FAQ’s on Campus Facilities & Resources

1. **Why is Duke not subsidizing parking for grad students when employees can buy a temporary permit and park for $12 a month?**

We're pushing for parking to adopt the most lenient, affordable approach that takes into account the fact that there will be decreased demand for parking on campus.

We want Duke to recognize that we need to commit to making parking affordable, accessible, and most importantly equitable, so that folks on campus will have equal opportunities to park and that Graduate and Professional students are not constantly placed at the lowest priority for obtaining on campus parking, which is essential to the performance of their educational duties and in many cases to their professional obligations. So yes, GPSC is very engaged in advocacy concerning parking and fighting for the rights of students when it comes to parking. This is still an ongoing discussion and we don’t have a clear definitive answer right now, but this is something that GPSC is certainly aware of and it's a priority for us going forward.

2. **I don't plan to be on campus this semester, but Duke student health and pharmacy is my provider. Can I pick up prescriptions?**

The answer to that is yes. Students who are not coming to campus as part of their educational activities, but who reside in Durham, will still be able to access student health services when they need them. That may be subject to change, but this is the current policy as we understand it at this time.

3. **How will our Duke insurance cover us if in person classes are canceled and some students relocate outside of the Durham area? Can our insurance be canceled in the future?**

GPSC has been very active in advocacy concerning student insurance. There is a lot of complexity here. On the one hand, Duke student insurance is a great insurance plan for the things it covers, especially if you use it specifically at Duke University Health System practices or at a Duke University-owned hospital.

However, there are times when it is not as easy to access or whether there are more costs associated with receiving care through an outside health system. If folks leave the Durham area and go to places where there is no Duke University Health System, then concerns about these additional fees are absolutely reasonable. So, GPSC has been advocating for a policy that takes this into account, to ensure that students are getting good value for their money with regard to the student insurance plan regardless of where they are located during this academic year.

There are specific concerns related to student insurance for students who are located outside of the United States. GPSC has had extensive conversations with the administration to ensure that
international students will not be required to pay for health insurance that they are not able to use. Currently, the way that students pay for health insurance will depend on their location, which is intended to satisfy the needs of all of these different groups. We are working to get more specific details concerning contingency plans if in person classes are canceled and students end up relocating in the middle of the semester, and we hope to have more specific information soon.

4. If/when the gyms opened in North Carolina, someone went to that or other similar activity, would that be a violation of the avoidance of large gatherings?

If COVID cases in North Carolina have declined to the point that the state allows gyms to open, I cannot see how going to the gym would be a violation as long as you do it safely unless there is updated in specific student health guidance exquisitely prohibits students from going to the gym. This is not in any of the policies currently, but of course policies can change in response to changes in the environment.

With regard to the large gatherings provision more broadly, GPSC has been advocating for the appropriate balance of measures that will allow us to hold our campus safe and ensure that we can respond effectively to any outbreak. We’ve also advocated for enforcement of key principles, such as masking on campus, social distancing on campus, and handwashing. At the same time, we trust graduate and professional students to make the decisions that are relevant to their own individual and personal circumstances. We want to place as much trust and faith in students' ability to make their own wise and conscientious decisions. If students need help making those decisions, there are resources to reach out to in terms of getting health guidance, interpersonal guidance, or peer to peer mentoring within or outside of your department. There are lots of opportunities to get that additional information and to get an additional perspective on whether your decision to attend gatherings are safe or not safe.

A lot of these issues are not really about what the policy explicitly says you can or cannot do. There are some things that are explicitly mentioned in the policy that are clear obligations or prohibitions, of course, but a lot of what the policy is focused on is trying to place trust in our community. So with all that being said, we don't think there is a specific answer at this time that will explicitly detail what gatherings count as “large.” As the procedures and policies in the state of North Carolina change, we anticipate that there will be additional guidance coming from Duke to determine to what degree that guidance is being applied specifically to the on-campus situation at Duke.

5. Is the campus gym open? And if so, in what capacity? So, the campus gym is not open to graduate and professional students

We don't anticipate it to be open for graduate or professional students throughout the fall. This is also been an area of GPSC advocacy. You will have noticed, hopefully, that you will not be paying
a recreation fee this semester. GPSC fought very hard for fee reduction, in conjunction with fighting against tuition increases, fighting for tuition decreases, and fighting for other components of decision-making about fees to ensure that students are treated fairly when it comes to their finances. As a result of that campus gym will not be available to graduate and professional students in the fall, but you will be able to engage pay-per-use virtual recreation to ensure that you can get access to virtual facilities, as well. That should be significantly cheaper than your recreation fee. GPSC took this position because we only want students who are going to take advantage of those programming to have to pay for it, given that we suspect that a significant portion of our campus community will not be accessing either in person or virtual services either to location, safety, geographic restriction, or timing. Note: GPSC is also working directly with the graduate school to ensure the doctoral students whose fees are normally covered under their stipend will not be disadvantaged by this decision.

6. Can we return to working in our offices on campus?

Unless you have been approved to come to campus and are participating in all of the necessary requirements, such as testing, symptom monitoring, and contact tracing, you cannot come to campus just to work in your office. Additionally, specific procedures around space usage will depend on who is responsible for the specific space in question. For example, if your office is located within a particular building within the school of medicine, you should reach out to the folks who are in charge of facilities or to your administration who runs that specific building understand what the usage permissions and requirements are in place. Because different spaces will have different policies, it’s important to check what the local regulations are.

At GPSC also recognizes that a significant portion of our population our parents, and we recognize that having children in the household, often not attending school in person, makes it awfully hard to write a dissertation. We have been working with the library to advocate for resources that graduate and professional students with families can take advantage of to ensure that they can perform their academic and professional obligations to the best of their abilities, even though things may be quite difficult at home given the COVID situation. We hope to have more specific concrete information in the coming weeks as we begin to settle into the fall. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us if there is any particular type of support that you feel would benefit your situation, whether you're a graduate or professional student parent or a graduate or professional student without children.

7. Why are graduate students not allowed to participate in virtual gym classes? And why are graduate students excluded from most of them completely?

You should have received or will receive in the next few days, an email from recreation that allows you to opt-in to paying a fee specific for virtual recreation services as discussed above.
8. Any chance we could get conference rooms or hold zoom office hours.

We assume this applies to graduate and professional students who are involved in teaching, either other graduate and professional students or teaching undergraduates. This is something that GPSC has been working with the library facilities about, because we recognize that graduate and professional students have particular needs. We don't have access to some of the resources that faculty have to support their teaching while staying at home.

We specifically recognizing that graduate and professional students have a lot of competing obligations, and have a lot on their plates. We need to make sure that we equip our students with the resources necessary to succeed academically and to do the work that they do on campus that is instrumental to the effective functioning of our institution.