



MONTHLY UPDATE – JUNE 2020

FACULTY ENGAGEMENT:

Internal Research Grants: Good news! We received a grant from funds originally allocated to Senate Strategic Planning Committees. In the face of the pandemic, the Senate proposed, and the Provost agreed, to redeploy those funds. The grant significantly expands our ability to support well-reviewed COVID-19-related research proposals of the 67 submitted to funding opportunities advertised earlier this spring, currently under review. Award announcements are expected to be made before the end of July. Four Core Instrumentation grants under the [Cores-Lite Special Solicitation](#) program have already been awarded, expanding faculty access to shared equipment and services. Click [here](#) for award information.

End-of-Summer Forums: We plan to hold two all-inclusive researcher forums in late August, one on “Navigating Research at USC” (broad topics, open to all and necessary for new faculty), and “USC Research Under COVID-19” (focused on special practices and policies under COVID-19, open to all). More information will follow next month.

Training Workshops & Mentoring: We are accepting proposals through July 24 for our [Center of Excellence in Research](#) (CER) workshops for Fall 2020; we’d love to [hear from you](#). All workshops are held via Zoom. In July, they include *Advancing Research Integrity in Research Labs* and a *SBIR NIH Grants* webinar. Please register [here](#).

Connecting: Looking for COVID-19 collaborators? Please join the Office of Research [Slack Channel](#) (#covid-talk).

RESEARCH RAMP-UP: USC research under COVID-19 is now in Phase 2 (2A3, for 30% occupancy/density); campus access is open to all researchers who cannot do research remotely, as long as they school-approved PI/lab/group-level plans and their schools have University-approved school-level plans. For details, see our Research Ramp-Up website: <https://research.usc.edu/covid19-rampup/> A University-wide Phase 3 plan is under final development and expected soon.

FEDERAL FUNDING: As part of a new service, the [DC Office of Research Advancement](#) has provided guidance to all faculty who applied for the *Zumberge Special Solicitation Epidemic & Virus-Related Research and Development Award* and the *Provost New Strategic Directions for Research Award* program to suggest potential federal funding opportunities related to their proposed research. Congress has provided \$3.6 billion to NIH for a variety of pandemic-related programs, with the majority of the funds designated to NIAID for research into treatments, vaccines, and diagnostics. The next two largest increments have been allocated to the NIH Director's Office and NIBIB to develop diagnostic tests. Specific COVID-related federal funding opportunities across agencies can be found [here](#). For assistance, contact [Steven Moldin](#).

FOREIGN RELATIONSHIP REPORTING: Faculty reporting of foreign relationships (research, teaching, and/or financial) continues to be an area of focus for all federal funding agencies. A [recent article](#) in Science describes NIH investigations in this area. USC’s Office of Culture, Ethics and Compliance has created a new [one-page guide sheet](#) on the types of activities that need to be reported to federal sponsors and to USC.

CONTRACTS & GRANTS: To raise awareness and assist faculty in meeting the above federal reporting requirements, PI and Co-PI certification questions will soon be incorporated into KC proposals. The questions, along with the [one-page resource](#), aim to remind investigators to disclose foreign relationships in proposals (in the biosketch, in other support, etc.) consistent with sponsor policies. Additional information will be sent via a [DCG NewsFlash](#). DCG is submitting a steady stream of proposals, including COVID-19 specific ones. Please contact your [DCG Officer](#) for any assistance.

OPRS/IRB: As of June 8, USC IRB instituted new requirements for research involving direct in-person interaction with participants under COVID-19. Please see the [OPRS](#) website for details. IRB submissions are increasing significantly, while the IRB is understaffed. To better manage the backlog, we are no longer prioritizing COVID-19-specific studies for

immediate review. This change will shorten overall review times for expedited and exempt studies and will not affect the pace of review for Full Board studies as they are placed in the next Full Board meeting.

RESEARCH INTEGRITY: The COVID-19 pandemic is raising new and challenging ethical issues for researchers. If you have questions regarding research or clinical ethics or bioethics, please contact the USC [Office of Research Integrity](#).

USC STEVENS CENTER FOR INNOVATION: The annual *Technology Advancement Grants (TAG)* competition just concluded. We received 31 LOIs, the Faculty Advisory Committee recommended 10 for proposals, the external expert panel (primarily VCs) selected 8 for Zoom panel pitches, 3 were awarded \$50,000 grants: Yong Zhang, Pharmacy (*Novel Site-Specific Antibody-Drug Conjugates for Targeted Therapy, disclosure #2020-045*); Jayankanth Ravichandran, Han Wang, Viterbi (*Polarization and Color Sensitive Infrared Detectors, disclosure #2020-153*); Ho Sing Kim, Keck (*Deep Learning Based Portable Diagnostic System for Sleep Apnea Syndrome Detection (disclosure #2020-141)*).