01D617DA.E697DD70

GSSW faculty, staff, and doctoral students,

I write with a diverse range of updates, though I want to begin by setting a bit of context and acknowledging some of your thoughts and fears. We are all anxious right now. In addition to personal concerns, we are anxious about the future of the university and the school—and about what the next few months or years will bring.

The Chancellor will announce soon that a university-wide initiative will be launched to plan for the next academic year and beyond. This initiative will be comprised of several task forces, for which the deans are advocating that there be school representation on each. The taskforces will examine academic priorities, fiscal realities, and opportunities.

I know that the news is troubling about how other universities are implementing furloughs, pay cuts, and the like. While the future is unknown, DU is not likely to be shocked like some universities are. For example, we do not have a medical school or hospital, which are currently incurring exorbitant expenses, nor have we relied on international student enrollment across the university, who are now logistically unable to enroll. And as I have shared with you often, we are a fiscally conservative university with a diverse financial portfolio.

Please also know that I am doing everything possible to shore up GSSW's resources and to ensure that we achieve our enrollment goals for next year. As I describe in the updates below, we have enhanced potential for recruitment next year, and the entire admissions, marketing, and academic affairs teams are hustling hard for us. Deposits continue to come in daily! Moreover, our faculty and staff continue to apply for and secure grants and contracts that keep our centers and institutes going.

I know that we are anxious about the immediate future as well. What does Governor Polis' move from shelter-in-place to safer-at-home really mean? What does it mean for DU? From the deans' daily meeting with the Provost, the campus is considering a very gradual transition process. For now, we remain fully remote. I do not foresee us on campus for some time. When we will return and in what ways will be determined not only by Colorado's and Denver's requirements but also by our assessment of public health science. Quite simply, the science is clear to me: it is not yet safe for GSSW to return to work.

We will discuss these and other matters at the May Community of the Whole meeting. In the meantime, please reach out to me with any questions—and also your ideas. For example, what are your creative ideas for how GSSW can help our community partners through the economic and social peril with our community-engaged teaching and research? Let's be excited for the hope that these opportunities can bring.

In solidarity,  
Amanda

MSW Program Decisions:

- Denver Campus MSW students may now begin our advanced standing program in summer, fall, or winter quarters.
- Denver Campus MSW students may now begin our traditional two year program in fall quarter or winter quarter.
- Summer courses will be online. This includes the new Denver Campus Advanced Standing cohort. The new Western Colorado Advanced Standing cohort will join these courses. Any other summer courses will be online as well.
- Whether fall quarter is online or onground or some combination is unknown. This university-wide decision will be made this summer. Associate Dean Leslie Hasche is representing us on this task force.
- We are working to actively advise current admits on their decisions, and hope to know more about their

distribution across the quarterly starts by mid-May. With the additional start dates, we are excited to continue recruitment of new applicants as well. As such, enrollment numbers could continue to grow over the summer and fall. I will keep you updated.

- Continuing students across all MSW programs may apply for a field education waiver in summer quarter, should they wish to return to their field sites. This university-approved option is now in effect.

#### Commencement:

The Chancellor announced at the town hall on Monday that the university will make a decision about commencement by May 15. Based on current state and city guidance that no more than 10 people can be in a space, it is likely that commencement will be postponed and rescheduled for a future date.

Options include combining it with the August commencement and/or adding a December commencement. Regardless, GSSW has developed an alternative plan for a virtual celebration in June to at least mark the occasion for our incredible graduates. We cannot, however, move forward until the university has made its decision.

Graduating students will still earn their degrees in June, and are still fully supported by GSSW Career Services and Alumni Engagement, which is hosting events and providing resources to support virtual job searches.

#### Research:

The Provost is committed to internal seed funding for faculty and students to support engaged research and scholarship which has demonstrated a significant return on investment. They are holding all award letters until this week. If you applied, you should hear soon!

#### Internal Community Engagement:

Thanks to everyone who offered up their skills and talents to support each other and to OCE for getting some social time planned. [A range of internal gatherings are planned](#). There are a few happening this week! Put them on your calendar and be on the lookout in tomorrow's Dispatch for how to join.

- April 23, 3:00 – 4:00pm, Connect Over Coffee (fourth Thursdays for all faculty across all programs), Hosted by Stephanie George
- April 24, 11:10am – 11:40am, Breathing & Stretching, Hosted by Kate Ross

#### External Community Engagement:

Check out [these great events](#) coming up through our continuing education program led by OCE. Please feel free to share these with others.

#### Accolades:

Assistant Dean Aneesha Bharwani was asked to join a national task force to explore alternative educational models for field education in this exceptional time. The task force will make recommendations to the Committee on Accreditation and CSWE. Thank you for your national leadership, Aneesha!

Please read these thank you letters to GSSW [staff](#) and [faculty](#) from the Provost. She sincerely appreciates your hard work.

Social workers deserve our accolades every day, though especially during this pandemic. Professor Melanie Sage of Buffalo's School of Social Work wrote this "[Love Letter to Social Workers](#)," which some of you have seen. I thought you all might appreciate it.

#### **Amanda Moore McBride, PhD** **Morris Endowed Dean and Professor**

Graduate School of Social Work, University of Denver  
2148 S. High Street, Craig Hall 306, Denver, Colorado 80208

303.871.2203 | [Amanda.McBride@du.edu](mailto:Amanda.McBride@du.edu) | [Portfolio and CV](#) | [she/her/hers](#)



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