

**From:** [bme-fac-request@virginia.edu](mailto:bme-fac-request@virginia.edu) on behalf of [Epstein, Frederick H \(fhe6b\)](#)  
**To:** [bme-fac@virginia.edu](mailto:bme-fac@virginia.edu)  
**Subject:** FW: IMPT: Reducing Research Activities in Labs in Anticipation of Further Guidance from VPR  
**Date:** Monday, March 23, 2020 11:57:50 AM  
**Attachments:** [Essential On-Grounds Research Form \(002\).docx](#)  
**Importance:** High

---

Dear colleagues – (This is redundant for BME SEAS faculty, but not BME SOM faculty) Please **read carefully** and if needed, **respond to Fred and Keisha by 5 p.m. today using the attached form.**

-  
Thanks, Fred

---

**From:** <[seas-leadershipcouncil-request@virginia.edu](mailto:seas-leadershipcouncil-request@virginia.edu)> on behalf of Craig Benson <[chb4x@virginia.edu](mailto:chb4x@virginia.edu)>  
**Reply-To:** Craig Benson <[chb4x@virginia.edu](mailto:chb4x@virginia.edu)>  
**Date:** Monday, March 23, 2020 at 7:34 AM  
**To:** "[seas-leadershipcouncil@virginia.edu](mailto:seas-leadershipcouncil@virginia.edu)" <[seas-leadershipcouncil@virginia.edu](mailto:seas-leadershipcouncil@virginia.edu)>  
**Cc:** "Mather, Elizabeth Thiel (eat6bx)" <[eat6bx@virginia.edu](mailto:eat6bx@virginia.edu)>, Engineering Dean <[seas@virginia.edu](mailto:seas@virginia.edu)>, "Notis, John (jn4ze)" <[jn4ze@virginia.edu](mailto:jn4ze@virginia.edu)>, Susan Barker <[sb5mc@virginia.edu](mailto:sb5mc@virginia.edu)>, "[barker@virginia.edu](mailto:barker@virginia.edu)" <[barker@virginia.edu](mailto:barker@virginia.edu)>  
**Subject:** [seas-leadershipcouncil] IMPT: Reducing Research Activities in Labs in Anticipation of Further Guidance from VPR

Department Chairs:

Based on the most recent message from Ram Ramasubramanian (UVA VP for Research) on Friday, March 20 (see below), we expect **research activities conducted on Grounds to be limited to “essential activities” by the close of business on Tuesday, March 24, 2020 (tomorrow).** This means that all those who can work remotely must do so. **By the end of the day Tuesday, only personnel required for essential activities may work on Grounds, and only for those essential activities.**

Please inform your faculty and staff with research activity on Grounds that this is forthcoming, and that they must prepare to limit activity on Grounds to essential activities. We believe essential activities will be defined as:

- Activity that, if discontinued, would result in significant loss (e.g., long-term experiments).
- Activity that, if discontinued, would pose a safety hazard.
- Activity that maintains critical lab equipment in safe standby mode.
- Activity that maintains critical samples, reagents, and materials.
- Activity that maintains animal populations.

- Activity that maintains critically needed living organisms.
- COVID-19 related activity that could address the crisis.

If no essential research-related activities must be maintained, PIs should prepare their laboratories for temporary shutdown by following the “Research Operations Continuity Temporary Shutdown Checklist for Laboratories:”

<https://research.virginia.edu/sites/vpr/files/2020-03/Lab.Shutdown.Checklist.COVID19.17Mar20.pdf>

If a PI believes essential research-related activities must be maintained, the PI must complete and **submit the attached request form by 5 PM EDT, Monday, March 23 (today)**, to their department chair.

The department chair will review the forms, mark those recommended for approval, and submit all forms to [Susan Barker](#), Associate Dean for Research, by **8 AM EDT, Tuesday, March 24**. Susan will communicate the approved essential research-related activities to chairs as soon as practical.

I know all of this is challenging and disruptive, and that many other questions about research remain. Health and safety of our students, staff, and faculty is paramount, and must be addressed as soon as practical. More communications will follow addressing other issues related to research.

Thank you for your assistance and your patience.

Craig

-----  
Craig H. Benson, PhD, PE, NAE  
Dean, UVA Engineering  
University of Virginia  
Charlottesville, VA 22904-4246 USA  
+1 (608) 444-0007

[chbenson@virginia.edu](mailto:chbenson@virginia.edu)  
[engineering.virginia.edu/benson-research-group](http://engineering.virginia.edu/benson-research-group)

Sr. Exec. Asst.: Ms. Lisa E. Meadows  
[enrdean@virginia.edu](mailto:enrdean@virginia.edu), +1 (434) 924 3593

-----  
Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for your patience as we navigate these uncharted waters as a University.

As you know, on Tuesday, March 17<sup>th</sup>, the President and Provost [announced](#) sweeping operational changes intended to “flatten the curve” of those infected and avoid overwhelming our health system, which would ultimately risk our patients, our community, and our Charlottesville neighbors. The following day, the Provost [announced](#) a set of principles regarding the research enterprise that re-affirmed that research is a core mission of the university (like education) and also made clear that those operational changes fully apply to the research enterprise. That means that all faculty and staff who can work remotely **must** work remotely, except for those employees who must report in person to carry out key functions; principal investigators, like managers across grounds, have the authority to decide which employees must work from home and which employees must report for duty in order to carry out key functions. The research continuity guidelines [linked](#) in that document made clear that lab and research teams should be pursuing only key activities by the close-of-business today, March 20<sup>th</sup>.

Since Wednesday, March 18<sup>th</sup>, we have learned that some of you need additional time due to the complexity of the lab experiments and to determine essential personnel, and other related tasks. In consultation with the President and the Executive Leadership, we are now allowing until **COB, March 24th** to give you more time to recalibrate down your activities to key only activities. Until that time, if you need their assistance to perform this recalibration, you may ask your graduate research assistants to work with you in an environment cognizant of our obligation to protect our people by practicing social distancing. Before March 24<sup>th</sup>, we will provide more detailed guidance on how to handle the dependence of the continuation of your key research activities on select graduate research assistants in your laboratory.

Sincerely,  
Ram

Melur K. (Ram) Ramasubramanian, Ph.D.  
Vice President for Research  
Professor-Mechanical Engineering  
University of Virginia  
PO Box 400301  
Charlottesville VA 22904-4301  
434-243-1100 (Office of VPR)  
434-924-8494 (Direct)  
[rammk@virginia.edu](mailto:rammk@virginia.edu)