

May 11, 2020

**COVID-19: Committee on Return to On-Campus Operations**

***Research and Scholarship***

Jan Novakofski, Associate Vice Chancellor for Research and Compliance (*Chair*)

Anita Balgopal, Director, Institutional Review Board

Wojtek Chodzko-Zajko, Dean, Graduate College

Elvira Demejia, Director, Nutritional Sciences, ACES

Melissa Edwards, Executive Director of Strategic Research Communications

Daphne Eagleman, PhD Candidate

Idalis French, Graduate Student

Laura Frerichs, Executive Director Research Park

Lyndon Goodly, Associate Vice Chancellor for Research

Linda Gregory, Director, Sponsored Programs Administration

Martin Gruebele, Professor, Head of Department of Chemistry

Heidi Imker, Associate Dean for Research, Library Research

Patricia Jones, Associate Director for Research, Beckman

Harley Johnson, Professor, Grainger College of Engineering

Monica Miller, Director of the Division of Research Safety

Catherine Murphy, Professor, Department of Chemistry

Cynthia Oliver, Professor, Department of Dance

Dana Yun, Student

Tracy Smith, Director, Research IT & Innovation (*ex officio*)

Allison Vance, Strategic Content Director (*ex officio*)

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for agreeing to serve on the Return to On-Campus Operations Research and Scholarship Planning Team under the coordination of the COVID-19: Executive Steering Committee on Return to On-Campus Operations. Associate Vice Chancellor for Research Compliance Jan Novakofski will chair this committee. Because of the urgency of this team's work, I expect that you will begin as soon as possible and meet regularly and often. Your work will complement the efforts of six other teams being charged as part of this effort: Academics, Community and Public Engagement, Finance and Operations, Human Resources and Staffing, Shield: Target, Test, Tell and University Life.

From the arts, humanities, social sciences, physical sciences, life sciences and engineering, our research enterprise is vast and serves as the foundation of so many of our university's activities. Research and scholarship often look very different in different disciplines, and this group represents some of that breadth. Please keep this bigger picture in mind and carefully consider how to ramp back up across the breadth of our research and scholarship.

As an immediate, first phase, I ask that this committee establish the framework and planning necessary to **transition the campus back to on-site work** in anticipation of Gov. Pritzker lifting current stay-at-home orders. That will entail:

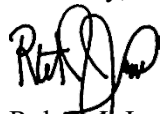
- **Developing guiding principles, including**
  - Local unit and PI responsibilities
  - central campus oversight
  - Safety guidelines for staff and students
  - Approvals and exemptions
  - Animal – related research
  - human subjects research
  - Plans for vulnerable populations (students and power dynamics, older adults and corona virus, early career researchers, etc.)
- **Considering Safety Procedures, Supplies, and Equipment**
  - Risk assessment, PPE, and safe use of spaces
  - Cleaning, coordination with F&S
- **Approval tracking, including**
  - Legal and HR requirements
- **Priorities for a return to on-site work, with consideration given to**
  - Core facilities and research service centers
  - Wet labs, labs with dedicated instrumentation, and other spaces with functions that cannot be duplicated remotely
  - Commitment of faculty “summer” salaries to sponsored or contractual work
  - Student progress toward degrees
  - Sponsor or contract deadlines
  - Societal benefit
  - Seasonal work

After this initial work is completed, this team should undertake a second, ongoing phase to recommend planning, actions, policies and processes that must be implemented for resumption of research activities for the fall 2020 semester, the total academic year and beyond as necessary. Such recommendations should take into consideration the breadth of campus research experiences, from undergraduate research projects and graduate-level research training to the large-scale, collaborative, interdisciplinary work that is the hallmark of the Illinois research enterprise.

The COVID pandemic is an enormous challenge, but it also represents an unprecedented opportunity for creating new and enduring ways to do research and scholarship. The many unknowns in the pandemic require that we be flexible and make it critical that we move wisely but with all possible speed.

As the first step of this process, I ask your team to coordinate with Mike DeLorenzo who chairs the Executive Steering Committee to identify some preliminary timelines and milestone goals for the first phase of planning. I look forward to your work and hearing about your progress on a regular basis.

Sincerely,



Robert J. Jones  
Chancellor