Dear MSHE Student,

On behalf of the entire SESP community, we wish you and your loved ones health and safety during these unsettling times. As we look ahead to the spring quarter, we want to assure you that we are designing and delivering the best possible experience under the difficult circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

We know you are balancing your graduate studies with concerns around your education, economic considerations, and self- and family-care. We also recognize that you carefully and specifically chose SESP for your graduate studies—where our programs focus on teaching and learning; designing for different learning environments; managing learning within organizations and during organizational change; and leading in higher education. While there will be challenges ahead, you are the right people to handle this rapidly evolving and uncertain world. We will support each other as we cope with complex issues, and emerge as stronger, more adept leaders when we come out on the other side.

Before we get there, though, we need to focus on what this spring quarter will look like at SESP. You will have already received correspondence from the Provost's Office. In the sections that follow, we amplify key points from that message, and provide additional information that might help you make decisions prior to the start of—and during—the quarter.

Spring Quarter Schedule
As you will have seen in the note from senior leaders, Northwestern classes will be delivered remotely through at least May 4. A decision will be made by April 17 about whether we will continue remote classes beyond May 4. We understand how important this decision is to you. The University is monitoring the situation closely, and we will update you as soon as a decision is made. Any students who are unable to return to campus to resume in-person attendance will be allowed to continue their classes remotely.

Spring Grading and Deadlines
The University maintains its high academic expectations and commitment to rigor for spring quarter. SESP graduate programs will offer a new option of either a traditional letter grade or a Pass/No Pass (P/N) grade. By default, students will receive a Pass/No Pass. We encourage only those who must have a letter grade for external accreditation, licensure, or reimbursement to opt-out of Pass/No Pass grading. Pass/No Pass grades do not count in the GPA; a Pass grade does earn a credit. SESP graduate students must earn the equivalent of a “C-” or better to receive a Pass.

If you wish to opt-out of Pass/No Pass grading and request a letter grade for spring quarter, please consult with your program adviser about your requirements and the procedures. Teacher education students have specific requirements related to licensure and should expect to receive additional guidance from the program in the coming week.

Add, drop, and withdrawal deadlines for graduate students will be extended. These changes are reflected in the academic calendar and grading changes will be reflected in CAESAR next week.

Flexibility
We plan to be flexible, where possible, about course substitutions, independent study, and taking time off, with expedited processes for evaluating student requests. As always, we recommend that
you talk with your program adviser to discuss possibilities and think holistically about the scenarios that are best for you at this time.

Many of you may be worried about starting a class this quarter and being unable to successfully complete it due to changes in individual circumstances. As noted on the academic calendar, drop and withdraw deadlines are being extended for students who may need such an option. Additionally, as the quarter progresses, program advisers will also be prepared to provide support and advising around the incomplete grading policies, which allow up to one year to complete course requirements if needed.

**Tuition**

Since the remote start to spring quarter has prompted questions, we want to confirm that tuition will remain as currently set by each program for 2019-20. As they do in preparation for each quarter, our dedicated faculty are working to design and deliver high-quality educational experiences that will help all of you meet your learning and professional objectives.

Do not hesitate to reach out to your program or the dean’s office if you are experiencing any kind of hardship. And please continue taking care of yourselves and your loved ones over the coming days and weeks. We trust that we will get through this together, and with a little SESP love, we will manage the current disruption while continuing to learn, lead, and create positive change in the world.

Sincerely,

David Figlio
Orrington Lunt Professor and Dean

Lois Trautvetter
Professor and Director, Master of Science in Higher Education Administration and Policy Program