

March 20, 2020

This message contains information for faculty and for School of Graduate Studies Graduate Directors relevant to effects of the COVID-19 crisis on graduate education

By this time I'm sure that faculty and graduate students have discussed the COVID-19 crisis and its effect on their lives and on progress toward degrees. The university's response to COVID-19 (<https://coronavirus.rutgers.edu/>) has so far addressed teaching continuity and research continuity, asking in each case for written plans from the faculty.

Faculty and programs must now develop written **Mentoring Continuity Plans** for graduate students. Discussions of plans with graduate students should begin as soon as possible (if they haven't already) so that graduate students are aware that their concerns are being taken into account in a systematic way. SGS is asking Program Directors to submit the collected written Mentoring Continuity Plans, along with a **summary cover page**, by April 3. Earlier submissions would be more useful (the earlier the better) for purposes of planning.

Plans will have to be submitted by upload to the Graduate Directors 19-20 Sakai site (see "How to submit" at the end of this message).

The details:

Each member of the graduate faculty who is a primary advisor to a doctoral student or to a master's student pursuing a thesis should submit to the Graduate Director of the program a brief Mentoring Continuity Plan that covers all the faculty member's advisees in one document.

The Mentoring Continuity Plan should briefly describe what the student and advisor would like to do over the next weeks or months relevant to the students' progress toward the graduate degrees. Plans should be developed jointly by students and advisors. The plans may include issues such as the frequency of remote meetings between students and advisors, plans to identify and access needed resources, anticipated changes in projects or timetables, changes to the order of tasks (to prioritize those that are most feasible at present), and challenges that cannot be readily addressed at this time (we are all aware that almost every student is facing challenges that cannot be readily addressed at this time). Programs are encouraged to find ways (online meetings, message boards) so that faculty and graduate students across the program can share plans and discuss issues of common concern. Programs may also consider how their policies or practices, such as the sequence of steps toward completing degrees, might be modified to allow students to focus on tasks that may be completed more readily under the current circumstances.

Any plan must give highest priority to health and safety, following the current guidelines: see <https://coronavirus.rutgers.edu/> for guidelines and information.

PREPARING AND SUBMITTING THE MENTORING CONTINUITY PLAN

Each faculty member's Mentoring Continuity Plan should be submitted to the Graduate Director

of their program for review. The reviewed plans then need to be loaded into a single PDF file with a **summary cover page**. Please name the file using the convention: **YOURPROGRAMNAME_MENTORING.PDF**.

The **summary cover page** is important. It should summarize key aspects common to the mentoring continuity plans of your program, including main ideas for continuity, descriptions of the major challenges confronting graduate students in your program (e.g., resources, facilities, technical personnel, field work), the ways in which your program and its faculty and students are trying to address these challenges, any ideas for meeting challenges through collaboration or sharing across programs, and suggestions for concrete and feasible actions that the university or SGS might be able to take to help address the challenges.

Please do not include at this time quantitative details about needs for financial support of graduate students. A separate survey is being prepared about financial support to allow SGS to collect and assemble relevant data across programs.

HOW TO SUBMIT THE PDF: Graduate Directors should **upload** the final PDF file for the program (**YOURPROGRAMNAME_MENTORING.PDF**) to DROPBOX in the **GRADUATE DIRECTORS 19-20** sakai site by **April 3**. **Earlier** submissions would be more useful for SGS.

If you have difficulty uploading the final PDF file to DROPBOX of the GRADUATE DIRECTORS 19-20 sakai site let me know and I'll fix the problem. Please do not email the file to me. It is important that we gather all the documents in one site.

Best to everyone,

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