Research Assistance Program (RAP) Q&A

Q: Where can I find information about the new Research Assistance Program (RAP)?
A: The RAP will award up to $8,000 of flexible research assistance funding to qualifying faculty. This funding may be used for a variety of purposes, including hiring of students, GSRs or other research assistants, research expenditures and the funds may also be used toward a course buyout (although this may be difficult in practice due to current teaching demands in most departments) to allow for additional time to be spent on research-related activities. See here for details on this program and to apply: https://ucsb.infoready4.com/#competitionDetail/1835136

Q: How do I request funding for course buyout or course release through the RAP?
A: Funding for course buyout and course release may both be requested through the RAP. When submitting, you must include evidence of your Dean’s approval with your application.

Q: How was the eligibility criteria established for the Research Assistance Program?
A: The Office of Research consulted with Academic Personnel, Faculty Equity Advisors, our legal team and others to establish this criteria.

Q: May I request support for childcare through the RAP?
A: No, the funding must be used for expenses incurred through UCSB. The Chancellor’s Childcare Assistance Program is launching soon through the office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and can provide funding up to $5,000 for junior faculty with children under the age of 2 who are still on the waitlist at the UCSB childcare center.

Q: Do I need to incorporate benefit costs into my proposed RAP budget?
A: Yes, the proposed amount should be inclusive of benefits.

Other Research Q&A

Q: Are we still operating at 25% density on campus?
A: We are now allowing density to rise above the 25% of our normal pre-covid levels provided that all other guidelines are met. The latter will assure that we remain in compliance with State and County requirements. What is most important is ensuring that good safety measures are in place in all spaces on campus. So as long as the appropriate density for a given space is adhered to, along with all other required mitigation steps, and the building committees can schedule building use in ways that do not create conflicts with these guidelines in common spaces, then there are no issues. The density requirements for spaces occupied for research are 150 sqft/person if the space meets the highest ventilation standards, 250 sqft/person...
otherwise. In some spaces with very limited ventilation, single person use with some amount of time left empty between occupants is required, independent of size. You can consult your building committee for more information.

Q: How do I request to bring an undergraduate researcher back into my lab?  
A: Requests for undergraduate researchers should be sent to the relevant building committee for review. Building committees should then send requests they would like to move forward to the relevant Dean and to Hilary Campbell. The County has given us an additional allotment of 500 undergraduate researchers over the next 5 months, so many, if not most of these requests could be approved. A link to the undergraduate researcher request form can be found here.

Q: I received approval to move forward with my research protocol last year. I would now like to update this protocol to allow for more staff/researchers. How do I do this?  
A: If this is within the guidelines we have produced for higher density you should just clear your request with your building committee. If your request would push density levels above the current guidelines, special requirements will probably need to be fulfilled. We may be able to accommodate requests for changes to approved plans depending on safety mitigations. Please reach out to vicechancellor@research.ucsb.edu with your requests.

Q: Since the onset of COVID, my research activities have changed. Is there flexibility in how I can use my startup or research funds?  
A: There may be flexibility in how your funds can be used. Please reach out to your divisional finance manager for more information about restrictions on your funds.

Q: I’m concerned about funding for my graduate students this summer. Is there a plan in place to assist with this issue?  
A: The Research Investment to Spark the Economy (RISE) Act has broad support nationally and we are hopeful that the major funding agencies will be authorized to provide significant funding to support research disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. We suggest that you speak with your funding agency in the meantime to see if there is anything they can do.

Q: I want to hire additional researchers/staff. Can I do this?  
A: The centralized campus review process (Staff Hiring Pause) has been delegated to each divisional Vice Chancellor. Employees hired on extramural funds should generally not be a problem. Please review your respective divisional hiring process at the following link: https://www.hr.ucsb.edu/hr-units/talent-acquisition/recruitment.

Q: I want to conduct research off campus. How do I get approval to do this?  
A: Requests for research off campus should be made through the Off-site Research Committee.

Q: Are there still travel restrictions in place?  
A: You can check on UCOP restrictions but some research travel has been possible and so if you wish to travel for your research, please submit a request to your building committee and the Offsite Research Committee.
Q: I would like to resume human subjects research. May I do so?
A: The current stage of the research ramp-up, Stage 4a, allows for a limited amount of in-person human subjects research. Information about human subjects research during the COVID pandemic can be found here: https://www.research.ucsb.edu/human-subjects/covid-19-impact-human-subjects-research.

Q: My question isn’t answered here, or I still have questions.
A: Please write to us at vicechancellor@research.ucsb.edu with any research related questions. We are here to help you!