

## Research and Creative Activity in FAHSS in Summer, 2020 April 20 Update

The COVID-19 pandemic has interrupted most of our activities at the University of Windsor this spring and will continue to have an impact going forward. Classes at both the undergraduate and graduate levels will only be offered through non face-to-face methods during intersession and summer session. Research and creative activity have also been profoundly affected, with many conferences, performances, public events, and other planned activities postponed or canceled.

### Our Situation

Currently, research and creative activities at the University of Windsor have been suspended unless:

- the research or creative activity can be conducted without face-to-face contact with collaborators and participants or use of physical facilities on campus, **or**
- the activity has been deemed essential in consultation with Dean Guarini and Vice-President Research and Innovation (VPRI) Siu.

These restrictions will continue until the university officially moves away from our **Essential Services Only** model.

Faculty and students whose research involves the gathering of data through interaction with participants are encouraged to either postpone data gathering or find an alternative to face-to-face meetings. Any changes to data gathering procedures must complete a Research Ethics Board (REB) Request to Revise form available [here](#). If the interview protocol is unchanged, it does not need to be resubmitted. In all cases, we strongly encourage scholars and artists in FAHSS to consider how their ongoing and upcoming projects can be reimagined so as not to require face to face contact or travel.

Of course, much research and creative activity can continue to go forward without face to face meetings or travel, including:

- virtual data collection and analysis,
- archival research through digital resources,
- staying current with scholarly work in our fields,
- designing research tools such as surveys and interview protocols,
- preparing articles, chapters, and monographs for publication,
- preparing grant applications,
- planning or scripting new creative projects,
- learning new skills, methods and tools that might be useful in future,
- participating in on-line conferences, webinars, and on community portals related to one's research and creative activity,
- working remotely with students on their research and creative work where possible.

Those of us who have research teams in place are encouraged to stay in contact with collaborators and students using available online tools such as Microsoft Teams. Please contact the Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Studies ([brentlee@uwindsor.ca](mailto:brentlee@uwindsor.ca)) if you are encountering barriers related to continuing research and creative activity as described and we will try to find solutions.

In recognition of the difficulties posed by the pandemic disruption, timelines have been lengthened for completion of tri-council funded research. Tenure and promotion timelines have also been extended. While most thesis defenses in FAHSS are continuing as scheduled but with increased social distancing, program extensions for graduate students are being considered on a case-by-case basis. More detailed

policies on various timeline extensions related to research and creative activity are currently being formulated and will be updated as our situation evolves.

The Faculty of Graduate Studies has announced that applications from graduate students for a leave of absence over the summer semesters will be considered without prejudice. The normal fee for such applications has also been waived.

### **Research personnel**

We encourage faculty to find ways to maintaining existing appointments of research personnel while the university continues to operate in Essential Services Only mode. In regard to new appointments, the following message from the Office of the Vice-President of Research and Innovation was distributed on April 16:

“The Office of the Vice-President, Research and Innovation (OVPRI) is continuing the appointment of grant-funded research personnel during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, we ask that supervisors carefully consider and use the upmost discretion when appointing new and/or reappointing existing research personnel during the Covid-19 pandemic, and wherever possible and appropriate, supervisors are asked to hold off on appointing new and/or reappointing existing research personnel until the pandemic has subsided and physical distancing measures have been lifted.

“In the event that supervisors need to move forward with appointing new and/or reappointing existing research personnel, they should ensure that the appointee can work remotely, contributing to research that is conducted online, and does not require travel by the appointee or research participants.

“In some cases, it may be necessary to delay, cancel appointments that are currently underway, or rescind research appointments that have been issued but have not yet started. If you have questions relating to the delay, cancellation, or rescinding of research appointments, please contact Amy Taylor in the OVPRI at [Amy.Taylor@uwindsor.ca](mailto:Amy.Taylor@uwindsor.ca).

“Please contact Tracy McLeod, Human Resources Manager, in the Department of Human Resources at [Tracy.McLeod@uwindsor.ca](mailto:Tracy.McLeod@uwindsor.ca) with questions relating to student research appointments.”

### **Access to campus facilities and equipment**

While under Essential Services Only, faculty, staff, and students are to remain off campus unless performing activities that have been deemed essential, including Student Health Services, Campus Community Police, Energy Conversion Centre, Facility Services, Food Services, Financial Services, Human Resources, Information Technology Services, Residence Services, Senior Administration, and Construction work and services. Even these services are operating at a minimum, and only where strictly required.

Should a FAHSS faculty or staff member not delivering an essential service require brief access to campus to retrieve materials or equipment, permission must be requested from their department head or supervisor. If permission is granted, faculty and staff must make every effort to minimize the potential spread of the coronavirus by (1) avoiding common spaces (washrooms, photocopy rooms, etc.), (2) wearing personal protective gear, including gloves and a mask, (3) wiping down with disinfectant any surfaces (doorknobs, desktops, etc.) with which one might have come into contact. While it may seem safe to use spaces when no one is around, we must take every precaution so as not to leave traces of the virus behind us. The university is currently formulating a strategy for disinfecting

facilities for limited use, and until those guidelines have been issued, please follow the above guidelines if permission to access is granted.

If you receive requests for access to equipment or facilities from community partners, please forward these requests directly to the VPRI.

### **Essential Research**

As noted, there may be research that is deemed essential, such as research directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Office of Research and Innovation Services has created and is frequently updating a [site](#) with more detailed information regarding the conditions under which research might be considered essential and the obligations associated with this exceptional circumstance.

FAHSS researchers who believe their research might meet the criteria to be considered essential should carefully review these conditions before contacting the Dean's office for a consultation. Under no circumstance will faculty and students be required to participate in research that they feel places them or their families at risk.

When meeting with the Dean or Associate Dean Research and Graduate Studies, please be prepared to (1) clarify why the research should be deemed time-sensitive and essential, and (2) the steps that will be taken in order to minimize risking the spread of the coronavirus. Detailed consideration must be given to how the research will:

- respect [guidelines for physical distancing](#) in all situations,
- incorporate the use of PPE (personal protective equipment) such as gloves and masks,
- minimize the use of campus facilities, travel, and contact with others.

If such plan is approved by the Dean, it will still require the approval of the VPRI as well as the Office of Health and Safety and Facility Services (if on campus).

### **Further Updates**

We hope that there will be news very soon regarding increased access to campus facilities, and we await direction from the Pandemic Planning Committee in this regard. Until that time, we encourage everyone to look for imaginative ways to move our research and creative activity programs forward. Please be in touch with the Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Studies ([brentlee@uwindsor.ca](mailto:brentlee@uwindsor.ca)) if you have questions or are in need of support.

Take care and stay safe.

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