

RESEARCH TOWN HALL
THURSDAY 9 APRIL 2020 AT 1:30 PM
VIA ZOOM

Preamble

- Welcome to the second virtual research town hall

- Joining us today are colleagues from IS and from the Office of Institutional Research
 - From IS, Lori Pelletier, Manager, IT Support Group
 - Also from IS, Mark Haidl, Director, Communications & Infrastructure
 - From the Office of Institution Research, Keith Fortowsky, Director Institutional Research and Data Governance Officer

- A brief update on grant extensions. Most agencies are supporting extensions due to research delays due to COVID-19 pandemic. In many cases up to a year.
 - Agencies have been communicating extensions to end dates, reporting requirements and adjustments to competition deadlines.
 - Announcements are forthcoming almost daily. The most pressing deadlines (e.g. within the next 6 months) are current priority.
 - Links to agency updates are on the UofR COVID-19 Info page, FAQ for Researchers
 - The Research Office is reaching out to individual researchers affected with next steps.
 - We ask that if you do have questions or concerns you contact your Research Facilitator with questions rather than the agency directly.

- Reinforce key messages re: current situation
 - Province is still under a State of Emergency
 - Accordingly, measures announced on March 18 regarding the research enterprise remain in effect
 - No one can say with confidence how long these measures will remain in place. However, I will re-assess the situation on April 30.
 - Any eventual relaxation of restrictions on research activity will happen in a phased in manner and work will begin soon to plan how that will work

Last week's town hall

- We heard your concerns about the impact the pandemic and the measures put in place to protect health and safety are having on your research plans and your students – undergraduate and graduate
- I committed to holding a follow up town hall when we had progress to report

What we've done since and want to share with you today

- Based on what we heard last week, we worked on compiling various available supports for adapting research plans to the constraints of the pandemic
- Some colleagues have stepped forward and offered their assistance and for that, I thank you
- CCR on Monday reviewed this information and provided feedback – thank you for that as well
- All of this information has been summarized in a document that we will make available following this town hall

- What's in the document?
 - Adapting research plans under the current circumstances for the most part translates to finding ways researchers and graduate students can work from home on value-added activities like data analysis, data modeling, writing and probably a number of others you can come up with
 - This may require access to software. The document provides information on the support available for that.
 - Lori Pelletier, who I introduced earlier, has offered help co-ordinate information and access to licensed software, like SPSS. She is here to listen in today, and then follow up with my office afterwards.
 - Importantly for your students, training support is available, for example ...
 - Gavin Simpson is offering Zoom workshops for students on quantitative data analysis using software such as R
 - Cara Bradley is currently scheduling several Zoom workshops ranging from using the library remotely to qualitative data analysis using NVivo to writing a literature review.
- Again, this information and more is detailed in the document we will be making available after this town hall

Thank you again for attending today

We will now open the floor to hear your questions

- Please use the “raise your hand” button
 - Or, if you prefer, you may submit your question using the chat function
1. Phased back in approach regarding instrument heavy research
 - Health and safety regarding allowing senior graduate students into labs
 - Sanitize/wipe down equipment

We are working on this with CCR and Health & Safety. Looking at data analysis to keep folks busy until we get to the other side.

2. Discussion on the policy regarding equipment to remote locations.

Touch base with your supervisor; anything with a barcode should have updated information (ie. home address, etc.) in order to keep track of it and ensure we get it back.

3. Extension for applications of new grants
 - Any current applications can have up to a year extension (doesn't matter what phase it is in)
 - All active NSERC discovery grants are eligible (whether you have previous extension or not); need to request the extension (not automatic); must be approved (some criteria exists)
 - There is flexibility when you can request (depending on how the summer goes)

Research Office will research this out; contact them.

4. Remote Research – high end instruments have one person running the equipment

Risk Assessment Form required.

5. What can we tell incoming graduate student regarding summer jobs?

Encourage everyone to come up with alternatives; doing something of value but not completely vulnerable (valuable for research & student; continue mentoring). There is the Federal Government CERB funding of \$2,000/month.

6. NSERC – two types of extensions (one comes with 1 extra year of money and the other gives an extra year to use the money)

There are so many different types of grants; speak with your facilitator to understanding/clarify what applies to you.

7. Is the U of R working with Immigration Canada regarding students who have been accepted but have not arrived yet? We are worried there is going to be a drop in international students.

Universities Canada is lobbying the federal government. UR International is working on this as well. It doesn't look good for spring/summer, but we are hopeful for the fall.

8. Discovery grants from recent 2020 competition

Still waiting to hear results. The deadline is April 24.

9. Federal Government funding of \$2,000/month to help summer students/jobs

We are thinking about putting an office together to further support students.

10. Continuation of Research Forms - when can expect information regarding approval?

Research Office and Health & Safety are working on creating a risk registry. While we are in a state of emergency and until risk is assessed, nothing will be approved.

11. Immigrations Canada announcement regarding international students

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/coronavirus-covid19/visitors-foreign-workers-students.html#restrictions-students>

12. Are graduate students that are here now going to get an extension to finish?

Nick Jones is preparing a package of information which will be available next week. All policy/program changes have to go through Council.

13. Question regarding additional funding from the provincial government

They are repurposing scholarships; no new money coming.

14. Can we fast-track graduate students who are close to finishing and want to return home?

Kathy McNutt said she would do that.

15. Research Ethics Board

They can only issue what the policies say. Applicants will be turned back because they cannot meet face-to-face. This will have an effect on back-end and future. They will be phasing out restrictions like were phased in. Be specific when applying; there could be changes.

16. Discussion on federal government funding and whether students should apply.

17. How will the reintroduction of fieldwork be handled?

We are still doing risk assessments. No field research will be approved until the province lifts the state of emergency. CCR is working on a process how to stage returning to fieldwork. We are starting to reach some normalcy; focus on graduate students moving forward. We will continue to monitor what the government is doing regarding the state of emergency.

18. Discussion on access to critical equipment at the university that will allow alternative options for research (one or two going into labs with social distancing and sanitizing equipment).

19. Tuition waver for international students and all graduate students

FGSR is looking at a number of alternatives. They will be putting an entire package together with input from people and Deans and will then go to Council next week.

20. Can we check on equipment that is currently in the field?

Want to see a Risk Assessment on this first. CCR will meet on Monday and will get a subcommittee together regarding processes, managing risk and safety.

21. What happens to graduated PhD students that are here and cannot go back to China.

Contact Nick Jones directly.

22. Discussion on research assistants and post docs

We are trying to come up with a process, case-by-case basis. We don't know what the impact to post docs are yet. We are looking for other alternatives; offsetting costs in other ways. Will be discussed at CCR on Monday.

23. Participants have asked for weekly updates.

We will have an update every Friday.