



Dear Faculty and Research Staff,

We are writing to update you on changes we are recommending in how you organize your research programs and scholarly work to diminish the risk of transmission of COVID-19 amongst our researchers, research support staff and students. We also ask that you plan for what might be more significant restrictions coming in the days and weeks ahead.

Work like yours has made it possible for nations to combat pandemics and many other challenges based on research and scholarship, conducted to exacting standards by faculty and staff who care very deeply about serving the world. Our commitment is to support your work and protect health and safety by minimizing the potential spread of COVID-19 for our community and all others.

We've been continuously monitoring the COVID-19 pandemic, considering actions taken by analogous universities, and working in close collaboration with U-M's health professionals. We are recommending additional health and safety precautions as we endeavor to keep the University of Michigan's research operations and research laboratory facilities open while promoting social distancing. We will do our best to keep research laboratory facilities and campus infrastructure in place for continuity of research and scholarship, but there are significant factors that may be outside of our control. We must now plan diligently for possibilities that could cause significant disruption even while we're doing all we can to continue our important work.

While research labs remain open, we must also support our faculty, staff, students and postdoctoral students who manage/work in our research laboratories and research workspaces. We encourage you to work with your research teams to discuss the time and manner in which people in laboratories and research workspace are interacting so as to promote social distancing and slow the transmission of COVID-19.

Please consider implementing protocols that could include requiring people to work in shifts or on alternate days to accomplish necessary research tasks, while reducing density in your research workspace. Another suggestion is to allow individuals in the research and laboratory research workspace to arrange personal interactions such that they can maintain a comfortable, six-foot distance from each other. If they have to be in the research space at the same time, perhaps they can separate themselves in some way and keep total laboratory or workspace time and density to a minimum. We trust that you, as seasoned researchers, will know what works best for your own research

laboratory. We would like you all to support staff to work from home on a rotating schedule, using established guidelines. We realize how disruptive this may be to your research operations, but while our research is critically important, we all agree that our people are more so. In addition, we suggest that you consider postponing elective activities or experiments that are not time-sensitive.

We also encourage you now to develop a research continuity of operations plan by the end of this week, March 20. Consider how the work of your groups could be slowed for the coming weeks to be prepared for a reduction in operations, and what steps you would follow if the work had to be placed on hold with short notice. The planning you do now will support the long-term success of our laboratories and research groups.

We understand this is a challenging situation for many of us and for our research teams, students, postdocs, staff and faculty. These are difficult decisions and we want you to know that the continued health and safety of our U-M community, and our families, friends and neighbors, is our top priority. This is a period for additional attention to empathy, kindness, and support of our colleagues and teams.

Please note, all research support units remain operational, including Research and Sponsored Projects, Technology Transfer, Institutional Review Boards and Animal Care. We also encourage you to visit our [COVID-19: Research Operations webpage](#), which includes information, resources for research continuity planning, and extensive research FAQs so faculty, staff and students can best manage their ongoing research and scholarship activities.

Sincerely,

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