



Stony Brook Medicine

School of Social Welfare

Office of the Dean
Health Sciences Center, L2, 093
Stony Brook, NY 11794-8231

TEL. 631.444.2139
FAX 631.444.8908

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Dear Graduating Students,

The pandemic has altered your final semester in a way that neither you nor any of us could have imagined. It has meant adjusting to constantly changing conditions in the world, in our communities, and in our School and University. We know it has not been easy for you or your families. We have tried to be responsive to your needs, communicate as clearly and as timely as we can, and to update you frequently about things that impact your studies. Today I'm writing you on two subjects we know you care a great deal about: completing your field education requirements and graduation.

There has never been a moment when social workers have been more needed—to offer counseling and support, to help people grieve, to give information and connect people to resources. Social workers are an essential part of the health care and first responders' workforce. We frequently find ourselves on the frontlines of traumatic events, and we bring a unique lens to intervention based on our skills in behavioral health and our commitment to oppressed, vulnerable and disadvantaged populations. **You are making a profound difference in the lives of clients by offering remote services now.**

Conversely, there has never been a moment when students can fast track their learning in cutting edge areas—Telehealth, using technology for remote intervention, and emergency preparedness and trauma treatments. The class of 2020 Stony Brook social workers will graduate with the most current knowledge and skills for working in this new and fast paced environment that will forever be meaningful in your careers. **That educational excellence is what sets us – and will set you—apart from the crowd.**

That is why after careful consideration we have decided that our field education requirements should remain in place. Although the NYS Department of Education Office of the Professions recently announced that it will review applications from license-qualifying programs that seek to reduce the duration of the supervised internship to no less than 85% of the 900 hours required in the calendar year 2020 for the MSW program, and 400 hours required for the BSW program, most of you are already quite close to completing hours. **And you are doing critical work with clients in great need.**

The School is committed to giving additional support to you to meet your goals and requirements. To complement the remote field placements in which you are now engaged, the School will offer a four-hour online training that will enhance your knowledge and skills to treat clients in the aftermath of traumatic events. This training will be given at no cost to you and count toward your remaining field hours. It will cover trauma interventions, bereavement strategies, and clinical work with our most vulnerable populations framed within a human rights and strength-based perspective. The

course will include lectures by a few of our outstanding professors and alumni who are actively engaged in trauma response work. You will be able to login and watch whenever you want and from wherever you are. At the end of this semester, you will receive a Certificate in Trauma-Informed Care and Crisis Response and a letter from your dean that you can provide to potential employers describing your unique final semester experience and training as further evidence of your preparation for advanced practice.

We're aware that some of you have been greatly impacted by the virus, and are experiencing exceptionally difficult conditions, both personally and financially, that will make a strong case for an exemption. You can apply for an exemption by clicking the following link:

https://socialwelfare.stonybrookmedicine.edu/sites/default/files/Field%20Exemption%20Form%20COVID_0.pdf

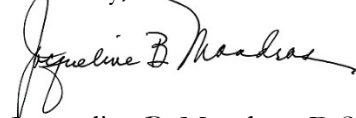
Additional financial resources may be available to you at:

<https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/basicneeds/get-help.php>

Finally, it is incumbent upon all of us that we recognize the professionalism and persistence of the class of 2020. With that in mind, we will hold a virtual celebration on May 20, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. that you will be able to join from anywhere. Christine Corrado, our Director of Advising, will be reaching out to students to help plan that celebration. And, as promised, we will have an in-person Social Welfare Convocation, marching in academic regalia, when the pandemic eases and it is appropriate for groups to gather on campus. I am not sure when that will be, but we will keep you informed as we learn more.

This has been a very difficult time. On a personal note, I have been endlessly worried and questioned many things during this unprecedented and turbulent period. But I have never for one moment doubted the resilience, commitment, and courage of our students and faculty. At graduation, you embody the bravery and determination of the greatest social workers -- Jane Addams and Whitney Young. Please know that we are with you and available to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,



Jacqueline B. Mondros, D.S.W.

Dean and Assistant Vice President for Social Determinants of Health

