

COVID-19: Guidance for the UD Research Community

Virtual Town Hall

Monday March 16, 2020

Noon-1 pm



Agenda

1. UD Campus Updates
2. UD Priorities
3. Suspension of Laboratory Research
4. While Laboratory Research is Suspended
5. Mentoring
6. Questions- Chat Function

- Communications—check these websites frequently (1+ per day)

<https://www.udel.edu/home/coronavirus/>

<https://research.udel.edu/coronavirus/>

UD Campus Update

- Seven Confirmed COVID-19 Cases (8 am 3/16/2020)
- Colburn and Harker ISE Labs Closed Friday for cleaning
- DBI (15 Innovation Way) and Ammon-Pinizzotto Biopharm (STAR) Closed Saturday for Cleaning. Lab moves suspended

Dr. Tim Dowling
Centers for Disease Control
Delaware



UD Campus Update

President Assanis Letter 3/15/2020

- Spring Break extended for an additional week: March 14-29.
- Move-out period for students to remove belongings from all residence halls will be extended to the end of the semester.
- Research personnel at all UD locations should immediately begin preparing for all on-campus research to be restricted to only essential activities. Effective 5 p.m., Tuesday, March 17

UD Campus Update

President Assanis Letter 3/15/2020

- Only those UD employees performing essential functions that cannot be carried out remotely will report to campus.
- All University-sponsored or affiliated travel, including domestic travel, is suspended until further notice.
- We are taking additional environmental measures to attend to the safety of our campus.

UD Priorities

- Health and safety of all members of the UD community
- Academic continuance of our students

Suspension of Laboratory Research

Research personnel at all UD locations should immediately begin preparing for all on-campus research to be restricted to only essential activities. Effective 5 p.m., Tuesday, March 17.

- All research laboratories and core facilities are ramping down immediately for a period of two weeks and potentially much longer.
- Essential activities: limited to only critical activities such as animal care and maintaining unique reagents and cell cultures, essential equipment and materials.

Suspension of Laboratory Research

- Equipment: magnets requiring cryogenics; GC/MS, PET, EM, confocal microscopes, irradiators, cleanrooms, Glove boxes, Incubators, Refrigerators/freezers, -80 Freezers, cryogenic storage
- Information technology resources
- Samples and Specimens (live, fresh, frozen, and fixed)
- Specialized reagents and chemical inventories
- Supplies: PPE
- Basic utility inputs: electricity, heating and cooling, potable water, sewage, and telecommunications, specialized utilities such as de-ionized water, etc.
- Service and maintenance on sophisticated equipment

Suspension of Laboratory Research

PIs and lab leaders should have received an email from Mike Gladle with subject line: *Lab Shuttering*. If not, email mgladle@udel.edu

EHS has prepared a UD shutdown checklist should you need it. Check COVID-19 website for updates.

BioRaft- takes you to a Google Doc to enter your lab's information.

(A) Lab is fully closed with no access required for 2+ weeks; or

(B) Need essential personnel to access [provide reason—LN2 fill, essential cell culture lines, etc.]—Provide names, Positions and Contact information for 2-3 essential personnel per PI. **Undergraduates are not permitted in facilities.**

Each Lab should post a sign on door when closed (or note that not closed).

Essential packages will be delivered. How is under evaluation.

While Laboratory Research is Suspended

- We encourage work from home for continuity of research and graduate education. Some suggestions-data analysis, writing proposals, manuscripts, dissertations, Zoom group meetings, etc. are productive activities. Bear in mind the need for social distancing.
- Grant-funded personnel continue to work remotely and charge grants accordingly. Individual agencies are issuing more specific guidance. (UD RO monitoring and updating website with links).

Personnel will continue to be paid via their current funding sources.

While Laboratory Research is Suspended

- Research administration functions continue to operate normally and remotely.
- Graduate College staff are available remotely to support for graduate students.
- PIs with questions about management of their grants should check with their program officers, agency websites and/or their cognizant contracts & grants specialist in the Research Office.

Supporting Our Community

- If students feel overwhelmed, they can contact the Center for Counseling & Student Development at (302) 831-2141 or (302) 831-1001 for after-hours emergencies, or Student Health Services at (302) 831-2226.
- Faculty and staff may contact the Employee Assistance Program within Human Resources at (302) 831-2171 and/or their health care provider.

Mentoring

Research advisors for graduate students and postdocs will need to develop new mentoring practices for their trainees. Some suggestions:

- Advisors should set expectations
 - what work the trainee will be doing
 - how they will communicate
 - what the trainee should expect from their advisor
- Regular group meetings (held virtually) are even more important when casual interactions are not possible.
- Students check in weekly with a written summary of their activities. This allows
 - tracking of each trainee's progress
 - assessment of whether new assignments are leading in productive directions
 - documents the effort

Mentoring

In addition to the usual support that trainees need to develop as researchers, remember that

- many of them will be doing new work, and may need help with the transition
- if they are accustomed to asking frequent questions or getting regular feedback from colleagues at work, they will need alternate means to maintain those interactions.
- they will also be socially isolated
 - Frequent interactions (email, text, Zoom or Skype) will help
 - The Counseling Center has a 24/7 call-in support line for students who feel overwhelmed or depressed