

June 1, 2020

Special Statement Regarding Participation of Students in
Laboratory/Field-Based Research During the COVID19 Pandemic

Students at both the undergraduate and graduate level are an important part of the research and scholarly community at Texas State University. Likewise, the research experience is an important part of the education experience for students, irrespective of whether they intend to become professional researchers themselves. Especially at Texas State, encouraging students to engage in research is consistent with both training and diversifying our future workforce of scientists and scholars.

We realize that the COVID19 pandemic is having a significant impact on student-researchers and professional researchers alike. The inability to do laboratory-based research is disrupting progression toward degree-completion, delaying collection of data needed for theses or dissertations, and possibly creating financial challenges as well.

At the same time, one of the underlying principles used to develop the plan for resumption of laboratory research was that students needed to be protected in the process. For this reason, the on-site work of graduate and undergraduate students must be entirely voluntary and authorized by the student's advisor. Furthermore, mutual agreement of the student's willingness and the advisor's authorization must be documented and confirmed by the graduate or undergraduate program director, who will serve as the student's advocate if necessary. The student's advisor, project principal investigator, lab manager, or other appropriately-trained employee must be present or sufficiently proximate to oversee health safety training and be readily available to answer questions and address any concerns.

If graduate students have any concerns or feel pressured to return to on-site work, they should first contact their graduate advisor and then the chair of the department. If no resolution can be found, graduate students can contact Dean Andrea Golato in The Graduate College. If honors students have any concerns or feel pressured to return to on-site work, they can contact Dean Heather Galloway in the Honors College. All other undergraduate students with concerns can contact Dr. Mike Blanda in the Office of Research and Federal Relations.

Thank you,

Walter Horton, Ph.D.
Chief Research Officer
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This statement must be shared with all students who will be participating in laboratory or field-based research