

March 17, 2020

To: UC Santa Cruz Research Community  
From: Lori Kletzer, Interim Campus Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor  
Scott Brandt, Vice Chancellor, Research  
Subject: Temporary cessation of non-essential on-campus research operations

As you know, we are in the midst of a dangerous global pandemic and the County of Santa Cruz has issued a Shelter in Place Order for all residents. For the safety of our campus community, we are now in the process of winding down all but essential on-campus operations. Late last week we sent out an email to all researchers about our [Research Continuity with COVID-19](#) webpage, in which we recommended that faculty and researchers take certain steps to prepare for a possible campus shutdown. We are writing now to require that all labs follow that guidance and, as spelled out further below, obtain approval for any research projects and key research personnel you believe must remain active on campus during this time. Until further notice, all projects and personnel not approved are required to wind down on-campus research operations by the end of the week. For the purposes of this communication, on-campus refers to all research operations at UCSC locations within a jurisdiction with a Shelter in Place Order.

Even where research is deemed essential, we need to reduce the density of people working in UCSC research spaces. All principal investigators must communicate with trainees and other lab members about preparation for the shutdown of all non-critical research activities.

We understand that the long-term viability of many research programs during this period will require management of essential animal lines, equipment, liquid nitrogen stocks, and certain long-term experiments. To meet these needs, each laboratory (or neighboring group of laboratories) must identify 1-2 key personnel who will be responsible for any essential ongoing maintenance.

When determining the appropriate size of your lab's "skeleton crew," please also consider any equipment that might require gas or cryogen monitoring/service, such as deep-storage freezers, electron microscopes, mass spectrometers, and incubators. Keep in mind that any potentially hazardous operation will require at least two trained and qualified persons be present. We are providing a ["Lab Ramp-Down Checklist"](#) that was assembled by EH&S and the Office of Research. It should be noted that in a campus curtailment, there will be limited EH&S support and their response capabilities may be diminished.

Our mouse facilities have been in direct communication with laboratories and have procedures in place to deal with curtailed operations. Individual labs using aquatic or avian species are expected to maintain basic animal care and husbandry operations, and labs with USDA-covered animals that require specialized lab care or intensive husbandry operations are expected to continue providing this care.

For all key personnel, it has been mandated that everyone practice good hygiene and social distancing, in part by coordinating with others to minimize time on campus and to avoid being in the lab or animal facilities at the same time as others.

To continue their research at home, laboratory members should be encouraged to work on writing projects, literature review, data analysis, or online learning (coding, statistics, etc.). Be sure that lab members are well equipped to work remotely.

If there are essential personnel necessary for the continuation of ongoing critical experiments, instrument maintenance or animal care, you will be required to request permission using this [Essential Research Exception Request](#) form. The form will be routed to your Department Chair, Dean, and VCR for approval. Only those meeting the criteria below will be approved.

### **Criteria for essential personnel**

1) *Necessary to ensure the ongoing viability of research, including the well-being of research animals and other not easily replaceable perishable research materials.*

Examples:

- Vivarium staff
- Non-vivarium lab staff responsible for animal care
- Greenhouse staff
- Faculty/research staff necessary to maintain other not easily replaceable perishable research materials. This could be primary cell lines or long-term experiments that there would be considerable cost and/or time associated with requiring the experiment to end. (For example, if there has been a continual one-month experiment that has been ongoing that requires regular measurements or maintenance to maintain otherwise all previous data is lost).

2) *Responsible for maintenance of equipment that, if not done, could result in damage or high cost to equipment.*

Examples:

- Cryogen fill on the NMR spectrometer

3) *Conducting experiments that have a small time window for completion.*

Examples:

- Time-sensitive experiments with not easily replaceable perishable research materials
- Experiments with a specific measurement that can only take place a few times a year

4) *Conducting critical COVID-19 research.*

5) *Necessary for other critical research/lab-related functions not covered under the*

*above definitions whose presence can prevent danger or significant damage to facilities or research activities.*

We completely understand that these restrictions are difficult for you and your laboratory personnel. Our focus at this time is on maintaining safety while avoiding catastrophic damage to people's research and careers. We hope you appreciate the full magnitude of this crisis and understand that these short-term setbacks will lead to a better outcome for our entire community.

Please direct any questions about this policy to [researchcontinuity@ucsc.edu](mailto:researchcontinuity@ucsc.edu).