

Dear SLU Faculty and Research Staff -

I wrote last week about developing laboratory contingency plans. Today I am writing to update you on new recommendations for laboratory activities as most of Saint Louis University (SLU) transitions to working offsite.

Scholarly and scientific work at SLU has made it possible for nations to combat infectious diseases, pandemics, and many other global challenges. We are privileged to work among faculty and staff who embody the Jesuit charism of women and men for and with others. As much as possible, we must preserve our ability to continue to work toward treatments and vaccines to protect our communities. We must also seek to minimize the potential spread of COVID-19 for our community and all others.

By Friday, March 20, SLU is asking each campus laboratory to severely limit the number of people who are physically in lab facilities for at least the next six weeks. As President Pestello stated in his [email on March 17](#), the expectation is **if it is not essential for you to work on campus, don't.**

First, any research activities and experiments that require in-person interaction and that are not time sensitive should be ramped down as quickly as possible. Principal Investigators (PIs) and laboratory staff should work from home and focus on future experiment planning, proposal development, and preparing papers for publications. The Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) has prepared a [laboratory shutdown checklist](#). The Environmental Health and Safety team in OVPR can work with you to prepare your labs for a hiatus.

Second, for instrumentation and research projects that are critically important to maintain, projects that have direct benefit to patients (e.g., some clinical trials), or that are necessary for student matriculation and graduation (e.g. completing dissertations or theses), PIs should identify essential personnel and limit their work on campus to the minimum required for safety and research continuity. Laboratory personnel should only be on campus for the amount of time necessary to maintain and monitor critical experiments. All other work should be done remotely. By Friday, March 22, please enter the names of your essential personnel and a justification for their presence on campus in [this Google Sheet](#)

Third, laboratories that are supporting the development and testing of vaccines and treatments to minimize the impact of COVID-19 are essential activities and will continue. Nevertheless, PIs need to plan the time and manner in which people in laboratories and research workspaces are interacting so as to maximally promote social distancing and protect faculty, students, and staff.

Fourth, the Department of Comparative Medicine will reduce operations to primarily animal husbandry. Anyone who seeks to continue animal research during this period must have written approval by the Dean of the School of Medicine and the Vice

President for Research. Please email Matthew Christian, Associate Vice President for Research, matthew.christian@slu.edu, as soon as possible to request approval.

This planning is subject to change as the public health situation changes. Please continue to plan for steps you would follow if research projects had to be fully stopped with short notice; for example, if SLU is required to fully close all non-clinical campus buildings. We certainly hope that this is not the case, but we are in uncharted territory and it is important to plan for this contingency.

During this time of disruption, the OVPR team is fully available to help you explore new funding opportunities, prepare grant applications, execute contracts, and develop protocols. OVPR is available by email, Zoom, Skype and phone to support you whether you ramping down your laboratory or ramping up your writing and preparation.

If you have questions about federal agency guidance about research expenditures or want to see how our peers are responding, the latest information is available [here](#). Feel free to [contact Lisa Wagner](#) if you need help interpreting federal regulations.

If you have other questions or concerns, please email me at kolliff@slu.edu and I will make sure to connect you with the right person at OVPR or otherwise.

This is an incredibly challenging situation and the continued health and safety of our SLU community, and our families, friends, and neighbors is our top priority. Thank you for all that you are doing. Please let me know how my colleagues and I can best support you.

In gratitude,
Ken

Kenneth A. Olliff

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