COVID-19 Statement from LAUNCH: UGR for Undergraduate Research Scholars and Faculty Advisors

LAUNCH: UGR is hoping you are all keeping well. As you all know, classes are cancelled for the week of March 16-20, and thereafter classes will be held online. This week off from classes gives you an excellent opportunity to work on your URS thesis if you are able.

If you are ill or required to self-isolate, you are not allowed to enter any labs, classrooms, or seminar rooms. Please stay at home and follow appropriate guidelines for self-isolation and self-monitoring, which can be found in the Frequently Asked Questions section of the TAMU Coronavirus web page (https://www.tamu.edu/coronavirus/#FAQ) and on the CDC Care Guide (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/risk-assessment.html). Please be sure to contact your faculty advisor, as your absence/illness may affect research in the lab and your own progress on your URS thesis.

If you are ill and unable to work on your URS thesis, contact ugr@tamu.edu as soon as possible. It is recommended, but not required, that undergraduate researchers should not return to their research labs until March 23, 2020. Undergraduate researchers conducting research for credit should work with their faculty advisors to ensure an appropriate plan as it relates to academic credit. More guidance from the Vice President for Research can be found at https://vpr.tamu.edu/covid-19.

URS thesis assistants will continue to review installments and progress reports during the week of March 16-20, but no deadlines will be set during this week. Please continue working on corrections and making progress on your thesis. For College Station, Galveston, and Qatar students who were previously assigned deadlines between March 16-20, your revisions deadline is now March 23, 2020 at 5:00 PM.

In-person drop-in sessions are cancelled for the remainder of the URS program. LAUNCH: UGR will hold a virtual drop-in session over Zoom. Details on this virtual meeting will follow. Please address any other issues over email ugr@tamu.edu.

Some students have contacted us with concerns over the public presentation deadline and the final thesis deadline. If you were planning to present at Student Research Week, the event has been cancelled. If you were planning to present at another venue and are unable to attend either due to cancellation or travel restrictions, please check with event organizers to see if they have a procedure in place for offering presentations and providing feedback. If not, LAUNCH: UGR will be organizing a virtual option for students to present their research as an alternative. Details will be provided as soon as possible.

Students on the Galveston Campus planning to present at the TAMUG Student Research Symposium will be able to present virtually. Students will be able to use Zoom for their talks, post their posters, and provide 3-minute video recordings. Updated information will be provided as soon as it is available. Please direct questions to Dr. Lene Petersen at undergraduateresearch@tamug.edu.

For students at the Caruth School of Dental Hygiene, College of Dentistry please note that details will follow on public presentation options.
The LAUNCH: URS final thesis deadline will remain in place for April 6, 2020 at noon, unless you are ill. If you are ill, please contact ugr@tamu.edu as soon as possible so that we can work with you as you complete your thesis. Some of you may be unable to provide complete details on data collection due to interruptions caused by the COVID-19 protocols put in place by the university. We are advising students to work with their faculty advisors on how to address the research completed up to the point of interruptions and how to discuss incomplete findings while still explaining the importance of the research project. In some cases, student and faculty advisors may want to include a statement such as “Due to the unforeseen events surrounding the COVID-19 virus in spring 2020, complete data was unavailable at the time of publication for this URS thesis.” The discussion/outcomes section of your thesis may need to include an explanation of the importance of what the data would have revealed in various scenarios based on what you expected to find.


And, for international students who may be worried about their status as we move classes online, the Department of State and Homeland Security have ruled that you may enroll in all online courses this semester and still be in compliance with F-1 and J-1 visas. If you have additional questions, please consult with the office of International Student Services at iss@tamu.edu.

The TAMU College Station campus is still open, and students have access to services like Health, Counseling, Dining Services, if needed.

Stay healthy and please let us know if you have any additional questions.

All best,

Dr. Sarah M. Misemer
Annabelle G. Aymond
A. Nicole Guentzel
And the rest of the UGR team

LAUNCH: Undergraduate Research
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