

From: Fred L. King, Vice President for Research

To: Deans and ADRs for Statler College, Health Sciences, Davis, Creative Arts and Eberly Colleges

Date: May 4, 2020

Re: Framework for Re-start of Laboratory/Greenhouse/Studio Work

As we all eagerly await a re-start of on-campus research and scholarship, we must aim for a plan that allows on-campus efforts to continue and puts the health and welfare of WVU faculty, staff and students and that of the larger Morgantown community at the forefront. The immediate return plan is to re-establish access (albeit restricted) for groups where the majority of their research and/or scholarship relies on access to a laboratory/studio/greenhouse with dedicated instrumentation or space that cannot be duplicated remotely. We will do so in a manner that maintains social distancing and minimizes transmission by means of vigilant use of masks, handwashing and frequent disinfection of common areas.

Our plan is to start out modestly and then allow for increased on-site engagement and activities as circumstances permit. **We appreciate your continued patience and the Research Office welcomes all comments and suggestions. We want this to work as best it can for the WVU community and need your input to help steer our decision process in this challenging time. Please email Fred.King@mail.wvu.edu and Sheena.Murphy@mail.wvu.edu with any suggestions/comments.**

To the extent that it is possible under the public health authority directives, as access restrictions are relaxed, priority to return to on-campus activities should be given to those researchers/scholars who cannot work remotely and (in no particular order)

- who are under time constraints to complete degrees or
- who are term appointments (e.g., postdoctoral researchers) or
- who are pre-tenure or
- whose externally supported project has near term deliverables or
- whose externally funded project is nearly the end of the award or
- who need preliminary results for a pending submission.

Those researchers whose work is primarily computational, archival and/or theoretical are NOT to return to campus.

Each college is charged with developing the criteria for prioritizing the first wave of return to campus, but it is to be expected that early career faculty needs for access should come before established researchers/scholars and that senior graduate students be prioritized.

Even for those individuals whose research has a significant on-site dimension, they should still perform analysis, manuscript writing, group meetings etc. off-site, and only return to campus for

work that cannot be performed elsewhere (compromised productivity because of distractions at home etc. is not a valid reason to return).

Guiding Principles

- Follow the cognizant Local, State, and National Public Health Authority directives to shelter-at-home and implement social distancing.
- Protect the health and safety of the research workforce.
- Protect the emotional, physical health and safety of the greater WV community.
- Facilitate progress of Graduate students toward degree completion.
- Facilitate progress of funded research and scholarship.
- Implement a fair and transparent process for granting access.

Guidelines

Social Distancing- Currently recommended social distancing guidelines are 6 ft separations between individuals, **WVU is operating under a 200sq. ft per person rule for laboratory spaces**. Please prepare your re-patriation plans with these densities in mind. Using all seven weekdays may be necessary as well of extension of the workday; however, no one should be in WVU buildings before 7AM ore after 10PM and no one should be working alone (i.e. plan for a lab buddy within shouting distance).

Self-reporting-Every returning researcher (PI, student, staff or postdoc) should evaluate their health daily and not return to campus if they are suffering any Covid-19 symptoms or believe themselves to have been exposed to a Covid-19 positive individual.

Travel-No travel requiring overnight stays until further notice from the university.

Researchers returning from out of state: Researchers returning to the region from an overnight stay to an out of state location, that is not their primary abode, should self-quarantine for 14 days. (i.e. If you live across the state line and usually commute to WVU from that location, you do not have to self-quarantine; if however you travel out of state and stay in the home of another or in a hotel, you must self-quarantine before returning to on-site work at WVU.)

Human Subjects Research-Specific guidance on face-to-face human subject research will be forthcoming in the near future.

Field Work-Field work that can be performed in isolation or in small groups that can maintain social distancing can continue. Additional guidance on procedures and PPE use will be forthcoming.

Rapid Changes- Researchers should be prepared to shut down activities on short notice at the direction of local and state authorities. No long-term research (with the exception of Covid-19 related work) that commences as a result of this re-start will be granted extensions. Plan

accordingly. Moreover, researchers should be aware that they may be denied access for 24+ hours for more intensive disinfecting processes if positive cases are found amongst returning building occupants. We are working on an efficient process for decontamination that will be provided once developed.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)- Any authorized on-site researcher must wear a face mask at all times, except when such PPE is incompatible with lab safety. Disposable gloves can be used as previously required for research purposes, but efforts should be made to conserve glove usage for those specific applications and for health care providers. Laboratory supervisors will be responsible for ensuring that adequate stock is maintained. If an individual is not provided PPE, they cannot work. Supervisors are responsible for providing any additional PPE (chemically resistant gloves, goggles, face masks) required as standard safety gear for laboratory activities. Under no circumstances should safety be sacrificed due to lack of adequate supplies, including the type and quality of PPE, lab supervisors will be held responsible for any violations by their supervisees.

Hand sanitizers-Colleges/departments should move hand sanitizer stations to entrances and more highly trafficked areas.

Higher risk groups and students- Older individuals or those with underlying health conditions or who live with older relatives or those with underlying conditions should not return to campus, but rather should continue to be provided with tasks that can be performed remotely. Graduate students and staff should NOT be pressured to return to work. Graduate students can email GradEd@mail.wvu.edu with any concerns they have (which will remain confidential). Permission for undergraduates to return to campus research MUST be approved on a case by case basis by the Research Office.

Disinfecting Procedures- Each group should establish a disinfection procedure and have that posted in the lab area. The laboratory area should be disinfected at the beginning and end of every shift. Items to be disinfected include doorknobs, exposed surfaces, light switches, keyboards, microscopes, shared equipment, desk and bench surfaces and any other high contact surfaces. Supervisors are responsible for maintaining the supply of disinfectant and wipes.

Tracking- All building entries and exits must be recorded by logging into a central system accessed by a QR code on the entrances. Details to follow .

Signage-Colleges/departments are responsible for posting at each entrance (a QR code and directions for login procedure) and on all occupied floors, signage which will be provided (Covid-19 symptoms, and disinfecting information). Additionally, each occupied lab needs to have a sign indicating maximum allowed density and every elevator should indicate maximum 1-person occupancy.

Scheduling: Supervisors are responsible for maintaining a group schedule for access that is shared with every group member, posted near the lab and shared with their dept head or his/her designee.

Restrooms/Water Fountains: Rest rooms that are open should be indicated as such. Closed restrooms should be signed as such indicating where the next nearest restroom is. All water fountains should be blocked off with masking/caution tape, indicating that they are not for use.

Eating: Eating in buildings is not permitted during this phase.

Agreement to abide by WVU and College policies: Each returning researcher will sign an agreement indicating that they will abide by the university, college, departmental and group plan. Supervisors will sign a pledge relevant to their supervisory role. More details are forthcoming.

Instructions

Each unit/college should submit a plan to the Research Office with the following information for each occupied building. The RO will share the spreadsheet of all the room sizes and maximum occupancies. Return to on-site research/scholarship cannot start until plans are approved by the College Dean and the Research Office.

- Building name
- Person(s) responsible for building plan implementation and compliance
- Floors that will be occupied
- Recommended location and plan for deliveries, including large items (gas cylinders etc.)
- Recommended list of operational restrooms, note signage needs to indicate closed and open restrooms
- For each floor indicate the groups that will return, including for each group
 - Group Leader, Title and contact information
 - Chair of Department and contact information
 - All Members of any group member returning including role, student, postdoc, staff and contact information
 - Physical location of group activities (room number(s), floor and building)
 - Brief description of activities of group
 - We ask that supervisors pay specific attention to safety of the activities. To the greatest extent possible, research that presents significant (more than the usual daily laboratory activities) chemical/biological/mechanical or electrical hazards should be avoided. If that work must proceed, supervisors are personally responsible for checking that fume hoods and wash stations are in operational order; that there are adequate specialty PPE supplies (chemical resistant, face shields, goggles etc.); that all other standard safety measures are operational; and that “buddies” are nearby to offer support in the event of an accident.

- Supervisors should seek approval with their Deans for any activities that reduce the 6 ft minimum separation between individuals, such as moving heavy equipment, animal surgeries, etc.
- Be advised that there may be delays in response from EHS and that the standard schedule for removing chemical and biological wastes is more sporadic, thus researchers are asked to avoid generating large volumes of hazardous waste.
- Colleges/units are free to add additional elements to their plans relative to the research/scholarship conducted in the unit in order to prioritize human health and safety.
- If the number of individuals in a particular group exceeds the maximum (200 sf/person) occupancy of the groups assigned lab spaces, the lab supervisor must develop rotation or priority plan that adheres to the allowed occupancy.
- It is expected that each lab supervisor will create a schedule (weekly or daily) to be shared with his/her group and chair, that is publicly posted in the vicinity of the labs so that everyone is aware of who is permitted at a specific time.
- In all cases, egress space and associated traffic patterns should be considered to accommodate all the groups occupying particular floors in the building.