

Dear Graduate Students,

We understand that graduate students occupy a unique position in the university ecosystem as both students and, in many instances, instructors of record, laboratory staff/investigators, or support staff. We are grateful for the good work that you do in educating your fellow Bengal undergrads, conducting important research, and supporting the ongoing functions of the university. In addition, we recognize that for those contemplating a return to their permanent homes, fulfilling your responsibilities as a GTA/GRA/SA is likely a concern. We are encouraging all graduate students to work closely with their departments or units to formulate a plan for working remotely whenever possible. It may also be that departments and units can find alternative assignments that can be done remotely in order to offset workload for others who can assume on-campus duties for GTAs/GRAs/SAs who have returned home. Graduate students should not feel restricted from heeding President Satterlee's invitation to return to their permanent home because of their duties related to GTA/GRA/SAs, but, again, please work closely with your advisors, supervisors, and department chairs so that we can identify what is needed to ensure that instruction, laboratory work, or unit support is adequately attended to during this time. We ask that all GTAs/GRAs/SAs contact their supervisors/department chairs as soon as possible (no later than end of the day on Friday, March 20th). Students unable to continue with their responsibilities because of their return to their permanent homes will continue to receive their tuition benefits and stipend for the remainder of the semester.

Additionally, we realize that many of you may have time sensitive laboratory work, field based projects, or other thesis and dissertation research that needs to be attended to. Please reach out to your major advisor and department chair to discuss how best to address your research if your ability to conduct it has been impeded by our move to a distance learning environment. The Graduate School also stands ready to help students and departments identify resources and strategies to facilitate research success in our current environment. Please reach out to us if we can be of assistance in this regard.

Finally, we recognize that the stresses of graduate school may very likely be exacerbated by the current situation. Our hearts go out to students concerned about how this transition to a distance based learning environment might impact them. The anxiety and stress felt in such circumstances is understandable, and we are anxious to provide you with the resources you need to navigate this time successfully. The Counseling Center is a valuable asset in this regard and we encourage you to contact them, if needed (<https://www.isu.edu/ctc/about-us/contact-us/>). Additional resources may be found by referencing the following:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/coping.html>.

<https://afsp.org/taking-care-of-your-mental-health-in-the-face-of-uncertainty/>.

<https://www.jedfoundation.org/id-like-some-tips-to-manage-stress-and-worries/>.

Finally, please know that you can always reach out to the Graduate School directly with any prevailing concerns (208-282-2150).

The welfare of our graduate students during this time is of paramount importance to us here in the Graduate School -- so please don't hesitate to reach out to us if we can be of assistance.

Best,

Adam Bradford, PhD

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