May 29, 2020

From: Kathryn Ann Moler
Vice Provost and Dean of Research

Dear Chairs and Institute Directors,

This week’s email includes information on:
1. County guidance and Stanford social distancing protocol
2. Research ramp
3. Building signage and culture
4. Testing
5. Working groups on needs and protocols for types of research and scholarship

County guidance and Stanford social distancing protocol
Santa Clara County’s current shelter-in-place allows limited additional activities to resume. Many provisions of the existing shelter-in-place order remain in effect, including requirements for physical distancing and face coverings. At this time, the highest priority for working on-campus is being given to research activities that require on-campus facilities, such as laboratories and libraries. All work that can be done remotely should continue to be done remotely.

Under the newest Santa Clara County public health order, Stanford has developed an updated social distancing protocol for those who work in our facilities in Santa Clara County. As we shared last week, all Stanford personnel coming to campus are now required to complete a daily check of health conditions to report COVID-related symptoms. All faculty mentors of postdocs should have seen a message sent on Monday, May 25 by Sofie Kleppner, Associate Dean for Postdoctoral Affairs, informing postdoctoral advisors that they will be notified when a postdoctoral scholar appointed to them has been instructed to self-isolate.

The protocol also includes frequent handwashing and use of hand sanitizer, physical distancing at a minimum of 6 feet, regular cleaning of high-contact areas, and the use of face coverings. Face coverings should cover both mouth and nose and sit close to the face to adequately cover potential coughs or sneezes.

Research Ramp
The current shelter-in-place order allows for Essential Functions and Minimum Basic Operations. In previous communications, we defined Essential Research Functions as lab maintenance, certain clinical research, and certain COVID-19 research. We defined Minimum Basic Research Operations as those that maintain the value of research inventory and samples or enable researchers to work from remote locations to the fullest extent possible. We limited the number of researchers to two people per PI per day except for groups with approved essential research functions.

Beginning the first week of June, units that conduct research and units that support research may prepare for the limited return to campus of additional researchers, following the Stage 1 for Laboratory Research guidance in the Research Restart Handbook. When ready, academic units can increase the number of research personnel conducting Minimum Basic Research Operations to two people per PI per shift. Please develop and follow a local calendaring system for shifts. If extra support is needed for shift
work or for any other reason, please work closely with your facilities staff to make sure that support is in place.

Work that can be done remotely should continue to be done remotely. We will continue to monitor virus transmission in the region, assess lab safety and adherence to public health guidance, prepare for additional on-campus personnel, watch county guidance, and issue weekly updates.

Schools may identify when buildings are ready for Stage 1 activities. Building leadership (or department or institute leadership) may identify when individual labs are ready for Stage 1 activities. Labs are ready when:

- A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) consistent with the population density and health guidance in the Research Restart Handbook has been reviewed and approved by the dean’s office of a local unit.
- The laboratory start-up checklist from PI (Appendix C of Research Restart Handbook) is complete and has been sent to chairs and DFO/DFAs.
- A list of personnel who will work on campus has been approved and recorded by local units.
- COVID-19 Hygiene Best Practices, EHS-2470-WEB, has been completed in STARS by all personnel who will work on campus.
- The PI has reviewed the guidance on the daily use of Health Check and face coverings with personnel who will work on campus.
- The PI has assessed the need for PPE and supplies, and these are available for the lab.
- Progress is being made on appropriate signage (see below) inside the lab buildings and floors by facilities and building managers.
- Building, department, institute, or school leadership agree that the lab is ready and the necessary support is in place.

Library staff are also hard at work! We anticipate that the Green Library will soon be opened to Stanford academics on a limited basis with reduced hours. Library patrons must observe physical distancing, wear face coverings, and wash hands frequently. The Stanford Libraries will also provide a paging service for faculty and students, circulating physical resources with limited personal contact.

Building Signage

Staff members in LBRE and EH&S have prepared building signage to comply with county requirements for all open businesses and to provide information on Stanford policies and health practices. LBRE and local building management will work together to implement this signage in preparation for increased research activities:

- LBRE will install outside signage, including signage on the main entrances to buildings. (Note that the County limitation on building occupancy is an upper limit.)
- LBRE will prepare a Building Manager Communication Toolkit with various signs for interiors, including individual labs as well as common areas such as break rooms, kitchens, bathrooms and elevators.
• Building managers will assess each facility and perform a detailed review of workspace configurations, prioritizing adjustments based on the recovery stage and anticipated occupancy.
• Building managers will print or order and install interior signage.

We hope that you will find the LBRE/EH&S “Stay Safe” signage package to be elegant and clear. Please help your building manager, LBRE, and EH&S to monitor effectiveness and supplement as required. Creating a culture of attention to this signage will help researchers and those who support research to feel safe, and keep us on the path of being able to responsibly ramp up research. We ask your assistance in helping to create this culture within your units.

Testing

COVID-19 is currently circulating at relatively low levels in the Bay Area, a result of early Bay Area public health orders for shelter-in-place, social distancing, and widespread use of face coverings.

In the past 2 weeks, Stanford University Occupational Health Center has coordinated with Stanford Health Care to offer voluntary COVID-19 testing, both viral swab, and blood antibody screening, for ~1500 on-site essential employees who have been working since shelter-in-place began, often in close contact with others, before mask-use was commonplace. This testing was initiated to assess the degree to which the campus population may have been exposed to COVID-19 and to ascertain if there is ongoing, low-level transmission currently occurring on-site. To date, there have been no positive viral swab tests, indicative of active infection, and only a few with positive antibody tests, likely indicative of an immune response to a past exposure.

Dean Lloyd Minor is leading a Task Force to develop longer-term strategies both for COVID-19 testing and to adopt a unified approach for contact tracing across the Stanford community. The members of the Task Force will determine the best approach and sampling methods for periodically testing asymptomatic individuals on an on-going basis. We anticipate that medical professionals in Stanford Medicine, Stanford Occupational Health Services, and Vaden Student Health Services will implement their recommendations, along with the Health Check Tool, to recognize infection as early as possible and reduce spread to others in our undergraduate, graduate, postdoctoral, and employee populations.

Working Groups
As we shared previously, we have formed seven working groups that represent a diverse variety of research and scholarship areas:

• Labs, Libraries and Shared Facilities (chair: Tim Stearns, Biology)
• Clinical Human Subjects Research (chair: Ruth O’Hara, Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences)
• Non-Clinical Human Subjects Research (chair: Jeanne Tsai, Psychology)
• Field Research Not Including Human Subjects (chair: Jonathan Payne, Geological Sciences)
• Computation (chair: Mark Horowitz, EE&CS)
• Arts and Humanities (chair: Stephen Hinton, Music)
• Graduate Students and Postdocs (cross-cutting) (chair: Sofie Kleppner, PostDoc Affairs)

Each of the working groups is preparing a risk matrix for the different types of work that occur as a part of research in their fields. The risk matrix is informed by research space configuration, distancing
possibility, research activity characteristics, and appropriate strategies to mitigate the safety risk. If you have ideas or feedback for these groups about the research restart, please contact them here.

Finally: we’ve heard many heartwarming stories of the ways that you have reached out to the faculty, staff, and postdocs and students in your department. Thank you! Our community and individual members of our community may be under unusual strain. The Research Recovery Handbook includes contact information for health and other concerns. Additionally, students with concerns should contact their department chair, student services staff, the associate dean for student affairs in their School, or the Offices of the Ombuds; postdocs with concerns should contact their department chair, departmental postdoc admin, the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs, or the Offices of the Ombuds; and PIs with concerns about the availability of personnel to carry out any lab-specific critical procedures should consult with their department chair or building manager.

If extra support is needed for shift work or for any other reason, please work closely with your facilities staff. Some requests may require longer than usual due to impacted schedules, social distancing in the support units, supply chain disruptions, and union rules for some workers. Let us, your facilities staff, and your dean’s office know which needs are most urgent so that we can help expedite them.

Thank you for all that you are doing -- and thank you for recognizing our amazing and dedicated staff, who are working very hard to support researchers and the research ramp-up!

Best wishes,
Kam, Stacey, Tim, and Russell

Kam Moler, Vice Provost and Dean of Research; Professor of Applied Physics and of Physics

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

Tim Stearns, Chair of the Faculty Senate; Frank Lee and Carol Hall Professor of Biology and Professor of Genetics

Russell Furr, Associate Vice Provost for Environmental Health and Safety