Faculty of Science Process for Resumption of Research Lab Activity

Dear Colleagues,

We wanted to provide an update on the Faculty process for the resumption of research activities on campus.

- The online portal for the Faculty submission process will not be available until early next week. There are a number of reasons for this delay. First, there have been changing guidelines communicated by the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Advanced Education. Second, a number of university committees are now examining aspects and implications of allowing faculty to return to campus to resume research activity and they are developing their own guidelines. We apologize for these delays that are beyond our control.

- While there is a short delay in getting the form online, we are hopeful that if further delays can be avoided, we can maintain our timeframe and have labs resuming operations in the week of June 1st.

- Attached to this message are the draft principles and guidelines to support development of Safe Work Plans and a copy of the WorkSafeBC COVID-19 Safety Plan guidance. You are welcome to begin developing your safety plans in alignment with these guidelines. We have purposely designed our guidance to be conservative, to ensure we can provide a safe working environment for everyone. We appreciate that each department has developed its own guidelines, which we believe are in alignment with those attached.

- Please be aware that as this process progresses there may be additional changes that we need to incorporate into safety plans.

- Related to the last point, we have just been informed by the VPRs office that prior to returning to work on campus, all employees must complete an online COVID-19 Awareness and Safe Return to Work training module on canvas. Supervisors will need to confirm completion of the training prior to employees returning to campus. The indication we have is that this online module should be ready for the week of June 1st. We will keep you updated as we hear further news.

Additional Context on the Resumption of Research Activity

We fully understand that the prospect of returning to campus may raise real and legitimate health concerns for faculty, staff and graduate students.

Consequently, we thought it helpful to highlight key considerations in our approach.
• The health and well-being of students, staff and faculty is our primary consideration.

• We are not instructing anyone to return to campus. Indeed, everyone is encouraged to continue to work remotely, where practicable, for the foreseeable future.

• We are creating a framework that will enable research faculty and graduate students, who choose to, to resume laboratory-based research activity, subject to development and approval of a Safe Work Plan.

• The option to return to campus is voluntary and we will not tolerate coercion of graduate students or staff.

• The online form that is being created includes language where faculty, staff and students acknowledge that the return to campus is voluntary and accommodations will be made for those who feel they cannot return to campus.

I thank you again for your continued patience and co-operation as we work carefully through this process.

Kind regards
Paul