

Shutdown of All On-Campus Research

Dear Colleagues,

March 18, 2020

Over the past week, the COVID-19 pandemic has reached serious levels of infection in many parts of the country including California. It is now in our county, our town, and very likely on campus, though we do not see it yet. Intuition tells us that we do not have to move quickly, but for this pandemic, hesitation has proved to be very costly. Waiting for definitive evidence of many confirmed infections puts our community in very serious danger. This lesson has been learned repeatedly across the globe. Data at hand show that decisive and comprehensive policies widely adopted early to minimize sharing of spaces lead to a significant reduction in loss of life. The difference can be as large as a factor of 10. It is our goal to make that difference. Through consultation with Deans, faculty, and leaders across campus, we have determined that:

All Principal Investigators shall work with their local administrators to complete a campus-wide UCSB Research Facilities Shutdown. Research must be drawn down as soon and as safely as possible and a plan enacted for on-campus research to cease entirely by noon this Friday, March 20.

Under no conditions is research equipment, chemicals, materials etc. to be taken off-campus. In the memo below I outline the reasons we have taken this step and provide more detailed guidance for navigating this shutdown safely and efficiently.

Expect the shutdown to last several months. Only **remote research**, defined as that which can be done remotely and does not require laboratory equipment and supplies, may be performed in this period.

All Principal Investigators shall complete and submit a UCSB Research Facilities Shutdown Plan linked below to your department chair, or relevant institute, laboratory, center, or fab director in which the research is being carried out, for expedited review. Be ready for **implementation by the end of day, Friday, March 20.**

Link: [Information required for UCSB Research Facilities Shutdown & Critical Maintenance Plan](#)

Link: [Sample lab safety shutdown checklist](#)

Details on Critical Maintenance: Long-term viability of some laboratories during a shutdown period of several months will require the maintenance of essential animal lines, instruments, cryogen stocks, etc. To meet these needs, we request that each laboratory (or group of laboratories) with such needs clearly spell out why and what continued tasks are necessary and identify a minimum number of essential personnel who will be responsible for this critical

maintenance. Your plan shall include protocols for safety, hygiene, sanitization and social distancing in all stages of the maintenance task. Keep in mind that any potentially hazardous maintenance operation will require at least two trained essential research personnel. See our [March 16 memo](#) for information about policies and backup teams for critical tasks.

Definition of Critical Activity for labs that cannot be shutdown and locked out:

1. Maintenance of critical equipment and a safe standby mode of laboratories
2. Maintenance of critical animal populations

Definition of Essential Research Personnel:

1. Faculty and/or research staff necessary to maintain other, not easily replaceable, perishable research materials
2. Responsible for maintenance of equipment that would otherwise become damaged
3. Staff responsible for animal care

We note that there are other important creative research programs on campus (music, dance, practice rooms, etc.) that will also need to be stopped on campus.

Exceptions: Requests to allow COVID-19 studies or the continuation of ongoing essential experiments must be submitted via the request form linked below. These requests will be reviewed by the relevant Deans together with the Vice Chancellor for Research. Expect very few exceptions to be granted.

Link: [UCSB Continuation of Essential Research Activities Request](#)

Mitigating Impact On Our Researchers: The shutdown of on-campus research will create unanticipated delays, which can be cause for significant anxiety for many, and especially junior, researchers. While there is no way to escape the loss of time, every effort is being made to assure that these actions will not damage careers or lead to excessive financial hardship. The Office of Research is working remote but fully operational and continuously updating its website with [agency guidance](#) regarding continuation of salaries for researchers. Alison Butler, AVC for Academic Personnel, also sent a [memo](#) to Department Chairs, Directors and Business Officers outlining the process by which one requests an extension of the Tenure/SOE/8-year limit clock.

This is a difficult time for all of us and we do not take the cessation of research on campus lightly. Your sacrifices will help save lives. This is one of the most challenging times in modern history. Together, we can make a difference. We know the facts. We have a responsibility to take the lead.

Sincerely, 

Joe Incandela
Vice Chancellor for Research
UC Santa Barbara