SCHOOL OF MINES & TECHNOLOGY
ROCKERS RETURN TASK FORCE
FALL 2020 SEMESTER PLANNING FOR COVID-19 IMPACTS

CHARTER
This Charter examines the options that the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology (SD Mines) might implement for reestablishing campus operations over Summer 2020 and conducting operations for the Fall 2020 semester to address the COVID-19 pandemic. Possible options could include a normal, early, or late start for in-person classes, online classes for the whole semester, or online classes for a few weeks and then transition to in-person classes. The task force should consider financial impacts as well as classroom, housing, and dining capabilities with social distancing and group limitations (<10).

MEMBERS
• Dr. Lance Roberts, Interim Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs, Co-Chair
• Dr. Bill Spindle, Vice President for Finance and Administration, Co-Chair
• Dr. Ralph Davis, Vice President for Research
• Dr. Patricia Mahon, Vice President for Student Development & Dean of Students
• Dr. Laurie Anderson, Department Head, Geology/Geological Engr (& MEM); Director, Museum of Geology
• Dr. Haley Armstrong, Humanities and Social Sciences Faculty
• Dr. Bill Cross, Faculty Senate President & Materials and Metallurgical Engineering Professor
• Ms. Jessica Daigle, Monument Health
• Ms. Rosalia Dawley, Student Association Vice-President
• Dr. Saurav Kumar Dubey, Industrial Engineering Faculty
• Ms. Diana Eastman, Assistant Registrar
• Ms. Shelby Guthrie, Student Association President
• Dr. Pierre Larochelle, Department Head, Mechanical Engineering
• Mr. Joel Lueken, Athletic Director
• Ms. Kelsey O’Neill, Associate Vice President, Human Resources
• Dr. Maribeth Price, Dean of Graduate Education
• Ms. Jerilyn Roberts, Director, Facilities and Risk Management
• Ms. Deb Rowse, Assistant Controller (Finance)
• Mr. Bryan Schumacher, Director, ITS
• Dr. Jeff Woldstad, Department Head, Industrial Engineering
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational Guidance</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Concepts</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overarching Operational Guidelines</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Containment and Surveillance Capabilities</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Containment</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveillance</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Distancing</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required Small Group Work</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universal Face Covering Use</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaning and Disinfecting</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signage</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spaces</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials Handling and Shared Equipment</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity Limitations</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel Measures</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Considerations</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Considerations</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence Halls and Campus Living Policy and Practice</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-Curricular Programs and Campus Activities</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Considerations</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Travel</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research – Laboratory and Field</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essential Research-Related Activities</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Next Steps for Investigators</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Space</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Work</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2020 Teaching Guidance for Departments and Faculty</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumptions</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guiding Principles</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Requirements</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies to Consider</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional/Department Strategies</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course/Faculty Strategies</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SOUTH DAKOTA SCHOOL OF MINES AND TECHNOLOGY
RETURN TO CAMPUS PLAN

This plan is designed to facilitate the return of SD Mines staff, faculty, and students safely to the ‘new normal’ face-to-face campus environment in Fall 2020. Campus leadership, which includes the Executive Council and the Emergency Management Team, will continue to meet regularly throughout the summer and fall semester to ensure that all aspects of this plan are carried out successfully as well as continue to refine and add tasks as required. The plan has three phases:

June 2020 - Transition Month: We will initiate the Return to Campus Plan in June 2020 with staff and faculty returning gradually to campus. Supervisors will determine when employees must return to work. It is expected that many employees will continue to work at home, and depending on the needs of the organization, may not return until notified by their supervisor. Those at high risk for severe illness or those who are ill will need to make arrangements to remain away from work.

July 2020: Depending on the state of the COVID crisis, summer events may be scheduled on campus. For this to occur, there must be a significant downward trajectory of documented COVID cases in Pennington County with no reports of large numbers of persons testing positive for the COVID virus.

August 2020: Face-to-face school will start on schedule unless the COVID crisis has intensified and there is a significant spread of infection in the local community. If this occurs, SD Mines may transition to online-only classes or some modified version of online classes and face-to-face classes.

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE

This guidance is being developed during a very fluid situation. If the COVID-19 infection spread dictates that changes are required to slow or stop the return to campus process, all employees and students will be notified as soon as possible. Some offices and workspaces will have limiting factors in the early stages of returning to a new normal. The sizes of offices, common spaces, or reception areas will guide the number of people that can be in a building together and how quickly operations resume. SD Mines intends to ensure buildings are equipped to handle traffic safely and in compliance with CDC’s guidelines.
The implementation of guidance provided will depend upon routine availability of COVID-19 clinical screening, access to health status evaluations for individuals, and the availability of public health measures including timely case contact tracing. The measures recommended will need to be in context with the prevalence of active and recovered COVID-19 affected individuals in the broader geographic region and comprehensive community-specific outpatient and inpatient clinical diagnostic and treatment services. There also needs to be timely and accurate data monitoring of the pandemic impacts on the campus and the surrounding community. It is understood that the broader community prevalence and the availability of comprehensive health care resources will fluctuate over time and hopefully continue to improve. As such, the progression forward and/or backward from one recovery step to another will occur in this broader context.

KEY CONCEPTS

COVID-19, a novel coronavirus infection emerging in 2019, has led to an unprecedented infectious disease risk for all persons. The duration of this pandemic remains unclear and the situation continues to evolve. Public health guidance, scientific knowledge, and clinical best practices will change, so these guidelines may require updates, so they do not quickly become obsolete. The single constant for SD Mines is that the road to recovery will be long. We can anticipate restrictions and limitations in activities will be in place for the next 12–18 months, if not longer.

Resumption of activities will be gradual and phased based on local public health conditions as well as institutional capacity. Return to an active on-campus environment will depend upon widespread testing, contact tracing, and isolation/quarantine of ill and exposed individuals both on campus and in the community. SD Mines will prepare for the likelihood of a local rebound of infections that may result in a return to more restrictive mitigation measures and physical distancing for periods of time.

Protecting our most vulnerable populations (medically susceptible, persons of color, uninsured or underinsured, non-traditional, and older students, faculty, and staff members) is a moral and ethical obligation. Some vulnerable individuals may need to observe ongoing physical distancing for a more prolonged period.

Meticulous adherence to public health practices including hand hygiene, physical distancing, proper cough/sneeze etiquette, frequent disinfection of common and high traffic areas, symptom assessment, temperature checks, and face covering in public is the campus’ new normal. This will be widely communicated to students, employees, and all campus visitors.
OVERARCHING OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES (Based on CDC, State of South Dakota Public Health Department, and local Rapid City and Pennington County Guidance. Individual units should use this guidance to develop more detailed department “Back to Campus” plans):

CONTAINMENT AND SURVEILLANCE CAPABILITIES

Containment measures are multi-pronged and include surveillance, rapid identification of infection with immediate isolation, contact tracing, and quarantine.

CONTAINMENT

• Controls are available to minimize exposure to the COVID virus.
  o Physical spaces (classrooms, offices, residence halls, gyms, etc.) will be properly cleaned to minimize the ability of the virus to survive on surfaces and facility set-ups will be in place to enforce social distancing.
  o Social distancing is practiced by everyone.
  o Everyone participates in cleaning surfaces.
  o Everyone wears a mask appropriately.
• Containment and surveillance capabilities exist to monitor high-risk groups and to limit exposure (using group cohorts where appropriate):
  o Vulnerable staff, faculty, and students because of medical issues or age may have an option of working/studying from home, if appropriate.
  o Athletic teams.
  o Fraternities and sororities.
  o Housing residents.
  o Research field teams.
  o Study groups.
  o Camp teams, etc.

SURVEILLANCE

Surveillance systems should detect the emergence and spread of infection within the general community and within specific campus populations. A plan is being developed to ensure sick students, staff, and faculty can be quickly identified and isolated to minimize disruptions to the greater university population.

• Everyone will accomplish a daily self-diagnostic symptoms checklist to be shared with supervisors or student affairs staff.
• Temperature stations will be available for uncertain cases and those wishing to check their temperature.
• Employees who are sick will stay home or be sent home and will be expected to connect with their health care provider for further guidance as well access to immediate viral testing for those with symptoms.
• Students will stay home or be sent home and will be referred to the Student Health Center (contracted through Monument Health) for further guidance. Monument Health Services include access to immediate viral testing for individuals with symptoms.

The South Dakota Department of Health provides contact tracing and identification of all persons exposed to COVID-19 and case management of persons diagnosed with COVID-19. Persons under quarantine after exposure, including placement in isolation/quarantine housing, seeking psychological support, support for basic needs, and ongoing monitoring while isolated, can seek services from Monument Health personnel and other community providers; students also have access to on-campus Student Health Services and SD Mines Counseling Services.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

• Maintain 6 feet of separation from other faculty, staff, students, contractors, or visitors whenever possible.
• To promote the concept of social distancing, in offices, labs, and study spaces, try to go beyond the 6-foot social distancing minimum and have a goal of 10 feet of separation between desks, workstations, computer terminals, individual study areas, and other single use equipment (e.g., exercise equipment, self-serve terminals, etc.).
• Have a goal of 60-70 ft² per student, faculty, staff, and visitor in classrooms, work areas, and common spaces by physically moving/removing furniture, demarcating physical distance requirements with physical barriers or signage, or covering equipment to promote physical distancing.
• Have a goal of 150-275 ft² per person in research laboratories and remove furniture, provide floor markings, and post signage as needed to promote physical distancing.
• Employees should not share small 100-160 ft² offices. If not possible, alternate use of the space among office members (see next bullet).
• To reduce the overall population density in shared space at any one time, consider alternating on-site and telework days, shifting work schedules, and part-time telework.
• Meetings should continue virtually whenever possible to prevent contact and free up meeting spaces for possible use as offices for employees who are displaced from shared offices, or for use as classrooms.
• Wash hands for 20 seconds using soap and water frequently throughout the day, and after contacting surfaces that may have been touched by other persons. Hand sanitizer may be used when a handwashing sink is not available.
• Limit visitors except required essential services, adequately control recruitment visits, and during properly managed museum/bookstore hours — when determined to be feasible.
• Initially, buildings will be locked and only accessible via key or card access.
• Meet via Zoom or outdoors where feasibly possible. In-person meetings must be kept to less than 10 people or at the adjusted capacity of the room, whichever is larger, while still maintaining a minimum of 6 feet of separation for social distancing.
• Create online options for traditional walk-up window services.
• Use plexiglass dividers between cashiers and customers and other situations where social distancing cannot be maintained routinely.

REQUIRED SMALL GROUP WORK

• Cohorts of small groups of students and faculty/staff learning teams will be implemented along with small group guidelines for co-curricular programs.
• These small group learning teams should have a consistent membership, so that students in close proximity always work together, with classroom seating, breaks, and meals taken together.
• Evening and weekend instruction and laboratory access will be expanded. This serves to both to decrease number of potential exposures for each person and to simplify contact tracing of possible exposures if a case presents.
• Limit crossover in entrances, hallways, and common spaces as needed by adjusting personnel workflow and physical structures. Individuals will be encouraged to walk to the right in common hallways, corridors, and paths.
• The number of persons in a hallway or entryway at one time will be limited.
• Transition time between events will be increased.
• Limit contact with high-touch surfaces (e.g., keeping doors open to allow movement without touching knobs when it does not impact fire and other safety zones).
• Campus community members should enter each area with clean hands and have easy access to hand sanitizers.

UNIVERSAL FACE COVERING USE

• All students, faculty, and staff are highly recommended to wear face coverings (i.e., cloth masks) in accordance with CDC guidelines whenever they will encounter other people, and especially in common areas (e.g., hallways, classrooms, recreational facilities, work areas, elevators, restrooms, retail spaces) or any other areas where it may be difficult to maintain a minimum 6 feet of distance from other persons. Regularly consult CDC Guidelines for use of cloth masks.
• Employees will be given one cloth mask, but everyone should have multiple face coverings. Face coverings worn for extended periods should be laundered or hand
washed at least daily using regular laundry detergent. If face coverings are issued by the university, they become the property of the user, and are the responsibility of that individual to ensure proper laundering.

• Food service employees must always be masked while preparing and serving food.

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

**Space Cleaning Routines:** Routine cleaning services will be augmented with additional cleaning and disinfection activities in all areas, with varying frequency depending on the number of occupants and the space type and usage. In general, spaces with higher levels of occupants and work activity will have a higher frequency of cleaning. Cleaning by the custodial service will consist of the activities described below:

• Routine cleaning: waste removal, floor cleaning, and wipe-down of horizontal surfaces.
• Routine restroom cleaning: waste removal, cleaning and disinfection of floors, sinks, toilets, and urinals.
• Routine cleaning of dining hall, Miner’s Shack, Einstein’s and other food service areas: cleaning of food preparation areas, service lines, and dining facilities.
• Enhanced cleaning and disinfection of high-touch surfaces: wipe down of high-frequency touch points (door handles, light switches, elevator buttons, shared equipment control panels, etc.) with [EPA-approved disinfectants](#).
• Enhanced disinfection: disinfection of horizontal work surfaces in classrooms and common areas using [EPA-approved disinfectants](#).
• Hand sanitizer locations are available throughout campus for campus community use.
• Everyone should take responsibility to help wipe down communal areas with provided supplies.

SIGNAGE

**Signage and Visual Cues:** Signs will be posted in high visibility areas within each building (including common areas, restrooms, shared office spaces, classrooms, etc.) The signs will be used to communicate:

• Reminders to exercise physical distancing, to use of face coverings, and to practice good personal hygiene practices.
• Specific room or space occupancy limits, if applicable.
• Additional precautions that must be observed for unique spaces.
• Floor markings or barrier tape may be used where necessary to promote physical distancing.
SPACES

Campus Spaces: Occupancy and distancing requirements for all spaces will be based on the following:

- Occupancy levels for departmental and university spaces and classrooms will be reduced, based on calculated square footage required per occupant in order to maintain physical distancing at all times.
- Scheduling Office, Environmental Health, and Facilities Management staff are available to help determine how best to maximize individual classroom and instructional laboratory spaces within social distancing guidelines.
- Shared spaces and meeting rooms should be converted to single-use office spaces or classrooms, as needed.
- All occupied buildings will maintain HVAC system operation for maximum space occupancy to allow for maximum fresh air supply, regardless of reduced occupancy within the space. Air filters will be checked routinely to ensure maximum usage.

MATERIALS HANDLING AND SHARED EQUIPMENT

- Individuals expected to collect or distribute materials throughout the workday (e.g., mail services, cashiers, retail employees) should wear disposable gloves while handling materials and, after gloves are removed, wash hands or use hand sanitizer when a handwashing sink is not available.
- Others handling paper materials less frequently should, whenever possible, place paper materials into a quarantine area for 24 hours before handling and wash hands immediately after handling. Shared equipment should be disinfected between uses.

CAPACITY LIMITATIONS

- Limit occupancy based on Rapid City/CDC guidelines with occupancy limits posted. Scheduling Office staff will provide guidance.

PERSONNEL MEASURES

The priority in the near term is to return employees to full productivity, whether by working in an office setting or in a work-from-home arrangement. Unless approved by HR for FFCRA, FMLA, or ADA considerations, employees who are unwilling to return to work will not be provided administrative leave.
INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATIONS

Supervisors will be required to work with their supervisor who is an Executive Council member to identify and continuously review the statuses of their employees’ work locations and availability. Should an employee be unable to work due to childcare needs or illness, supervisors should instruct these employees to contact HR for information on options available to them.

- Those identified as high risk by a medical provider or CDC guidelines.
  o Continuation of remote work will likely be necessary, with evaluation on a regular basis moving forward, in accordance with CDC guidelines or recommendations.
- Those identified as having a high-risk immediate family member living in the home.
  o Continuation of remote work is an option for consideration.
- Those without childcare who can work remotely can continue to do so through May 31, with reevaluation at the end of the month.
  o Employees without childcare who either cannot work remotely or cannot work remotely and care for their child/children also have Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) available, which may need to be used should the situation continue.
- Not wanting to send children to childcare is not the same as not having it available; the FFCRA leave requires the employee to certify that they do not have a person to care for the child.

June 1, 2020 – Back to Normal Operations will be implemented, provided the benchmarks for return to work are met.

Procedures will include phased return to work planning through staggering schedules of employees while coordinating schedules to ensure phone and office coverage, depending on the employees and the office working conditions.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Visitor restrictions should remain in place.
- Work related in-state travel, by a single traveler or cohort, may be resumed on a limited basis where it is crucial to the execution of projects and delivery of services. However, employees should evaluate the pandemic situation in the county or counties being visited and any restrictions in place for facilities in which the work will be done before
traveling. Proper PPE should be used throughout travel. Out-of-state personal or work-related travel should be approved only if deemed essential.

• When/if employees test positive for COVID-19, while the case is active, they will be in contact with personnel from the South Dakota Department of Health for health care management. Employees who test positive are also asked to contact Human Resources. Employees who test positive can be accommodated through remote work while they quarantine or will be eligible for emergency sick leave if they are too sick to work.
• Employees with symptoms should notify their supervisor and stay home.
• Employees exhibiting symptoms at work will be sent home.
• Any employee with symptoms should contact their healthcare provider.
• Sick employees should remain home as directed by the South Dakota Dept. of Health or their healthcare provider.
• SD Mines will not require employees to be tested for COVID-19 to confirm calling in sick or to return to work.
• Employees who have been exposed to a person who has tested positive to COVID-19 may be able to work on site or remotely, depending upon the situation.

RESIDENCE HALLS AND CAMPUS LIVING POLICY AND PRACTICE

Campus residence halls and related living facilities will be available for students returning to campus. To best ensure the safety and health of the residents, the residence halls will only be filled to an approximate 85% capacity.

• Residence halls will promote physical distancing best practices in all designated areas.
• Residence halls, dining facilities, and common areas on campus are not being used for community public health quarantine, isolation, or post-acute care needs.
• One or more residence hall areas on campus will have rooms designated for students who develop influenza-like or COVID-19 related symptoms, require isolation, and/or quarantine for other medical reasons.
• Increased surface and facility cleaning will be done with approved equipment and materials in all common areas and residential facilities by students, resident advisors, and/or the custodial services personnel who are specifically trained and protected.
• Residence hall guest policies and procedures will be adapted to promote the wellness of students and meet social distancing guidelines.
• Designated PPE and appropriate training in proper use will be required of all residence life staff working in campus housing facilities.
• Aramark will work with the residence life staff to develop and implement policies and procedures to maintain physical distancing in all food service and campus dining facilities. Efforts to increase “take-out” services and spaced dining, as well as responsibilities for surface cleansing and waste disposal, will be addressed.

COUNSELING
As the stress from the pandemic has continued the rates of depression, anxiety and ultimately suicide are all likely to see serious increases, with anecdotal evidence already being reported. 

To meet the needs of SD Mines students, the counseling center has and will continue to work on the following to provide ongoing services in a safe and effective manner.

- Implementation of an electronic health record system, allowing students to schedule appointments and prepare intake forms online.
- Continue to implement telehealth services, allowing increased access to clinical staff by students; addresses social distancing; continuity of care for students during internships and coops; and services to students when they are ill.
- Reorganization of the counseling office spaces will meet CDC health recommendations.
- Wellness prevention programming will continue and include virtual aspects to reach more students.

**CO-CURRICULAR PROGRAMS AND CAMPUS ACTIVITIES**

Guidelines will be subject to constant change. Preliminary considerations are as follows:

- All meetings and social gatherings should be limited to 10 people or less, have made accommodations for appropriate physical distancing, and should not involve any off-campus participants for on-campus events.
- To provide access for individuals not able to be physically present, all university-sponsored events and activities need to accommodate remote participation when activity is otherwise happening face to face.
- University-affiliated housing facilities, like fraternity and sorority houses, will be open so long as students will be able to use all physical distancing best practices in all designated areas. Dining facilities inside the houses will permit students to maintain appropriate physical distancing and best practices for food service facilities.
- All student organization-sponsored events and programs must be pre-approved by the organization advisor and the Vice President or designated senior staff member.
- Student organization travel needs to be deemed necessary and be pre-approved by the organization advisor and the Vice-President or designated senior staff member.
- Student organizations will be provided support to conduct organizational business online, leveraging technology.
- Student organization fundraisers distributing food are not permitted until further notice (e.g. bake sales, selling franchise food items).
- Fundraisers should leverage electronic money exchange (e.g., Venmo) instead of collecting physical currency.
- Student organization gatherings must follow adequate physical distancing for on and off campus meetings.
• Campus recreation and fitness centers will be open so long as students and members will be able to use all physical distancing and cleaning best practices.
• All fitness and recreational programming such as group exercise classes, club and intramural sports competitions should be limited based on campus physical distance guidelines and pre-approved by a designated senior staff member.
• All campus-sponsored student, faculty, and staff events and programs must be pre-approved by the Vice President or designated senior staff member.
• All campus events and programs should avoid providing food service until further notice.

INTERNATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Students
• Visa services have been shut down worldwide; this may resume in June or July in various locations.
• International students are limited in taking online courses, but exceptions have been made for online, hybrid, and face-to-face courses for the pandemic, if it applies to ALL students.
• New international students will probably be unable to obtain visas for fall term. If allowed, quarantine sites will need to be determined if they plan to live with others or housing arrangements have not yet been made. Duration of the quarantine will be in accordance with CDC guidelines.
• Some current students in home countries or traveling abroad may be unable to return to the US.

International travel
• International flight availability is currently severely limited.
• Self-quarantine after arrival could apply to ALL students, faculty, and staff for international travel and travel to domestic hot spots.
• Travel restrictions in other countries include barring all entry or requiring self-quarantine, including for citizens of that country. The CDC lists restrictions at: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/from-other-countries.html
• Other resources:
  o https://www.fragomen.com/file/newcoronavirustablefornewspage512v30pdf
  o President’s Alliance on Education and Immigration https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/18E7osk_Z3KfOfxQevaB9n1S1JfPMviv
RESEARCH – LABORATORY AND FIELD

Procedures for Requesting Laboratory Access

With the rapidly evolving circumstances regarding COVID-19 and a focus on social distancing and the health and well-being of the community, the Office of Research, in consultation with the SD Mines Executive Committee has issued these standards related to laboratory research. Specifically, Principal Investigators should be in a mode for all on-campus research to be reduced to essential research-related activities only.

The underlying principle is to help ensure that our healthcare systems do not become overwhelmed. Together, we need to do everything we can to curtail campus activities to the barest minimum levels.

Limited access to laboratories will be maintained so that essential research-related activities can continue.

The best thing you and your students can do now is write papers, process data, and write grant proposals. This activity can all be done from remote locations.

ESSENTIAL RESEARCH-RELATED ACTIVITIES

- Activity that, if discontinued, would result in impediments to fulfilling contractual grant related obligations.
- Activity that, if discontinued, would impede the progress of graduate students toward completion of their research programs.
- Activity that, if discontinued, would generate significant data and sample loss necessitating a total restart of an ongoing project.
- Activity that, if discontinued, would pose a safety hazard.
- Activity that maintains critical equipment in facilities and laboratories.
- Activity that maintains critical samples, reagents, and materials.
- Activity that maintains critically-needed plant populations, tissue cultures, bacteria, archaea, and other living organisms.
- COVID-19 related activity that has a timeline for deployment that could address the crisis.

If you are unsure if your activity is considered essential research, please contact Ralph Davis, Vice President for Research.

As a reminder, faculty members and project principal investigators should strive to minimize time in the laboratory by all personnel, maintain social distancing when laboratory access is necessary, follow PPE guidelines, and practice recommended disinfection processes.
Please contact Ralph Davis, Vice President for Research to determine if your personnel can access the facilities.

The final decision to request laboratory access for research purposes is at the discretion of the faculty member in charge of each individual laboratory. These decisions should be made with the best interests of the faculty member, the research scientists, the post-doctoral scientists, and the graduate students as paramount.

**SCOPE**

This guidance applies to researchers in all campus facilities, including those located off campus such as the CAPE laboratory at TDL, the AMP laboratory at Ascent, and other off-campus facilities.

**NEXT STEPS FOR INVESTIGATORS**

- **Request for essential personnel in laboratories**: this will include the following information:
  - **Faculty name**
  - **Research scientist**
  - **Post docs**
  - **Graduate students**
  - **Undergraduate students**
  - **Reason access to the facilities is essential**

- **Access to labs will be available only for personnel who conduct essential research-related activities.** A determination of essential research-related activities will be made on a case-by-case basis.

- Essential work in labs should be staggered so that minimal laboratory personnel are present at any one time. In no case should the number of personnel in a space exceed the CDC guideline for groups of 10 people or fewer.

- Social distancing should be maintained even when groups are in the same space in accordance with the CDC guidelines.

- Maintain contact information for all lab members (students, post docs, staff) and review contingency plans and emergency procedures within your group.

- Disinfect common laboratory areas and touch points (e.g. doorknobs, sink handles, freezer doors, telephones). This should be done upon entering the facility and leaving the facility.

- Each facility with employee access will develop and implement a cleaning/disinfection protocol and inform all personnel entering the facility about their responsibilities based on this protocol. Post the protocol in the laboratory where it is clearly visible.

- Be aware that these guidelines may change on short notice. Given this, it is important to plan ahead so your facility and experiments can be shut down in a timely manner should the need arise to become more restrictive with laboratory access.
RESEARCH SPACE

Laboratory and Field

- Identify facility coordinators for implementing COVID-19 guidelines, addressing issues and evaluating facility impact. Coordinators should include the department head or a person identified by the department head who will report issues to the Vice President for Research and the Director of Facilities.

- Maintain opportunities for hybrid, fully remote and traditional research, discovery and creative activity combinations. Faculty, staff, and students associated with research projects should work remotely to the greatest extent possible. Minimize time in the laboratory, follow social distancing practices while in the facility or in the field, define and implement a PPE (Personal Protection Equipment) plan, and follow an established disinfection plan when entering and exiting the facility.

- Ensure students, staff, and faculty work closely with accessibility services staff to manage specific accommodations related to on campus or remote research laboratory engagement. Continue current approval chain and tracking system for students, faculty, and staff working in research laboratories. This approval includes a request for personnel to access the facility with review and approval by the Vice President for Research with final listing provided to Director of Facilities and the Provost.

- Implement ways to support high risk “vulnerable” students, faculty, and staff and maintain remote opportunities to enhance their safety related to their research programs. At the Vice President for Research level, we have not identified high risk/vulnerable researchers, but is a discussion that must take place between the faculty supervisor overseeing the research and personnel conducting the research. Faculty, staff, and students in high risk/vulnerable categories should feel free to bring their concerns to the faculty laboratory supervisor, department head, and/or the Vice President for Research.

- Transfer grants and sponsored programs, grants accounting, and the host of regulatory required aspects of sponsored research programs to an online setting. All Office of Research staff are currently working remotely and doing so successfully. We have been accessing the office individually on an as-needed basis. Personnel accessing the office have followed social distancing guidelines and followed PPE and disinfection protocols. When offices are required to be open, we will move to a minimal staff (one or two) who can adequately socially distance in our office complex. The remainder will continue to work remotely. We have several employees in high-risk categories and these employees will continue to work remotely.

- Require that all faculty, staff, and students carry a valid campus specific ID in research laboratory facilities.

- Cross-train employees to perform essential functions to maintain laboratory operations. Such training is the responsibility of the faculty and/or laboratory director.
• Implement a plan for human subjects research programs that reflect best physical distancing practices, including considerations for the most “vulnerable” individuals. SD Mines has very limited human subjects research, but our researchers will follow this guidance.
• Discourage policies and practices that may incentivize students, faculty, and staff to come to work sick (e.g., extra food at end of shift, bonus pay, etc.).
• Maintain only essential research personnel in laboratory space at all times.

FIELD WORK

Field work will be reviewed in the same manner as any other research performed at SD Mines. The same access form is to be used, but the response to justify must include the following.

• Does the field work meet the definition of essential, i.e., the research cannot be put on hold because:
  o the opportunity to collect data is seasonal or site-specific, or must be done on a set schedule?
  o is irreplaceable if the research cannot be done at a specific time at a specific site?
  o cannot be done in another way?
• Is the site and/or facility accessible?
• How many people will participate and what are their roles (faculty, student)?
• Is field work part of a class?
• Does travel include overnight stays or is it day travel to and from the site?
• What is the safety plan (include social distancing protocols, safety practices, decontamination of items, travel to a location, and travel to and from field site on routine basis)?
• Action plans should include:
  o List of all personnel, their contact information, and an emergency contact.
  o Justification as to why delaying the research will have a detrimental impact on the research project or the student’s progression towards a degree that are engaged in the research.
  o Description of the research activities that require interaction of less than 6 feet and what precautions are being undertaken to limit potential disease transmission.
  o Contingency plan for carrying on research if one or more personnel becomes sick or is no longer willing to risk conducting the research.
• Research being conducted at non-SD Mines sites must have written permission for the field work to proceed from the funding agency and from those that control access to the field site.
• If non-SD Mines agencies or research partners are actively engaged in the research, the research should be conducted using the guidelines that are the most stringent, unless expressly permitted by the partner agencies.
• Before conducting research each day, all SD Mines participants in the research project must self-report their symptoms to their supervisor.
• No one should participate in any field work if they are feeling ill or if any members of their household are experiencing flu-like symptoms.

FALL 2020 TEACHING GUIDANCE FOR DEPARTMENTS AND FACULTY

ASSUMPTIONS:
1. Semester will begin and end on “normal” dates (+/- one week).
2. Semester duration will be normal at 15 weeks.
3. General safety and cleaning protocols will be in place before the semester begins.
4. Social distancing recommendations from CDC will not be relaxed by fall.
5. HR policies will be developed as necessary.
6. BOR will develop temporary policies as necessary.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:
1. There cannot be a one-size-fits all solution, as every department and every class are different. Departments and faculty are encouraged to think creatively about how to conduct instruction effectively within the assumptions and guiding principles.
2. We need to prepare for any scenario from semi-normal instruction to fully online instruction and we should be prepared to switch between scenarios on short notice.
3. We need to accommodate the needs of faculty and students who are in vulnerable, at-risk groups or who are quarantined.
4. In-class interactions are an integral and valuable part of on-campus instruction and should be provided to on-campus students to the extent possible.
5. Classroom and laboratory capacity will be set based on meeting social distancing recommendations per the CDC, which will likely result in a 50- to 75-percent reduction in the number of students that can be placed in a room. To that end, there are facility, scheduling, and workload limits to overcome through means such as adding more sections during the day, adding evening or weekend sections, requiring additional sanitizing, etc. Reducing in-person contact hours where feasible will help preserve capacity for courses and laboratory sections where in-class activities are critical.
6. Use of “hybrid delivery modes” that combine face-to-face interaction with online components in the course and “mixed delivery mode” in which some students attend the course in person while others attend via distance must be strongly considered.
MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS:
1. All instructors must use D2L to provide course materials to students. Use of D2L to accept, grade, and return assignments is strongly recommended, along with its use for quizzes and exams.
2. All courses need to provide a mechanism for at-risk or quarantined students to participate remotely.
3. All courses need to be prepared to move online on short notice, if necessary.
4. Advising and office hours should be performed using remote means (i.e., email, Zoom) whenever possible.
5. Limit or eliminate the use of shared items in classrooms and laboratories such as computer keyboards, pens, and mice; whiteboard markers and chalk; pens and pencils; lab samples; etc. If items must be subject to shared use, arrange for sanitizing or other protective measures.

STRATEGIES TO CONSIDER:
There are a variety of strategies that the institution, the departments, and the faculty can consider in planning for fall 2020 instruction.

INSTITUTIONAL/DEPARTMENT STRATEGIES:
1. Survey faculty and courses to identify which could go completely online, which need to be offered partially in person, and which need to be in person.
2. Use online instruction for the first two weeks as a quarantine measure.
3. Move largest courses online or primarily online, with consideration that these are typically freshman- and sophomore-level courses. These students may have the most difficulty in succeeding online and will need additional support strategies.
4. Move courses to larger classrooms to maintain social distancing guidelines.
5. Ask for volunteers to provide instruction outside the core academic day from 8am-5pm. Some faculty may find this approach beneficial to their family schedules. Consider potential impacts on working students. Be aware that rescheduling may create new scheduling conflicts for students.
6. Schedule lab sections and recitations in separate but adjacent rooms so that faculty and teaching assistants can move from room to room rather than holding more sections at different times. The same cohort should meet together each week.
7. Consider whether it is feasible to temporarily reduce the number of courses that require labs, especially elective courses.
8. Offer courses online where feasible and reserve room capacity for lab courses.
9. Swap fall electives requiring more live interaction/labs with spring electives requiring less interaction.

COURSE/FACULTY STRATEGIES:
1. Rethink relying on lecture as the primary class time activity. Consider flipping the course, so that students consume lectures and study course materials remotely, and in-class
activities focus on student questions, problem sets, and application of course materials. [https://lesley.edu/article/an-introduction-to-flipped-learning](https://lesley.edu/article/an-introduction-to-flipped-learning)

2. Consider creating a hybrid/blended course, in which a portion of “seat time” is replaced with guided remote instructional activities. [https://ctl.wiley.com/transitioning-to-an-online-class/](https://ctl.wiley.com/transitioning-to-an-online-class/)

3. Consider a hybrid model in which the lecture hours are taught remotely and labs are in-class. The lecture could be delivered synchronously so students and faculty still have an “in-class” feel and can interact with each other.

4. Use the flipped/hybrid approach to restrict in-person attendance in a class to a certain percentage of students in each class session and rotate students throughout the week (1/3, 1/3, 1/3 model).

5. Offer a mixed-mode class, in which at-risk students can participate in most or all activities remotely while other students participate in classroom activities. This strategy will also ease impacts on students who work, have families, are in quarantine or sick, or face scheduling challenges due to courses being moved outside core hours.

6. Review lab activities in a course and evaluate which require in-class participation, which could be online, and whether some could be temporarily eliminated.


8. Provide additional training and opportunities for individual coaching during the summer 2020. Encourage faculty to take advantage of these resources.