Appendix F: Policies and Procedures for Reopening On-Site Research Activities

I. Overview
This Research Reopening Plan provides a roadmap for the gradual, deliberate and safe resumption of on-site research activities at Baruch College. As the landscape of the pandemic evolves, this plan will be updated accordingly.

In drafting this document, Baruch College leadership foregrounded the imperative to follow not just CUNY Office of Research policy and guidelines, but also those set forth by the City and State of New York, as well as federally. Ultimately the intent of the Research Reopening Plan is to provide compliant, but also clear and campus-specific, guidelines, policies and best practices supporting the ongoing fulfillment of the Baruch College mission.

Baruch College President David Wu, Provost and Executive Vice President Linda Essig, and Associate Provost for Research Patricia Price have reviewed this Research Reopening Plan as well as the CUNY and State guidelines. We affirm that they will be implemented.

II. Baruch College Research Context
An urban campus with an emphasis on Business Administration, the Liberal Arts, and Public Policy and International Affairs, Baruch College’s research portfolio includes primarily social and behavioral research, some of which is conducted with human subjects. The research operations of the College are distributed among several multi-story buildings in the Gramercy Park neighborhood of Manhattan. The College has no on-site animal facilities or IACUC (Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee). That being noted, Baruch researchers in the Natural Sciences do conduct research with invertebrates, as well as limited research with vertebrate animals off-site.

III. Research Reopening at Baruch: Guiding Principles
The Research Reopening Plan is a part of the Baruch College Safe Campus Reopening Plan, located on the Baruch Forward web page, and is guided by the principles set forth therein. All Baruch researchers must familiarize themselves with the Baruch College Safe Campus Reopening Plan and abide by it.

IV. Stages for Reopening On-Site Research at Baruch College
The following is a description of each of the Reopening Stages. The substance of each Stage follows the Stages of Research Reopening as posted by CUNY’s Office of Research posted on 07.01.21. Please note that these Stages of Research Reopening may coincide with NYS Phases for reopening, but ultimately rely upon best available information from State and local health authorities and are informed by College conditions.

Approvals must be obtained prior to going on site. See Section VI below for specific instructions for obtaining approval.

Stages may be paused or, if transmission rates, new cases, or other benchmarks of public health risk are deemed to warrant it, Stages of Research Reopening may return to previous Stages, including returning to Stage 1. Researchers should not start new long-term projects or phase in projects that cannot be stopped on short notice in Stages 1 – 3.

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**Stage 1 (Essential/Maintenance and Planning/Preparation)** During Stage 1, all on-site research is paused, except for essential, approved research (e.g., COVID-19 related) utilizing a limited number of personnel for facilities maintenance. Plan and prepare for reopening research activities that must be conducted on site, focusing on high-priority research and scholarship activities.

Plan and prepare for Stage 2 priorities.

**Stage 2 (Gradual Ramp Up of Time-Sensitive Research Activities; up to 50% capacity)** Expand on-site access to research that does not involve face-to-face interaction with human subjects*, with priorities including: externally-funded and deadline-driven work requiring stipulated deliverables (grant/contract deadlines) that must be conducted on site or in the field (with documentation of deadlines) (regardless of researcher rank or tenure status; includes any required research staff); research by graduate or untenured undergraduate students who are near degree completion (with advisor or area head support/presence), untenured faculty research (with department chair/program head support); and/or research requiring season-specific sample collections.

Undergraduate researchers may be allowed to engage in faculty-led research if approved to do so. Approval for undergraduates to be present in labs is contingent on submission, review and approval by the RRRC of an amendment to an existing, approved lab reopening plan, and the identification of a suitable space allowing for social distancing, appropriate ventilation, and faculty supervision (in collaboration with the Environmental Health and Safety Officer).

Plan and prepare for Stage 3 priorities.

**Stage 3 (up to 85% capacity)** Stage 3 includes ongoing research established in Stages 1 and 2, and expands on-site access to college-approved medium priority research with limited personnel. Expand on-site access to professorial-title researchers, regardless of rank or funding (with department chair/program head support); and well as to graduate students and postdoctoral research associates regardless of seniority or funding (with advisor/mentor support); provided that research does not involve face-to-face interaction with human subjects*.

Undergraduate researchers may be allowed to engage in faculty-led research if approved to do so. Approval for undergraduates to be present in labs is contingent on submission, review and approval by the RRRC of an amendment to an existing, approved lab reopening plan, and the identification of a suitable space allowing for social distancing, appropriate ventilation, and faculty supervision (in collaboration with the Environmental Health and Safety Officer).

Stage 3 may require a pause given a resurgence of COVID-19 or considerations related to flu season. Plan and prepare for Stage 4 priorities.

**Stage 4 (100% capacity)** Stage 4 includes ongoing research established in Stages 1 through 3, and expands personnel for those stages. In addition, Stage 4 expands on site access to include undergraduate research projects and undergraduate research assistants. Begin allowing on-site access to research involving face-to-face interaction with human subjects, subject to the approval of a research plan.

*With the exception of human subjects research that either addresses COVID, or has a direct therapeutic benefit to the subject such that interruption of the research could cause harm.*

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V. Addressing New York State Public Health and Safety Guidance and Incorporating Best Practices

Any plan to restart research requires plans customized for individual research spaces. These individual plans must be approved by the Research Reopening Review Panel (RRRP) before researchers are granted access, see Section VI below, forms can be found on the Research Reopening web page.

A. Occupancy and Physical Distancing

1. All lab occupants must wear masks at all times, per CUNY guidance effective 08.16.21.
2. For any research activities occurring indoors, total occupancy is limited to 50% of the maximum occupancy of a particular area as set by the certificate of occupancy or as otherwise designated by current NYS guidance.
3. Staggered work schedules will be implemented wherever possible. This includes break times, but also staggered shift schedules to reduce the total number of employees on site at any given time. For shared laboratories, researcher lab reopening plans must specify clear procedures to ensure that the 50% occupancy threshold is not surpassed.
4. In the short term, researchers must arrange for pickups of mail, shipped equipment and supplies from the Mailroom and Receiving areas in the Library Building. If possible, researchers should arrange for all materials including hazardous chemicals to be delivered directly to 17 Lexington Avenue with their suppliers. Special arrangements for delivery of such large or hazardous items must be arranged with Public Safety. New equipment must conform with the College’s Policy on Furniture, Equipment, Paint and Other Finishes.
5. Non-essential visitors will not be allowed in campus buildings except as allowed under Baruch campus policy and protocol. Non-CUNY visitors must abide by the CUNY Visitor Policy, per CUNY guidance effective 08.16.21.

B. Gatherings in Enclosed Spaces

1. All staff meetings, seminars and events for researchers must be held in accordance with Baruch and CUNY policies. Meetings and seminars that cannot be held effectively in person should be conducted virtually.
2. Communal areas such as lunch areas and cafeteria spaces will not be used for gatherings.
3. Conference room use will be limited to 50% capacity with all individuals masked.
4. Restrooms will be designated limited use.
5. Passenger elevators will also be designated as limited use in accordance with Baruch’s reopening plan.

C. Protective Equipment

1. Masks must be worn at all times in accordance with the Baruch College Safe Campus Reopening Plan, and CUNY mask mandate effective 08.16.21.
2. Acceptable face coverings include but are not limited to cloth (e.g. homemade sewn, quick cut, bandana, commercially available), surgical masks, and face shield (with a face covering underneath). Users should consult CDC guidance for these types (How to Wear Face Coverings).
3. Cloth, disposable, or homemade face coverings are not acceptable for workplace activities that typically require a higher degree of protection for PPE due to the nature of the work (e.g. if working with flammable materials or chemicals, ensure face
coverings are flame-resistant). If contact with hazardous materials require more stringent protection, a hazard assessment will be conducted by Environmental Health and Safety for the hazardous agent will be used, where the hierarchy of controls will be employed to eliminate, substitute, engineer control, administratively control, and/or create protective barriers for workers.

4. All researchers should be provided information on cleaning, replacing and sharing face coverings, in accordance with CDC Guidance for Wearing Masks.

5. All personnel must limit the sharing of objects, such as tools, equipment, machinery, touchscreens, and vehicles, as well as the touching of shared surfaces; in scenarios where this is unachievable, personnel should use a combination of the following methods:
   - Disinfect the object immediately after use - this is the most effective and desirable method
   - Sanitize hands before and after using a shared object
   - Utilize a clean pair of gloves when using shared objects
   - The first two methods ensure the object and user are sanitized and are strongly recommended, while the third creates an additional barrier. Regardless of the method chosen, personnel must avoid touching their eyes, mucous membranes, mask and face at all times.

D. Shared Spaces
Researchers working in common areas with common equipment should develop a shared calendar system visible to all users. Depending on the maximum space occupancy, this method will ensure that all maintain these limits. In scenarios where more than one researcher needs to use a common area concurrently, social distancing, and masking will be maintained as required. Users in common or shared areas must utilize proper cleaning procedures and must clean the equipment after use, in preparation for the next user. Cleaning and disinfection of lab spaces must occur at least after each shift, daily, or more frequently as needed. Researchers will clean and disinfect their labs, together with high touch surfaces and shared instrumentation. Prior to using equipment, users are also required to clean the equipment. Care will be taken to ensure cleaners or disinfectants will not be harmful to the shared equipment. If available, far wavelength UVC wands may be used to disinfect the equipment, if appropriate and available. The time between common area usage should be extended (30 minutes to one hour) to minimize interactions and allow disinfection to be completed by the prior user. Ultimately, all personnel should follow a principle of “clean as you go” when possible. The cleaning for common areas of the building will be handled by the College Facilities Department who use products and equipment designed to neutralize germs and bio-contaminants.

E. Hygiene, Cleaning, Disinfection
Refer to the Baruch College Safe Campus Reopening Plan for College-wide guidance

F. Communication
Signage shall be posted around campus, including research labs, to remind all personnel of the CDC guidelines for COVID-19 safety in the workplace. These signs will include reminders to remain socially distant where possible and are consistent with NYS Department of Health
language. Refer to the Baruch College Safe Campus Reopening Plan for the minimum instructions to be conveyed by signage.

G. Vaccination Status
Starting on 08.16.21, anyone entering a CUNY facility for any reason will need to be fully vaccinated (defined as 14 days beyond the last vaccination shot) or have proof of a negative COVID-19 PCR test taken within the past seven days. More information can be found on the Baruch Forward web page.

H. Laboratory Permits
All researchers working in labs with FDNY Non-Production Laboratory Permits must hold a valid C-14 certification while building occupancy is limited. At a minimum, there must be a C-14 holder on the floor any time permitted labs are in operation.

I. Building Entry Points
Entry to each of the buildings must be through the following entrances:
- 17 Lexington – Lexington Avenue entrance
- Administration Building – 22nd Street Entrance
- Newman Vertical Campus – 24th Street entrance or Plaza entrance
- Library Building – 25th Street Entrance

VI. Approval Process for Baruch Researchers
Principal Investigators (PIs) have first-line responsibility for the conduct of their research groups and compliance with policies and rules developed during the reinstatement of research. Schools/Divisions should continually monitor research reopening in their area to assure public health and safety. Researchers should be prepared to make changes on short notice, depending upon compliance requirements as dictated by health and safety directives.

Baruch PIs who wish to apply for consideration to resume on-site non-human subjects research must first contact their academic supervisor via email, to supply basic information. A template is provided on the Research Reopening web page; you may type your answers directly into the form. Once you have completed this application, email it to your Department Chair (Faculty PIs) or School Dean (Center or Institute Directors). They will review your responses to make an initial determination of whether your request appears to meet the priority criteria for the current Stage of Research Reopening and can only be conducted on-site. If they determine it does, they will forward your application to the Research Reopening Review Panel (RRRP), which will contact you to assist with the preparation of a detailed research reopening plan, to be accompanied by a confirmation of your completed CITI ‘Back to Campus’ training, and any other information needed by the RRRP and your Dean to review and approve your request.

Requests to conduct in-person off-site research activities involving human subjects will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Researchers wishing to restart existing research or to propose new research must submit a Request to Conduct Off-Campus Research with Human Subjects Plan for review and approval to the Research Reopening Review Committee (note that this is in addition to any standard application(s), IRB review, site-specific approval, etc. that would normally be required to gain permission to conduct your human subjects research). This form can be found on the Research Reopening web page. Submit your completed Plan, and proof of offsite permission to conduct human subjects research (if applicable) via email to Associate Provost for Research Patricia Price (patricia.price@baruch.cuny.edu), who will forward your Plan to the Research Reopening Review Panel,
and your Dean, for review and approval. Only researchers with approved plans will be allowed to begin recruiting human subjects

- The workflow is as follows: 1) obtain site-specific permission to conduct human subjects research in the place(s) you will conduct the research, if applicable (note: this includes foreign countries); 2) obtain Baruch College RRRC approval to conduct offsite human subjects research; and 3) obtain IRB approval to conduct research, if your existing protocol has been modified more than administratively, or if this is a new protocol
  - The submission, review and approval of your Plan to Conduct Off-Site Human Subjects Research by the Baruch RRRC is not a substitute for IRB review, which must also be conducted prior to recruiting human subjects, for new or substantively revised protocols. Please contact the Office of Research Compliance and Outreach for further advisement if needed via email to janet.badillo@baruch.cuny.edu
  - If you are re-starting an existing research protocol and need to make substantive changes to that protocol that are more than administrative in nature (e.g., you increase or decrease your human subjects recruitment target, the risk-benefit equation is altered, etc.), you must submit an amendment to your existing protocol online via the IDEATE system
    - Note that, per OHRP guidance, administrative changes to accommodate COVID-19 risk mitigation – use of PPE, disinfecting protocols, screening, social distancing, and so forth – generally do not constitute a substantive change to an existing protocol

Any substantive modification to or deviation from an approved plan must be requested via written addendum to the RRRP.

VII. Training and Reporting Unsafe Practices
    A. Training and Education
       All returning research personnel (faculty, staff and students) must take the CITI Program Back to Campus Course. The purpose is to train staff, students, and faculty on COVID-19 safety for their return to campus. Returning personnel must provide a certificate of completion with the individual lab plans.
    B. Reporting Unsafe Practices
       If you observe unsafe practices, you may report this anonymously here.

VIII. Communication Plans and Campus Contacts
    A. The Research Reopening web page houses campus-wide communications about research reopening, application forms, training, and other resources.
    B. Adverse Events
       Should you experience any COVID-19 research-related adverse events, you must pause your research and immediately report the adverse event(s) to Associate Provost Price via email to patricia.price@baruch.cuny.edu
    C. Environmental Health and Safety
       All issues related to Environmental Health & Safety should be reported to Environmental Health and Safety Officer James Kaznosky at james.kaznosky@baruch.cuny.edu. Emergent issues can be called in at 646-660-6048 or by contacting Public Safety at 646-312-3333.

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D. Buildings and Grounds
   Requests for service (custodial and trades related work) can be submitted through the Archibus System.
E. Public Safety
   Public Safety can be contacted for issues related to public safety, first aid, possible crime, safety issues, and building access questions at 646-312-3333. The Building Access procedures are currently posted at the home page for Public Safety.