DATE: July 7, 2020

FROM: Jessi L. Smith, AVC-Research

TO: UCCS Faculty

To meet our academic mission at UCCS, we must maintain our vibrant research and creative scholarship. You have vigilantly strived to keep some thread of your scholarly agenda going during these most difficult times.

We commend all of you who have had any level of productivity during these deeply difficult and traumatic times. Every word written is a win, every line read is a cause for celebration. We also commend those of you using your expertise to discover new solutions to pandemic related problems; asking new questions about viruses, policies, and therapies; and documenting the planet and human toll of the crisis. So far **22** sponsored program proposals related to COVID-19 were submitted in just the past few months.

**What can you expect this Fall?**

Without easy access to our campus resources and daily access to our campus community members, we have all felt the overwhelming stress and worry about how to proceed. What lies in store for us this next academic year is unknowable; but what we do know is that your health and safety are of utmost importance. Keeping our UCCS community safe requires every one of us to follow the [*Returning Stronger Together*](https://returnto.uccs.edu/)guidelines.

Below, please find information related to research and creative works as they stand right now for Fall 2020; knowing we need to stay ready, flexible, and motivated to adjust our expectations and processes as the public health crisis requires.

**Meaningful research opportunities for students**

* Faculty are encouraged to **facilitate remote research opportunities** for students as much as possible, for example, literature searches, data coding and analyses, transcriptions, and online studies.
* [The Center for Student Research](https://studentresearch.uccs.edu/) and the [Graduate School](https://graduateschool.uccs.edu/) will host virtual workshops and professional development opportunities for undergraduate and graduate student researchers.
* The [Undergraduate Research Academy](https://studentresearch.uccs.edu/undergraduate-research) and the Graduate Research Academy will begin in Fall 2020, with a hybrid of in-person and virtual activities in coordination with the faculty mentor and the Center for Student Research.
* Faculty mentors will set safety guidelines that limit the number of people in their research spaces to ensure social-distancing; use face-coverings; [take the daily self-health check](https://surveyuccs.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4YDQXPfNGTjTlwV); clean shared spaces, etc.
* Graduate student researchers will have full access to campus; following all safety protocols.
* Undergraduate student researchers will have full access to campus; following all safety protocols.
* Mountain Lion Research Day 2020 will be hosted as a virtual conference in November 2020. Spring opportunities for showcasing graduate student research will be held in-person or virtually as permitted for necessary health precautions.
* Thesis and dissertation defenses can be handled remotely as needed and all submissions to Graduate School and the Library can be handled virtually.
* Graduate student support (e.g., fellowships, scholarships) for participating in research have been protected.
* [Graduate](https://graduateschool.uccs.edu/uccs-finances/finance-resources) and [undergraduate student travel awards](https://studentresearch.uccs.edu/undergraduate-student-travel-program) have been expanded to include participation in virtual research conferences and publication costs for research papers.

**Access to research support**

* The [Institutional Review Board (IRB)](https://osp.uccs.edu/research-compliance/research-involving-human-subject-irb) will continue to review protocols for human subjects research. The IRB committee meetings will be held virtually during Fall 2020.
* The Office of Sponsored Programs and Research Integrity (OSPRI) staff will be primarily working remotely to submit proposals, accept awards, issue subawards, submit extensions, submit annual reports, and perform other sponsored program activities as usual.
* Prospector and other interlibrary loan processes will be available through the Kraemer Family Library.
* Access to databases, journals, archives, and software are generally available off-campus via the Kraemer Family Library.
* The Office of Research will host virtual workshops in Fall 2020 which highlight various funding agencies and provide other virtual community learning spaces to enhance research activities.
* The Graduate School and Office of Research will host virtual [responsible conduct of research trainings](https://rcr.uccs.edu/).

**Steps researchers can take now**

* Assess and prioritize your critical research and creative activities for Fall.
* Identify research and creative activities you can accomplish remotely (e.g., writing, reading, data analyses, manuscript or grant submissions).
* Ensure you have access to contact information for your research team.
* Cross-train research staff to fill in for others who may be out sick.
* Review social distancing plans, contingency plans, and cleaning procedures with your research team.
* Know that one-year tenure extensions will be granted automatically to all pre-tenure faculty for the AY 2019-2020. This means that each pre-tenure faculty member will get one more year before comprehensive review or tenure review. If you wish to opt out of this tenure clock stop, please contact your dean no later than August 31, 2020.

**Informational Resources:**

* [Campus information on COVID-19](https://covid19.uccs.edu/)
* [CU System information on COVID-19](https://www.cu.edu/coronavirus)
* [State of Colorado information on COVID-19](https://covid19.colorado.gov/)