Moratorium on Exceptions to Allow Research Laboratories to Reopen

Since the research labs have moved to final hibernation mode, the Deans and Vice President for Research have been fielding requests to reopen labs to do COVID-19 or national security connected research. The requests (and anticipated requests) fall into two broad categories:

1. Projects funded explicitly for COVID-19 or national security designated research:
    a. Newly funded Rapid Response projects
2. Projects that would redirect existing resources to COVID-19 or national security designated research
    a. Currently funded projects that could be refocused on COVID-19 related research
    b. Projects where faculty would use discretionary resources to do pilot studies to prepare proposals for COVID-19 research.

We remain concerned about safety. The peak of the local novel coronavirus impact is predicted to be several weeks in the future. Conditions may get worse before they get better. And, we have learned so far that what may currently seem a conservative policy, may need to be made more conservative in only a matter of days. Thus, we are issuing the following guidance to faculty with research lab operations about how requests for exceptions will be handled. Additional guidance will be issued as conditions change, including guidance about how the suspension of lab operation might be lifted when conditions improve.

Category 1

Going forward we will approve category 1 projects subject to the conditions that

- Travel within the community is safe and a social distancing/hygiene and safety plan within the lab has been submitted and approved.
- Our request template has been completed and approved.
- Confirmation that a grant has been awarded.
- <u>All personnel</u> have signed an opt-in form.
- Lab reopening is delayed as long as possible.

Category 2

There will be a moratorium on considering requests for lab reopening in category 2 until at least April 20. In that interval, we will monitor the local safety situation as well as policy from the Federal Government, the State of Indiana, the City of South Bend and the University. In the meantime, we would receive requests from Principal Investigators that include:

- A completed request template.
- A description of how the work would be funded and a compelling case that the benefits of the proposed work would outweigh the risks. For category 2a, a letter from the sponsor indicating approval that work be directed toward COVID-19 research is required.
- Signed opt-in form for all personnel proposed to be participating in the project.
- A timeline of when the lab would be active and not active (e.g., when pilot data collection is expected to be complete and lab operation will be re-suspended).

Based on the situation at the time, the moratorium on considering lab reopening requests may be extended beyond April 20. If conditions that currently restrict travel and non-essential business are eased, decisions to allow reopening of research labs will be made by the Vice President for Research based on recommendations of the Deans of the Colleges. Decisions will be based on an assessment of safety to participants and other personnel on campus and the benefits of the project relative to risks.