Dear GCSW Community and Friends,

A week ago when the University of Houston closed its campus in anticipation of Hurricane Harvey, we had no idea what was in store. In the days that followed it quickly became clear we were experiencing what we now know was a historic weather event.

We watched, along with all of you, the City of Houston and its residents experience incredible devastation side by side with amazing heroism and grace.

This event, as devastating as it was has also shined a light upon Houston as a model for the nation. As the most diverse city in America, diversity and inclusion are a way of life. And this past week we modeled what it means for such a diverse population to come together for common goals, to value and seek each other's unique strengths, to serve our neighbors and communities in ways that show we are all in this together.

I am particularly proud of the way our community has mobilized. CNN shared the story of how the storm affected our very own Dr. Suzanne Pritzker and highlights the compassion and spirit of the GCSW community.

It's a wonderful illustration of how our students, alumni, faculty and staff came together to help each other and, of course, the larger Houston community.

Also, I am particularly proud of our students and alumni who answered the call for help, especially those specifically requesting social workers at numerous shelters across the city. I am proud of the alumni and students who immediately set out to both organize and volunteer, and of course, our community partners who have been at the forefront of the recovery.

We are looking forward to the reopening of our campus and building on Tuesday, September 5 so we can continue to be a facilitator and partner in what will certainly be, long running recovery efforts.

We are more than ready for we know the devastation is vastly overshadowed by the selflessness and grace of Houston's residents and leadership, always moving forward, always looking for opportunities to work and to serve.

Many from our social work community have asked how to help. As we move forward through the recovery process we will share specific needs and requests. But please know you have already helped with the many messages of solidarity and concern. It has been comforting to know that you stand with us.

We will be in touch again, very soon.

Alan Dettlaff, Ph.D., MSW
Dean and Maconda Brown O’Connor Endowed Dean’s Chair