Hello DNP and Post-Graduate Certificate Students!

We are four weeks from the start of the semester and we truly hope that you are getting a well deserved break now that the summer semester has concluded (we know that some of you are completing practicum hours in August). We look forward to beginning the fall semester with you and want to share additional information to help you plan for fall semester.

**Preparation for Practicum Experiences**

First, we want to celebrate that many of our health care organizations accommodated some practicum experiences in summer and more are committed to having students return in fall. Practicum placements, especially for the nurse practitioner specialties, are being identified and approved slowly—one by one. The practicum coordination staff in the Office of Academic Programs, along with your specialty coordinators, are steadfastly working with the health care organizations for practicum placements. We remain fully committed to ensuring all DNP students get the necessary practicum hours for certification and licensure and to graduate.

As we receive confirmed practicum placements for DNP students, the practicum site may have requirements specific to COVID-19 such as infection control/prevention training, personal protective equipment, and attestation of absence of COVID-19 symptoms. Every health care organization has its own nuances related to these requirements. We want you to be aware that in addition to the regular onboarding requirements to begin your practicum in an organization, there may be other requirements specific to COVID-19. These requirements will be communicated to you as soon as we get your practicum placement confirmed.

**Clinical badges.** Some of you will begin your first practicum placements this fall semester and will need to have a UMN School of Nursing Clinical Badge to wear in the practicum settings. These badges are going to be mailed to you. Therefore, we need to ensure that we have your correct mailing address.

**ACTION NEEDED:** Please visit your Personal Information section in MyU to double check that your mailing address is accurate.
https://onestop.umn.edu/personal-information/update-your-information
Note that you may have two addresses listed (home and mailing). The School of Nursing will use your **Mailing Address**.

**Protecting yourselves and others**

As you prepare to return to campus and the practicum settings, we ask that you be mindful of actions you can take to minimize the risk of COVID-19 exposure to yourself and to others. You will be with your student peers, faculty, health care workers and patients during the semester. Many of you, as licensed registered nurses, are already working in health care environments and are fully aware this.

According to data from the Minnesota Department of Health, more health care workers are testing positive for COVID-19 through exposure in social settings or their households, rather than their work settings. Given that non-work exposures can lead to infection as often, or even more often, than exposures experienced in the healthcare setting, taking personal action to minimize your exposure is very important. As a reminder, the State of Minnesota and the
University of Minnesota has a mandatory mask policy that everyone must follow. The school of nursing will be providing each student 2 cloth masks at the start of the semester. We also know that using 6 foot physical distancing as a means to minimize exposure is strongly recommended.

Each health care setting will have its own rules about whether DNP students can be assigned to a patient diagnosed with COVID-19 or a Person Under Investigation (PUI). Regardless, personal protective equipment and steadfast infection control practices will be essential when caring for all patients.

**On Campus In Person Course meetings**

There are only a few DNP specialty courses that require students to be on campus for a learning experience. If you are enrolled in one of those courses with that requirement, you can be assured that appropriate measures will be taken to minimize exposure risk. In person learning experiences will be limited to small groups of students using physical distancing, wearing masks, hand hygiene, and cleaning surfaces in the room where the class is scheduled. If your learning experience cannot accommodate 6 foot physical distancing (e.g. demonstrating a physical assessment competency on another person), you will be provided with full PPE.

**DEEP day**

DEEP day will be held virtually on Thursday, September 17. In addition to meeting with faculty and students in your specialty, the focus of DEEP day is institutional racism and its impact on health equity and health outcomes. These are the objectives for DEEP day:

1. Increase personal awareness of the impact of institutional racism and racial disparities in health care
2. Apply your personal awareness to inform individual and collective action to address institutional racism, racial inequities and disparities in health care.

The DEEP day website will be updated in the next several weeks with more detailed information. You are encouraged to begin or continue your personal awareness journey by taking advantage of these resources.

**Office of Student and Career Advancement Services**

The Office of Student and Career Advancement Services (OSCAS) will continue to provide services and support remotely. Alicia George, Assistant Director/Doctoral Programs Coordinator and your staff/academic advisor will continue to provide meetings and appointments via Zoom or phone. All other services and programs will continue to be online and have remote access through the fall semester. To lessen the risk of COVID exposure to staff and students, all OSCAS staff will not be physically on campus through the fall semester unless specifically requested or needed, but will continue to be available to help support and assist however and wherever you are.