A Few General Principles for lab re-opening during COVID-19

1. Faculty, Staff and Trainees/Post-Grad Trainees safety is paramount.
2. Staff and students should remain off-site unless actively conducting research.
3. Faculties and Departments can shut down laboratories, floors or buildings as required.
4. Faculties will work collaboratively with their VP Research to oversee re-opening research.

Please consult the University’s on-campus research phase-in directives.

Early guidance on McGill’s approach to re-opening
Dr. Shari Baum (April 29th, 2020)

Building access
- Social distancing measures will need to be maintained: in the lab, but also in shared facilities, common spaces, elevators, building entry/exit points, and in travel between work and home.
- Guidelines for re-opening are still being finalized; logistics will take time to work out.
- Some buildings will open before others.
- Measures including security guards and handwashing stations to be put in place.
- After-hours access to buildings is being discussed.

Ramping up plans
- Each PI will need to submit a plan for how they will ensure maintaining health and safety measures such as physical distancing, scheduling, requirements for PPE, and so on. Plans will have to be approved by Department and then the Faculty of Medicine. Guidance on this planning will be provided.

Working from home
- If you do not need to be on campus, you are expected to work from home.
- Full return to research will happen very slowly, likely over a period of many weeks.

Sanitation
- The university is discussing plans to provide extra cleaning materials, training on how to use PPE, and how to clean equipment. This will take time and further discussions on this are in progress.

Expect to “go slow” as you prepare your ramping-up plan
Each lab will need identify their own ‘strategic priorities’: what can and should be done first, what timeline is feasible, what logistical barriers must be addressed.

The following are some of the suggestions and questions suggested by those who participated in the discussion. They may help you as you consider preparing your own ramp-up plan and will be considered in the Faculty’s planning.

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<th>Topic</th>
<th>Questions to consider</th>
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| Physical distancing           | - Develop schedules and principles — maximum number of people in the lab at a given time and schedule to coordinate attendance, for each lab, and more broadly for units, shared facilities, floors and buildings  
- Equipment — develop protocols for sharing equipment, cleaning (before and after) and space between different instruments  
- Lab layout — taking into consideration adequate space between workstations, need for barriers between people  
- Training and supervision — can some of this be done remotely, with trainee in lab and supervisor on Zoom, for example?  
- Share symptom checklists and criteria for when to stay at home. Plan for sudden absences in case of symptoms — i.e. back-up personnel |
| Schedules/ resources          | - Hours — Create a schedule with shifts (morning, afternoons, etc.) to allow for adequate distribution of access.  
- PPE — procure supplies through regular means and ensure that there is an adequate supply for those who need it at all times.  
- Consider a plan for handling supply deliveries safely.  
- Create a log (in and out) of persons present in individual rooms/labs. This can also allow rapid contact tracing if someone becomes ill.  
- Create a forum to share information amongst lab members (or larger units).  
- Share webinars, training videos re: how to wear a mask properly, handwashing, gloves for ‘dirty procedures’, etc.  
- Consider asking people to wear non-medical masks while moving through the building. |
| Ramping up staff and research | Researchers and technicians: Individual PIs can identify project priorities for return to the labs. Considerations to include in decision process:  
- Stage in student’s research, seniority, those who have chronic conditions, transportation methods to the lab, those who are caretakers for family members, etc.  
    (Be careful to respect confidentiality in discussing personal issues.)  
- Summer students can be recruited but their work should not hinge on lab access.  

**If you are doing animal research**  
- It will be important to consider ramp up time of colonies and risk that access could be abruptly limited again in the near future (i.e. local outbreak or increase in community cases)  
- Coordinate with CMARC.  

**If you are doing human subjects research**  
- Consider alternate methods to collect data (Zoom, telephone, etc.)  
- Return to in person, face-to-face research with humans, especially vulnerable populations likely to be very, very slow.  

**Other**  
- Assume that people will follow the public directives.  
- Provide resources for students to reach out to for support (e.g., WELL Office, Student Wellness Hub)  
- Transportation: consider whether staff will be taking public transit and if parking is available
Additional questions raised:

- Will there be COVID screening for students?
- Will there be limitations in moving between hospital and research areas? Between different research buildings?
- How will common spaces be handled? i.e. bathrooms, elevators, cafeteria, entrance to metro, etc.
- Can expert resources from affiliated hospitals be shared to avoid reinventing the wheel (re: procedure, contingency plans, outbreak report & situation management)
- Parking was a big topic and the possibility of getting additional access was important.
- Can instructions and guidance be provided to PI’s regarding how to deal with people who have differing comfort levels?
- There was interest in getting additional information regarding government Emergency Wage Subsidy plan covering 75% of salary for 12 weeks.
- Can information from departmental health and safety committees be shared to help with monitoring and information?
- Can hand sanitizer be added on each floor?
- How to re-order supplies was a big question.
- A number of facilities questions about cleaning and waste disposal – what will be done with gloves, cleaners getting special training, etc.
- What are the best ways to communicate with Facilities Management?
- Is there any financial compensation for money lost on service contracts for equipment that hasn’t been used during the shut-down?

Thanks to all who participated and shared their concerns and ideas. The many questions raised emphasize the importance of ramping up slowly to allow logistical challenges to be safely managed.