



# TUSKEGEE UNIVERSITY REOPENING

*A Reopening guide for TU Faculty, Staff, Students and Visitors*

*COVID-19 Policies and Procedures*

**GOLDEN TIGERS** *Let's Do Our Part*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>A Message from President McNair .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>COVID-19 Campus Entry Policy .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Policy .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<i>General Campus Spaces .....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Campus Laboratories &amp; Personal Protective Equipment .....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Hand Washing/Hygiene .....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Failure to Comply .....</i>	<i>5</i>
<b>Physical Distancing Policy .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Common Areas and Shared Property Policy .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<i>Cleaning Shared Work or Study Areas .....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Laboratories and Research Spaces .....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Classrooms, meeting spaces and common areas .....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>University Vehicles .....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>University Shuttles .....</i>	<i>7</i>
<b>Covid-19 Testing Policy and Protocol .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<i>Initial Testing for Re-entry .....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Sentinel Testing .....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Campus Clusters/Exposure Notification .....</i>	<i>7</i>
<b>Policy on Required Reporting &amp; Isolation .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<i>Contact Tracing .....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Student Isolation Location .....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Cleaning Areas Potentially Exposed to COVID-19 .....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Returning to Workspace(s) After Cleaning .....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Returning to Class, Residence Hall or Workspace Post-COVID-19 Diagnosis .....</i>	<i>11</i>
<b>Guidelines for Laboratories &amp; Research Spaces .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Mice and Other Species .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Health and Safety .....</b>	<b>16</b>



# A Message from President McNair

The presence of SARS-COV2 virus that causes COVID19 requires that the University take extraordinary and sometimes, inconvenient measures to maintain the health and safety of our community. The purpose of this COVID-19 manual is to outline policies and procedures that will begin in the summer of 2020 and continue throughout the academic year. These policies will apply to the entire Tuskegee Community and are designed with the best available practices and standards of care guidelines from state, local, and federal public health experts and agencies.

These policies and procedures are necessary, but not sufficient, to ensure meeting our collective safety and health goals. As such, each member of the TU community has a critical role to play in the fight against the spread of the virus; our success depends on every person adhering to the best practices as outlined in this manual, including wearing masks and other protective equipment, practicing physical distancing, washing hands frequently, and so on. As everyone is expected to take responsibility for their own health, we also expect you to be considerate of the safety of others -- together we can succeed in keeping everyone safe and healthy. This is our commitment to our students, colleagues, and all members of the Tuskegee University community.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lily D. McNair".

President Lily D. McNair

## COVID-19 CAMPUS ENTRY POLICY

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends tracing and monitoring contacts with individuals exposed to COVID-19, and subsequent notification of their exposure. Tuskegee University personnel will utilize digital tools to expand the reach and efficacy of tracking COVID-19 exposure.

These requirements are to ensure better safety precautions and effective quarantine of potential coronavirus positive contacts from the campus community, and to prevent additional community spread of the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19 disease.

All visitors entering the gates of Tuskegee University will be required to complete a brief questionnaire before proceeding to their destination. All must adhere to following:

1. All TU employees, students and contractors must present proper identification at authorized entrances to campus which includes a cleared passport from the completion of the Golden Tiger Health check daily.
2. All visitors must register and obtain a visitor's pass and adhere to TU on-campus safety guidelines, especially the requirement to wear masks to gain entrance to campus.
3. All persons on TU property must remain six feet apart and abstain from physical contact.
4. All persons on TU property must wear a face covering that covers both their nose and their mouth.
5. University Police will use no-touch digital forehead thermometers to check every person entering the gates of Tuskegee University. If the temperature reading is above 100 degrees, they will not be permitted to enter the campus gates.

## PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) POLICY

### General Campus Spaces

Anyone in a Tuskegee University space (including buildings, grounds, shared laboratory areas, conference rooms, elevators, parking structures, shuttles, etc.) must wear a face covering or a mask that covers both the nose and mouth at all times, except when alone in a private room or vehicle.

Residents in campus housing are not required to wear a face covering while in their own units or rooms, but face coverings must be worn in all common areas of Tuskegee University housing, buildings, and other campus facilities.

### Campus Laboratories & Personal Protective Equipment

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is an important factor in your safety when working in laboratories. Gloves, safety glasses and lab coats must be worn as part of lab safety equipment and established experimental protocols. It is expected that anyone who enters a campus laboratory will wear the required personal protective equipment. (See the Guidelines for Laboratories & Research Spaces on page 15 for more guidance.)

### Hand Washing/Hygiene

All students and personnel must practice good hygiene by frequently washing your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or longer. Hand sanitizer is available in building lobbies and other frequented locations. When possible, use soap and water instead of hand sanitizer. Avoid touching your face and hair. If you need to cough or sneeze, please use a tissue or cough inside your elbow.

### Failure to Comply

**Students:** First failure to comply with the Personal Protective Equipment Policy will result in a warning. Repeated violations of this policy will result in suspension from campus and laboratories. If a laboratorian is suspended, for those with required laboratory experiments, arrangements must be made with the Dean of the respective department or school/college to ensure animals are cared for and/or someone takes suspended persons' place. Students can report violations of this policy to the Office of the Dean of Students. Students may also use the student complaint form: <https://www.tuskegee.edu/student-complaints>.

**Faculty and Staff:** First failure to comply with the Personal Protective Equipment Policy will result in a warning and the employee being sent home if appropriate PPE is not immediately available. Additional disciplinary actions will follow the progressive discipline policy outlined in the appropriate handbook. Third-party vendors will be reported to their immediate supervisor.

Faculty and staff can report violations of this policy to the unit's immediate supervisor; the supervisor will notify Human Resources of the violation. We will attempt to preserve confidentiality to the extent possible.

**Contractors & Other Visitors to Campus:** Failure to comply with the Personal Protective Equipment Policy will result in a warning and the contractor/visitor being asked to leave campus if appropriate PPE is not immediately available.

## PHYSICAL DISTANCING POLICY

Tuskegee University will follow the Centers for Disease Control's recommended practice of physical distancing to reduce exposure to the COVID-19 virus. Keeping space between you and others is one of the best tools to avoid being exposed to SARS-COV2 the virus that causes COVID19. People can spread the virus before they know they have symptoms, so it is important to stay away from others when possible, even if neither party has symptoms.

Physical distancing requires students, faculty and staff to practice the following:

- Stay at least six feet (about two arms' length) from other people
- Avoid gathering in groups
- Refrain from crowded places with 10 or more people if at least six feet of physical distancing cannot be maintained

Students, faculty and staff who continuously fail to comply with the Physical Distancing Policy will follow the progressive discipline policy outlined in the appropriate handbook.

Contractors and visitors who repeatedly violate this policy may be suspended from university properties.

## COMMON AREAS AND SHARED PROPERTY POLICY

### Cleaning Shared Work or Study Areas

If you work or study in a non-private space (open offices, shared offices, etc.), we ask that you share in the responsibility to clean and disinfect your area. Supplies will be available in limited quantities for you to disinfect high-touch surfaces when you arrive and when you leave your space at the end of day.

To facilitate cleaning, please declutter your work and study areas. Please wipe all surfaces (use a dry cloth for electronics) that you touch in shared work areas, including:

- Desktop, including buttons for adjustable desks
- Monitor buttons
- Keyboard, camera, mouse and mouse pad
- Computer docking cable and dock, including on/off button
- Phone keypad, handset and headset
- Chair arm rests
- Lamp button

### Laboratories and Research Spaces

See the Guidelines for Laboratories & Research Spaces on page 16 below.

### Classrooms, meeting spaces and common areas

Face-to face meetings and classes should engage in the following cleaning protocols:

- Common areas, including high-touch areas, bathrooms, and vending machines will be cleaned three times a day by Facilities personnel.
- Cleaning wipes will be provided so that students and faculty may clean tabletops and chair arms with disinfectants before and after your class or meeting.

- Classrooms and meeting places will be cleaned once a day by Facilities personnel.
- Cleaning wipes will be provided for faculty to sanitize markers and clean white board before and after their class or meeting.
- Faculty should clean audio equipment and speakerphone control panels before and after their class or meeting.

### **University Vehicles**

For students and personnel who drive university vehicles, please follow these cleaning procedures:

- Clean door handles, steering wheel, shift handle, brake handle and all other interior locks, knobs and handles of department vehicles or carts before and after each use. Limited cleaning supplies will be available from Facilities
- Drivers are expected to clear all trash from the vehicle (towels, napkins, gloves, masks, paper, etc.) after each use.
- Only one person per vehicle is allowed unless the vehicle is large enough to practice physical distancing.
- If more than one person is in the vehicle, cloth face coverings must be worn.

### **University Shuttles**

Shuttles are restricted to six passengers per vehicle. Cloth face coverings are required while riding Tuskegee University shuttles. Hand sanitizer is provided on all shuttles, and riders should use it upon entering and exiting. Please heed physical distancing markers on floors and seats and ensure you maintain sufficient distance while riding the shuttle.

## **COVID-19 TESTING POLICY AND PROTOCOL**

In order to safeguard the campus and reduce potential spread of the COVID-19 virus, we are requiring all students, faculty, staff, consultants (regularly on campus) and third-party vendors returning to campus for the Spring 2021 semester to provide proof of COVID-19 negative PCR test result. Students who have tested negative for COVID-19 and have submitted documentation to Student Health Services will be permitted to move into on campus housing; participate in classes and campus activities; and enter the campus and university facilities (within 15 calendar days of re-entry). Faculty, staff, consultants (regularly on campus) and third-party vendors who have tested negative (within 15 calendar days of re-entry) and have submitted documentation to Human Resources will be allowed to resume their normal or assigned duties.

New and returning students must meet the following medical requirements before moving into campus housing or registering for classes. These medical requirements include the normally required physical exam by a medical provider, mandatory immunization requirements, a TB questionnaire, COVID-19 testing and an authorization to treat form.

### **Initial Testing for Re-entry**

Faculty & staff returning to campus will need to provide a negative COVID19 test within the deadlines published to all faculty and staff during the holiday break. All new and returning students onto Tuskegee University campus will be tested for COVID-19 before within 15 days calendar days and/or immediately following their entry to campus. All students without a negative test upon arriving to campus will be quarantined in their personal living quarters until a test result can be received. If found to be positive students will be placed in isolation housing, if negative quarantine restrictions (online classes only, no participation in student gatherings of any size, no use of cafeteria facilities) will be removed.



## Sentinel Testing

Sentinel testing of faculty, staff, and students will be implemented to signal trends, identify outbreaks, and monitor the prevalence of COVID-19 on campus. Sentinel testing would involve conducting COVID-19 tests on a randomized sample of 15% of employees and students. Testing will be voluntary for most off-campus students. Students living in on-campus residential housing or participating in university sponsored extracurricular activities will be required to participate in sentinel testing. A subcommittee has been developed to create a specific process for randomization, notification, testing, and the handling of test results.

## Campus Clusters/Exposure Notification

As part of campus standard protocol to manage outbreaks, a trained team will be sent where there have been multiple confirmed cases of COVID-19 in a single location, a "cluster." The team will require COVID-19 testing, outside of the sentinel process, to faculty, staff, and students who may be part of a cluster and/or involved in university sponsored extracurricular activities. Protocols to manage groups who may be required to quarantine/isolate have been established. Campus plans will offer technology-facilitated exposure notification to augment exposure notification performed by monitoring the Alabama Department of Public Health and local emergency management systems. The campus team will also provide appropriate guidance based on consultation with the local or state health departments, and the CRMC.

If you have a positive test result, you must meet the following conditions to return to campus:

1. You show no evidence of a fever, cough and/or related symptoms.
2. Your symptoms have improved (e.g., cough or shortness of breath have improved).
3. You received a negative PCR test.

If you are in the local area, you may choose to obtain a COVID-19 test at one of the below facilities:

Tuskegee University will provide testing-details will be announced at a later date.

Lee County  
Auburn Family Care  
2544 Enterprise Drive  
Opelika, AL  
334-528-9050

Macon County Emergency Management Agency  
334-727-1800  
Testing Weekly on Thursdays

Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) 888-264-2256 Hotline-provides testing sites near your zip code

Please know that your private health information will be kept confidential.



## POLICY ON GUIDESAFE APP/TU HEALTH CHECK IMPLEMENTATION

Tuskegee will abide by best practices and validated scientific evidence in reporting potential and confirmed COVID-19 cases, symptoms, and contacts.

Students, faculty, staff and third-party vendors and staff will be required to download the GuideSafe App™ which is a platform that promotes testing and self-reporting to assist with making informed decisions and helps stop the spread of COVID-19. You must have a tuskegee.edu email in order to utilize the GuideSafe App™. The platform has three tools to help mitigate the risk of exposure and spread of COVID-19:

1. Golden Tiger Health Check
2. Event Passport
3. Report Positive Test

### Golden Tiger Health Check

Students, employees or third-party vendors must take their temperature daily and complete the Golden Tiger Health Check to track their health. (Only personnel with a Tuskegee email will be able to utilize the GuideSafe App™.) To utilize the Golden Tiger Health Check, download the GuideSafe App™ (see instructions below). Once the app has been downloaded, click on Health Check then Select Your Organization (Tuskegee); login using your Tuskegee University credentials, then answer the healthcheck questions.

If you have new COVID-19 symptoms or exposure, report it immediately in the Golden Tiger Health Check.

Make your check-in quick and easy. Pin the Golden Tiger Health Check to your phone's home screen.

iPhone/iPad: open <https://www.tuskegee.edu/coronavirus-resources/golden-tiger-health-check>

- in your browser, tap the share icon at the bottom, click "Add to Home Screen" from the menu.
- Android: open <https://www.tuskegee.edu/coronavirus-resources/golden-tiger-health-check>
- in your browser, click on the three dots in the top right menu, select "Add to Home Screen" from the menu.

Together, we can return to a healthy and safe campus.

Once you have completed the Golden Tiger Health Check, click on Get my Passport to get a CLEAR (green) or screen. If you get a NOT CLEAR (red) screen, you will not be allowed entry to campus, classes, events or activities. All faculty, staff, students and third-party vendors regularly on campus, who have been issued a Tuskegee email, will be required to show their Event Passport for entry to campus, classes, meetings events or other activities.

### Event Passport

GuideSafe™ Event Passport is used to facilitate access to meetings, events, or facilities having ten or more people including access to campus. Event attendees will be required to complete the Golden Tiger Health Check or a COVID-19 assessment tool, prior to entering their event. Event passport is issued based on a proprietary risk algorithm factoring your daily Golden Tiger Health Check assigned risk level. After you have completed Golden Tiger Health Check, press the "Get my Passport" button to get your passport. Your passport is valid for the day. Each user is assigned a unique passport number indicating their status for the upcoming event which will show a "Clear" (green) screen or "Not Clear" (red) screen.

## **Event Passport Demonstration**

For a demonstration of how the Event Passport App works, please link to <https://vimeo.com/447555616>.

## **Event Passport Daily Requirement**

Beginning on February 26, 2021, Tuskegee University will require the Event Passport as a daily check on each individual's health prior to entering the campus. Every student, employee, consultants, third-party vendors, or contractors will be required to present an Event Passport "CLEAR" (green) to enter campus, classes, events, and activities.

Please note that the Event Passport is not a substitute for the temperature check at the campus gate.

## **Failure to Comply**

Any student, employee, or third-party vendors with a Tuskegee email who does not present the Event Passport "CLEAR" (green) prior to entering campus, classes, meetings, events, and activities will be denied entry.

## **Report Positive Test**

You should report all test results to the university at [reportcovid19@tuskegee.edu](mailto:reportcovid19@tuskegee.edu). You may also use this platform within the GuideSafe App™ to report a positive test result. Please know that your private health information will be kept confidential.

## **TU Checkpoint Log**

Visitors, including media personnel, third-party vendors or contractors without a Tuskegee University email can download the TU Checkpoint log and respond to the necessary questions to allow you entry to our campus. The link to the TU checkpoint is below for your convenience. All visitors must have an employee that they are visiting and the name of the building(s) they will be entering while on campus. The TU Checkpoint must be completed at least 24 hours in advance and the scheduled visit must be confirmed by the employee prior to your arrival or you will be denied entry onto the campus. The link to complete the TU Checkpoint is below.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScj7Uru104xGXp1hwGNAGWK5xT22e4kq8hCAJOXGE6MXs2UYg/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1&flr=0>

## POLICY ON REQUIRED REPORTING & ISOLATION

Tuskegee will abide by CDC and Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) guidance in reporting potential and confirmed COVID-19 cases, symptoms, and contacts.

Tuskegee will abide by best practices and validated scientific evidence in reporting potential and confirmed COVID-19 cases, symptoms, and contacts. Please know that there are a wide range of symptoms ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure to the virus**. People with the following symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

This list does not include all possible symptoms. Anyone experiencing these symptoms or exposed to these symptoms should email [reportcovid19@tuskegee.edu](mailto:reportcovid19@tuskegee.edu).

Student Health Services	(334) 727-8641	Monday -Friday	8:00 am to 4:30 pm
Contact Tracer	(334) 421-3491	Monday-Friday and in Emergency Cases on the Weekend	

### Definitions

Tuskegee University defines isolation and quarantine as follows:

Quarantine is the process in which people who have been **exposed** to a person known to be positive for COVID-19 but are not themselves known yet to be positive. These individuals are to remain separate from the general community and monitor themselves and report symptoms.

**Isolation** is the process in which people who are known to have a **positive** COVID-19 test result. These individuals are to remain separate from the general community for 10 days to prevent the disease from spreading. Campus residential students will be isolated in one of the spaces identified for this purpose.

### COVID-19 Symptoms or Positive

If students, employees, consultants, third-party vendors or contractors experience one or more COVID-19 symptom(s) they must engage in the following:

1. Call the Contact Tracer at (334) 421-3491 and/or email at [reportcovid19@tuskegee.edu](mailto:reportcovid19@tuskegee.edu).
2. Employees must inform their supervisor; and
3. Quarantine immediately a call from the Contact Tracer will be forthcoming with further instructions

## **COVID-19 Direct Contact**

A Direct Contact is a person who has been tested positive for COVID-19. Direct contact is defined as having

1. Physical contact such as sharing lab equipment
2. Close contact with a person who has tested positive (6 feet or less for 15-20 minutes)
3. Been in a shared space with someone who has tested positive with or without a mask

## **COVID-19 Proximate Contact**

A Proximate Contact includes those who:

1. Have been in a space with a person who has tested positive (6 feet or less for an hour or more) with or without a mask

If students, employees, consultants, third-party vendors or contractors have been notified that they have been in contact or exposed to a person with a positive test, the student or employee must:

1. Call the Contact Tracer at (334) 421-3491 and/or email at [reportcovid19@tuskegee.edu](mailto:reportcovid19@tuskegee.edu).
2. Employees must inform their supervisor; and
3. Obtain a COVID-19 PCR test
4. Immediately quarantine until a test result has been received and follow appropriate guidance from the contact tracer based upon the result
5. Report test results to Student Health Services immediately upon confirmation to [reportcovid19@tuskegee.edu](mailto:reportcovid19@tuskegee.edu).  
Student Health Services will inform Human Resources of any employee, vendor and contractor COVID-19 health concerns.

## **Contact Tracing**

Student Health Services will alert the Vice-President for Student Affairs regarding affected students and personnel. A Contact Tracer will trace who may have been in contact with the affected person and make the appropriate notifications. If a student or employee has been directly exposed to an individual who has had a suspected exposure to COVID19, he or she must quarantine until test results are confirmed. If a positive COVID-19 test is confirmed, the individual(s) must continue to quarantine until they have received a negative PCR test and follow the return-to-work guidelines below.

The Contact Tracer, under the direction of the COVID-19 Recovery Management Center (CRMC), will conduct an investigation (following HIPAA guidelines) to confirm case details and follow-up with department heads. If a positive COVID-19 test is confirmed, Human Resources will work with department heads to transition the impacted personnel to remote working (if asymptomatic and able to continue work duties) and coordinate with contractors or third-party vendors. Student Affairs will work with students to ensure the appropriate resources and support.

The Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs will initiate the following:

- Coordinate with TU President and the CRMC regarding messaging to the community
- Work with Student Health Services to notify local public health officials. These officials will provide advice to Administrators on the appropriate course of action

In addition, the Office of the Vice-President for Student Affairs will coordinate with:

## **Vice President of Facilities and Construction**

- To ensure the custodial staff cleans the facility following federal standards and place appropriate signage in areas to be quarantined until cleaned according to federal standards.
- To secure the location and post signage to ensure personnel do not enter the facility.



### **Supervisors/Deans**

- To address employees in the immediate area of the confirmed case. Inform them to gather their belongings, leave the building and prepare to work remotely.
- To coordinate with Chief Information Officer and supervisor regarding possible remote work computer needs.

### **Student Isolation Location**

Isolation facilities will be made available for residential students. Student services will be available to students in isolation. Students living off campus should isolate at home and contact the Contact Tracer at (334) 421-3491 to ensure appropriate resources and support.

Students will remain in isolation for a minimum of 10 days. Students must submit and receive verification of a negative COVID-19 PCR test by a physician. The one of the staff members working with Student Health Services will convey that the student will be released from the Isolation Center upon receipt of communication from Student Health Services that the test meets university requirements.

Should a student test positive a second time, they will be required to continue isolation and retest as directed by the Student Health Center. If the student has a third positive test, the student's legal guardian will be contacted, and the student will be instructed to continue isolation at home until a negative test result is submitted for verification and approval to return to campus.

### **Cleaning Areas Potentially Exposed to COVID-19**

All areas wherein a person has had a suspected exposure to COVID-19 will be cleaned utilizing federal standards. A professional cleaning company will be contacted in cases where a COVID-19 positive test has been confirmed.

### **Returning to Workspace(s) After Cleaning**

Students and employees not in the affected area of the reported case can re-enter the building once the area has been cleaned utilizing federal standards. Facilities Management will coordinate the cleaning and contact the Hall Director, Dean or the appropriate Vice President to confirm when it is safe to return to classroom, residence halls and campus spaces.

The Vice President for Student Affairs and Human Resources will notify students and staff when it is safe to return to the facility.

### **Returning to Class, Residence Hall or Workspace Post-COVID-19 Diagnosis**

An individual who has stayed home in isolation due to a **positive test** may return to a facility **after Student Health Services has confirmed** all of the following conditions have been satisfied:

Students, employees, contractors, and third-party vendors must submit and receive verification of a negative COVID-19 PCR test by a physician. For students, the Student Health Center will convey that the student will be released from the Isolation Center upon receipt of communication from Student Health Services that the test meets university requirements. Employees, contractors and third-party vendors, who are tested at the student health center will also be notified by someone from Student Health Staff if your test is positive or negative.

## **Returning to Class, Residence Hall or Workspace After Exposure** (No Diagnosis of COVID-19)

An individual who is in quarantine due to **possible exposure** may return to a facility **after Student Health Services has confirmed** all of the following conditions have been satisfied:

- A negative COVID-19 PCR test
- Symptoms have improved or subsided
- No fever for 24 hours and without the use of fever reducing medications
- A minimum of 7 quarantine days completed
- The physician will have discretion or authority to release students earlier than 7 days after the required negative COVID-19 PCR test.

## **GUIDELINES FOR LABORATORIES & RESEARCH SPACES**

These guidelines address the following specific circumstances for general research laboratories as well as labs performing COVID-19 research:

- Faculty with four to eight workstations in total are allowed one person in the entire lab during Phase 1 (Phase 1 is defined beginning on page 19). No lab should have more than one person in a four-workstation space. If the lab has less than four workstations, the PI should negotiate with neighboring labs to share space and use shift work to allow some minimal amount of work to proceed.
- Faculty with eight to 15 workstations can negotiate with neighboring labs to allow a density of one person per eight workstations in the neighborhood.
- Laboratories are allowed to continue using previously approved personnel numbers for ongoing projects, staggering laboratory hours to meet the guidelines above.
- In some cases, members of multiple laboratories in a department/college might, at different times, use the same equipment room, cell culture space, or animal room. Researchers should avoid unnecessary interactions by coordinating or pre-scheduling activities. For example, cell culture rooms with multiple hoods should have no more than one person working at each station and use stations in a manner that allows physical distancing to be maintained (i.e. every other station), and all necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) should be worn even if alone in the culture room.
- Some researchers and technicians spend all of their time in animal facilities, cell culture rooms, or other spaces away from a central laboratory; these individuals do not count toward the density of the central laboratory. However, physical distancing guidelines should be observed in areas ancillary to the central laboratories as well.
- We understand that some complex experiments, as well as the training of new laboratory members, require teamwork between at least two researchers and/or technicians. These interactions are allowed when necessary but should be minimized whenever possible. Physical distancing of six feet must be employed, and appropriate PPE utilized to create a physical barrier.
- Laboratory safety must continue to be considered during times of low staff density. The Tuskegee COVID-19 Laboratory Policy prohibits working alone in a laboratory unless crosschecks, periodic security guard or coworker checks, or other communication measures are taken. Those working with hazardous materials are encouraged not to work alone and not to work at off hours when fewer laboratories members are in the facility. Researchers should establish a buddy system with someone in a neighboring space or laboratory or use check-in/check-out by phone or text with the Principal Investigator (PI) or another laboratory member.

Scheduling and coordination of work hours. To allow multiple researchers/technicians to sequentially occupy the allotted space, laboratories should develop calendar systems to schedule work shifts throughout the day and on weekends, bearing in mind that safety is a particular concern for people working alone late at night. The structure of these schedules and the length of shifts can be flexible, depending on the type of experiment and the needs of the lab. Currently, laboratories in operation at Tuskegee University have shifts ranging from three to 12 hours in length. Another option is for specific researchers/technicians to reserve certain days of the week. Researchers/technicians should understand that their time in the laboratory is limited. Furthermore:

- Researchers/technicians should communicate openly and often (by text or other messaging systems) to coordinate and adjust schedules as necessary. Everyone should complete work within their shift and respect the agreed upon schedules.
- Researchers/technicians should plan ahead to maximize the use of their limited bench time, and they should do their notebook updating and other desktop activities when they return home or to their personal office space.
- Researchers/technicians should assist their colleagues by doing minor tasks and experiments that will reduce the need for others to come for routine tasks such as: resetting a timer, noting the results of an experiment, etc.
- Each researcher's/technician's bench and desk space are private and should not be used by others, so that it can be viewed as a safe space free of contamination.

Choice of researchers/technicians who return to work. When considering which researchers/technicians will be allowed to return to work initially, each PI should first determine which research activities are the most important to resume at this time (for example, research performed by students or postdocs may be a high priority if needed to meet a thesis, paper submission, or grant submission deadline). Then, in consultation with laboratory trainees and staff, the PI should determine which researchers/technicians are most appropriate for continuing that work, and whether it is possible to resume multiple projects using shift work. Selections of returning researchers/technicians should also be based on the following factors:

- Trainees (PhD students and postdocs) should be given high priority due to the need to complete their research projects in a timely fashion.
- Consider occasional rotation of researchers/technicians in the schedule to allow as many members as possible to experience some progress in their projects.
- Consider equity, diversity, and inclusion, as well as the well-being of laboratory members who are feeling isolated and may benefit greatly from the ability to come to the laboratory.
- Undergraduate volunteers will not be allowed in our laboratories until further notice.

Support staff, core facilities, and delivery of supplies. The reopening of laboratory research will require additional staff for glass washing and other tasks, as well as for the core facilities, such as flow cytometry and imaging facilities, that are needed for certain experiments. It will also be necessary to increase the flow of supplies into our buildings. As the resumption of work begins, we can expect delays in the reactivation of core facilities as they adjust to the new demands, and there are likely to be delays in ramping up some supply lines. Furthermore, these added services will lead to increased population density and physical interactions. The numbers of support staff should be kept to the minimum wherever possible.

Animal Research. All animal research activities must occur as detailed in the approved *Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)*. IACUC policies and procedures must be followed to ensure appropriate animal welfare. As you prepare to resume or initiate experimental activities, consider levels of staffing and resources needed to adhere to these requirements. If animals cannot be monitored and overseen as detailed in the approved protocol and required for approved laboratory housing, the associated activities should not resume until appropriate personnel and resources are available.

Adequate Laboratory Staff for Animal Research:

In all cases, laboratories must have adequate available staff to perform the proposed animal research activity.

- Laboratories must adhere to the frequency of monitoring and parameters described in the protocol and maintain associated documentation.
- Laboratories must monitor all animals under researcher care every day (including weekends and holidays) and maintain associated documentation.

### **Mice and Other Species**

- Animals already on Tuskegee University campus: Laboratories may resume studies using existing campus animals.
- Breeding: Mouse and other animal breeding may commence at levels that laboratory staff can support.
- Orders for new mice and other animals: Laboratories may place animal orders as needed.
- Importation of mice and other non-USDA animals from non-commercial vendors: This may commence immediately.
- Mouse transfers within Tuskegee University: Same as importation; this may commence immediately.
- New rodent research projects that require veterinary and/or IACUC oversight: Laboratory staff must contact IACUC chair with sufficient notice pursuant to their policies and procedures in advance of proposed studies.

Monitoring compliance. Based on good compliance with current research shutdown policies, we are confident that faculty, trainees, and staff understand the importance of these policies and will strive to operate their labs accordingly. However, compliance checks will be used to identify laboratories where there is inappropriate density or lack of distancing and protective measures. In these cases, faculty will be required to modify staff schedules or take other measures to minimize risk of transmission.

Researchers/technicians are empowered and encouraged to report recurring noncompliant practices to the PI of the noncompliant laboratory or to their own PI. Neighboring PIs should then make every effort to resolve the problem locally, if possible. If safety deficiencies are not resolved locally in a timely fashion, the issue will be escalated to the appropriate department chair, dean, or research oversight committee for swift correction. Another option for initiating an evaluation of unresolved safety concerns should be reported to [crmc@tuskegee.edu](mailto:crmc@tuskegee.edu).





# **GOLDEN TIGERS**

## ***Let's Do Our Part***

