



TEXAS

The University of Texas at Austin
Office of the Vice President for Research

This message has been distributed to all UT employees with Principal Investigator (PI) status, as well as all UT graduate students and postdocs.

Dear PI colleagues, graduate students, and postdocs,

As you may have [read](#), President Hartzell is making some adjustments to the start of the spring semester, given the significant increase in COVID-19 cases both locally and throughout the country. I am writing to you today to discuss how this change in plans affects laboratories and other campus research spaces.

Please know that at this time, we are not changing our Research Restart level. All forms of research are still approved. We are also not formally limiting workforce density, but in order to support a gradual return to campus, **any research that can be conducted remotely over the course of the month should be to keep lab and research space density low.** Also, PIs should be flexible with undergraduate researchers as they may be returning to campus a few weeks later than originally planned. As in the past, PIs continue to have the authority to determine if members of their teams need to work in person to support their research projects. Should this change or be extended further for any reason, I will let you and your associate deans for research (ADRs) know right away.

Additionally, [UT has revised its isolation guidelines](#) for those who are symptomatic, diagnosed with COVID-19, or who have been exposed to someone with COVID-19. Please **read these closely and share them with your teams.**

At the same time, please know that campus [is open](#), and our facilities are available to anyone — faculty, staff, student — who needs them. However:

- It is **requested and strongly recommended** that everyone, including researchers, get tested before returning to campus and that everyone wear a mask when indoors, unless in a single-occupancy office. [Free on-campus antigen \(rapid\) and PCR tests resumed this Monday](#), and [N95 and KN95 masks continue to be available in the STEM stockroom](#).
- **If you or anyone on your team is diagnosed with COVID-19, please [contact OHP immediately](#)**. They will work with you and Environmental Health & Safety to ensure a proper response, including contact tracing and assessing research spaces for cleaning or other measures.
- Individuals should not gather in confined spaces for meals or meetings, if possible.

I know this may feel like a step backward, but we are well prepared for moments such as these. We know what to do. Please work with your teams to allow for remote work when feasible this month, and please take all necessary and sensible precautions when on campus. If you have any questions that relate specifically to your school, college, or department, please contact your [ADR](#).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dan Jaffe". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dan Jaffe
Vice President for Research

This communication is from Principal Investigators – Official.
View this email [online](#).

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