

A LETTER TO OUR IFUSS FAMILY ALL AROUND THE WORLD

April 3, 2020

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

At IFUSS we are fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with terrific scholars from dozens of countries over the years—from every continent but Antarctica! We are thinking of you now as the COVID-19 pandemic draws the world close in such terrifying ways.

We think of our friends from Beijing, to Christchurch, to Hyderabad, to Kyoto, Budapest, Cape Town and Johannesburg, Rome and Rio, Moscow and Stockholm, Merida and Waterloo, and on and on. We know that no place is immune, and that the virus reveals the many ways that we are interconnected—for better in better times, and now with such deadly visibility. Virginia and I are thinking of each of you as we watch the news reports unfold and hoping that you and yours are being sustained. So many of you have spent time here either at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign or at the University of Iowa, both now closed and functioning almost completely online to the extent that we can. I know you can imagine those beautiful “quads” at the heart of each university full of students and staff and faculty....and now you can imagine them hushed and empty.

We’d love to hear how you are doing and if there is any way that our IFUSS network can help you during this extraordinary time. We’ll post this letter on our website and on our Facebook page too where you are welcome to share comments if you wish.

Building IFUSS with Virginia Dominguez, all of you, and our fabulous staff over the years has been one of the great joys of my professional life, and now more than ever it reminds us of the interconnectedness we all share. On our Fellows page you will find contact info to connect with each other in case you want to reach out to someone who was here from elsewhere during your residency. And please, let us know how you and yours are doing! Alice Balestrino, our marvelous Programming Coordinator, is returning to finish the rest of the academic year back home in Italy, a country that has been especially hard hit. Once settled, she will continue electronically to help keep us running. And meanwhile, our current scheduled residencies by scholars from Sweden and South Africa will be rescheduled...we are already looking forward to a future when we can gather together again.

Warmly,
Jane

Jane Desmond, Ph.D.
Executive Director and Co-Founder
International Forum for U.S. Studies: A Center for the Transnational Study of the United States
The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign