Email Dated: May 9, 2020  
From: Kathryn Ann Moler, Vice Provost and Dean of Research; Professor of Applied Physics and of Physics  
To: Chairs and Institute Directors, cc Deans and DFOs/DFAs,

Subject: Weekly Research Continuity Update for Chairs

Planning and communications
The latest draft of the Research Recovery Handbook is here. We will send a public version of the Handbook soon and will continue to iterate as circumstances and needs evolve. You’ve shared with us that the current Handbook is focused on particular types of labs and libraries at Stage 1, and that we need a similar shared understanding of other types of scholarship at multiple stages. You’ve also shared that simplified summaries of the guidance would be helpful to researchers.

We are establishing working groups on the following areas:
- Labs, Libraries and Shared Facilities
- Clinical Human Subjects Research
- Non-Clinical Human Subjects Research
- Field Research Not Including Human Subjects
- Computation
- Arts and Humanities
- Graduate Students and Postdocs (Cross-cutting)

Importantly, these working groups are meant to complement, not replace, your local department or school planning efforts. The working groups will be asked to:
- Hold broad community discussions to create a shared understanding of research continuity principles, policies, priorities, and recommended practices;
- Communicate and gather feedback on research recovery planning and implementation for researchers and scholars in their disciplines; and
- Advise the Academic Policy Group on the safe and gradual restart of research and scholarship.

Allowable on-campus research
We recognize that many visits to campus could individually be accomplished with minimal risk of transmission, but we must collectively keep the total number of people on campus low. Stanford continues to allow a limited number of Essential Research Functions as described in our March 17 memo:
- maintenance required to preserve laboratory viability;
- certain clinical research per SOM; and
- certain COVID-19 research.

At this time, we will begin allowing additional clinical research per the School of Medicine, described in a separate memo. Also, beginning next week, academic units (schools, departments and institutes) that have the capacity to support additional visits may approve a small number of on-campus lab visits in an additional category of allowed research, Minimum Basic Research Operations, subject to department and school approval and density and headcount guidelines. Minimum Basic Research Operations are those that:
- maintain the value of our research inventory and samples; and
- ensure that we are able to work remotely to the fullest extent possible.

Specific examples of activities that would fall under Minimum Basic Research Operations might include making cultures, biobanking, processing samples that would otherwise degrade, short-term efforts to allow group members to acquire a final piece of data for analyzing and writing up their experiments, downloading data that cannot be accessed remotely for analysis at home, and setting up experiments with a limited presence on campus such that the experiments can then be monitored and controlled remotely.

For this approach to work under current guidelines, it is important that we strictly limit the total headcount on campus, despite the large number of activities that could qualify as Minimum Basic Research Operations. Therefore,
Individual units must evaluate whether and when they are ready, given current physical distancing and hygiene guidance, to allow a small number of additional researchers.

**Preferably no more than one, and definitely no more than two, researchers per PI should work on campus on any given day,** unless the lab group additionally has approved COVID-19 or approved Essential Research Functions (in which case they should not add more researchers).

Approval for minimum basic operations should remain rare, based on the ability to complete the highest priority tasks with the minimum on-campus presence. Most groups should continue to have 0 researchers coming to campus on any day.

We may have to become more restrictive if the additional population presents logistical challenges or if physical distancing and hygiene guidance are not followed by all individuals.

Academic units must continue to follow the Essential Research SmartSheets process at this time.

No student or postdoctoral scholar is to be required to go into the laboratory. Students with concerns should contact their department chair, student services staff, or the associate dean for student affairs in their School.

**Thoughts about timing of future stages**

We ask you to begin preparing your proposed department-level plans for Stages 1 and 2 for laboratory research. We will provide additional guidance to researchers and scholars who work in a non-lab environment soon. Our ability to move to Stage 1 will depend on county guidance, the public health situation, the availability of supplies, and, importantly, our own planning and readiness. We will continue to evaluate our preparations for the next stage throughout May, and we invite your feedback (preferably on this [Google Form](#) so that it gets transmitted to the relevant committee, but email to any of us is also fine).

Earlier this week, a member of the Committee on Research described this process as “infuriatingly, but appropriately, slow.” We feel this sentiment deeply. The necessity to shelter-in-place now and plan for a slow, staged return is difficult for all of us — a sacrifice that we are making as individuals, for the benefit of our community. We understand how difficult these circumstances have been for our community of researchers and scholars, and we are tremendously grateful to have all of you as colleagues as we plan for a safe, gradual, and staged return to in-person, on-campus research and scholarship.

Best wishes,

*Kam, Stacey, Tim, and Russell*

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Stacey Bent, Vice Provost of Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs; Jagdeep and Roshni Singh Professor of Engineering

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