

ChemE Virtual Town Hall

March 26, 2020

Questions

1. Q: Clarification on slides 10 and 11 and the research impact; will labs be open and operating after two weeks?

A: We are holding to the *Stay Home and Stay Healthy* directive from Governor Inslee for at least 2 weeks. Beyond this, we do not know. The 2 week directive could be extended. ChemE will communicate as we know more. Possible gradual reduction in the restriction of *Stay Home and Stay Healthy* and getting back to business as usual.

2. Q: How will graduate students and suspended research activities be addressed? Will timelines be adjusted?

A: Everything will be taken into consideration. We will not unfairly affect the graduate student. We know when prelims and generals will be taken. The decisions will be determined by the department. We have the ability to change/modify graduate requirements and when exams will be taken. We will not put students up for exams who are not ready. We will consider blanket adjustments, individual exceptions or neither. Jim will consult with Grad Program Director, Professor DeForest, Chair's Advisory Council and faculty. Collective input that makes sense for everyone will be taken into consideration.

3. Q: Will there be commencement – university or department level?

A: There is no official word on this yet. Graduation is in June. The event will still be a large group and may still be problematic. Celebrating achievements is very important with family, friends and self. Graduation is an important event to move forward. It provides the opportunity for everyone to recognize achievements.

4. Q: Can a PI argue that group research is COVID-19 related to continue to help advance medical research in order to classify a post doc as critical personnel?

No. The Vice Provost and President for Research have 6 specific criteria that outline if there is an in-person need to be in a lab. The decision has already been made.

5. Q: Is it safe to be in the building? What if someone doesn't feel comfortable being in public places? What if the PI is pressuring the graduate student, RA or post doc to be in the lab when they prefer to work from home?

A: If you are not comfortable taking the issue to the PI bring the concern to your ChemE advisor and they will explore strategies with you to address this. Debbie Carnes, Office Administrator, and Jim are also available for graduate student and post doc meetings. All inquiries will be held in confidence and the student will be anonymous.

6. Q: How will Undergraduate research work with modified operations?

A: We don't know what is going to happen yet. Students will still get the credit and should participate in research. Talk to your advisor and PI immediately. Wet lab research is really important. Right now, it's a wait and see approach.

7. Q: What is the safety of Benson Hall during the day and after hours with fewer people in the building and on weekends?

A: Doors to Benson Hall are now locked 24/7. Be sure the door closes behind you when you enter/exit. Bring your safety concern to your PI's attention. Remember personal and DH&S first. There are resources on campus available for assistance. UW Campus police are aware of the current issues and the increase in transient activity. Kameron Harmon, Facilities manager, is on-site daily from 12:00 – 2:00pm and will conduct regular walk-throughs of the building. Custodial services are on-site during morning hours and will also be keeping an on things. We will continue to monitor the situation. Keep non-emergency phone number with you.

Non-Emergency Police: (206) 685-8973

Safe Campus: (206) 685-SAFE (7233) [washington.edu/safecampus](https://www.washington.edu/safecampus)

8. Q: How will mail and packages be received?

A: If you are not critical personnel, you should not be on campus. Mail will be available when you return to the building. If there is something you really need, we will mail it to your home. Regular packages are now being rerouted to Mailing Services and will be delivered daily to Benson Hall. Kameron will distribute it between 12:00 – 2:00pm. ** If you are expecting something that requires refrigeration or is considered chemical materials, make arrangements ahead of time with Kameron. Mailing Services will not accept those items.

9. Q: What is the cleaning schedule change?

A: The custodian has been instructed to frequently wipe down door handles, bathrooms and breakrooms routinely. Custodial services will be reducing some schedules. They will focus their attention on the area of the building where there are people.

10. Q: What happens if we get stuck in the elevator?

A: Use the elevator if you have to transport something safely. If the elevator gets stuck, critical personnel at the UW will be called to repair. When able, use the staircase. Bring your cell phone although there is help speaker button in the elevator. Multiple people should be present or contact your PI. You will not be stranded and will be safe.

Facility or Utility Failure assistance: (206) 685-1411

11. Q: Is there a back- up plan if Jim gets COVID-19?

A: For teaching – all core classes for the undergraduate program have backup faculty members who are ready to step in, if needed. Professor Holt is an Associate Chair for the ChemE Department and is very aware of what needs to happen if a Chair is not available. The COE Dean and the Vice-Dean are monitoring all departments very closely. This should not be a concern or point of anxiety. Many faculty and staff in ChemE are capable to step in when needed so that all essential tasks can continue without interruption.

12. Q: How will everyone be notified about graduation?

A: Notification will come from Jim Pfaendtner, Chair. We will continue to give you information through email updates. There will be no weekly newsletter. ChemE has a website and will list all critical information which will be updated as new information develops. ChemE department can convene again for another Town Hall, if needed. Students will be notified by email, Twitter, Chem E Slack channel. Jim Pfaendtner will communicate.

13. Q: What's happening with ChemE Seminars, DYSS and the Data Science Grad Program?

A: Grad seminar is cancelled for the quarter. Speakers were contacted and asked if they wanted to do a virtual seminar and most of them said no. Will proceed with taking a quarter off having seminar. DYSS in the summer will be virtual and regular seminar in the autumn quarter again.

For the Data Science Grad Program, the next phase is the capstone project, ChemE 547. This is a grad school elective. Program will run well in an on-line format. Capstone sponsors are excited and ready to work with grad students.

14. Q: Is it possible to increase the capacity of the lab classes since 436 has been cancelled?

A: Please reach out to the advising staff asap. We will do our best to accommodate requests.

**** IMPORTANT RESOURCE:**

UW [Care Link](#) is a resource available to faculty, staff, post docs, or a family or household member of a UW employee. They also offer financial counseling and other supportive assistance. There is also a list of COVID-19 resources on their website.