On-campus research ramp up

• A committee of faculty & senior staff chaired by Professor Tyler Jacks produced a report with guidelines for ramping up on-campus research

• Lightning committee released detailed guidance for PIs to plan Phase 1 ramp up
  - Planning Exercise A due May 26, Planning Exercise B due June 1

• Campus conditions for ramp-up:
  - For the foreseeable future, continue to require that all research that can be done remotely is done remotely
  - Individual PIs structure their own research activities to accommodate prescribed occupancy/density levels
    ‣ PIs develop detailed schedules and exposure control plans for each on-campus lab member
  - Participation is voluntary but requires: Acknowledgement form, EHS training, daily health attestation; masks, social distancing, testing & monitoring
Research Ramp-up pilot

• “Test run” using designated personnel currently approved to work in campus labs
  − Includes Buildings 76, E17/E18/E19/E25, 68, chosen for controlled access & suitable lobby space
  − Participation is voluntary, but compliance with guidelines is required

• Step 1, initiated May 18:
  − Entrance using a single, first-floor portal
  − Face mask and social distancing at check-in
  − Physically distanced staff available to verify permission to access building once ID is scanned
  − Outcome: minor glitches in execution; realized 24/7 staffing can’t be scaled campus-wide; IS&T developing keycard access system that will replace staffed desks in most points of access

• Step 2, starting week of May 25:
  − Viral test process began to be rolled out for LAP list
  − Buildings & systems being finalized
  − Readying core facilities
Research Ramp-up Phase 1, starting week of June 8

• For labs with approved plans and researchers who have completed:
  − Acknowledgement of voluntary participation
  − EHS training specific to COVID-19 protocols
  − Daily health attestation
  − Viral test

• Most portals not staffed; completion of requirements digitally linked to ID; must be compliant for ID swipe to permit access
Research Ramp-up feedback

• Concerns: enforcement, pressure to return/work extended periods; child care; commuting risks.

• Additional focus needed on non-lab research that requires campus access; SHASS-Sloan-SAP-Libraries group being convened.

• Some PIs think they can ramp up more personnel research hours (Planning Exercise B) and still meet density and spacing guidelines (Planning Exercise A).
  - Doesn’t consider population flow, building operations, common spaces, procurement, etc.
  - Some favor occupancy limit rather than capacity limit, perceive MIT is more restrictive than peers
  - Some lab members do not trust PIs to distribute hours equitably

• Initial target intended to achieve:
  - Get started with fewer people on campus per unit time returning to campus so as to adapt to new conditions, and to learn;
  - Keep number of people of campus at a given time to a low number to reduce the risk of infection;
  - Reduce overall burden on MIT central services and core facilities at the beginning of the ramp up.
Process & guidance for requesting Phase 1 exceptions

• Process received input and support from subset of Lightning Committee, Campus Space Continuity Working Group & Legal, Ethical and Equity Committee

• Process:
  - PIs complete ramp up exercises A and B by Phase 1 deadlines
  - Submit justification for exception to DLC head. DLC head should prioritize requests if there is more than one request per DLC;
  - Any requests that are advanced will be:
    - Reviewed by Campus Space Contingency Working Group (to assess campus impact) and LEE Committee (to address LEE issues)
    - Input forwarded to VPR for consideration and decision.

• Guidance
  - Requests to maximize capacity without regard to time on campus are inconsistent with intentions of gradual ramp up: starting slow to learn; reducing risk of community infection and limiting burden on campus services
  - In the spirit of cooperation, groups on the same floor/wing/building may choose to develop collaborative proposals that trade off resources and maintain gradual ramp up guidelines
Another potential complication

- OMB M-20-17*, which afforded considerable flexibility to federal agencies in execution of federal grants in response to COVID-19, will be re-assessed on or before June 17.

*Administrative Relief for Recipients and Applicants of Federal Financial Assistance Directly impacted by the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)