To: All UT Tyler Faculty (Academic Campus)
From: Dr. Steven Idell, M.D., Ph.D., Senior VP of Research & Dean, Graduate School
Subject: Covid-19-Related Field Research, Group Travel and Accommodations
Date June 16, 2021

Dear UT Tyler Faculty Colleagues,

First, many thanks to our faculty, staff, and students who paused their field research in compliance with our COVID-19 related safety precautions. Effective July 5, 2021 and based on input received from legal counsel and occupational health, I am sharing the following guidance for beginning or resuming field work and research projects involving person to person interactions, as follows:

Covid-19-Related Field Research, Group Travel and Accommodations

1. Whether travel is segregated between vaccinated and unvaccinated persons is within management discretion.
2. Travel that includes vaccinated and unvaccinated persons in close quarters, such as travel by car, is permissible and is also within management discretion.
3. Masking cannot be required to participate in the activity.
4. Vaccination cannot be required to participate in the activity.
5. Waivers of liability are unnecessary as they present no practical advantage to the institution.
6. It is best if persons traveling are aware of the risks whether they are vaccinated or unvaccinated so that each can make an informed decision to participate or not participate in the activity.
7. If a person decides not to participate in the activity because of perceived potential harm, that decision cannot be regarded or used negatively in student grading, employee evaluation, etc.
8. Research projects involving close team contact or face to face interactions with research subjects may begin or resume as previously approved by the IRB.
9. Individuals participating in these projects are encouraged to follow precautions dependent on their own vaccination status and assessment of their risk factors.
10. For research team members who choose not to participate, that decision again cannot be regarded or used negatively in grading or evaluation settings.
11. Changes to these guidelines may occur in future contingent on changes in pandemic conditions.
12. Contact research@uttyler.edu if you have questions.