

Welcome from AGHE Section Chair

Dear Colleagues:

I hope that you are all hanging in there during this unprecedented time. I hope that you and your family are safe and healthy. Despite our remote and distanced lives, much has been happening on the AGHE and GSA scenes. AGHE has been represented on a GSA COVID-19 Task Force which has disseminated a number of [materials for teaching and learning](#) during the pandemic. The second cycle of a call for AGHE awards is opening up soon; please see the detailed information provided in this issue about the individual awards and deadlines. The AGHE Live event on April 23 was a great success, and as a follow up AGHE is hosting a Peer-2-Peer three-part summer series focusing on virtual approaches, including clinical placements, online lecturing, and service learning; please [click here](#) for more information. GSA is continuing to move forward with plans for hosting the GSA 2020 Annual Scientific Meeting in Philadelphia, PA, from November 4 to 8, 2020. The Society is closely monitoring the latest COVID-19 developments from the CDC and WHO. We will notify members of any changes to current plans.



My best wishes for a stress-free summer.

Cordially, Judy

GSA Call for Volunteers is Just Around the Corner

Are you interested in getting more involved with AGHE? Consider volunteering! We are recruiting volunteers for several positions to begin in January 2021, including members for workgroups and review panels. Click [here](#) for information on how to access a list of positions available. The deadline to apply is July 15, 2020. We hope you get involved!

Progress Update: Newest Edition of AGHE Standards and Guidelines

Led by Tamar Shovali and Marilyn Gugliucci, substantial work on the *7th edition of the AGHE Standards and Guidelines for Gerontology and Geriatrics in Higher Education* e-book is underway. This resource is instrumental for those implementing and revising programs in liberal arts, the

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sciences, and health professions education. As of April 2020, a subcommittee is in place and all chapter authors and an editorial board are confirmed.

Submit Your Ideas for Supporting Mental Health Needs

AGHE's Judy Howe and Joann Montepare serve on the GSA COVID-19 Task Force as members of the Education Team; the Task Force has identified support for mental health as a priority as we begin to move beyond crisis response and into building the immediate future.

To that end, the Task Force is compiling ideas for supporting the mental health of GSA members, colleagues, caregivers, families, and older adults themselves and seek your input.

Do you have suggestions for what an individual may be able to do to support their own mental health or that of another? Please send an email to covid19@geron.org regarding:

- What action can be taken
- If you'd like to reference any publications on the topic
- If the action would take 5 minutes, 1 hour, 1 day, or a long-term commitment

The group will compile and condense responses to share in the coming weeks and share on geron.org/covid19, where updated news articles, webinars, and available resources from GSA and partners will continue to be provided.

Nominate Your Colleagues and Students for an AGHE Award!

The Academy for Gerontology in Higher Education Awards Committee is seeking your nominations for our summer awards cycle. We hope you will consider nominating your colleagues, students, and even yourself for recognition of the work that AGHE values so highly. During the month of July, we will receive nominations for the following:

The [Mildred M. Seltzer Distinguished Service Honor](#) recognizes colleagues who are near retirement or recently retired. This is an honor and all deserving colleagues will be recognized.

The [Part-Time/Adjunct Honor](#) is designed to recognize the invaluable work of our part-time colleagues in teaching gerontology and/or geriatrics related courses. Likewise, this honor is bestowed on all of those who meet the qualifications and are deserving of recognition. The

[Administrative Leadership Honor](#) recognizes administrators on AGHE member campuses who have made exceptional efforts in support of gerontology and/or geriatrics education. Nominees should be administrators above the level of everyday program operations such as Deans, Provosts, or Presidents.



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Our two student awards this cycle are designed to recognize student excellence. The [Student Leadership Award](#) recognizes a student whose leadership has advanced the goals and mission of the Academy for Gerontology in Higher Education in general and on their campus. The awardee will be selected from nominees who exemplify a commitment to scholarship and advancing the cause of gerontology and/or geriatrics among their peers. Finally, the [Graduate Student Paper Award](#) is given to a student who presents their work at the GSA annual meeting. The paper must exemplify excellence in innovation, significance, approach, and implications for gerontology and/or geriatrics education.

All of the honors and awards criteria and submission procedures can be found [here](#). *Nominees must be affiliated with an AGHE institution or a GSA member with AGHE designated as a primary or secondary section.* Please feel free to share this information far and wide. We look forward to all of the wonderful submissions! Nominations open July 1 and close July 31. Questions? Feel free to contact Cynthia Hancock, the AGHE Awards Review Panel Chair at chancock@uncc.edu.

Pandemics vs. Academics: Naming Graduate Student Uncertainty

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If you're like me, you've received dozens of emails lamenting the "strange and unusual circumstances," of the present day. This sentiment is an understatement. Education does not (and cannot) occur in a vacuum. The shifting of the context highlights the precarity of graduate work that has always been there for graduate students. Any one of these contextual factors is enough to cause extreme stress for many of us. Economic, emotional/psychological, social, physical, and systematic barriers are now affecting us even more than before.



Sudden and drastic distancing measures are imperative, and their effect causes extreme stress for many of us. Even "smaller" changes are hard! Classes are fully online, graduations have been cancelled and Zoom-ified and fieldwork or practica may be postponed. We may not be able to see family and friends. Even not working in my usual coffee shop seems like a loss lately! Your losses count, too.

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The uncertainty of the present moment is stifling and unprecedented. It is OK for this to not be ok.

Often the worst part is the lack of timeline. I am currently a third-year doctoral student finishing my coursework before comprehensive exams and my dissertation proposal early next year. People used to ask me, "what's next?" And, now I am constantly asking myself the same question. I have faced my own contextual barriers in the loss of jobs, death of clients, flare up of mental and physical health symptoms, and economic precarity. And I know I'm not alone. For all of my losses, my colleagues have to pause their doctoral coursework to take care of loved ones, focus on their essential roles (e.g. caregiving/long-term care work, job overtime, etc.). The emotional toll of this moment cannot be underscored enough. This sucks! AND I do believe we will make it through with the right support.

I do not have any real answers for my fellow graduate students. Yet, I do have some basic ideas that have helped me through the pandemic so far:

1. Resist the desire to engage in "comparative suffering." It is unhelpful to compare your losses to those of others. There are new losses every day. Invalidating your own feelings of grief does not make you more available to support others. There is room for naming our uncertainty AND supporting others in their struggles.
2. Remember your values despite fear. Your passions, skills, and talents within the field of gerontology, education, and related fields are needed now more than ever. Spending time acknowledging your values can allow space for uncertainty AND hope for your future work.
3. Focus on small actions. If you are working in a high-risk area, take care of yourself. I commend you for your bravery and care for our elders. If you, like me, are often spending time in our new virtual workspaces, focus on small actions in connecting with yourself and others. Phone calls, handwritten letters, and mindful walks all help me stay connected at a distance. You can focus on small connecting actions AND also disconnect from Zoom and Netflix when that feels helpful.
4. Your uncertainty right now is valid. Your feelings, insecurities, and thoughts regarding your career and education may have shifted due to the pandemic. There is room for your fears, hopes, and uncertainties right now. Oh, and see points 1-3 (rinse and repeat).

Finally, please keep in mind there are no solid answers right now. Name your losses and uncertainties. Find trusted colleagues who will listen to your fears with compassion. Support others when you can. Connect in small ways and disconnect from technology when needed. Your uncertainty as a graduate student is valid and important. We need you.

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AGHE Members Serve as Panelists for Community Engagement Webinar

On May 20th, Tina Kruger and Lisa Borrero served as panelists with two other faculty in a one-hour webinar titled, *Community Engagement in Online Courses: Practical Advice During Uncertain Times*. The webinar was designed to give instructors guidance on providing valuable community-engaged experiences to students within a distance-learning environment. The faculty panelists drew upon their experience teaching online to discuss project design, student and community partner communication, effective student reflection, and unexpected benefits and challenges. To access a recording of the webinar, please [click here](#).