Resuming Research in a Time of Uncertainty
Webinar: May 14, 2020

Presenters:
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With the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, many communities took steps to reduce the risk of infection within their community by promoting social distancing; aggressively limiting the number and size of gatherings; and issuing stay-at-home orders.

Universities took actions to de-densify including:
- Moving classes online
- Establishing remote work, and
- Limiting on-campus research to “critical research” [mainly related to COVID-19 or those that would be severely impacted if stopped- even those are with limited key personnel]

*Note: Most States considered “research” as essential.*
Impact of COVID-19 on Higher Education

Better Times?

- As the pandemic eases, States are starting to develop plan to reopen businesses.
- Universities are also planning on the resumption/expansion of on-campus research.
- Planning is being done at a time of great uncertainty.
- Information changes daily (if not hourly).
- We have experience with hospitals and research labs that have remained open.
Planning Principles

Most University plans follow a similar set of principles:

• State Lifting of “stay-at-home” orders.
• Availability of PPE.
• Preparing buildings for return.
• Low density work plans.
• Those who can work remotely should continue to do so.
• Access control to buildings.
• Testing and notification of symptoms.
• Contingency plans for rapid lab closure if team member(s) test positive.
Potential Planning Issues

• How are decisions for re-opening made (e.g. Committee, Deans, Chairs, etc.).
• Coordination between research, teaching, and administrative.
• How are Phases decided?
• How do you manage high-risk employees who must return to work?
• Administrative support (e.g. receiving supplies, building maintenance, house keeping)?
• Arrangements for food services, lunch space, etc.
• Commute to and from work.
As you plan for the resumption of on-campus research you need to:

• Walkthrough the entire *life-cycle of the research process

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• Additional factors related to COVID-19 control

And determine what changes are required the support it!

*Life Cycle includes: human subject, animal research, lab supplies, core/shared facility usage, data management, research administration, receiving, break-rooms,

* Additional factors: staff/student return to campus, health monitoring, isolation, postings, elevator use commute....
• Diversity of research programs needs to be considered.
• Plans have to be flexible (one size does not fit).
  – Social behavior, humanities need access to libraries, archives, museums, etc.; how are these planned for?
  – Core facilities.
  – Share facilities, open labs.
• Field research requires special considerations with understanding of local conditions.
• Contingency Planning: If there is a local or statewide re-emergence how do you wind down?
Safely restarting on-campus research is complex and depends on factors that are outside of our control!
DISCUSSION
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SUGGESTED RESOURCES


MASSACHUSETTS Reopening Advisory Board https://www.mass.gov/orgs/reopening-advisory-board

NEW HAMPSHIRE Economic Re-Opening Task Force https://www.nheconomy.com/reopeningtaskforce
