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Subject: FW: U-M research re-engagement guidelines following governor's directive
Date: Saturday, May 16, 2020 10:15:15 AM

Hello everyone. I wanted to follow up on President Schllissel's and VPR Cunningham's emails from earlier today. As you can see from below, the Pharmacy and North University Buildings (NUB) are to be included in the pilot first wave of building that will allowed to open for limited research activity.

While I wish I was able to open up all of the labs for our faculty, this is not the case. For faculty whose labs are located at NCRC, they need to follow the directions coming from their unit leads and I unfortunately don't know the timeline for when those labs will open. Please be aware that this first wave is being called a pilot because that is exactly what it is. If we do this well, then we will be able to open up more laboratory space and the cadence at which we do this may also increase. If we do this poorly, then we will be back in our current situation. The governor and the University have set out benchmarks of success that each building must meet in order to move forward with our plans after this pilot. We will be closely monitoring those and asking UMOR that we be allowed to proceed when we successful achieve them.

Our first priority is the health and safety of our entire Pharmacy and UM community. This is also why office space (regardless of whether or not you are authorized to be in the building) will remain closed with remote work continuing. You should have seen previous emails from Jim and Pennie in regards to this.

I am extremely confident that we are well prepared for our labs to open in a limited fashion and that we will be successful. I have been meeting with Jim, Pat, Pennie, and Nicole to work out our plans for several weeks now and it is due to these plans that we were placed in this pilot wave.

On Monday, I will be having a town hall with graduate students and post docs to answer questions, and then one on Tuesday with staff to answer theirs.

For the labs located in Pharmacy and NUB, I have asked the faculty to communicate with their students, post docs, and staff regarding who is going to be authorized to be in the building. Before anyone steps foot in the door, training issued by the Governor and University regarding how we will do this in a safe manor, will need to be completed. I have not yet sent out any links to this training, but hope to do so by early next week.

One key issue that I have asked faculty to communicate with their students and post docs is that their presence in the lab needs to follow Rackham's guidance, "specifically the manner in which graduate students return to research in the laboratory or field should be mutually agreed upon by faculty mentor/PI and the graduate student." I will also be talking about this with the students and post docs on Monday. For staff concerned about coming into the building please reach out to your faculty and/or Pennie to discuss your options and we will talk about this on Tuesday during our town hall.

I currently do not know the exact date when our Pharmacy and NUB labs will open. However once we get the green light, and we work out the kinks in our process to gain laboratory entrance, I ask for your patience. **More importantly, I ask for your persistence in following the rules UMOR and the Governor has set in regards to social distancing, mask wearing, and cleaning the labs and shared equipment.**

Although further details are coming for those who will be authorized to enter the building first, you should feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions. Thanks and have a great weekend
Vicki

From: Office of the Vice President for Research <ovpr-mail@umich.edu>

Sent: Saturday, May 16, 2020 9:16 AM

To: Office of the Vice President for Research <ovpr-mail@umich.edu>

Subject: U-M research re-engagement guidelines following governor's directive

May 16, 2020

This message was sent today to the U-M research community (faculty and research staff with active sponsored research). Please share this information with your colleagues.

Dear faculty and research staff,

I am pleased to announce that [Gov. Gretchen Whitmer yesterday authorized](#) the limited reopening of laboratory research. Research leadership from across the University of Michigan campuses are solidifying dates for when we can safely re-engage research activity through carefully managed waves, in accordance with the governor's authorization. We anticipate the first wave of lab buildings—a pilot wave—to begin toward the end of this coming week. Your research leadership will provide further details regarding dates for re-engagement.

The university prepared for this directive, and we have developed guidelines for how to safely re-engage limited research activity that is compliant with state regulations and other public health guidance. These planning efforts will play a critical role as we navigate research and scholarship amid the rapidly changing COVID-19 situation.

It is important for us to first acknowledge that not everyone can safely resume his or her research and scholarship on the same date, and laboratories that are allowed to reopen will do so at a limited capacity in conformity with state regulations. We will have to operate much differently in the months ahead to protect health and safety.

We recognize that entry and work within labs could *individually* be accomplished with minimal risk of transmission, but we must *collectively* keep the total number of people in lab buildings at low density. For us to do this properly and eventually resume all in-person research, we need everyone to cooperate. We plan to ramp up research and scholarship in a series of waves according to state and other public health guidance to pilot our new procedures, while protecting our employees, students and the communities we live in.

The governor's recent announcement applies only to research activities in a laboratory setting. The university will maintain its current restrictions on in-person human subjects research. Studies with investigational treatments, such as drugs and devices or stabilization of high-risk psychological conditions, that provide the potential for direct therapeutic benefit that were previously approved should continue.

All lab work that can occur remotely will continue to be done in that manner, including office research and dry lab work. Faculty, staff and student office space outside of our experimental laboratories in these buildings should remain closed until such time they can safely reopen.

A gradual reopening

We anticipate at least four waves of building reopenings over May and June. This will help us transition from our current state of critical and essential research only, to operating more than 5,000 lab spaces at the socially distancing capacity allowable under state guidelines.

The first wave will be a **pilot wave** in which we will collectively identify the issues and challenges of implementing these guidelines at scale, which we can course-correct. Six schools, colleges and units on the Ann Arbor campus will have laboratories or research studios in 1-2 buildings each participating in this pilot wave.

These buildings were selected based on a principled approach that will maximize information and learning in the pilot wave to aid with success in subsequent waves. Research leadership, in coordination with the U-M Research Ramp-Up Committee, accounted for a number of staging variables, including the need to have cores and vivaria functional now for later waves to proceed:

- College of Engineering; College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; College of Pharmacy; Life Sciences Institute; Medical School; and Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning.
- Buildings that will reopen during the pilot wave include:
 - Art and Architecture Building
 - Biomedical Science Research Building
 - Chemistry Building
 - Electrical Engineering and Computer Science Building
 - G.G. Brown Building
 - Life Sciences Institute Building
 - North University Building
 - Pharmacy Building
- During the pilot wave, we will limit the total number of researchers returning to work, and we will limit to one shift to minimize complexity.

Building access

Buildings that are not open for laboratory/studio-based research remain restricted to critical approved personnel only. Buildings that will open for laboratory/studio-based research will not yet be open to other activities beyond the approved research or approved critical activities.

Schools, colleges and units have developed specific research re-engagement plans that outline the schedule for building reopenings in the planned waves, and the manner in which they will approve individual lab safety plans. I encourage you to work with your research leadership to obtain lab approvals and complete the necessary training requirements before returning to in-person work.

University-wide guidelines and plans for how to safely re-engage research amid COVID-19 also are provided on our [Research Re-engagement webpage](#), which covers important details such as entry into buildings and how many individuals can safely occupy research spaces. I also encourage you to visit our [COVID-19 Research Operations webpage](#) for FAQs as it relates to research re-engagement planning.

It is important to remember that decisions regarding graduate students and postdoctoral researchers returning to work is a shared decision. Please communicate with your graduate students and postdocs about the status of your research lab.

Graduate students and postdocs should work with their faculty mentors to develop a mutually agreeable plan that allows them to return to on-campus research. Graduate programs or departments can help by providing specific guidance for the development of work plans describing the ramp up, and also ensure the ramp up in activity is accomplished in a safe and equitable manner.

We will continue to assess this situation to ensure faculty and staff can safely manage their research and scholarship amid COVID-19. With guidance from public health experts, we will reevaluate the pilot wave of buildings' performance metrics for safety, health and compliance within state guidelines. We then would ideally launch a more expansive second wave of laboratory reopenings across schools, colleges and units about two weeks after this initial wave begins.

These are not easy decisions, and as a fellow researcher, I understand the challenges of pausing your research and scholarship endeavors, and also that the pace of this process is frustratingly slow. But we have to get this right in order to protect the health and safety of our employees, local communities and region, and to ensure the university can proceed with a public health-informed fall academic semester.

Transparency remains critical throughout this pandemic, and so our plan moving forward is to send weekly email updates about research re-engagement to U-M faculty and staff with active sponsored research.

Stay safe and healthy.

Rebecca Cunningham, M.D.
Vice President for Research

William G. Barsan Collegiate Professor of Emergency Medicine

Electronic Mail is not secure, may not be read every day, and should not be used for urgent or sensitive issues