Sent on behalf of Dr. Deborah Bruner, Senior VP for Research and
Robert Nobles, VP for Research Administration**
Please disseminate this message to your faculty groups.

EMORY UNIVERSITY | **Office of the Senior Vice President for Research**

Dear Colleagues,

The Senior Vice President for Research and the Office of Research Administration (ORA) are committed to the business continuity of our research enterprise. As a result, we are sharing with you the latest information regarding our response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) situation.

- First, ORA is directing all research personnel to Emory's **centralized webpage** that contains travel guidance, what to do if a member of your research team thinks they may have contracted the virus and potential cancellations of activities on campus. This website is updated regularly, and we encourage you to visit this page often to remain aware of the latest developments. We also encourage you to share information with your research teams and begin thinking about the continuity of your research activities.
- Second, ORA has developed a website for researchers and research staff at **ORA – COVID-19**.
- Third, review with all research team members and staff the importance of proper handwashing practices. A video is a helpful tool **http://www.or.emory.edu/COVID/index.html.** For staff who may have English as a second language, consider primary language instruction. See the following link for assistance **https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/posters.html#posters-general-public**. Posting reminders in the lab may be helpful.
- Fourth, as you communicate with your research team and staff, reinforce that proactive planning is an assurance that their health and safety is the number 1 concern, and that research continuity is a priority.

A proactive approach by both ORA and your lab is needed to minimize the impact of our service to faculty and researchers and minimize interruption to your experiments and research.

Here is what ORA is doing:
We want to assure you that our offices have established plans to mitigate any interruption of the research support we provide you and your colleagues across our many campuses. Specifically, all of the offices of ORA are prepared to increase telecommuting, increase the use of Zoom for virtual face-to-face meetings, are gaining access to DocuSign for electronic signature capture, and are communicating with their associated committees (e.g., IRB, IACUC, Biosafety, Radiation Safety) to ensure that all members have the capability of participating in virtual meetings. Essential functions such as oversight and review of human research studies, care and use of animals, grant, and agreement reviews, environmental health training, and decontamination activities, and coordination within the RAS units will continue as we respond to the threat of a COVID-19 outbreak.

Here is what your research team can do:
We encourage you and research team/ lab staff to create (or review) and communicate a plan to ensure the continuity of critical functions of your research program. In your planning, you can think of best- and worst-case scenarios that include some of the following:
1) What is the plan if a large portion of your research team are out sick or telecommuting
   a. Is there assigned back up for critical functions
   b. Can faculty and staff be cross-trained in critical functions
   c. What is the communication plan when a team member is out and cannot perform a critical function

2) Have you taken inventory of essential research infrastructure and reviewed university plans or contacts for maintaining critical functions such as animal care, power, telecommunications, electronic systems, etc.

3) Have you taken inventory of essential research related supplies and planned for possible delays in ordering or shortages of personal protective equipment (PPE) or other supplies.

4) Have you assigned someone on your team to check for and communicate to the research team updated guidance from the university website and the ORA research website on COVID19. Follow any guidance on need for more frequent decontamination of laboratories and workspaces if they are issued.

5) Research collaborators at other sites may be negatively impacted by COVID-19, is there a contact list, coordination and communication of essential multi-site functions.

Frequently Asked Questions and Research Issues to Consider:
We have begun receiving numerous questions from researchers and research administrators, so we have compiled a list of items that may be helpful to you as you prepare your research teams for continuity procedures:

- Discuss approaches of research continuity now in the event that some personnel are unable to come to work. Such advanced planning will make future decisions straightforward and minimize disruption to research activities.
- Take an inventory of procedures that require regular personnel attention (e.g., cell culture maintenance, human and animal studies, etc.).
- Depending upon the nature of your research, you might consider prioritizing work that can only be carried out in your research facility. Stockpiling results and data that could be analyzed remotely in the future is a potential option that might create future flexibility.
- Think about saving samples more frequently if you are carrying out a long-term experiment and if it is feasible to freeze or otherwise capture samples at specific steps.
- Identify any research experiments that can be ramped down or delayed, should the need arise.
- Coordinate with the other offices with which you work if they are conducting critical functions.
- Ensure that members of the research team have access to information they need to carry out work remotely. Examples of the types of research work that can be performed remotely include data analysis, literature reviews, writing proposals, reviews, or research papers, writing the background sections of theses, computational work, meetings, discussions, etc.
- Confirm that you have access to contact information for your staff and key contacts on campus.
- Cross-train research staff to fill in for others who may be out sick or unable to come to work, including documenting step-by-step instructions for team members who may be asked to cover for their colleagues.
- Maintain a sufficient inventory of critical supplies that may be impacted by global shipping delays.
- Review contingency plans and emergency procedures with your research team and related staff.
- Communicate significant planned absences and/or lab closures to departmental administrators, and contact Environmental Health & Safety Office if you need assistance with decontamination procedures.
- Be thoughtful about travel to conferences and other research-related trips.
  - Currently, we have not received any federal guidance relating to charges to awards for non-refundable travel, conferences, and related expenses due to COVID-19. Please continue to follow the University Travel Policy and general cost principles described in Uniform Guidance.
  - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) created **travel guidelines** that have been implemented by the University. New CDC guidance directs travelers to stay home for 14 days from the time they left countries that have a Level 3

travel health notice. Currently, this includes China, Iran, Italy, and South Korea. Emory University is following this directive for all returning travelers, including faculty staff, and students. This means all returning travelers must stay home for 14 days from the time they left these countries before coming back to Emory in order to maintain social distancing. The CDC advises to take these steps to monitor your health and practice social distancing: Take your temperature with a thermometer two times a day and monitor for fever. Also, watch for a cough or trouble breathing. Stay home and avoid contact with others. Do not go to work or school for this 14-day period. Discuss your work situation with your employer before returning to work. Do not take public transportation, taxis, or ride-shares during the time you are practicing social distancing. Avoid crowded places and limit your activities in public. Keep your distance from others (about 6 feet or 2 meters).

  o Faculty and staff who have traveled to or through Level-3 countries should call the Office of Occupational Injury Management at 404-686-8587 to receive a questionnaire. Additional details can be found on Emory's COVID-19 site.

  o Trip cancellation insurance is typically an unallowable charge to sponsored awards. Emory is monitoring the federal agencies for any additional guidance related to travel.

- If you are the Principal Investigator of a grant and you anticipate that your grant deliverables will be delayed, please contact your Program Officer immediately to let them know of your work plan adjustments. Additionally, please prepare a brief explanation of the delay for your next progress report. The explanation should outline the alternative work completed and your plan for accomplishing the original deliverables.

We understand there is a substantial amount of information available. We encourage you and your teams to remain knowledgeable by utilizing the resources listed above. Visit our **ORA – COVID-19** website for updates.   We appreciate your dedication and commitment to Emory and our research enterprise. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Additional resources:
In addition to Emory's webpage, we are directing research teams to visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website to follow the guidance and learn about COVID-19's virulence, transmission, and statistics related to the outbreak. The CDC has prepared an Interim Guidance for Administrators of US Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) to Plan, Prepare, and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), to help higher education organizations, like Emory, prevent the spread of COVID-19 among students, staff, and faculty.

Sincerely,
Deborah Bruner, Senior Vice President for Research
Robert Nobles, Vice President for Research Administration