

Report to Senate
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Report to Senate of the Vice President, Research

1. Research activity under pandemic conditions

- Like all Canadian and most international universities, Brock University is currently in period of research slowdown owing to closures and restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Many forms or stages of research can continue without restriction, as they require no face to face contact, nor use of shared spaces, equipment, or facilities. Remotely conducted survey work, text-based scholarship that does not require physical library access, and the data analysis phases of laboratory research are among the activities that may fall into this category.
- Other forms of research involve the use of shared spaces and facilities. These are suspended at Brock University, unless they are part of the public effort to mitigate the COVID-19 pandemic; are fully compliant with all university safety measures announced in response to pandemic conditions, including social distancing, minimization of on-campus presence, restricted access to facilities, and hygiene protocols; or are an approved exemption from the Vice-President, Research. Any researcher continuing projects under any of these conditions is responsible for confirming that any necessary modifications to Research Ethics clearance has been obtained. In practice, almost all laboratory facilities at the university are currently inactive.
- Research enterprise staff continue to work, primarily from home, in support of researchers and the institution.
- A full year extension to completion dates has been automatically granted to all internal research grants.

2. Functioning of the Research Ethics Office and Research Ethics Boards

- On March 16, I wrote the Research Ethics Boards and the Chair of R&SPC, notifying them that I was activating the provisions of the [REB Guideline: Functioning of REO and REB During Unforeseen Circumstances](#). The text of [this letter](#) is available on the main Research Ethics Office SharePoint page.

3. COVID-19 expertise inventory

- To better facilitate requests for expertise and scientific collaboration on Novel Coronavirus, the Office of Research Services is creating an inventory of relevant

expertise that Brock researchers can choose to join. The call for participants is available at: <https://brocku.sharepoint.com/SitePages/Statement-from-the-Vice-President%2C-Research-regarding-an-inventory-of-COVID-19-expertise-at-Brock-University.aspx>

4. Brock Research Farm: Call for Expressions of Interest

- A call for expressions of interest in research uses involving the Brock Farm was launched on March 19. The CEI is posted online at: <https://brocku.sharepoint.com/Research-Services/SitePages/Request-for-Expressions-of-Interest--Brock-Research-Farm.aspx>

5. DRCA and ECRA

- The Brock University Distinguished Research and Creative Activity Award is co-sponsored by the University and the Brock University Faculty Association. The University and BUFA have moved to continue and extend this partnership, agreeing in principle to increase the funding allocated to the DRCA Award (\$10,000, up from \$5,000), and to support an Early Career version of the award (\$5,000).
- Formalizing these changes would proceed via the Research and Scholarship Policy Committee and Senate. A proposal to R&SPC is forthcoming.

6. Delayed business

- As all staff, students, researchers, instructors, and administrators at Brock are aware, the past weeks have represented a dramatic disruption to normal operations. Many initiatives have been displaced by the imperative to change immediately the university's operations, and by the subsequent series of urgent updates and revisions that comprise the daily routine at the time of writing. It is fair to say that most processes and policy developments that were in progress prior to March 13 have been placed on hold or been significantly delayed. Research is no exception to this experience. I anticipate that, in weeks to come, some ongoing items of policy development (such as revisions to the Centres and Institutes processes and the draft Indirect Costs of Research policy) will again become action items.