

Dear MS Students:

I write here to follow up on the message that Elizabeth Elam and the team in the MS-PhD Office sent to the group of you. The Dean's Office wants to make sure that you are clear on the recent changes that the school has made in response to the COVID-19 outbreak that affect the group of you. Much of what I lay out here has been communicated elsewhere but I believe that it is worth reiterating the information and doing so in one central place.

Please feel free to reach out directly to me or the team in the MS-PhD Office with your questions and concerns. We will do everything we can to get you answers and help you navigate what is a very complex and continuously evolving challenge. Please know that your safety and health are our number one priority. Thank you for your patience and understanding during this crisis.

University COVID-19 Updates: I know it might feel like University policy is constantly changing and that it is difficult to remain on top of these changes. To help keep people informed, the University has created this [page](#) where they are posting COVID-19 alerts and announcements as well as answers to frequently asked questions. If you are unclear about which resources remain available or need guidance on COVID matters, this page is a great starting point.

Work Remotely: The University is working hard to reduce on-campus populations, and had to close all campus libraries. We ask that you please work from remotely. If you decided to remain in the area or were forced to because of travel bans, please work from your apartment. At this point, it is imperative that we thin out the number of people on campus.

Columbia Residential: Students in Columbia Residential are not required to leave housing. That said, having more space and fewer residents would make it is easier for the University to properly care for the people who need to stay because they cannot return to their home country, etc. For that reason, any student who voluntarily cancels their housing contract can do so without incurring the usual cancellation fee, and rent will be prorated based on their move-out date. For details and updates on the housing policy, please see [here](#).

Online Coursework: By now you have received several messages about how to setup zoom for online classes. Please make sure that you can access that account before classes start. As a reminder, you will have your own Zoom account with CBS. If you do not have Zoom already installed on your laptop, you can download the client from <https://zoom.us/download>. **Within 4 hours** of registering, you will receive an email directly from Zoom with instructions for login. **Your username will be your GSB email address** (please do not use Google or Facebook). We recognize that travel and time-zone differences may affect your ability to attend class. The school is still working on how to handle that challenge. For now, let me say that most classes will be recorded.

Maintaining F-1 Visa Status: On Friday, ISSO contacted all international students to inform them that the federal government intends to be flexible about how students maintain their F-1

visa status. For the Spring 2020 semester, students are allowed to maintain their visa status through online coursework. For more information, please see the ISSO website: <https://isso.columbia.edu/>.

Health Services: We want to make sure that you are aware of the health services that are available to members of our community.

- To speak to a medical professional about COVID-19 symptoms, call the Columbia Health Hotline at 212-854-9355. They can provide guidance on next steps.
- To speak to a mental health care professional, call Counseling and Psychological Services at 212-854-2878.
- To speak to someone about other medical issues, contact Columbia's Medical Services at 212-854-7426.

Career Services: We realize that the COVID-19 emergency complicates the job search process. The CMC team remains committed to helping you find attractive positions and is working to provide the group of you with tips on how to proceed under the circumstances. Stay tuned for more on this front.

Virtual Town Hall: Next week, Dean Maglaras will host a virtual town hall to hear from students and share information about how the school will maintain its educational mission during this emergency. The Dean's Office will reach out with a date as soon as it has been confirmed.

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