

An update to Brock faculty and staff

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On Thursday, May 28, the University continued its regular communication to the wider Brock community sharing further information and details regarding the Fall 2020 academic term. This update was shared with every Brock student; with every prospective Brock student; with all staff and faculty members; and with leaders in our community. A special [web page](#) contains further information.

Today's communication aims to provide further updates for those who work at Brock.

It was just more than two months ago that the University had to make the difficult decision to suspend the Winter Term, move to an online format and transition to working remotely.

During that time, Brock faculty and staff have worked tirelessly to put our students and the University first. It has been a challenging time. Each of us has experienced some frustration, some disappointment and some extraordinary circumstances. Each time though, you have come through and together, we have managed to bolster Brock's reputation as a community with spirit, drive and a shared commitment to our students. For that, we say thank you.

What does the future look like?

With the Fall academic plan complete, we have some further certainty about what the coming term will feature:

- Almost all courses will be held online.
- A very small number of courses will be on campus – those with class sizes fewer than 20 students and also requiring access to specialized equipment or spaces.
- The number of students on campus will be greatly reduced.
- The Brock approach will continue to prioritize your health, well-being and safety.

When will we return to 'normal?'

One of the challenging aspects of this pandemic is the uncertainty it brings. There are no firm timelines. Brock's approach has been to build its response following established principles that prioritize health and well-being. We have been following the guidelines established by Niagara Public Health and the Province of Ontario. We

are in constant contact with health officials, including having them participate in our planning meetings and in our emergency response sessions.

The Province of Ontario has provided a three-stage approach to recovery and recently extended its state of emergency to June 9. Gatherings continue to be limited to fewer than five people. Some retail establishments and health-care providers are slowly opening, while others remain closed. Schools are closed until at least September.

As Brock emerges from this first wave of the pandemic, the following approaches will guide our recovery:

- Return to campus will be deliberate, strategic and guided by safety and health protocols. Returns will be staged appropriately and done gradually over time.
- You will receive considerable advanced notice of any change in your current working location.
- Priority to return to campus will be for those roles:
 - serving students;
 - conducting and supporting research;
 - involved in health, security and physical infrastructure needs.
- For most roles not listed above, we would expect working remotely will continue for the foreseeable future.

We understand that some faculty and staff may have concerns about the prospect of returning to campus for a variety of reasons related to health and safety. We are developing measures to ensure flexibility and protection for those members of our community who may belong to vulnerable populations or otherwise be at higher risk from COVID-19.

I need to return to my lab. When will that happen?

The Associate Vice-President, Research is leading a research access task force to provide a framework for expanding access to research labs. This will enable Brock to respond to changes in provincial and public health advisories as they develop. That work is nearing completion.

We appreciate that being away from research facilities, ranging from laboratories to library archives, is very challenging.

Research and scholarship continued during the shutdown, when conducted under physical isolation conditions away from campus facilities. Brock, like all Ontario universities, restricted access to most of its campus facilities, including research facilities, to meet provincial and public health guidelines. Over the past weeks, some

field research and analytical services have resumed when appropriate health and safety plans are in place.

Once the task force has completed its work, we anticipate a gradual expansion of access to labs and research spaces, consistent with specific health and safety protocols. Brock's approach to managing research facility access has been in line with that of its peers in the sector thus far, and we expect that this will continue.

Staying well

These have been remarkably stressful times. It's important for all Brock employees to be aware of the supports and resources available to them and their families. The University continues to provide access to the EAP provider and has many other services and supports to keep you well.

There are also links and information about health and well-being in the Human Resources section of the [Coronavirus FAQs on the Brock University site](#).

Through the trying times of the past few months, members of the Brock community have worked together to take care of each other and ensure our mutual health and safety. We will need to continue to do so in the months ahead, as 'regular operations' as we knew them before March 13 may still be several months away. Similarly, any return to campus must be accompanied by preparations for a second wave of the pandemic, should it occur. We will remain careful; we will continue to prioritize health and safety and we will get through this together.

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