



Message from VPRA: Dr. Robert Nobles



There is no question that we are living in unprecedented times as we navigate the COVID-19 pandemic. As an enterprise, Emory remains in the unique position of conducting key COVID-19 research while adapting operations to optimize safety and efficiency. In this newsletter, you'll learn more about how the Emory community and ORA handle emergent pandemic issues, while continuing to facilitate the standard research enterprise.

To understand internal operations and faculty-facing productivity, the ORA produces an internal dashboard. We are tracking key indicators of daily and cumulative activity in the midst of COVID-19. While some aspects of research (e.g. clinical trial visits) have declined to optimize safety as we navigate COVID, we are finding that new submissions, awards, and expenditures for March and April were comparable, if not greater, with 2018 and 2019 volume. Individual ORA offices have remained committed to expedient administration and continuous process improvement. We continue working to implement a number of initiatives, but truthfully our focus over the past two months has been ramping down, creating operational efficiencies. We now shift towards helping campus plan for the ramping up process in a coordinated and compassionate manner.

In the coming weeks, Emory will share information regarding the plans for ramping up. ORA has been intimately involved in numerous working groups and conversations that have reviewed the available information and advances in our collective understanding of COVID-19. The general consensus regarding reengaging research comes with requirements and guidelines for maintaining social distance, utilizing adequate personal protective equipment, having sufficient testing, and ensuring that we have a plan for monitoring and contact tracing. More information regarding the preparations and safeguards for Emory are being finalized and will be circulated soon.

We remain committed to supporting university efforts, and pledge to communicate additional information as it becomes available. In this edition of the newsletter, I highlight for you this year's metrics compared to pre-COVID times, including ORA efforts to meet the increased need.

Respectfully,

Robert Nobles, DrPH, MPH, CIP
Vice President for Research Administration

Faculty Can Now Share Their Experiences with ORA Using the [Faculty Feedback Form](#)

Returning to Laboratory Research at Lower Density

The Environmental Health and Safety Office (EHSO) and the Office of Research Administration (ORA) in concert with Emory Executive Leadership have developed requirements and guidance for the Phased Return of Research to Campus.



As stated in the guidance communicated by Emory's Executive Leadership on Friday, May 15th, EHSO has developed a **mandatory training course** that must be **completed by all Emory Laboratory Research Personnel** (faculty, staff, postdoctoral fellows and trainees, and graduate students) **returning to, as well as, those currently engaged in** on-campus and community-based research activities. This training will be provided using Emory's electronic laboratory management system, BioRAFT. An announcement with instructions on how to access the training will be sent to Emory's research community via email the week of May 18th.

Additionally, a ***Return to Laboratory Research Checklist*** is available on the EHSO webpage. This checklist provides general laboratory safety considerations intended to aid research teams as they **begin planning for laboratory research re-engagement that meets Emory's requirements for lower density**. The checklist was developed to minimize potential disruptions and to ensure the safety of all individuals working in Emory's laboratory research facilities.



Environmental Health and Safety Office
Research Administration

Other new guidance documents that can be found on the EHSO webpage include:

- [Disinfection Guidance for Laboratories and Workspaces](#)
- [Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) and Disinfection Matrix for Emory University Employees](#)

Please remember lab personnel are not to work alone. Social/physical distancing, as recommended by the CDC, must be observed if two or more individuals are in the lab. If it is unavoidable to be in the lab alone, please use other methods of communication, such as a virtual buddy system, to check in and out with your supervisor or colleagues using text message, FaceTime, email, or telephone.

Wash your hands, practice social/physical distancing, wear a cloth face cover, and stay well.

Rapid Response Expedites COVID-19 Related Studies at Emory



In January 2020, the Georgia CTSA Quality & Efficiency program finalized their SOP for the Rapid Response Team to obtain fast-track approvals across the Emory system. This new SOP allows for the coordination of needed approvals within 48 hours. The process was a collaboration, with Office for Clinical Research (OCR) leading Emory's Rapid Response Team (RRT).

Emory's first COVID-19 patient began receiving infusion therapy as a result of this new Rapid Response Team SOP. More coverage of this first patient can be found in Georgia CTSA's published article [here](#).

The overall process of rapid review at Emory is facilitated by Sherry Coleman, DNP, RN, CHRC, CHC. Dr. Coleman is the Associate Executive Director of Emory OCR's Invoicing and Clinical Research Support Service teams and supervises the Clinical Research Navigator team for the Georgia CTSA. As the facilitator, she works non-stop with all teams involved to initiate relationships and alleviate any barriers as they occur. This includes sending reminders, calling, texting and following-up at any time (after hours and on weekends) when necessary to ensure that any preventable delay is addressed. [Continue reading the rest of the article here.](#)



Thank an Emory Faculty or Staff Member with New Web-based Tool

We are so appreciative of our faculty and staff for their incredible ability to rise to the occasion to support our students, maintain our campus operations, and help Emory continue to deliver its mission in these extremely challenging and uncertain times.

If you want to recognize an Emory University staff or faculty member, or a group of individuals for going above and beyond to help Emory get through the current crisis, we invite you to give them a shout out.

You can submit your form anonymously or you can provide your name. All submissions will be reviewed by HR and will be posted on the website (allow 1-2 days for your submission to post). [Create an “Above and Beyond” shout out.](#)



Significant Information

Environmental Health and Safety Office

- [Laboratory and Workspace Disinfection Guidance](#)

Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee

- **Process Improvement: [IACUC Protocol Submission Process Streamlined](#)**
- **JAVMA News- [“Research delayed, rodent populations reduced during pandemic”](#)**

Institutional Review Board

- **Revised Emory IRB Guidance for the Use of [Electronic Informed Consent \(eConsent\)](#)**

Office for Clinical Research

- **[Georgia CTSA Rapid Response Team](#) Coordinates 48-Hour Approval for Treatment of Coronavirus Patent**

Research Grants and Contracts

- **Learn More About RGC’s [NCURA Campus Liaison](#)**
- **Budget Reductions for [Financial Status Reports \(FSRs\)](#)**

Sr. Vice President for Research

- **[“Fridays at Four”](#) Previously Recorded Webinars**

We welcome your questions, comments or concerns.
Please email Dr. Robert Nobles at robert.e.nobles@emory.edu.
Share your ORA experience with us using the [Faculty Feedback Form](#)

Partnering with Researchers to Change the World

