



Dominican School of Philosophy & Theology
at the Graduate Theological Union

Office of the President

June 12, 2020

Re: Fall 2020

Dear DSPT Students,

We hope that you are enjoying summer and a feeling of great accomplishment having the spring semester behind you. The faculty and staff at DSPT have heard all of your input from the survey about the online learning experience you had in the spring. Our leadership and the Western Dominican Province have been involved in intensive planning as we approach the Fall 2020 semester, considering many factors as we weigh the possibilities for re-opening our campus. With this letter, I would like to inform you of our plans.

We place a very high value on your safety as a member of our DSPT family and are taking every precaution. With the Fall semester approaching, we are collaborating with the Western Dominican Province and looking to the directives and advice of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC has issued specific directives to institutions of higher education which include three levels of risk:

- a. **Lowest Risk:** Completely remote (online) instruction
- b. **More Risk:** Allowing *some* classes on campus while following strict restrictions, safe distancing, wearing masks, sanitizing classrooms after every class, sanitizing bathrooms after every use, sanitizing counter tops, door handles, light switches etc.
- c. **Highest Risk:** *All* instruction offered in-person, in classrooms with an open campus.

It is clear to us that the **More Risk** category would result in a highly unnatural learning environment for DSPT and that it would be nearly impossible for us to provide this hybrid type of education while at the same time ensuring that you are kept safe from infection. The **Highest Risk** category is impossible, which leaves us to choose the **Lowest Risk** category.

Therefore, we will begin the Fall 2020 semester online until there are benchmarks hit in the pandemic that make it safer for on campus learning. We understand this news may be disappointing. Please know that we, too, are disappointed that we will not be able to see you face-to-face. We are looking at ways to engage in co-curricular activities with all students online.

We understand that the delivery of our graduate education results in a very different experience when offered through remote instruction. The *mode* is different, but the *content* of the superior education remains the same. We are committed to implementing the best pedagogical practices for online learning as we go forward.

Course Planning and Registration: Due to our decision to continue remote instruction this fall we have had to make adjustments to our course schedule. You will receive information and instructions on course scheduling and registration soon.

You remain in my prayers.

God bless you,

Fr Peter Rogers, OP, President