

Thursday, April 16, 2020
Subject: Sharing Lab Staff During COVID-19 Crisis

Dear colleagues,

As you know, a key priority in this current crisis, is to make sure that we do everything we can to protect our URM research family.

We are approaching this both from the perspective of safeguarding the health and physical well-being of our community (through social distancing and ramping down non-essential research) and also from a professional/employment perspective (by prioritizing the support of the people we already have, over new hires from the outside).

To that end, we are writing to ask for your assistance in thinking through two issues:

1. How do we best allow research staff who have been sent home for safety reasons, and are not fully occupied, to help out in this crisis? Specifically: how do we best connect them with unmet needs in other departments/units, that they can assist with?
2. How do we best help research staff whose grants/contracts have ended (or are about to end) find new positions within our system during this difficult time?

We are in the process of using a REDCap survey to collect information on the staff members who are not currently working in labs. The goal of this project is to collect information on these individuals so that we can map them to the various needs throughout our division. We are considering whether this tool could also be used to share lab staff across departments. We would like your input on this as well as other suggestions for how to share lab staff among departments.

We are also in the process of considering moving lab staff if they have the right skills and qualifications from labs who are losing grants to labs that do have funding available and might otherwise hire an outside candidate. Because many lab activities are currently on hold and we know which grants are ending between now and the end of August, we can consider creating a pool of lab staff who could be available to those faculty who are hiring because they are newly setting up a lab or have grant funding and need lab staff.

Look forward to your [input](#).

Thanks,

Steve, Dirk, Gerard and Brian

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