

Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research

December 21, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

As we come to the end of a very difficult year, I would like to thank you again for all of your dedication, adaptivity, perseverance and patience in this unprecedented time. Strong participation of researchers in mitigation programs across campus has given us an excellent track record that has enabled us to continue our work despite a new Stay-At-Home Order. Nevertheless, the situation is far from normal and there is much research that is on pause. We hope to continue the ramp-up in the new year. Given the current surge in cases, this may require more care and planning, especially for spaces that are inherently less safe than laboratories whose ventilation systems provide additional layers of protection.

To arrive where we are, we have had to adjust to do things in very different ways with a lot of added overhead. For some of you, this has meant juggling or even replacing your research with remote instruction, remote learning for young children and/or caring for older family members, which has greatly impacted your ability to do your research. I know that for you in particular, it has been an incredibly difficult and stressful time and it is important that we find ways to help you in 2021. This has become a high priority for research universities across the country and I will work with others on campus and at other institutions to find ways to address the immediate and longer term impacts of these added stresses on researchers.

Some of you have pivoted your research toward solving problems that COVID presents; ranging from the development of a new test used in surveillance studies to understand the role of asymptomatic carriers in transmission, to examining the social, cultural, and economic cost of epidemics in ancient societies and what we might learn from them that's relevant today. The quantity and quality of [COVID research at UCSB](#) is impressive. The response of researchers around the country has greatly increased the recognition of the value of research universities.

With the distribution of vaccines now underway we hope to be able to return to a more normal state sometime 2021 but in the meantime, please be extremely cautious over this holiday season, avoid travel and large gatherings and follow quarantine guidance upon your return if you do travel. [Travel and return-to-campus guidelines](#) have recently been distributed that you should follow if you plan to travel.

The Office of Research will be closed from Monday, December 21, through Friday, January 1, to give our administrative teams a much needed year-end break. We hope you will also take some time to rest and refresh for the new year ahead but if you do intend to continue on-campus or field research, please be extra-vigilant during the current surge and make a note of the [information about testing and reporting](#) of a positive test result over the holiday period that have been prepared for you in the event they should be needed.

I wish you a relaxing and peaceful holiday season.

Sincerely,



Joe Incandela