

Subject: From Dean Quick: Continued Support and Additional Resources for Graduate Studies During Reduced Operations



Dear Graduate Students,

These are difficult times for all of us, and graduate students face their own set of challenges different from those of other SMU students. I am writing, therefore, to assure you that the Office of Research and Graduate Studies is working closely with your schools and programs to ensure that you continue to have the support you need to succeed in your studies and to provide you with additional resources to assist you in facing these challenges. As you know, SMU is observing reduced operations due to the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19), but we are still working hard for our students. I encourage you to check the University's [Coronavirus site](#), and in particular the [student FAQ](#), regularly. There you will find the latest information about the University's response to the spread of Coronavirus. I also, though, wanted to share some specific information with you about the continuation of the support graduate students receive from SMU and additional resources available for graduate students:

Research Assistantships, Teaching Assistantships, and Fellowships: For students funded by a Research Assistantship, Teaching Assistantship, and/or Fellowship, we do not anticipate any interruption of this funding through the end of the spring term. Research assistants and teaching assistants are expected to continue to perform the duties of their positions, however, and should work with their supervisors to ensure that they are able to continue to perform these duties during reduced operations.

Student Health Insurance: Students who have enrolled in the Student Health Insurance Plan for the Spring 2020 term, including those whose premiums are covered by the Ph.D. Health Insurance Program, will continue to have coverage through July 31, 2020. Coverage for those who elect the Student Health Insurance Plan for the Fall 2020 term will begin on August 1, 2020. The plan does also provide coverage for telehealth services and telemedicine service (for more information about this coverage please see the [2019-20 plan brochure](#)).

Counseling Services: SMU's Counseling Services will be providing mental health service by the Zoom platform or phone to current clients over the next several weeks. Crisis services will be available 24/7 by calling 214-768-2277 and selecting the "speaking with a crisis counselor option" for assistance. Additional assistance with referrals or other services can be obtained by calling the number listed above and selecting the option to speak with the clinical case manager.

Student Emergency Fund: Students experiencing financial hardship or food insecurity may request support from the Student Emergency Fund. To initiate the application process, please complete a [Caring Community Connections form](#) for yourself and select "economic hardship" at the very bottom. An application for support from the Student Emergency Fund will then be sent to you. Your application will be reviewed and a decision made on support that can be provided in 3-5 business days. Please note that these funds are limited. We are striving to meet urgent needs as best we can, but we will not be able to fulfill all requests or to provide the level of support requested in all cases. More information

about the Student Emergency Fund and the application process will be posted on the University's Coronavirus blog in the coming days.

Graduate students make an essential contribution to the University, not just as students but in the other roles they play as well. I hope that this continued support and additional resources will help you to continue to succeed in these roles and in your academic career in these challenging circumstances. If you have questions, or if we can assist you in any way, you are always welcome to reach out to the Office of Research and Graduate Studies by emailing smugrad@smu.edu or by leaving a voice message at 214-768-4345. We stand ready to do what we can to assist our graduate students during these difficult times.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "James E. Quick". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

James E. Quick
Dean of Graduate Studies
and Associate Provost for Research