Memorandum

Date: March 20, 2020
To: UT Tyler Researchers
From: Interim Associate Provost for Research & Scholarship
Cc: Provost, Deans, & Chairs
Subject: Guidelines for Research and COVID-19

In response to the expanding threat of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), and in adherence with advisories issued by President Tidwell and guidance issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), the Office of Research and Scholarship (ORS) at UT Tyler is taking precautions to ensure the health and safety of all our student, faculty, and staff researchers.

We recognize that some of the precautions may pose an inconvenience to you, but your cooperation and understanding are essential as we all work together to protect the health and safety of our researchers and the entire university community. To this end, please review and implement the guidance provided below and on the UT Tyler COVID-19 and Research website when planning and conducting your research activities.

1. **Research and scholarly activities at UT Tyler are continuing, but they should be conducted differently to maximize social distancing.**
   a. Research administration services provided by the ORS to support faculty and staff remain available by phone (see the ORS Personnel and Offices webpage for staff contact information), email at research@uttyler.edu, and/or video conferencing venues.
   b. Research activities that can be performed remotely should be continued, with approval from supervisors – this applies to all faculty, staff, post-docs, graduate students, and undergraduate researchers.
   c. Activities that require access to campus facilities (as deemed by supervisors) should be conducted in a way that maintains the recommended distance of six feet between people, such as creating work shifts to reduce the number of people in a lab at one time, while considering normal safety protocols.
   d. Research activities that involve in-person human subject studies, must be paused or modified, in accordance with the COVID-19 Face-to-Face Human Subjects Research Activities Restrictions to reduce the risk of exposure to both participants and researchers. See

2. **All researchers should immediately begin developing contingency plans** to prepare for curtailing all but the most essential on-campus research and creative activities. Contingency plans are critical
to minimizing the impact of a disruption and to ease the process of restarting research. See the Research Operations Contingency Planning Guidelines for suggestions on what to consider in contingency planning.

3. Researchers should work with their department chairs, research center directors, and associate deans for research to make appropriate decisions on whether their research activities should:
   
   a. Continue because the research activities are already conducted remotely;
   b. Be modified so that the activities can be conducted entirely remotely;
   c. Be modified so that the activities can be conducted with minimal time involving on-campus or field-based research while maximizing social distancing and reducing the environmental, health, and safety risks; or
   d. Be paused until conditions lend themselves for continuing the research.

   Please be sensitive to the needs and concerns of graduate students when making decisions and plans.

4. Researchers should pay extra attention to safety considerations given the reduced environmental, health, and safety personnel on campus, and minimize time on campus and within the community.

5. Please use the resources that are available to you – including the COVID-19 and Research web page to make the best and most informed decisions you can make.

   There’s no doubt we are conducting research in uncharted territory, but we’re doing so together. We ask that you share your questions, ideas and suggestions for content with us at research@uttyler.edu to help all of us chart a new path forward for research at UT Tyler.

   Many thanks, and please be healthy and safe.

   Kouider Mokhtari, Ph.D.
   Interim Associate Provost for Research & Scholarship