Repopulation of Faculty & Graduate Students FAQ

This document will be regularly updated as additional questions are answered

Topics

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General questions

- Where can faculty, staff, and graduate students find more information?
    - Review the Repopulating Faculty & Graduate Students plan: http://research.sdsu.edu/repopulating_faculty_graduate_students
    - Listen to the informational webinar presented on 5/21/20: https://SDSU.zoom.us/rec/share/1NNtCpfK2nNJQp3KwluGXY0xEbnPeaa80CVN__pezUoB2bey5m525O mrhxGNuuww?startTime=1590102022000
    - Check out the responses to frequently asked questions: https://research.sdsu.edu/restarting_research_FAQs
    - Contact your college dean's office
    - Send an email to: GRA-COV2@sdsu.edu

- Is there an approximate timeline regarding when the campus might re-open for research purposes?
    - We recently received approval by the Chancellor office and the County has review our plans. Announcement of the first steps toward restarting research and scholarly activities at low density will be made on June 3. Note that during Phase 2 and 3, all research and scholarly activities that can be done remotely should continue to be done remotely, including planning and analysis of data. In addition, face-to-face meetings must be done remotely during these lower density phases.

- What is the likely timeline for Research Leaders to submit their plan?
    - Submission of plans may begin starting on June 3.

- Is there a standard form for the density control plan?

- o A Google form will be available for Research Leaders soon. Note that the allowable density during each phase is described in the Repopulation of Faculty & Graduate Students Plan (see link in the first question).

- Would you provide a template, instructions, and expectations for these plans from the project leaders?
  - o A Google form with the required information and instructions will be available on June 3. Additional information will be posted on the GRA website. Links to these documents will be provided in a letter sent to all faculty.

- Will the College or Institution be providing standard acceptable verbiage for the written plan required from "research leaders" describing what is considered appropriate as a written response document? This would be helpful to avoid iterative revisions and feedback as we prepare the required paperwork.
  - o The requested research description is expected to be brief and to address the items listed in the explanation on the form.

- For the repopulation plans, will the College or Institution provide floor plans and square footage numbers for PI lab space in order for "research leaders" to perform required calculations to be compliant with the personnel density and distancing requirements?
  - o Square footage for specific rooms will be provided by the college Dean's office if requested.

- As density plans change, will research leaders need to re-submit their plans each time?
  - o Yes, a new plan is required for the different criteria for each different phase.

- Who is directly responsible for project leadership within various labs and departments? e.g. Is the dean of the College of Sciences responsible for planning schedules, or will the PIs hold that responsibility and pass the information up?
  - o The Faculty Research Leader with responsibility for the space, supervision of the personnel is responsible for each lab, studio, or other space used for research and scholarly activities. This Research Leader is responsible for planning schedules of the personnel in the group. The information will be described in the Google form that is provided to the college dean, Provost, and VPR for approval.

- Am I understanding correctly that the Research Leader has to be a faculty member or could it be a student?
  - o Research Leaders must be the faculty member with responsibility for the assigned space. A student is not eligible to be a Research Leader.

- As we repopulate, what about individuals in vulnerable categories (underlying health condition, 65+, etc.), will they be allowed to continue to work from home?
  - o Although not prohibited, the CDC strongly recommends that individuals in vulnerable categories work remotely during Phase 2, and in Phase 3 this is recommended. Individuals in these groups who return to work must do so on a voluntary basis with an understanding of their personal health risks.

- For us to go back to regular business, do we not have to/must implement a serious/regular testing program?
  - o Although the university is looking into testing, requirements for returning to regular business, follow the guidelines developed and guided by SD County Health, CSU Chancellor's office, and the CDC. Currently

those recommendations do not include CoV-2 testing. Physical distancing, healthy habits, wearing face coverings, washing hands are our best solutions at this time.

- Do we have a contact tracing plan?
  - The County will provide contact tracing for SDSU.

COVID-19 Testing

- How does testing fit into the reopening plans?
  - CoV-2 testing is currently under consideration by the university. We do not yet know any details about availability or dates. Information about testing will be provided by the university as it becomes available.

- Will SDSU/SDSURF offer COVOD19 and/or Antibody testing for faculty, staff, and students?
  - At this time there are no plans for antibody testing. Please see the above comment about CoV-2 virus testing.

- You have addressed proximity, but what about time? The longer people are in a shared space, the greater the risk.
  - This is part of the reason that a lower density than a 6 ft circle is required inside rooms. For Phase 2 there can be no more than 1 person per 250 sq ft in rooms. In addition, all personnel are required to wear face masks or face shields at all times unless in a single occupancy room.

Facilities

- What are the plans for reopening the library?
  - Access to the library is very important for a number of parties, especially students and researchers in the humanities. There is a discussion about ways of providing increased access to the library, and the Library Dean has developed a plan that will be released soon. For questions, please contact the Library Dean.

- Will SDSURF be following the same guidelines for reopening off-campus field stations?
  - Yes, all SDSU and SDSURF sites will be required to follow the same procedures for repopulation.

- Many of us are working on personal equipment at home. Are we able to bring desktop computers and monitors to our homes if we are unable to repopulate in Fall? These often have software that does not operate well on personal machines.
  - Please contact your Dean to make plans for accessing your space and getting the materials and systems you need to work remotely.

- Is the CSU looking at requiring temperature screenings at entrances to buildings or other spaces?
  - Yes, temperature screening or symptom screening is a county mandate that will be followed by SDSU for all research personnel. No-touch thermometers have been ordered. Until they arrive each group will be

required to do COVID-119 symptom screening for all personnel each time they arrive to work. Details on this process will be available soon.

- Air circulation has come up in trade-specific research with regard to performing arts and singers in particular. Will any modifications be made to building ventilation?
  - The current rating on the filtration systems for all buildings, operated by both SDSU and SDSURF, are MERV 14, typical of level 2 trauma hospital. Higher filtration standards may require more powerful and differentially designed units. A systematic review of all buildings, from a mechanical engineering standpoint, is underway to see if increased MERV rating filtration is possible without disrupting or damaging the system.

- With regard to building custodial services, are research groups to take shared responsibilities for building cleaning, even tracking down cleaning supplies?
  - Research groups are expected to disinfect all spaces internal to their workspaces. Each individual is expected to disinfect their workspace and commonly touched surfaced upon arriving to work and departing. Disinfectants can include readily available cleaning supplies such as dilute solutions of bleach.

- How do we know if our building is being considered for increased air handling capacity? Especially if our building is a closed system (no windows in the building)?
  - Please consult with your college Dean's office.

- Is the intent for this plan to apply to administrative support offices, such as Enrollment Services, and department offices or is this strictly faculty/research based?
  - This plan is specific for spaces used for research and scholarly activities.

- If we need to go into Research Foundation spaces to retrieve materials, should we contact our dean for access, or do we contact the Research Foundation?
  - Approval by the Dean, Provost, and VPR is required to access all SDSU and SDSURF spaces. If approved, the Dean's office can facilitate communication with the Research Foundation.

Research Operations

- How do these guidelines translate to research in the field, specifically boating and diving?
  - The expectations for distancing, disinfection, face masks (when above water), and hygiene apply to field research as well as research in rooms on campus. For example, the number of people in a vehicle/boat would not be expected to exceed the physical distancing requirements. However, for any particular situation with unique requirements, like research involving diving, we expect that the Research Leaders will provide a plan describing how they can meet these requirements, and the plan must be reviewed and approved by the college Dean, Provost, and VPR.

- What about projects that require direct interactions with research participants/patients?
  - Rick Gulizia oversees the human subject's compliance committee and his office has developed guidelines that are specific to human subject's research. A document will be posted on the Human

- What will collecting data for research projects look like with PPE restrictions? Will IRB be accepting new proposals?
  - IRB is fully operational and accepting new applications at this time. It is best to plan for a fully operational research plan and accommodations/modifications can be made along the way depending on the phase of the density control plan at that time.

- What are the guidelines for starting research with human subjects?
  - See the guidelines recommended by the Human Subjects committee and posted on that website. Restarting Human Subjects research cannot occur until authorized by San Diego County.

- We are not able to maintain 6 ft social distance with our human subject research protocol. Will this be allowable within the Phase 2 guidelines?
  - See the guidelines recommended by the Human Subjects committee and posted on that website. Restarting Human Subjects research cannot occur until authorized by San Diego County.

- Is the HRPP working on guidelines for interacting with human subjects so we can all start from these recommendations when redoing our applications?
  - See the guidelines recommended by the Human Subjects committee and posted on that website. Restarting Human Subjects research is pending approval by San Diego County.

- How do these phases apply to projects that provide services in the community?
  - The phases and required approvals apply to all research, creative activities, community service projects, and other scholarly activities that are done in or on SDSU or SDSURF spaces. Currently only "bench research" is authorized by San Diego County.

- If one needs to do field work as opposed to lab work, how do the stages for occupying labs/campus space coincide with them, or are they independent?
  - The same safety considerations are expected for field research as for research in campus spaces. Currently only "bench research" is authorized by San Diego County.

- Are there going to be additional requirements related to animal work performed using vivarium facilities and animal work that "research leaders" can anticipate and prepare responses so as not to incur additional delays?
  - Please work with your Animal Care personnel to ensure that the research continues safely and without interruption.

- if only 1 person is allowed within 150 sq feet, then how can researchers interact with human subjects? Would this mean a minimum of 500 square feet is needed to interact with a human subject under low density?

- See the guidelines recommended by the Human Subjects committee and posted on that website. Restarting Human Subjects research is pending approval by San Diego County.

Research Laboratories

- For small lab spaces, how might we maintain low density in labs while ensuring worker safety by having a "buddy" present to help in case of lab accidents?
  - The distancing requirement has precedence over the buddy system. However, if only one person can safely be in the lab at a time, then that person needs to be within visual or hearing distance of another person for the duration of their time in the lab.

- If we don't have any rooms of 150 sf or greater, then we can't have 2 people in a room until we "return to normal"?
  - Yes, only one person can be in a space of this size at any given time.

- For smaller spaces (< 250 sf), do we need to worry about air circulation via vents? If so, are there any recommendations?
  - If the room does not have adequate air circulation, it should not be used by multiple people even if they are not in the room at the same time.

- In phase 2, do we have access to the lab at any time? Does this include the weekends?
  - If you have been given access to your lab, you can use it any time.

Art and Performance Studios

- inquiring about the private studio access over the summer for the arts grad students. Whose responsibility is it to get these studios approved for the low-density population for the summer?
  - Access to space on campus requires that a Faculty supervisor with responsibility for the space submits a request for approval form, the graduate student submits a Responsibility for Project Personnel form, and the forms must be approved by the college dean, Provost, and VPR. In addition, there must be adequate staffing by facilities services for the space to become available.

- What is the likelihood that graduate students with individual studios in the art department will have access in the fall?
  - It is impossible to say definitively given uncertainties about the COVID-19 pandemic, but we expect that faculty and graduate students will have access to individual studios for art and performance activities at low density beginning in the summer. Access depends upon adequate custodial services, disinfection protocols, and other university requirements.

- If we are in Stage 4, do you think there would still be social distancing guidelines in place for audiences coming onto campus?

- o There may still be requirements for face coverings and recommendations for constraint by vulnerable populations, but our definition of Phase 4 is that there will no longer be restrictions on hosting group events.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Will the university be providing PPE – facemasks, gloves, lab coats, sanitizers, disinfectants, etc. for researchers and students? Or are we responsible for the PPE in our own labs?
    - o A committee has been formed, spearheaded by Agnes Wong Nickerson and Eric Hansen, to review individual units across campus trying to assess how many employees and what level of PPE might need to be ordered. The review is focused on face coverings, hand sanitizer, cleaning wipes and disinfectant. From the research foundation side, the employee population was counted and the administration will be procuring initial supply. Five facemasks per employee, one for each day, so they can launder them on the weekends, as well as, a supply of disinfectant and hand sanitizer, will be distributed in a package so that PI's do not have to bear that cost for at least the first 6 months. On the SDSU campus side the process will take place for faculty, staff, and student employees. This will be submitted as bulk purchase through the CSU Chancellor's office.

- Has SDSU/SDSURF looked into paper disposable lab coats for a temporary period?
    - o SDSU is not currently planning to order disposable lab coats at this time.

- Will there be any recommendations about lab coats (i.e., no shared lab coats, washing lab coats, storage of lab coats, etc.)?
    - o Even before COVID-19, a Chemical and Physical Safety Committee had been convened to address safety equipment like lab coats. This is done to develop a more uniform way of how we purchase lab coats, how we launder lab coats, who is responsible for replacing them etc. No recommendations can be made at this time because the committee has not yet evaluated all the facets of the situation, however, the recommendations that come from that committee will be rolled out consistently across campus.

CSU / UC Comparisons

- Does the CSU Chancellor recognize the unique nature of SDSU as a major research university wishing the CSU when considering our plan to repopulate research labs?
    - o The campus administration worked closely with the Chancellor's office in developing this repopulation plan and has advocated a nonuniform response based on the unique research qualities of SDSU. The Chancellor's office recognizes that campuses are embedded in different communities with different COVID-19 situations, and has recently agreed to our request.

- Is anyone doing a study at SDSU to test all students, staff, and faculty like at UCSD?
    - o UCSD has one of the most ambitious plans in the nation, SDSU is looking at all the possibilities for testing the various populations including referral testing, contact tracing, direct testing, antibody testing, etc.

We are also exploring the option of having labs on campus do the testing work, but that option needs to be more fully developed and vetted significantly before any final decision will be made.

- Is there anybody we as SDSU researchers can contact to advocate for the phased research repopulation at SDSU on a timeline more in line with UC than CSU?
  - The President and senior staff are worked closely with chancellor's office to advocate for a nonuniform response that would allow SDSU to develop its own plan and procedures for repopulation, separate from what the other CSU's are planning. This plan has been approved recently.

- JDP students are held to the same graduation/oral exam timelines and research standards as our UCSD colleagues. Our colleagues will begin returning to campus to conduct research on June 1st, yet we have no return date. It is difficult to understand how we are following UCSD's plan if the CSU chancellor is making the ultimate decision for the CSU system as a whole.
  - While we are not in lockstep with UCSD, have been closely communicating and discussing repopulation strategies with UCSD administration. Nevertheless, the CSU Chancellor's office believes that SDSU is in charge of managing our students in the most safe and effective manner regardless of UCSD's repopulation plans.

- If we are collaborating with UCSD and doing research using their spaces can we follow their guidelines for repopulating?
  - If you are working at UCSD, you must abide by the UCSD requirements. If you are doing work in any SDSU or SDSURF spaces, you must have appropriate approvals and abide by the SDSU requirements. Note that requirements at UCSD and SDSU are very similar.

Student Questions

- Will undergraduate RA's and/or graduate students be allowed to work in research labs as we repopulate?
  - Graduate students working on approved projects will be allowed back on campus as repopulation begins, and will be expected to follow all requirements described in the Responsibility of Project Personnel form. Their safety and activities are the responsibility of the faculty member who submits their names for approval.
  - During the summer, undergraduates will only be permitted to participate in campus research and scholarly activities with permission of the Dean, Provost, and VPR. undergraduates back into the lab at this time. Undergraduate participation in research on site will be reviewed again for the fall semester.

- Will the students be allowed comparable access to essential personnel?
  - The Chancellor's office and the President de la Torre were responsible for defining the essential personnel classification. Graduate students may be allowed back on campus for approved research projects. There is currently no timeline when undergraduates will be allowed to participate in on-campus research projects.

- Is there a working plan for how this will affect the expectations of students getting graduate degrees? Are we letting students go without the experience they need, or keeping them and charging more tuition? If you have a vulnerable graduate student with underlying conditions, how do you handle this situation?
    - Graduate students with health concerns cannot be required to work on campus at this time.
    - It is generally expected that graduate advisors, thesis/dissertation chairs, and other research leaders will provide opportunities for graduate students to continue making degree progress, whether on or off-campus. These opportunities must be reasonably balanced with university and government public health policies. At least monthly, faculty and staff who work with graduate students should reevaluate the tension between making accommodations for these unprecedented circumstances, and protecting the integrity of SDSU graduate degrees.
    - If a graduate student feels that the research or creative activity opportunities presented to them are unreasonable, they should propose a reasonable alternative in writing (email) to their research leader and graduate advisor.
    - Plans will be presented to the college Dean's about which graduate students may be returning to the research projects. The framework for these decisions include consideration of whether a student is close to graduation (within 6 months) and needs access to complete their graduate research. Faculty Research Leaders must advocate for graduate students most in need of access, in balance with reasonable health concerns.
    - Accommodations made for students who were quite close to completing their degrees this semester are discussed on the GRA website. Faculty running graduate programs need to think about the tension between making accommodations for these circumstances and protecting the integrity of SDSU graduate degrees. What kind of work is sufficient to earn a master's degree? If a master's thesis has been derailed by COVID and the inability to be on campus, doing the work as planned, is there an alternative that is within disciplinary standards within the control of the faculty in the program? Faculty members can have students pivot do something slightly different, perhaps with Data that has been previously collected. The integrity of SDSU degrees is an important part of the conversation.