DATE: March 19, 2020

FROM: Jessi L. Smith, AVC-Research

TO: UCCS Research Community

With the ongoing concern for the spread of the disease, UCCS researchers are experiencing significant interruptions to their scholarly activities. It is not easy to develop plans that allow the continuity of research. Just one week ago, we thought this week would be a “transition week” and that some activities could still continue on campus. This is no longer the case. We must rapidly accelerate COVID19 mitigation, which means we are immediately moving all non-essential on-campus research to remote work.

Of course, everyone’s research is essential. Research and creative works are absolutely mission critical. This is not a judgement on the value of research, but a judgement on which research agendas risk catastrophic loss or have animal care requirements. Very few are in this category. Our priority must shift to keeping our researchers safe and healthy and this means reimagining how we do our scholarship remotely.

What does remote research activity look like?

**Research Continues Remotely:**

* Research is conducted remotely.
* Access to your office or research space is highly restricted. If you require brief, vital, access to your space to obtain data or documents, you may call campus police 719-255-3111 to make an appointment to access the building.
* Access to research facilities is limited to those where there is a critical risk of disruption, catastrophic loss, or animal care requirements. **Only research spaces on the authorized list may be accessed**. The authorized list is maintained by AVC-Smith. If your space is on the critical access list, only the primary investigator, or their voluntary designee, can access the facility.
* Access to databases, journals, archives, and software are generally available off-campus via the Kraemer Family Library; however, Prospector is unavailable. See the [KFL Covid19 Library Services Page](https://www.uccs.edu/library/covid-19).
* Any human-subject studies currently in progress that require face-to-face contact must be suspended. Where possible, human-subject studies may be modified and conducted virtually or over the phone.  Emergency changes to protocols that ensure the health of your participants or your research team can be made immediately as long as no new risks are introduced; report the changes to irb@uccs.edu as soon as possible.
* Only in rare cases can data can be moved off campus. Export control, IRB, and other compliance regulations must be followed. Contact Mike Sanderson msander3@uccs.edu for guidance.
* If your lab contains chemical or physical hazards be sure that they are secured and/or disabled.  [EHS](https://www.uccs.edu/ehs/) has developed a check list.  For specific questions or assistance, please email Cynthia Norton cnorton@uccs.edu.
* You may continue to pay your student and staff employees working on research projects remotely. Follow HR rules and complete [paperwork for remote work](https://www.uccs.edu/hr/covid-19-hr-guidance). If you have a sponsored program and have questions about paying your grant-funded students or staff, you can contact the [UCCS Controller’s Office](https://www.uccs.edu/rmd/uccs-controllers-office/uccs-contacts).

**Sponsored Programs Continues Remotely:**

* Our OSPRI staff will continue to submit proposals, accept awards, issue subawards, submit extensions, submit annual reports, and perform other sponsored program activities as usual.
* The Council on Governmental Relations is maintaining an up-to-date list of [agency responses to COVID-19 here](https://www.cogr.edu/institutional-and-agency-responses-covid-19-and-additional-resources) including information on late applications, paying staff, and guidance on major facilities.
* For a list of frequently asked questions and answers related to sponsored program administration and financial impacts, [please see the Controller’s Office Sponsored Projects FAQ](https://www.uccs.edu/rmd/covid19-financial-impacts).
* For general post-award questions, you should contact your research administrator. You may also contact the campus post-award specialist Lin Kaplan at jkaplan2@uccs.edu who can help direct you to the right person.

**Graduate Research Continues Remotely:**

Graduate students on path to graduate this spring will require utmost flexibility to successfully complete their thesis/dissertations/capstone/comprehensive exams.

* You should arrange video conference calls, phone calls, or other means of communication to sustain graduate student mentoring. It is important to maintain contact with students. Clarify and update any expectations that you have for them while working remotely.
* Student defenses can be handled by electronic means (use conferencing tools such as Zoom, WebEx, Microsoft Teams, Collaborations within CANVAS). You can consider changing strategy to using a written format for defenses (e.g., have faculty submit questions and students provide a written response; students video-record their defense and send to committee members for evaluation if an oral component is important). Defense committees with external members must allow for electronic participation.
* The Graduate School [has adjusted deadlines](https://www.uccs.edu/graduateschool/current-students/graduating-this-semester) and requirements for enrollment during semester of defense *if* the student is enrolled this spring semester, but campus disruptions result in a delay in finishing. The Graduate School will work with programs and the Registrar office for possible accommodations.
* Graduate students should not come to campus; alternative remote research tasks should be considered (e.g., literature reviews, manuscript submissions, data analyses, generating posters or graphics). Graduate students who have access to critical research spaces approved by AVC Smith should only access the space if the faculty researcher is unavailable, and even then, only voluntarily. Student health and safety is of utmost concern.

**Social distance does not mean disconnected**

The Office of Research is here to support you, offer advice, research the answer to your questions, and do our best to keep some resemblance of business as usual during this public health crisis. Stay connected via our:

* UCCS Research Listserv
* UCCS\_OOR Instagram page
* Email OOR@uccs.edu
* <https://www.uccs.edu/research/>

**Informational Resources:**

* [Campus information on COVID19](https://covid19.uccs.edu/)
* [Kraemer Family Library information on COVID19](https://www.uccs.edu/library/covid-19)
* [CU System information on COVID19](https://www.cu.edu/coronavirus)
* [State of Colorado information on COVID19](https://covid19.colorado.gov/)

**Inspirational Resources:**

* [My lab group met to chart our response to COVID-19. Here’s what we learned](https://www.sciencemag.org/careers/2020/03/my-lab-group-met-chart-our-response-covid-19-here-s-what-we-learned) (Science Magazine)
* [Working from home because of COVID-19? Here are 10 ways to spend your time](https://www.sciencemag.org/careers/2020/03/working-home-because-covid-19-here-are-10-ways-spend-your-time) (Science Magazine)
* [Amid pandemic fears, we could benefit from some gallows humor](https://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/post-tribune/opinion/ct-ptb-davich-covid-19-panic-versus-preparedness-st-0317-20200316-yjon2hqe3ra4pfc7rozgi5t7te-story.html) (Chicago Tribune)
* [Advice for Faculty Members in a Turbulent Time](https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2020/03/19/how-faculty-members-can-best-cope-stresses-covid-19-opinion) (Inside Higher Ed)