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Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2020 1:51 PM

Subject: Additional Guidance; Research Restrictions

To the CWRU Research Community:

I am writing to provide additional guidance on the continuity of research during the COVID-19 outbreak.

All staff members in the Office of Research and Technology Management have moved to remote operations as of today (Tuesday, March 17) and are working full-time during regular business hours. We will be in regular contact via email, phone or Zoom as needed. We do not foresee any reductions in service during this time.

Case Western Reserve is actively and carefully monitoring the situation regarding COVID-19.

With the exception of the two areas detailed below, university officials have not restricted the conduct of research at this time. However, that status is subject to change.

For now, the campus is open for research, but buildings will be locked and put on card-swipe access only in order to prevent public access.

The two areas of research restriction are human subjects' research and undergraduate participation in research within laboratories. This message also addresses graduate student participation.

Restriction 1: Human Subjects Research

During this period of remote work, there should be minimal contact with human subjects involved in research. Contact with human subjects should be limited to remote methods (e.g. email, phone, Zoom, RedCap, Qualtrics) to the extent possible. Please contact the IRB Office if you need to revise or amend your IRB protocol to conduct remote interviews or surveys.

In those instances in which human subjects research cannot be performed remotely, and are not essential to a participant's health, researchers should work with their teams to develop revised/alternative plans to enable continued progress on research or should delay projects.

Researchers who need to have physical interactions with human subjects in clinical trials should follow the guidance of the hospital or clinic in which those studies are taking place.

Restriction 2: Students

Undergraduate Researchers

Undergraduate students are not permitted to be on campus to carry out any research activities.

Graduate Student Researchers

Graduate students conducting research for their thesis/dissertation or as part of a research assistantship may continue their research activities, if possible to do safely while using social distancing, staggering of time in labs, etc. However, research groups should implement mechanisms and/or shift activities to conduct research remotely wherever possible (e.g., computational work, research of online resources and databases, data analysis, etc.). Where research activities on campus and in associated research facilities are necessary, additional practices should be adopted to keep health and safety a priority (see section on Planning below).

Now is the Time to Plan

Because of the rapid pace of change, principal investigators and others who manage research labs should plan

for the possibility of interruptions in access to facilities, disruptions in supply chains, etc. Planning can minimize the impact of such events.

- Create a staffing and essential duty coverage plan
- Assist personnel to work remotely
- Arrange for managing lab equipment, materials, and supplies

Payment of University Personnel

Finally, we have received numerous questions about how people will be paid during this period of reduced and remote operations. The university's position is that all employees, regardless of pay source, will be paid for working at home.

To the extent that some personnel are deemed both "essential" and required to work on campus, there are provisions (sent out by HR yesterday) to provide comp time or premium pay. These exceptional pay measures apply regardless of whether personnel are supported by external grants/contracts or internal funds.

Federal agencies have stated that they will allow grant funds to be used to pay personnel for work from home and even in the event they can no longer work. Also, salaries can be paid on grants during these exceptional circumstances. Now is not the time to engage in hoarding of award dollars. Our top priority is the well-being of all members of this community.

If there are any questions, please contact me directly at suzanne.rivera@case.edu.

Please take all recommended measures to stay safe.

Suzanne M. Rivera, PhD
Vice President for Research & Technology Management