

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

Office of the Dean for Research

To: Assistant, Associate and Full Professors; Department Chairs; Dept. Managers in Divisions III and IV

From: Pablo G. Debenedetti, Dean for Research

Subject: Summer and Fall Expectations

Date: April 25, 2021

Dear colleagues,

I trust that this message finds you well during this very busy time when we approach the end of the academic year. This year, of course, “very busy” is a wholly inadequate understatement.

I write to remind you of the need to continue following our health and safety guidelines during the pandemic, and to share some expectations for the summer and fall.

Summer, Fall

With effective vaccines available (a wonderful example of the immense good that comes from research) and steadily increasing vaccination rates, we are planning for a full resumption of in-person research activities in the fall. The summer will be a transition period, during which we expect to see some State restrictions lifted. If/when this happens, we will of course communicate with the research community and implement appropriate procedures to enable the safe and orderly return to as close to normal operations as State rules and guidance allow.

Current Policy

Our current policy and [guidelines](#), including on [face coverings](#) and [social distancing](#), comply, as they must, with New Jersey Executive Orders 155 (Limited in-Person Instruction at Institutions of Higher Education) and 192 (Workplace Safety Standards), which remain in effect. In particular, we must continue to maintain strict social distancing (6 ft) and wear face coverings.

Current [guidelines from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#) (OSHA) specifically state (see # 15, “Not distinguishing between workers who are vaccinated and those who are not”): “*Workers who are vaccinated must continue to follow protective measures, such as wearing a face covering and remaining physically distant, because at this time, there is not evidence that COVID-19 vaccines prevent transmission of the virus from person-to-person.*” In other words, our policies apply equally to vaccinated and non-vaccinated persons and labs.

Reminders: Lab Densification, Return to Campus

In the meantime, I remind you that [procedures are in place for densifying labs](#) up to an occupancy level that maintains no less than 125 sq. ft./researcher at all times.

I also remind you that [procedures are in place for allowing the return to campus of graduate students and post-docs](#) (e.g., theoretical/computational researchers) for whom working remotely is a major impediment.

In Conclusion

Thanks to the extraordinary commitment and cooperation of Princeton’s research community, our labs have operated safely and with an admirable level of [compliance](#) since re-opening in June 2020. Thanks to science, we are beginning to see the light at the end of the very long and dark tunnel that we are traversing together. Now is not the time to lower the guard. With patience and with everyone’s cooperation, I am confident that we will be able to return to normal operations before long. Your continued compliance with health and safety guidance will make this possible. My heartfelt thanks for all that you have done to get us to the good place we are at.

With all good wishes,

Pablo

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