

PLANS FOR PHASED EXPANSION OF ON-CAMPUS OPERATIONS**THE VIRGINIA INSTITUTE OF MARINE SCIENCE****July 22, 2020 (modified from June 12 document)**

This document was prepared for the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) as a campus reopening plan for state compliance review. The Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) is part of William & Mary, and its School of Marine Science is embedded within VIMS. As a non-residential campus with approximately 400 employees, including 90 graduate students who are enrolled year-round, the education and advisory service missions at VIMS are underpinned by a cutting-edge research program. This document covers the phased expansion of all three parts of the VIMS mission (see Section 2 below). VIMS fills a vital niche in the Commonwealth by helping to sustain the marine environment, bolster the fisheries-based economy, and protect human health. The plan articulated below provides assurance that this will continue during the pandemic.

In developing plans to expand on-campus operations in a safe and new normal way, we must set a path forward that emphasizes employee safety and is achievable. While efforts and sacrifices in the Commonwealth have slowed the spread of the virus, we need to remind ourselves that it is still present. It is essential that as we begin to ease some of the restrictions to return to campus and expand our in-person research, education, and advisory activities in the next phase, we remain vigilant, cautious, and measured. We will take a phased, systematic and strategic approach, understanding that work environments will be dramatically different (new normal) compared with those before the pandemic.

The path forward will not be business as usual. We must continue to practice physical distancing, telework when possible, wash hands frequently, not touch our faces, wear a face mask when required, and remain home when not feeling well or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. These measures, as well as the ones outlined below, are meant to make necessary adaptations to our campus, work, and learning environments with the primary goals being the health and safety of our campus community and expansion of in-person research, education and advisory activities. As this pandemic continues to be very fluid, various elements of this plan may change. This plan is derived from the most recent and current policies and guidance.

1. COVID-19 COORDINATOR AND CAMPUS TEAM**Coordinator**

Joseph Martinez, VIMS Chief Operations Officer and Chair, VIMS Emergency Management Team

COVID-19 TEAM

Dr. John T. Wells, Dean and Director

Dr. Mark Luckenbach, Associate Dean, Research and Advisory Services

Dr. Linda Schaffner, Associate Dean, Academic Studies
Mark Brabham, Director of Facilities Management
Stewart Lamerdin, Director of Marine Operations
David Malmquist, Director of News and Media

2. GOVERNING QUESTIONS

At a time of considerable uncertainty, it is important to ask what immediate, creative actions should we take to ensure VIMS remains resilient over the next two years. In very pragmatic terms: how do we fulfill our mission and vision to (1) make seminal advances in understanding marine and coastal systems through research and discovery, (2) translate research findings into practical solutions to complex issues of societal importance, and (3) provide new generations of researchers, educators, problem solvers, and managers with a marine-science education of unsurpassed quality, while protecting the health of the entire VIMS community.

3. UNIVERSITY/INSTITUTE GOALS

On March 19, 2020, William & Mary President, Katherine A. Rowe highlighted the university's goals for navigating the pandemic:

- A. Safeguarding the health of students, faculty and staff;
- B. Ensuring students complete their classes;
- C. Maintaining the university's critical research and other operations; and,
- D. Joining in the national effort to slow the spread of COVID-19.

As an integral part of William & Mary, VIMS shares these goals and has communicated them to the VIMS community.

4. PRESIDENT'S PRINCIPLES FOR REOPENING CAMPUS

On May 6, 2020, President Rowe stated these principles for re-opening William & Mary for the new academic year:

- A. Prioritization of the health and safety of the entire campus community;
- B. A focus on creativity and flexibility; and,
- C. Collaboration across the University.

5. GATING CONDITIONS FOR PHASED EXPANSION OF OPERATIONS

- A. For nonresidential campuses, as well as science labs, libraries, and many graduate programs, the gating criteria for business and commercial operations should apply.
- B. As a nonresidential campus, VIMS will require symptomatic students, faculty, and staff to get tested prior to returning to campus; the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) testing recommendations (dated 5/28/20) for colleges and universities include:

1. Establishing a testing strategy that assures students, faculty, and staff have access to testing as needed.
 2. At a minimum, colleges and universities should have the ability to identify individuals reporting illness and provide or identify access to testing for symptomatic students, faculty, or staff.
 3. Additionally, colleges and universities should have the ability to isolate cases and quarantine close contacts of cases. VDH recommends having a low threshold for identifying anyone who may be exhibiting any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 (www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html).
 4. As individuals are identified, colleges and universities should ensure they are separated from others until test results are available or longer if the result is positive and to identify and place their close contacts in quarantine.
- C. VIMS will continue to implement plans that meet or exceed all state and university guidelines related to reducing risks associated with the spread of COVID-19.
 - D. VIMS will ensure that students and employees have access to required PPE.
 - E. Specific work plans have been developed for all activities related to operations, research and teaching to ensure that activities fulfill the plan requirements.

6. GOVERNOR'S DIRECTION, EXECUTIVE ORDER 67 – PHASE THREE

On July 1, 2020 the Commonwealth of Virginia moved forward into Phase Three under E.O. 67. Institutions of higher education are encouraged to continue remote learning where practical. However, such institutions may offer in-person classes and instruction, including labs and related practical training, provided they comply with all applicable requirements under the "Guidelines for All Business Sectors." No institutions of higher education shall hold or host gatherings of more than 250 individuals. Specifically, E.O. 67 further indicates:

- A. A "Safer at Home" theme.
- B. Vulnerable individuals (employees) are strongly encouraged to stay home
- C. Social Gathering – no more than 250 people.
Note: The presence of more than 250 individuals performing functions of their employment is not a "gathering". This applies to business meetings as long as the space where being conducted is large enough to comply with physical distancing requirements.
- D. Continue physical distancing of 6 feet or more.
- E. Strongly encouraged to continue teleworking.
- F. Individuals are required to wear face masks in indoor public settings.

7. CURRENT RESTRICTIONS

- A. University sponsored travel is currently prohibited by William & Mary through the end of 2020. <https://www.wm.edu/sites/pathforward/facstaff/index.php> Travel restrictions do not apply to in-state advisory service and grant-supported research. Note: special permission granted to VIMS by Secretary of Education for limited out-of-state and

overnight travel supporting research and advisory services. This travel will be reviewed and approved by the Associate Dean of Research and Advisory Service on a case-by-case basis.

8. BUSINESS OPERATIONS GOING FORWARD (UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE)

- A. The VIMS campus buildings will remain locked at this time.
- B. All relevant University human resources and compliance policies will be strictly followed, including those modified by Federal and State requirements.
- C. All employees are required to self-monitor themselves for COVID-19 symptoms. The Virginia Department of Health has created a website to help with this: <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/covidcheck/>
- D. Face-to-Face meetings should only occur sparingly. During in-person meetings and students attending classes, individuals must comply with physical distancing and wear face masks, except while they are eating. The community has been instructed to continue to utilize Zoom or other virtual modes to conduct business meetings even when individuals are on campus. (See additional details under use of classrooms and meeting rooms.)
- E. All employees are required to wear masks when walking through campus buildings and public spaces, during in-person meetings, students while attending classes, and whenever the 6-foot physical distancing requirement cannot be met. Travel between buildings should be kept to a minimum.
- F. Volunteers, who have been approved, will be permitted to work on campus and will be required to follow employee guidelines.
- G. Undergraduate student program specifics on the Williamsburg campus will follow the W&M Undergraduate program guidelines.
- H. Gathering locations such as Sowers House, Abrahamson House, and Clayton House shall remain closed. However, Abrahamson House, which serves as a visiting scientist facility, will be open for small groups of visiting scientists on a case-by-case basis provided restrictions for its use can be met. The Galley and Davis Hall Kitchenettes (no food services provided) will be restricted to a minimum occupancy. Tables and seating will be arranged to provide 6-foot physical distancing.
- I. The VIMS Library will remain closed and will be re-evaluated for use prior to the Fall semester. Pick up and return of materials is available one day per week.
- J. Campus “Closed to the Public” remains in effect except for scheduled meetings as noted below.
- K. Visitors to campus will be allowed by appointment only. Visitors should come to campus for the purposes of conducting business meetings that cannot be done virtually. Visitors will be required to wear face masks when travelling through public spaces, during in-person meetings, and where physical distancing cannot be met.
- L. Contractors and Vendors will be allowed by appointment only to make repairs or to perform service on critical equipment to provide additional information as to their safety plans for operating during the pandemic. Following are requirements of the vendor to provide/perform on campus:

1. The vendor shall provide to us their protocols for working within a COVID-19 pandemic prior to scheduling their visit.
2. Any vendor staff not feeling well or experiencing symptoms should not come to campus.
3. Confirm the day(s) and time(s) they will be on campus.
4. We require that the technician's tools be disinfected prior to entering the building.
5. We require that they disinfect the piece of equipment prior to repair/service and at the conclusion of their work.
6. We require that they disinfect all surfaces that they come in contact with.
7. We require that anyone in the lab or service areas maintain the required physical distancing of 6 feet or more at all times.
8. We require that the technician will wear a mask while in the building(s).
9. We require that the vendor maintain a direct route from entering the building to the area to perform the service and departing the building. Any contact with surfaces along the way should be disinfected (i.e. stair handrails, elevator buttons, etc.).
10. Once the repair/service is complete, best practice is that the equipment is not used for 72 hours.

M. VIMS Sponsored travel

1. Comply with State and University Policies.
2. Travel only for business operations and research and advisory activities. No travel to seminars, workshops, conferences, etc. will be allowed until further notice.

N. Food Trucks on campus – Not applicable at this time. Caterers are considered vendors and will be required to follow the guidelines above.

O. VIMS will discontinue routine cleaning of offices and labs. Individual offices are to be self-cleaned (i.e. hard surfaces, computer keyboards, etc.). Trash pickup continues in corridors.

P. In the event of a positive case on the VIMS campus, VIMS will follow an established Operational Protocol to minimize spread of the virus. In the event the COVID-19 Coordinator becomes aware of two or more potential cases of infection on the VIMS campus, he will consult with the local health department for guidance in determining measures to mitigate or stop the spread.

9. RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

The guidelines defining critical research activities in response to the Gov. Northam's Executive Order 55 that were articulated in the April 5, 2020 memo from Associate Dean Mark Luckenbach to VIMS PIs, technical staff and, graduate students remained in effect until that EO expired on June 11, 2020. With the expiration of that order and the announcement of Phase Two, and most recently Phase Three by the Governor, we began to think more broadly, realizing that our entire research enterprise is essential to all aspects of our mission. Our challenge lies in developing laboratory- and project-specific actions to conduct research in a manner that complies with guidelines and protocols articulated in this document. For some research programs and projects this will require creative solutions and perhaps significant alterations in the research plans.

Each laboratory group and VIMS Centers with research components is developing a written set of procedures that clearly spells how it will meet or exceed the guidelines listed below. The plans include activities by all individuals, including the students, utilizing a lab. The conduct of field work is also covered in these plans with a time horizon looking out to the end of the calendar year. These plans must be submitted to the Associate Dean of Research and Advisory Services, and be easily accessible to all members of the lab group.

- A. Minimize the time that more than one or two people are in a room at a time.** Reducing density and maintaining distances between people is a fundamental component of reducing the spread of the virus. In many cases we will alter work schedules to reduce the numbers of people in a laboratory and shared office space at a time (e.g., use of shared group calendar to manage lab use), organize labs in a manner that accommodates greater distancing, and re-think how we accomplish particular tasks. Bearing in mind that several people, all spaced 6 feet apart, working in a laboratory or other closed space that is not well ventilated carries some risk of spreading the virus, we will use protocols that minimize the time that more than one or two people are in such a space at a time.
- B. Masks must be worn at all times that a minimum of 6-feet of distancing cannot be maintained.**
- C. Employees and students working in laboratories will be responsible for thoroughly cleaning and disinfecting their workspaces before, during and after use.** Supervisors have the responsibility to ensure that these cleaning responsibilities are clearly assigned to individuals and that they are fully implemented.
- D. Until further notice there will be no more than two people at a time authorized in a VIMS truck, each required to wear a mask.** Travel to research sites in personal cars must also adhere to this density requirement. Thorough cleaning and disinfecting of all touched surfaces in VIMS vehicles, before and after use, is the responsibility of the users. Refueling of vehicles will remain the responsibility of the users.
- E. Though working at outdoor field sites generally poses less risk of spreading the virus, distancing guidelines should still be followed, and masks worn anytime this distance cannot be maintained.** Careful consideration must be given to other risks of the field work that might be exacerbated by reduced crew sizes and distancing. Supervisors should conduct thoughtful risk assessment and reduction planning for all field research activities.
- F. Scientific diving operations for specific projects must adhere to the Dive Program COVID-19 Procedures and Guidance** developed by the VIMS Dive Control Board. Modifications to training and certification programs in response to COVID-19 are detailed in the procedures document (see references).
- G. Research activities involving VIMS' small vessel fleet will require adherence to distancing requirements to the greatest extent possible and the wearing of masks and other appropriate PPE at all times that this is not possible.** For Gloucester Point-based

small vessels, the general expectation is that the research team, not Marine Operations staff, will be responsible for operating the vessel and thoroughly cleaning and disinfecting all high-touch surfaces before and after use. If a research team needs a vessel operator, they should contact the Director of Marine Operations to request an exemption on a case-by-case basis. For Eastern Shore Lab-based vessels, users should contact Sean Fate to discuss their needs and operational plans.

H. Research aboard VIMS' large vessels (*R/V Virginia*, *R/V Bay Eagle* and *R/V Tidewater*) must follow the guidelines developed by Marine Operations staff. Project specific details for implementing these protocols must be established through discussions between scientific staff and vessel staff prior to sailing (see references).

I. Research conducted aboard third-party vessels will generally require approval by the Associate Dean of Research and Advisory Services in consultation with the Chief Operations Officer and the Director of Marine Operations on a case by case basis.

For all operations aboard vessels, the most important risk reduction steps are those that we can take before boarding, namely self-monitoring for temperature and other symptoms by all personnel.

10. TEACHING ACTIVITIES

The priorities for the VIMS academic plan moving ahead are:

- A. Provide safe learning and teaching environments, consistent with public health and safety guidelines, and best practices that emerge moving forward;
- B. Offer the highest quality experiences possible for students and faculty;
- C. Increase resilience of the academic program in face of continuing uncertainty; and,
- D. Implement a plan that is consistent with a “whole institution (VIMS)” level plan. The academic program plan must take into consideration the importance of continuity of research for VIMS, which is a critical component of the education and training of graduate students (and a small number of undergraduates) on the VIMS campus.

To maximize the safety of the teaching and learning environment, the largest courses (weekly department seminar courses that are attended by students, faculty and staff) will be remote and large classroom spaces have been prioritized for required courses for incoming students and moderate enrollment courses that are best suited to face-to-face delivery mode. Although the classrooms available for in-person teaching allow for greater than required physical distancing, VIMS faculty and students will be required to wear face masks in classrooms due to the extended nature of contact in classrooms. Adjusting delivery modes has allowed VIMS to avoid scheduling classes in buildings that are heavily utilized for research and to allow for less crowded traffic around and within buildings. All of this is supported by an increased cleaning regime focused on individual responsibility for personal space and more extensive and frequent cleaning of public spaces.

VIMS is also supporting a safe classroom environment by moving to a compressed academic calendar. By starting a week early and forgoing fall break, the School of Marine Science at VIMS will complete the Fall 2020 semester before Thanksgiving, allowing for an extended break between semesters. This extended time will be critical if there is a resurgence of the COVID-19 virus in late fall.

Twenty graduate courses including three seminar courses are scheduled to be taught in Fall 2020; of these, eight are face-to-face, ten are remote, and two are a 50-50 mix of remote and face-to-face. This mix of course types offers enrollment options for students who are unable to attend class on campus due to health-associated risks. Those who are required to quarantine for COVID-19 will be able to participate in required in-person courses from a remote location or to watch recorded class sessions. All VIMS faculty who will be teaching face-to-face are preparing for remote/online delivery in the event it will be necessary to quickly pivot. Before the beginning of the fall semester, faculty will be required to submit course continuity plans based on guidelines similar to those used during the spring semester.

11. USE OF CLASSROOMS OR MEETING ROOMS

- A. Whenever possible, eliminate the need for face-to-face meetings and ensure that non-graduate program education or training classes can pivot to remote options, such as Zoom.
- B. The VIMS Emergency Management Team (EMT) has set maximum occupancy for each class and meeting room based on room size and physical distancing requirements. Recognizing that the more time people spend in a room, the greater the chance of spreading the virus, a further reduction in room occupancy rates is desirable.
- C. Facilities will provide disinfectant wipes or other means for individuals to clean desks, tables and seats before and after use.

12. FACILITIES CONSIDERATIONS

The following plans are underway for those on campus who are responsible for maintaining facilities or ordering materials and supplies:

- A. Place plexiglass or other barriers in workspaces where people must face each other or are unable to be 6 feet apart. Such areas include the cashier window, Watermen's Hall front desk, Gift shop around cash register, and Academic Studies workstation.
- B. Place appropriate signage at entrances and around buildings (i.e. COVID-19 symptoms, physical distancing reminder, wait here, occupancy, indicating how to proceed).
- C. Remove (or tape off) chairs and desks to ensure proper physical distancing in conference, classroom and waiting rooms. Identify (by posting signage, normally 50% reduced) allowable occupancy in order to control workflow and/or establish maximum attendance.
- D. Make face masks available throughout campus.

- E. Post maximum occupancy in common break areas and configure to accommodate appropriate physical distancing.
- F. Provide sanitizing supplies for individuals to clean their areas before and after use.
- G. Provide hand sanitizer at all building entrances, classrooms, and high traffic areas.
- H. Identify frequently touched areas (doors, cabinets, etc.) and investigate options to implement no/reduced touch options, such as installing door stops (where possible), or sensor triggered doors and faucets/flushometers.
- I. Monitor and secure inventories of PPE, hand sanitizers, wipes, cleaning products, and hand soap. NOTE: Facilities is responsible for products above that are specifically related to COVID-19 and not normal/customary PPE for lab research.
- J. Increase the frequency and attention to the cleaning and disinfection of high traffic public areas and hard surfaces such as door hardware, handrails, switches, classroom seating, watercoolers, etc. in accordance with CDC recommendations.
- K. HVAC System Preventions
 - a. Increase outside air (where possible) and not to impact humidity control.
 - b. Keep HVAC systems operating in most efficient manner
 - c. Increase Filter Changes (Frequency TBD)
 - d. Increase Preventative Maintenance activities (Scope being defined)

13. VIMS OPERATIONAL PROTOCOL FOR POTENTIAL COVID-19 CONTAMINATION

Here is how the process/protocol will work:

- A. We have established a new email address: EMT@vims.edu. This email is available for anyone in our campus community to notify the VIMS EMT of a suspected, presumed, or positive case of COVID-19. For the purposes of privacy, this email will be restricted to the following members of the Emergency Management Team (Dean and Director John T. Wells, Associate Dean Mark Luckenbach, Associate Dean Linda Schaffner, and Chief Operations Officer and EMT Chair Joe Martinez).
- B. Once the email is received and reviewed, the relevant information will be forwarded to the VIMS Office of Safety and Environmental Programs, to contact directly the individual in question to obtain additional information via a questionnaire that has been developed. The responses to the questionnaire will aid in the creation of a response plan. The questionnaire includes:
 1. When were you last on campus?
 2. What buildings, offices, laboratories or other areas (including restrooms) did you frequent?
 3. Is your office/work area currently secured?
 4. What activities were performed while on campus (lab work?, microscopy?, data analysis?, field work?, etc.)?
 5. Please list any and all VIMS personnel that you've been in close contact with over the past 14 days.

- C. With the developed response plan, notifications to individuals and affected building areas will be communicated by the VIMS Office of Safety and Environmental Programs.

Here are some general ground rules:

1. If a VIMS faculty member, staff member, or student has been tested, either voluntarily or as directed by a health care provider, they are to remain off campus until the test result is provided, and to notify the VIMS EMT.
2. If a VIMS faculty member, staff member, or student was to test positive for the COVID-19 virus, that individual will require a release from a medical provider before returning to work and campus.
3. If a VIMS faculty member, staff member, or student is caring for someone who has tested positive or showing signs of COVID-19 they should remain off campus due to possible exposure.
4. Impacted areas will be closed and access restricted immediately for a minimum of 72 hours before the Advanced Cleaning Team will commence with decontamination activities. Based on the response plan, impacted areas may include offices, labs, building floors or the entire building.

REFERENCES

1. [Virginia Department of Health Interim Guidance for Daily COVID-19 Screening of Employees](#)
2. [Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes](#)
3. VIMS Operational Protocol for Potential COVID-19 Contamination
 - a. [Local COVID-19 testing locations](#)
4. Dr. Mark Luckenbach's email dated 04/05/2020 related to Defining Critical Research
 - a. Addendum for approval of student critical research, dated 04/13/2020
5. VIMS Research Vessels (Large) [Fleet COVID-19 Policies and Procedures](#)
 - a. [Self-Assessment Form](#)
6. [VIMS Dive Operations COVID-19 Pandemic Procedures](#), dated June 12, 2020, version 6
7. Commercial Vessels, COVID-19 Protocols: Protocols currently under development
 - a. Fisheries Science Department
 - i. F/V Darna (NEMAP)
 - ii. F/V Carolina Capes II
 - iii. F/V Italian Princess
 - iv. F/V Celtic
 - v. F/V Polaris
 - vi. ESS Pursuit
 - vii. F/V Jersey Girl
 - viii. F/V Betty C
8. Governor Northam, [Executive Order 61](#), Forwarding Virginia, dated May 8, 2020
9. Governor Northam, [Executive Order 65](#), Phase Two, dated June 5, 2020
10. American College Health Association (ACHA), [Considerations for Reopening Institutions of Higher Education in COVID-19 Era](#), dated May 7, 2020
11. [Safe Workplaces: Guidance for State Agency Leaders in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic & Enhanced Safety Measures](#), published by Commonwealth of Virginia, dated May 13, 2020
12. [CDC – Considerations for Institutes of Higher Education](#), dated May 30, 2020
13. Governor Northam, [Higher Education Reopening Guidance](#), dated June 11, 2020
14. Governor Northam, [Executive Order 67](#), Phase Three Easing of Certain Temporary Restrictions, July 1, 2020