

# WSU COVID-19 Provost's Research Town Hall – May 19

PHIL WEILER: Well, good morning, everyone. Welcome to the latest in our series of system-wide COVID-19 town hall meetings. Today's session is going to be focused on draft guidance for a staged return to on-site research, scholarship, and creative activity.

My name is Phil Weiler. I'm Vice President for Marketing and Communications here at WSU, and I'm going to serve as our moderator for the next hour. We have an all-star panel who are going to help us walk through some of this draft guidance today. Let me take a second to introduce them all.

First, we have Bryan Slinker. Bryan is our Interim Provost and Executive Vice President. Next, we have Chris Keane, Vice President for Research. Colleen Kerr is our Vice President for External Affairs and Government Relations.

John Roll is Vice Dean for Research at the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine. Guy Palmer is a Regents Professor in pathology and infectious diseases, and the founding director of the Paul G. Allen School for Global Animal Health. Next, we have Lisa Gloss. She is the Dean of the graduate school.

Christine Potfors is Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education on both the Tri-Cities and Vancouver campuses. Celestina Barbosa-Leiker is Vice Chancellor for Research at WSU Health Sciences in Spokane. And finally, we have Levi O'Loughlin, who is our university biosafety officer.

We're going to give each of the panelists a couple minutes to talk about research from their particular vantage point. And then with the time we have remaining, we'd like to go over some questions that we've already received based on the draft guidance. And in addition, as we've always done in the past, those of you viewing on YouTube, if you have questions, please feel free to put any questions or comments in the live chat section.

We again have a cadre of subject matter experts who are on-hand to point you to specific resources, answer questions if they can in real time. I see that we've got a couple folks who've already posted to that, so please take advantage of that section. With that, we have a lot of information to cover today. So I'm going to turn it over to Bryan Slinker, and let us get started.

BRYAN SLINKER: Thank you, Phil. And thank you all who are joining in for this latest in a series of town halls. This one is the most focused that we've had so far. And it's an important one because we find ourselves in a really challenging time across the country and then across the state because of COVID-19. It's something none of us wanted to be in, and I really appreciate the efforts of all of WSU to rise to this challenge.

It's not lost on any of us that we are a research institution. And it feels really uncomfortable to those of us here and to you all, I'm sure, to have had to scale back our research in response to this public health crisis. So this is nearing the end of a process that Chris began, charged me by several weeks ago to work with the associate deans, with faculty. The deans have participated, so there's been a lot of input.

And this is a process leading us to a draft plan where WSU as a system, recognizing that there may be some context differences, feels comfortable that we can safely return to research in a broader measure than we're currently doing. So they emphasize a couple of things. We do want to ramp up our research. This document needs to be finalized. And this, again, this is the nearing the end of the feedback on finalizing the document.

Want to emphasize, this does not mean we can instantly ramp up research when we're agreed that this document describes how we think we can safely do so. There still needs to be continued interactions with public health authorities at the county level and at the state level before we feel like, as an institution, we're able to move ahead. So it's important that everybody remember that. We all want to do this.

We need to work hard together to finalize this guidance so that we all feel like we have a plan to safely do it, but it's not our decision alone as an institution. We have to interact with public health authorities because we still are in a state of emergency statewide. That said, I appreciate everyone's effort so far.

Where you have been able to engage in research, it's important as a research institution that we are able to do this and do it well. It's most important that we be able to do it safely, and that's what this document is all about. The other thing I'll say is, that as a broad statewide research institution, we have a lot of different kinds of research activities. They're all important.

And it's important that we return many of these activities because there was a reason that you have your own research program. It's because you study important problems. And we've gotten sidetracked a bit, understandably, because of COVID-19. But all the problems we study are important.

And so we this is our effort to return to that. Not return to normal, but to return to a more active research portfolio befitting our status as a research institution. And reflecting more of the breadth of things we do as scientists and scholars of this institution.

I say that in part to emphasize the breadth, not only because it's important to engage in these, but the problems we study are still just as important as they were before COVID-19. But one document is probably not going to capture every specific case, so we need to be sure that we understand that we're trying to get really good general guidance, and knowing that some things will likely need further clarification with many of the team that are on this workshop right now. So bear with us. Provide us your feedback.

Recognize that we're not going to capture every specific instance, and that we all recognize that and we're all willing to support and work within this general guidance find other ways to modify it on a case by case basis. It's just important that you know that. We understand that's going to be part of the process.

So I'll finish by again thanking you for what you do. Thank you for bearing with us. As a research institution where we now are beginning our thoughts about how we return to more research safely, and we need your help by finalizing this document. And that's why we're reaching out today through this town hall. And with that, I'll finish and will engage with you later as appropriate for questions. Thank you very much.

PHIL WEILER: Thank you, Brian. Chris, I want to turn the stage over to you for a moment to talk about things from your perspective as the vice president for research.

CHRISTOPHER KEANE: OK. Thank you, Phil and Bryan. Thank you for those very inspirational remarks. Appreciate that. So Chris Keane, vice president for research. Let me just start by thanking all of you for attending today. It's a very important discussion.

And I'd also like to thank our faculty, staff, and students, and everyone out there in the WSU community for your dedication to the research mission. It continues to remain important, as Bryan said. That's why we're here today. We really appreciate all that you've done during this difficult time to continue research in particular.

A lot's been done remotely. But at the same time, we recognize that everyone would like to get back to normal, and start to do research here on site as well. And what our meeting today is about is starting to prepare the groundwork for that.

As you heard from Bryan, Levi O'Loughlin in the Office of Research, with many people on this video, as well as input from many of you already, has put together some draft guidance on how to do that, which is the main point of our town hall today. I would like to emphasize too, that the entire range of research we do at WSU is important. We want to bring that back.

We are currently functioning, I want to remind people, under the guidance that Bryan and I issued on March 26, which really has the on-site activities limited to either COVID-19 or things that are really essential to maintain and sustain the enterprise in the long term. Well obviously we're not all working on campus right now. It's very important, until this guidance is issued finally and officially, that we stay functioning under that previous guidance.

So when this is issued, you'll know, but it's in draft mode right now. OK. And that's what we're here to get, is your draft comments. And as you saw at the intro there, and we'll put this up again at the end, we appreciate any comments you have on this by this Wednesday so we can start to work in the next version.

I should also emphasize that this guidance will be a dynamic living document. It will adjust as we think more about things like human subject research, field work, other activities. It's a really broad and strong enterprise we have. We want to thoughtfully consider every piece of it as we come back. We've done that so far as best we can.

We appreciate your input. We want to keep doing that as we come back. So again, we'd appreciate any thoughts you have on this by Wednesday. In the bigger picture, this is just part of all of us getting ready to ramp up again, and start to return to research as normal, but do it safely, as Brian emphasized.

That's really important. That's our top priority. We want to do it safely. And we appreciate your thoughts on how to do that, so we look forward to your comments. And Phil with that, I'll turn it back to you after a final thank you to all of you for your dedication to the research mission. Thank you.

PHIL WEILER: Thank you, Chris. You know one thing I noted when I looked at the draft guidance, is there was a line in there about we're going to be slowly turning a dial, not flipping a switch. The idea that we are going to be slowly reintroducing the research activities to our various campuses, and if I remember correctly, that line actually came from something the governor had said when the governor talked about how we slowly reintroduce some level of normalcy to life here in the state of Washington.

And so with that in mind, I think I'd like to turn it over to Colleen because I know that a lot of what we're doing is going to be dependent upon where we are in the various phases of reentry at the state level. And if you could talk a little bit about where things stand with Governor Inslee and the work we're doing in partnership with his office, that would be helpful.

COLLEEN KERR: Yeah. Thank you so much Phil. That was the perfect segue. So good morning, everyone, Colleen Kerr, Vice President for External Affairs and Government Relations. So by way of background, let me just say that this office, we are the formal point of contact with the federal government, the state government, and then working with our campuses on the local governments.

And that piece, in terms of state government and local government, is critically important here because in this public health situation, it is a matter of coordinating at the state level with the governor's office and the Department of Health, and then the local jurisdictions. In terms of our public health districts, they also have an extremely important role. I am going to screen-share here, so we can talk about the phases for a second.

Let me pull that up. I think everybody should be able to see this at this point. Let me pull this over really quickly. Thank you.

So let me also start by saying, in addition to thanking all of my colleagues and all of you, it is a privilege to work with WSU. We are in every county. And as a state, we are going through a

statewide state of emergency. I think the last time we went through a statewide state of emergency was when Mount St. Helens blew, which was yesterday. The anniversary of it was yesterday, so in some respects it's very appropriate for us to talk about this.

But I want to thank all my colleagues and all the researchers. Governor Inslee talks time and again about how this is going to be a science-driven process, and will be data driven. And it's the science from our two research institutions and from the important research that all of you are doing that is going to help us navigate where we are now, and help us navigate forward into the future.

I also want to acknowledge the strong partnership and leadership that we have had from Governor Inslee, from his leadership team, from Dr. Weissman at the Department of Health, and from all of our public health districts around the state. They are working nonstop. And I realize that like all of us, we're at capacity. But it has been a tremendous partnership over these past couple of weeks, past couple of months, forgive me, the time-space reality of COVID.

So I just want to give a two minute introduction here about the phases. So the purpose of the phased reentry, exactly as Phil said, is to dial it in. So I wanted to offer this to say, one thing for us at WSU to remember is that we are all going to be, very often, and I say all because we are in different counties many of us, we are going to be in different phases at different times.

And so from a WSU perspective, that may not feel that different. But it will feel different in terms of how we congregate in our communities, and what it feels like in different counties. And so it's critically important that for those of us individually, that we are always talking with our department, our unit heads, and then those department and unit heads are coordinating up through their campus or their local leadership up to the system leadership, so that we are all in the same place.

Let me transition next, just quickly to the next link, which should be right here. It's the Safe Start Washington. And so these are online, and it should be provided in the chat box.

So as we're thinking through our research reentry, I should say, restart to on-site research because I am aware of how much research has been happening during this time period. And again I want to thank you all for that. I want to refer us to this page. So what we can do, is if we go to the governor's web page, they have a coronavirus response web page, which is extremely dense with information. And this is where we can find all of the different business activity guidelines.

So at some point, there will be one for higher education. But because we are an essential service, and because research is a critical function of an essential service, we do not anticipate that we will be here. However, as we think through and we look at the document that Levi put together, and I want to commend his leadership on this, and we look at the detail that is in here, that's what we're seeing for every industry.

And so it's good to periodically check this page to get a sense of where the governor's office, working with the Department of Health and the industries, have had the opportunity to put together reentry plans that will then be implemented as counties move into the different phases. And right now at the state, we're only thinking through phase two, with some of our counties, including Whitman County, already in phase two. Phil, I will transition back to you. And I'm happy to take questions.

PHIL WEILER: Great. Thank you, Colleen. Appreciate that. The links are, I believe, I'm looking to see, I think we're trying to put those links in the chat box. If people haven't seen those, I know a lot of folks have been watching the Governor site closely, but for those who haven't, I think it's probably a good idea just to have some basic understanding of what those four different phases look like, and how much time it might take to move from one phase to the other.

So next, I'd like to turn it over to John Roll. John, can you talk to us a little bit about some of the research activity that has been going on, and some of the research activity that has not been going on, in particular at the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine.

JOHN ROLL: Thank you, Phil. I arrived at WSU in the late 1980s to pursue a PhD. I left afterwards, but was able to return in the early 2000s. And one of the many things I love about WSU is our remarkable faculty.

And during the last two and 1/2 months, I have been tremendously impressed by our faculty who have paused or reconfigured their scholarly pursuits to adapt to the circumstances of the pandemic. This has been difficult, but I have seen firsthand the creativity and grace they've employed during this time. And I want to add my heartfelt thanks to all of you for those efforts.

Dr. Palmer and I were asked to help those of our faculty who wanted to engage in COVID-relevant scholarship to do so. This has included several actions. First, COVID-related scholarship is directly in line with what some of our faculty do. They don't need any special help to succeed. This has resulted in funding being received by faculty in veterinary medicine, and proposals for funding being submitted by faculty in most every other college.

We've been working with government and corporate relations to explore opportunities for our faculty to address local and national need. An example of a successful outcome of this, is that we now have faculty working with the Department of Health to model COVID issues. Working in close partnership with the associate deans of research and the vice chancellors of research, we invited 19 different groups to develop white papers that we are trying to help fund with external dollars. In addition, we have identified over 150 faculty representing every college and campus, who are either engaged in COVID scholarship, have modified existing protocols to collect COVID-relevant data, or are interested in engaging in COVID scholarship.

We're working to support these faculty by fostering synergistic partnerships and helping them to identify funding opportunities. Finally, I think it's worth noting something that the provost

said at the beginning. One of the most important things faculty can do is retain their current expertise in funding competitiveness.

This will be crucial to helping WSU and the state rebound from budgetary shortfalls we'll experience. If you can logically or easily pivot to COVID research, that is fine, but don't feel compelled to do so. I want to end by thanking everyone at WSU who supports the research enterprise. The behind the scenes work you are all doing enables our success. Thank you.

PHIL WEILER: Thank you, John. So Guy, I'm going to ask you to see if you have any additional remarks you want to add to what John was talking about. Because again, the two of you are working really hand in hand to make sure that WSU is addressing COVID-19 as a research topic.

GUY PALMER: Thank you, Phil. No, I believe John said it about as beautifully and eloquently as could possibly be done. I think one thing we've learned in these interactions with the faculty is that much of the great research that's being done at WSU by our faculty across all the colleges and including extension, really addresses societal issues through their scholarship. COVID-19 has illuminated many of these, made them more evident to much of the population than before.

But these pre-existing issues of inequality, vulnerable populations, our faculty do a great job of addressing those. And I think it just reflects our land grant mission of trying to raise all of society through scholarship. And I share John's pride in the work that our faculty is doing.

PHIL WEILER: Great. Thank you. So Lisa, I'd like to turn to you next. As dean of the graduate school, I know that being able to be in labs and doing research is really critical to graduate students. And so you talk a little bit about what the implications have been as part of this need to ramp down, as well as now the efforts to ramp back up.

LISA GLOSS: Thank you, Phil. Research is, as you point out, research is a key component of graduate education, and particularly for doctoral students. Going forward, one key philosophy to remember is that students are trainees, not just employees. And faculty must remain true to their responsibility to provide mentorship.

Students' education is an essential business, and thus it is essential that they be allowed to make progress toward degree completion, in terms of their research and scholarship, but do so in a safe and healthy environment. And many have been very good at ramping down, but now we need to start thinking about ramping back up. And a key thought to me is that compromise will be necessary for success, compromises between productivity and safety, compromise between what we were used to doing, and what's practical in the age COVID-19.

The guidance on staged return to research scholarship and activities that this town hall is about lays out guiding principles and general procedures, but for many students there will be a need for individualized plans crafted in partnership with their mentor. And looking at specific accommodations that reflect research and scholarship in question, the physical constraints of

the environment in which the research is done, and individual vulnerabilities. So as I think Bryan said, this document can't cover every specific detail, but it does provide an overall guidance within which for students to continue their research in a more active form.

PHIL WEILER: Great. Thank you, Lisa. And I noted as I looked through the draft document, there was a lot of emphasis placed on the responsibilities and roles that the principal investigators need to play with regard to graduate students. So if you haven't had a chance to look at the guidance, I'd encourage everyone to do that. Next I'd like to ask Christine to give some perspective in her role being responsible for research both on the Tri-Cities and Vancouver campuses.

CHRISTINE POTFORS: Thanks, Phil. Hi, everyone. I actually just want to take a minute to really emphasize that all the work that we've been doing has been a coordinated system approach. This hasn't been just Pullman, just Tri-Cities, Vancouver extension, it's really been a system approach. Faculty, staff, and students at all of the campuses and locations have done a great job modifying or pausing their research activities during these really challenging times.

During the whole time, the Office of Research COVID task force that has leadership in research from across the system, has worked together very well to make sure we implement the same guidelines across the system with the safety of our researchers at the forefront of all the decisions. And again, I just want to really emphasize that this has been all campuses, all locations, all extension centers, being at the forefront of what we're doing. And in developing the guidelines we're talking about today for increasing research activities on-site, the Office of Research team has still ensured that we're working as a system to create standardized guidelines that address the needs of all campuses and locations.

And we'll work together to facilitate resuming research activities on-site in the safest manner for everyone across the system. We're certain that we can work together to develop safe protocols based on all the guidelines to get much of our on-site research back up and running. There might be some minor differences by location. But with faculty, students, and staff working with local leadership and system leadership, I'm pretty sure that we can have a good standardized approach to get everything back up and running where appropriate.

So I just want to add my thanks to everyone who's been working so hard on this. Faculty, staff, graduate students, and we're hoping we can really work together to get people back into their labs and their research sites. So thanks, Phil. I'll pass it back to you.

PHIL WEILER: Great. Thank you, Christine. Next I'd like to ask Celestina to provide any thoughts that she has in from her vantage point on the Spokane campus.

CELESTINA BARBOSA-LEIKER: Sure. Thanks, Phil. Here on the Spokane campus, research was either paused, or we were able to modify research protocols so that data could be collected safely and from a distance. I want to thank the IRB staff for quickly moving through a lot of research protocol modifications so that research could continue from a distance and in a safe



manner. We did have some lab-based essential research being conducted here on the Spokane campus during the stay home order-- all done in a safe manner.

In terms of my perspective on the guidance that we'll be discussing shortly, it's really been a team effort here in Spokane, and as Christine said, across all of the campuses under the guidance of the Office of Research COVID task force. I've heard that the Spokane researchers have already provided a lot of input to the guidance. Thank you very much for doing so.

I'll continue to lead the WSU health sciences Spokane research task force. That's in collaboration with the associate and vice deans for research at the three colleges here on our campus, environmental health and safety, department chairs, the core facilities, pre and post awards services, and many more to ensure that this guidance is implemented in a standardized way across the entire campus and in line with the WSU system. I just want to end with a special thank you to all of the researchers, especially those across the entire WSU system contributing to health sciences research during this time. You're impacting the health and well-being of all the residents of the state of Washington, really adhering to our land grant mission, and impacting the health of residents across the entire nation. Thank you.

PHIL WEILER: Great. Thank you, Celestina. I'd like to close out this portion of the conversation by hearing from Levi. Levi, I understand you spent a lot of time and put a lot of effort into drafting this guidance, so love to hear what you have to say.

LEVI O'LOUGHLIN: Thank you, Phil. Really appreciate it. The Office of Research worked with a lot of faculty, staff, students, and administrators to draft a plan that is in front of you, hopefully. Hopefully all of you have looked at that. The document really is intended to support a modest increase in on-site research activities.

We know we can't bring everything back, but we're going to try to do whatever we can consistent with public health and WSU general guidance. We'll continue to work remotely when possible. We'll continue to minimize on-site staffing.

But I wanted to talk two main features of this guidance. And the first is the process we got there, and then I'll do a brief overview of what we have. The process really started with an internal review. It began in meetings, task force with associate deans of research, with vice chancellors of research. And out of this, I was charged by VPR Keane, as the university biosafety officer, to work within a team to draft some form of guidance.

And so we set up this team, and a big thank you goes to Celestina, to Christine on this call, as well as Katrina Mealey and Dave Field. These four and I have done a lot of heavy lifting. We've read a lot of recommendations, a lot of documents, peer reviewed articles. Over time we've asked for a lot of input from others. We've talked with HRS, Facilities Services, EH&S, Environment Health and Safety on numerous campuses.

We talked to the attorney general's office, solicited input from postdocs, grad students, technicians, researchers, and more and more faculty. And really we're asking for everybody now to comment. It's open through Wednesday-- the end of Wednesday, close of business.

And so in addition to this internal review, we also looked at a lot of other institution's plans. When we started, there wasn't very many, but over time we've seen a couple dozen of this. Every institution has to have some sort of plan. It's something the governor's office has asked us to do. Something we're seeing all over the place.

You've seen them for restaurants. You've seen them for retail stores. And this is consistent with the Washington stay home, stay healthy guidelines, as well as the Washington State safe start plan that Colleen had shared a little earlier. And so we're trying to provide some kind of solid framework for the WSU guidance.

And I'd like to just state that during this process, we recognize that there is a broad research enterprise. And I've never appreciated the vastness of our research more than I do now. WSU really is a special place, and we have incredible research. And it really spans not only our state, but the nation and globally.

And so we came up with a few guiding principles for our document. They're on page one of it, but just to reiterate, we want to prioritize and protect the health and well-being of all of our students, faculty, staff, and research partners. That's everyone we interact with as researchers. We want to minimize the spread of COVID-19 while serving our communities responsibly, being true to what our granting agencies have given us to do.

We also want to protect the careers of students and early stage researchers. We're talking about graduate students, postdocs, pre-tenured faculty members. And so with those guiding principles, we've come up with a document here for you to look at. And so let's go through this real quick.

So what we're asking, is building on laboratory safety management techniques. And we're just adding a few principles. So the mechanism here will require the principal investigator overseeing the research activities in laboratories or other common use spaces, studio spaces, creative activities spaces, to sign and post the guidance, as well as a brief synopsis of their specific plan.

And the PI signature on the document is that he or she is aware that they are responsible for implementing the guidance. In addition, we're asking the chair or the local campus unit director, to sign to indicate that they concur. Both signatures are required to move forward and commence with bringing people back. It also requires the PI to have a specific plan, individualized plan, whether it's a laboratory, a studio, a field, whatever you're working on, as we're in numerous campuses and extension centers throughout the state.

So briefly, the document is divided into four sections. You have the two pages of oversight, and that has all the action items. Then you get into appendix one, and that's five pages. And that has about 10 bullets with supporting documentation in it to help you decipher what looks appropriate for your research plan.

Then you move into appendix 2, which is the checklist and written plan. And this is about four pages. It also has you list research personnel that will be on site.

The last appendix is the staged approach. And it's kind of a summary. It's three pages. There's four stages. They don't necessarily follow exactly the phased stages from our governor's plan, but this is just to give you an idea of how we're thinking this long term.

There are some things that'll be possible as we move from our current stage, stage one, to stage two. There will be more possibilities opening up in stage three and stage four, and some of those are beyond the control of the Office of Research. So the general plan ahead of you is likely in a Word doc. That's probably what you've seen. When this goes live we'll be able to make it a little more accessible, using HTML formatting and other web pages, just to make it not as long.

So let's talk about that first appendices that's briefly referred to as the guidelines. We know they're dense. We know they're a little long. It's hard to use the right verbiage to convey what we want without using too many words or too little words.

If you ask the safety folks, most of them wanted more verbiage in this section. But if you asked a researcher, they typically wanted a little less, so we've tried to balance this as best as we can. And we know it's dense, so believe me. But really it's consolidated down into 10 tips, supporting evidence, links, and ideas to be successful.

So the first is, continue to work remotely if it's possible. This is consistent with Washington safe start plan, phases one through three. We want to protect all researchers from exposure, including high-risk individuals. And this is supported with HRS directives, the governor's orders.

We want to emphasize researchers stay home if they feel sick. As an infectious disease person, we always emphasize this. But it's even more pronounced when SARS-CoV-2.

Physical distancing-- this is the same thing that most of us are fatigued hearing about, but it's still so applicable. We're talking about six feet. And so we're trying to maintain and ramp up research that doesn't require us being within six feet of one another.

So if it's something that's routine work that's close contact, maybe that needs to wait until stages three or four for Washington research. I know it's tiring, but it's pretty clear that it's working. I read one study that showed that places without physical distancing, it's 35 times more spread of SARS-CoV-2.

We're also trying to maintain personal density to a minimum, and we're trying to maintain only essential spaces. So if you typically work on the third floor of a building, that's where you're at. You're not popping up to the fourth floor or the second floor.

You're trying to do everything you can to have these essential spaces. So using every other desk, or lab bench, or opposite corners of the room, you try to maintain that six feet. As an aside, one of my safety professional colleagues mentioned that the average person is about two feet across. Six feet beyond that gives you a radius of about 201 feet, and that is your bubble. You never want to violate that bubble. We didn't go as specific to mention something like that, but that's just one of those rules of thumb.

We're also talking about appropriate protections. And so we have recommendations to strongly recommend facial coverings, so-called facial coverings. These are not PPE, but these are meant to be worn in public areas, hallways as you move into buildings, as you walk through spaces similar to a grocer or a retail space.

They're not really meant for eight hours of work, and they're not meant to replace any kind of physical distancing. PPE is different than these cough facial coverings. PPE is something that you would normally use in your research, and the PPE is not meant to protect you from SARS-CoV-2. It's meant for your research purposes.

The next point is practicing appropriate hygiene and sanitation protocols. And this is where this systemness and working together has really come in really well. EH&S and Facilities on numerous bases, campuses, have provided either disinfectants or hand sanitizers for us to use. And so it's really been nice working with such a broad group of people willing to rise to the challenge of completing this.

We have a mechanism to report unsafe behaviors, and this is through the Office of Research suggestion box. Finally, we have training on COVID-19 specifically, so the transmission and disinfection protocols. It's also a good time to look at all required trainings.

We ask the PI, finally, to prioritize their research. And we have a list of things to consider. In some regards it's almost a de-prioritization list, so international travel, research regarding close face to face contact. These are going to be really difficult to do with physical distancing.

And some of the precautions we discussed never made it for various reasons. Either they were above or beyond what was within our control, or they were impractical, or they had evidence that they weren't going to work for us. Some of them are dependent on emerging technologies, widespread testing, vaccines. And so we considered a lot of things. And this is where we came up with.

Some of the feedback received thus far says they either go too far, or they're not far enough. And so we're trying to balance that to keep everybody as safe as possible.

OK, with that said, let's move real briefly into appendix two. This is the checklist and written plan. This section is intended to define appropriate activities to modify and resume.

It's not exhaustive. It's not meant to be. And adjustments will be necessary for each research need. There's some sections that you may need to delete. There's some sections that you may need to add to. That's the individualized plan portion.

But also list personnel and their contact information if there is some kind of concern or some kind of emergency. It's also the place where we have the PI sign, the chair sign. And it's posted near the entrance of the research space or studio space. It's same mechanism we've used years ago for the H&S safety commitment, also known as the five focus areas.

And the guidelines that we discussed are used to help you think through this checklist, and develop what is specific to your research areas. I'd like to thank the people that have already sent me theirs. I have read every comment so far. I just haven't had a chance to get back to you on some of those.

The last section is the staged summary timeline. And it's somewhat speculative, but we're also preparing for how to move to those stage 3 and 4. And we hope by then we have better data, we have better tools to use. We'll be able to bring back more human subject research than is possible now-- maybe some field research, maybe some on-campus research, or that research involving international travel.

We should have better information at that point to help be more successful in those areas too. And as a reminder, our stages are not specific to the Washington safe start plan. That plan continues the stay home, stay healthy directive through phases two and three. So we're trying to get as much research returned as possible during this time.

Finally, as everyone has echoed, we are a system. We have research all over the state. We have it throughout the country. We have it throughout the world. And this is a large undertaking to be able to make all of that work in a very succinct 14 page document.

We appreciate the opportunity to share our draft with you, hear the feedback from you now and before, have you look at this, submit guidance, submit comments. We'll edit it. We'll get it back to you, and we'll start from there.

The last thing I'll say is, a lot of this will take what we're calling a preparatory week, or a prep week. Because the chairs have to approve plans for a lot of people, once it goes live we'll likely need at least a week to be able to get all of these systems in place-- ensure we have trainings, ensure we have the right disinfectants, we have the right plans for our research. With that, thanks for listening. Thanks for supporting research. Thanks for doing what you do as it truly betters us locally and globally. Phil.

PHIL WEILER: Thanks, Levi. And I say thank you to you and the team that put this together. It is the most succinct 14 page document I have ever read. Seriously, I have to say I was very impressed by it when I took a look at it.

And you know to be clear, much of it are checklists for PIs as they get ready to make that shift. So the meat of the document is not that long. But you did, Levi, answer a lot of the questions that I saw that were popping up in the chat. But I think it's probably worth just reiterating some of those just so that we're all really clear.

And I think one of the big questions, not surprising is, OK, what's the timing? When do we think we're going to be moving to turning the dial slightly and ramping up? Is there a date certain?

LEVI O'LOUGHLIN: In terms of dates of when we can do this, we have adjusted the timeline and it's been very fluid. We thought we were moving faster, and there's times we feel like we're moving slower. The current date in there is our best guess of when we can do this. We think a lot of this will get ramped up maybe at the beginning of next month. That's where we move from phase one to phase two.

There are some key conversations that still have to occur. There are some input we're soliciting before we can get there as well. And I think we could also ask Colleen Kerr, as she has some good information on this too. So I'm going to turn it over to Colleen for you.

COLLEEN KERR: Hi there. So thanks, Levi. And again, it is an extremely succinct 14 page document. It's a model. It's very impressive.

So this is a process that we have with the governor's office and with the State Department of Health, that we also need to be coordinating with the local health departments for our campuses and for our research and extension centers. And so that is something that now that we-- once we get a final document, we will begin that process. And we have already started that informal process. We are in communication with the Department of Health and the governor's office all the time. They have been wonderful partners to us.

So I would ask everybody to keep in mind that the phases, the phased approach from the governor's office, is intended to be flexible. And that we would want to keep that in mind as we think through firm dates right now. Today I believe is may 19th. And so we want to also keep in mind that we want to be flexible for the next week or couple of weeks, until we can get really clear what those dates are.

But again, if you look at that web page the governor put out, they are really working diligently to sign off on different plans. And while we don't know that ours will be on that web page, we feel very good in terms of the attentiveness that we will be getting from those two offices.

PHIL WEILER: Great. Thank you, Colleen. Another question that I saw on the chat had to do with the idea of oversight and who's going to be actually monitoring compliance. Levi, I heard you

make a quick comment about if individuals have concerns about labs maybe not following the guidance. Can you just give us a little bit more on where people can go if they have concerns.

LEVI O'LOUGHLIN: Yeah, I'd be happy to. Thank you, Phil. The guidance is intended to use the same mechanism that we've always had in Washington State. We're using supervisors. We're using PIs, chairs, we're using safety folks such as myself or EH&S. We're using safety committees as the president has outlined, those level four safety committees.

All of those are enabled to be able to be used as a resource to help provide good guidance. We also have that suggestion box. So if there is something that you would like to put in there of, hey maybe something needs a little bit more attention here or anything like that, we would be happy to follow up on those. Finally, there are good subject matter experts on this, and a lot of them are on this panel.

There is others you can reach out to on your specific campus. With that, I know that Bryan Slinker also has a good take on this, and so I'd like to let him weigh in as well.

BRYAN SLINKER: Well this is a fundamental question, and Levi's answered the bulk of it. I just want to emphasize that from a perspective of the institution engaging in research, we're all as scientists and scholars, depending on our specific areas, used to having to comply with bio safety, with radiation safety, chemical safety. Again, this is really no different. This is infectious disease safety in the midst of a pandemic.

And we're fortunate that we live in a state that's guided by science. We are guiding our decisions by science. And because we start with safety as the first point here, whether it's a grad student, postdoc, faculty, vulnerable groups, all of this has to work to keep us safe within the guidelines.

And that's the basic approach I think we all take. The details are a little bit different, but we're all used to existing in this culture of complying. We're doing our work safely, and this really is no different conceptually. The specifics are a little bit different because this is the defined infectious disease response.

PHIL WEILER: Great. Thank you, Bryan. I'm going to jump back to the chat feature that we're seeing with YouTube. Still a little confusion about timing. There have been conversations about June, whether it's that we might see a change in early June or later in June. My sense is, and please correct me if I'm wrong, but that we don't have a date certain at this point. Bryan, did you want to weigh in on that?

BRYAN SLINKER: Yep. We don't have a date certain. So the May 29th in the draft is indeed a draft, even for the day. It's the earliest possible we could conceive of moving ahead. But as Colleen has said, what remains after we feel as an institution that we finalized this guidance for this next step, we still have to have dialogue with state public health, county public health.

And because we exist across the state in multiple counties, as this is essentially our plan, again like a plan for restaurants or a plan for any other segment of the economy to open, we want to do the heavy lifting now to get ready to go. And we have our plan. Colleen mentioned they've already begun discussions.

So this is finalizing it, having the discussions. And then once we feel like we have all the ducks in a row, then we can call a date. That May 29th is the earliest date we could conceive under the current phase that we could do it.

PHIL WEILER: And my assumption would be, at the point that we think we can move to a new phase, we're going to give folks plenty of notice. Is that correct?

BRYAN SLINKER: Correct.

PHIL WEILER: Thank you. I'm seeing lots of head nods on the gallery here. Another question I have for you-- oh, I'm sorry. Colleen, go ahead.

COLLEEN KERR: I was going to say, and our understanding is that the governor's office will be adding guidelines as we progress through each phase. Right now we're just between phase one and phase two, and so we're seeing a lot of guidelines and direction around that. And then as we get to the place we're going from two to three, and even then, right, in the future from three to four, we will get more and more guidelines along the way.

PHIL WEILER: Great. Thank you, Colleen. This next question I want to maybe direct toward Chris. And this is something that came up earlier in the chat. There was a question about how do we define a critical research activity so that we know when it's appropriate for us to be thinking about taking that next step?

CHRISTOPHER KEANE: Yeah, thank you, Phil. Great question. And let me just start by echoing what you heard from Bryan and Levi, is that we are using our existing structure-- PIs, chairs, directors, et cetera, to manage this process. So we provided top level guidance in the draft you've read. We've also taken a similar tack in the guidance that Bryan and I provided earlier in March, on March 26 and 18, which basically says that in order to decide what things are essential, you have to discuss it with your immediate leadership.

We understand that there's a lot of gray here. We understand that there's judgment calls required here. We have not attempted to make those calls ourselves in this guidance document, nor have we made it in the previous guidance we've issued. Rather, we've given it to the folks that you, the faculty and staff, work with every day, your supervisors to wrestle with these.

Let me just say that we get asked to comment on a lot of these issues all the time as you all work through them, and you all have been working through them. And so the short answer is, talk to your chair, talk to your supervisor. And we're here to help and talk about it. But some of



these things are pretty gray and they do require discussion. And we work through them, so we welcome that opportunity to continue to do that with you.

PHIL WEILER: Great. Thank you. Bryan, did you have something to add to this topic? OK. Well, I have a question for you then. There is concern, not surprisingly, about what impact reductions in revenue might have on research. And I know it's pretty early in the process, but is there anything you can comment on about what we-- anything we can expect with the loss of state funding through tax revenues and the like, and how that might impact our research?

BRYAN SLINKER: So the simple answer is, no differently than any other budget cut we've had to endure as an institution. At least this is very painful times in many respects, and we just have to acknowledge that. We are a research institution. We are a land grant institution, and that's at our core.

And as we think about budget challenges, there'll be more information coming out this week on as an institution how we're asked to plan. No decisions will be made, but we are going to have budget challenges. Again, like any other time, we're going to decide what we preserve, what are our core principles as an institution, what are our core principles we want to accomplish in thinking about challenging budget times.

And every aspect of our university is going to be challenged. And we'll work through it like we always have. And research is going to be no different. And we still have the same goals. We still have the same missions.

We have students to serve in education programs, whether undergraduate or graduate students. We have all the wonderful research that we do that's funded by a variety of funders across the state, the nation, and globally. And we're going to ramp up to do that as best we can.

In a way, I understand where the concern comes from because budget challenges provide constraints. But our task is really to figure out how we safely ramp up research and re-engage more strongly in that arena, while we're using our core principles to guide how we deal with budget challenges.

PHIL WEILER: Thank you, Bryan. You mentioned on this idea of the importance of safety, obviously that's going to be our primary responsibility. One of the areas that I think is going to be really challenging is how we engage in research with human subjects, and make sure that we can do that in a really safe manner. Chris, I wonder, can you provide any thoughts on human subjects and what that might look like as we try and ramp up?

CHRISTOPHER KEANE: Yeah Phil, and thank you for that. I actually, I want to talk about that subject generally for future planning. But before that, Levi, if you could just reiterate for the group exactly what you say right now about human subjects. Then I'll pick up from there, Phil.

LEVI O'LOUGHLIN: Thank you. Human subjects is one of the trickier aspects, and more complicated aspects, of a return to on-site research because a lot of this doesn't occur on site. It's not in a WSU building. It's not in a traditional campus.

A lot of the human subjects research is going to other places, having face to face conversations, talking to vulnerable populations. And a lot of that just simply can't be done with good physical distancing. Wearing a respirator or a cloth facial covering isn't the same as the other measures we have. So it's going to be difficult.

That's not to say that not any human subjects research can progress. Some of it is applicable. Some of it can happen under current local guidelines, state, federal, WSU guidelines, to make it work. But it's not as easy as none or all. And a lot of it will be a case by case basis.

This is where you rely on those subject matter experts. You rely on the human research protection program, the IRB. You work with your chair, your director. With that I know we're going to be able to do a lot more in later phases, later stages. And so I'll turn it back over to you Chris, as that's what we're currently recommending. And you can talk a little bit about the future.

CHRISTOPHER KEANE: Yeah. Thanks, Levi. Just thank you for just clarifying where we are right now. Let me just say everyone, that we do understand that this is a really important issue in terms of how we handle it. As Levi said, it is a complicated one.

In principle, one could go out and get tons of PPE and try and do human subjects, et cetera. We don't want to go with that path. We're following a single-system plan as you've heard. It's the one Levi's outlined in the document.

With that said, though, we do need to think about the future and how to resume human subject work effectively in a broad spectrum, everything we do. And so you heard earlier about the working group we have that put together this document. And we have a little spin off of that, which is going to be focused on human subjects. We're just going to start by looking at what exactly we want to do, how should we conduct it, what are the PPE requirements and other requirements.

And we will use that to spin out some more detailed guidance, and actually a plan to implement this. So we can implement it safely and effectively. That group will get going right away. Again, we do understand the urgency of this.

We understand as time goes by there's work not being done which is delaying research, delaying grants, has financial impacts. So we get it. And we will start-- well, we have been working on this subject. And we will form a specific group just to get a path forward on human subjects in detail right away. So and Levi, thank you in advance for your involvement in that.

PHIL WEILER: So we're getting close to the top of the hour, and there's one question that is a little bit different that I want to ask before we do run out of time. And this is sort of the opposite of what we've been seeing in the chat, and I think a lot of us have heard. I think the vast majority of our researchers are anxious to be able to get back in their labs, and to get restarted, and to pick up work where they left off. But there are also those individuals who are concerned that they may not be ready. So the question that we had received, submitted in advance is, do labs have to reopen if the researcher does not feel either prepared or safe or ready to go?

CHRISTOPHER KEANE: No. I think in fact the guidance says, if you can continue to do the work remotely, you should. But some things need to be done on site, and so again, that's the logic. But again, back to what we said earlier. We're building on the existing safety structure and our existing structures for managing work and working together. So if you have questions like this, go see your chair, go see your supervisor, and just talk about it. And we're here as a resource. Bryan--

PHIL WEILER: Bryan, did you have something you wanted to add?

BRYAN SLINKER: Yeah, just briefly. Agreed, the answer is no. You don't have to return. There are vulnerable populations. There are different assessments of risk personally.

At risk people, I unfortunately happen to be in an at-risk group because I'm over 65. And so you have to think about those things. But this also, I just want to modify that advice by saying there's most of us have research groups that have multiple individuals. And this can be customized further.

Not everybody has to go back in the lab for research to ramp up. Certain key individuals, we don't want anybody put at risk, or feel like we're being put at risk individually. But if there's a vulnerable individual that shouldn't come in, and can support the research remotely, that's what should happen.

And then if there's another member of the lab group that it's appropriate, and there's a mechanism for them to come in safely, they can do that as well. So this isn't an all or none thing where everybody in the research group's back or nobody is back. So that's another level of flexibility to keep in mind as you think about your own assessments of risk.

PHIL WEILER: Thanks, Bryan. I like that idea of emphasizing the flexibility of these guidelines. We are at the top of the hour. Before we sign off, Chris, I'd like to give you a chance to make any parting comments before the end.

CHRISTOPHER KEANE: Thanks. Thank you, Phil. But I would just like to thank everyone again for joining today, and also for providing input on the guidance. And in the bigger picture, thank you for your work during this difficult time to maintain and sustain our research enterprise. It's a team effort with you, with everyone on this video. So we're just here to help you.

Thanks again. Have a great day. We look forward to your comments on the guidance.

PHIL WEILER: Great. Thank you, Chris. I also want to say thank you to all of our subject matter experts who are monitoring the live chat on YouTube. As I was watching it, there's a lot of interaction back and forth. So I think that that's a really helpful service, and I appreciate folks being willing to share their expertise, live in real time.

I also want to thank our panelists. I appreciate all of you taking the time to share your information on this really important subject. And I will conclude by just reminding folks that we would love, if you haven't had a chance to provide any feedback, please do so by the end of day tomorrow.

You can visit the Office of Research website. There is a link. Link is here on the screen. But if you go to the Office of Research, in their nav button or their nav bar, you can see there's a lot of information there around COVID-19.

They have a series of frequently asked questions, as well as the draft guidance. So please do make your voice heard. Help us put together the best guidance that we can. With that, again I want to thank everybody for joining us. Enjoy your afternoon and Go Cougs.