March 20, 2020

Dear MacEwan Research Community,

In light of the COVID-19 crisis I wanted to provide an update on research activity and some temporary modifications in how the office of research services is working.

As starting point, please refer to the general MacEwan COVID-19 update website https://www.macewan.ca/wcm/MacEwanNews/NEWS_CORONAVIRUS for up-to-date information on building status/access and MacEwan’s response to any government legislation. Research related policy and/or services may change at any time due to changes to Government or MacEwan legislation.

Office of Research Services
Our office is temporarily closed for in person consults, but we are still ‘open’ and supporting researchers electronically. ROMEO remains accessible and grant or award applications can still be submitted via PeopleSoft. Our plan is to hold virtual grant adjudication meetings and the April REB meeting will likely be virtual as well.

We are also still processing expense claims for research expenses. However, because of our virtual delivery mode, we are asking researchers to submit claims electronically. Before submitting an expense claim, scan all your receipts and submit them along with a log of all the expenses by date, including a brief explanation of each expense.

We are also available for virtual consultation on the support we offer including research proposals, funding opportunities, expenses or ethics. The following table provides contact information for ORS staff and the areas they are responsible for:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORS Staff Member</th>
<th>Area of Responsibility</th>
<th>E-mail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Garson Law</td>
<td>Internal/external research grant funding, research program development</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lawg22@macewan.ca">lawg22@macewan.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca Mitchell</td>
<td>Research ethics (human and animal)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mitchellr38@macewan.ca">mitchellr38@macewan.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bryce Wicks</td>
<td>Project accounts &amp; paying research students or personnel, expense claim eligibility, other financial issues</td>
<td><a href="mailto:wicksb2@macewan.ca">wicksb2@macewan.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicole Zastawny</td>
<td>Expense claim submission or general inquiries</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Nicole.Zastawny@macewan.ca">Nicole.Zastawny@macewan.ca</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Any general inquiries can also be directed to research@macewan.ca
Conducting Research
In accordance with government recommendations to practice social distancing and limit personal contact, the University is encouraging people to work at home if possible. Therefore, undergraduate students doing honours thesis or serving as research assistants may not be on campus, and they should not be required to be on campus. I encourage you to take advantage of online communication tools as much as possible so that your research students and any personnel doing research with you can work remotely; consider tools such as “WebEx” or “Microsoft Teams” to run group meetings without people needing to be in the same room.

As of today, the University has not closed the campus completely but there are hour and building restrictions and there could be future government directives that would prevent people from coming to campus as we have seen in other provinces. If you haven’t already done so, please be proactive and consider what your resources your research activities would require should our building operations change.

We also strongly encourage the suspension of all research protocols involving face-to-face contact. This is in the best interests and safety of our faculty, staff and students as well as our community. Now this does mean that you cannot do research as studies not involving contact with people (e.g. mathematics, literature) can go on as before. People doing studies involving human contact should consider if their research studies can be modified or delayed. In some research studies it may be possible to replace in-person participant interactions such as interviews with telephone or online communication (e.g. Skype, Facetime). Considerations include the nature of your protocol, the type of participants engaged in the research, and any additional risk that may arise by switching from in-person to virtual communication.

There is a national SOP from the Tri-Council Policy statement on REB review during publicly declared emergencies, where REB procedures become more flexible that we can use as a guide during this time. It would allow people to change their protocol from face-to-face to virtual meetings where the change is necessary to eliminate an immediate risk to participant(s) (TCPS2 Article 6.15). Such changes may be implemented but must be reported to the REB at the earliest opportunity (5 business days is suggested). If you have any questions about this, please contact Rebecca Mitchell at mitchellr38@macewan.ca.

The University has banned all international travel until August 31, 2020. No international travel will be approved before that date and any travel already approved will be revoked. Domestic travel may still be approved pending government restrictions and University policy. I recommend you contact my office before considering any research related travel.

Research Funding
The call for internal research grants for dissemination and project grants closed on March 1. Our plan is to still adjudicate these grants subject to University policies. For example, any dissemination grants requesting funding for international travel before August 31, 2020 will be cancelled. Given the current circumstances, our office will work with individuals to be as flexible as possible in how internal grants are adjudicated and used.
The Tri-Agencies (CIHR, NSERC, SSRHC) have released a number of statements about research funding and COVID-19, including information on cancelled travel and the reimbursement of non-refundable travel fees. [https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Media-Media/ProgramNewsDetails-NouvellesDesProgrammesDetails_eng.asp?ID=1133](https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Media-Media/ProgramNewsDetails-NouvellesDesProgrammesDetails_eng.asp?ID=1133)

I encourage anyone with a Tri-Agency grant to consult the agency specific website for information on COVID-19 and their grant:
CIHR - [https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/51917.html](https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/51917.html)

For researchers with funding from grants (both internal and external) and have deadlines or pending deliverables that may be interrupted, it is very likely that an extension would be provided. For external grants other than Tri-Agency grants, contact the funding organization directly with any questions about deadlines or extensions. For questions on internal or Tri-Agency grants please contact my office.

**Research Events**

It goes without saying that all research events including seminars, student research day etc. have been cancelled. We are working with the library on an approach to allow students with accepted presentations at student research day to create a video or some other means of virtual dissemination.

We hope this provides some guidance on research and research activities during this time of change and rapid-response to the COVID-19 pandemic situation. ORS is committed to helping all of you maintain research productivity as much as possible during this challenging time.

As always, I am available to answer any questions you might have.

Stay safe and my best wishes to you all.

Regards,

Craig Kuziemsky, PhD
Associate Vice-President, Research
MacEwan University