

**From:** Luis Cifuentes <[lacifuen@nmsu.edu](mailto:lacifuen@nmsu.edu)>

**Date:** Thursday, March 26, 2020 at 8:01 AM

**Subject:** THURSDAY: Campus Research Update

Dear deans, DHs, directors, faculty, students, and staff,

Owing to Governor Lujan-Grisham's Stay-at-Home order and the continued spread of COVID-19, access to on-campus NMSU laboratories, work spaces and offices will be restricted to faculty and staff who provide essential/critical functions. Neither graduate nor undergraduate students should be performing research on campus unless they meet the exceptions below and have documented approval from their director or department head, dean, and the vice president for research.

Per the Governor's order, the following will be excepted:

1. NMSU's Carlsbad Environmental Monitoring & Research Center and the Physical Science Laboratory under the "Laboratories and defense and national security-related operations supporting the United States government or a contractor to the United States government" waiver; however, running with reduced staffs; and
2. Farming and ranching operations at NMSU Agricultural Science Centers and field locations under the "Farms, ranches, and other food cultivation, processing, or packaging operations" waiver.

Recognizing that not all research activity can be suspended, the following will be allowed:

1. Maintenance of critical laboratory organisms, animals, and sensitive equipment;
2. Research in remote locations if the area is not shut down and the work, including travel, enables social distancing to be easily accommodated at all times.

We understand that these circumstances will result in delays of and impediments to critical research. In particular, there are graduate and undergraduate students planning to graduate this Spring who still need to collect data. In these cases, a request for an exception must include an explanation of why the effort is essential/critical and should describe the protocol to ensure safety (e.g., minimum number of people, social distancing, tracking students and employees moving through campus buildings, proper cleaning/sanitizing). The exception request must be reviewed and approved by the relevant director or department head and dean or vice president, and then forwarded to the vice president for research for final review and decision.

PIs on grants and contracts need to do everything possible to keep everyone employed, including students. If absolutely necessary, we have a process that provides guidance for temporary reduction of your workforce (site HR info). Finally, keep track of your sponsors' webpages for guidance and contact your funding agencies for needed clarification.

The situation is complicated and fluid, and changes may take place at any time, hopefully in the direction of lessening the need to curtail research activity. Such changes will be communicated regularly and promptly. I ask for your patience during these demanding times. As always, your contributions to research and scholarship at NMSU are greatly appreciated.

Regards,

Luis

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