DATE: March 26, 2020

FROM: Jessi L. Smith, AVC-Research

TO: UCCS Research Community

[A Stay at Home Order](https://wp-cpr.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/2020/03/Amended-Public-Health-Order-Authorized-Business-.pdf), issued by Governor Jared Polis, went into effect for the State of Colorado today, March 26, and will remain in effect until at least April 11, 2020. Though we were already operating “within the spirit” of this order, we want to clarify guidance related to how this might further impact your research and creative activity.

We know that UCCS researchers are experiencing significant interruptions to their scholarly activities. It is difficult to imagine continuity of research with such limitations and restrictions. Indeed, one of these limitations is that only designated “critical” authorized research personnel are allowed limited access to UCCS buildings.

I know it might sound like some research is more important than others. This is not the case. *Everyone’s* research is essential. Research and creative works are fundamental to our university mission and to your livelihood. 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 be on keeping our researchers safe and healthy and this means reimagining how we do our scholarship remotely.

The situation and guidance continue to evolve rapidly. We therefore outlined what has changed since our last communication on March 19, 2020.

**Research Continues Remotely:**

* All research is conducted remotely.
* 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](mailto:irb@uccs.edu) as soon as possible.
* Only in rare cases can data or equipment be moved off campus. Export control, IRB, and other compliance regulations must be followed. Contact Mike Sanderson [msander3@uccs.edu](mailto: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](mailto: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).

**What’s changed since our last communication**

* 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 faculty investigator can access the facility. To access the research space, you should call campus police at 719-255-3111 to make an appointment to access the building between 8am and 5pm.
* Graduate students, undergraduate students, post-docs, lab managers, techs, and your sponsored program staff should not be asked to come to campus. Everyone should be working remotely. Only under very exceptional circumstances (e.g., the PI is quarantined) should an alternate be designated. Please alert AVC-R Smith if this occurs.

**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 sponsored program questions, you should contact your research administrator, OSPRI, and/or the [UCCS Controller’s Office](https://www.uccs.edu/rmd/uccs-controllers-office/uccs-contacts). You may also contact the campus post-award specialist Lin Kaplan at [jkaplan2@uccs.edu](mailto:jkaplan2@uccs.edu) who can help direct you to the right person if you are not sure who to contact.

**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).

**What’s changed since our last communication**

* Graduate students who had prior access to critical research spaces approved by AVC Smith are no longer allowed to access the space. Student health and safety is of utmost concern. Only under exceptional circumstances (e.g., the faculty researcher is quarantined and critical tasks much be performed in the lab) should students come to campus.

**Steps to take now:**

* Assess and prioritize your normal scholarship activities.
* Identify any activities that can be potentially ramped down, curtailed, or delayed.
* Identify scholarly activities that you can accomplish remotely (e.g., writing, reading, data analysis, manuscript or grant submissions).
* Ensure that you have access to contact information for your research team and stay in regular communication.

**Donating your new PPE at Penrose Hospital**

Does your research use personal protective equipment that you can spare? Centura is accepting PPE to their dropbox at Penrose Hospital between 9am and 3pm Monday to Friday. [Learn more here](https://www.fox21news.com/health/coronavirus/how-to-donate-supplies-to-colorado-hospitals/?fbclid=IwAR0WQ_eW5omLoNYiErb5TlFMQbtpU_AquxQrEJwttHqW4Sn0pJMXjfi-lVw). If you do have materials to donate, make an appointment with campus police between 8am and 5pm to access campus and collect your PPE donation goods.

Items accepted include:

* Boxed masks and N95s (single or used masks cannot be accepted)
* Gloves that are still in manufacturer packaging
* Packaged gowns or rain ponchos with sleeves
* Face shields (must include eye protection and be labeled as surgical, isolation, dental, or medical procedure face shields)

**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](mailto: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)