



Thursday, March 12, 2020

*Office of the Director*

Dear friends,

I write with a new update on MKI's position with respect to the COVID-19 conditions. The major work adjustments that we anticipated at Tuesday's meeting are being realized, and this note is to help provide guidance on our particular implementation of MIT's recommendations.

This is a long message but contains important information so please read carefully.

1. Consistent with the email from Anthony Sharon and Ramona Allen, our expectation is that all employees who do not specifically need to be at MKI's three buildings for their job functions should work from home. This is not a campus ban, and you may come to campus on occasion to pick up materials, manipulate experiments, etc as needed. We simply ask that you consider whether your physical presence is really necessary, and if the answer is no, then work from home.
2. We are asking this because it fulfills our basic obligation to the public health: to protect the most vulnerable members of our community and society from the worst effects of this disease. COVID-19 is in the exponential growth phase, and lengthening the doubling time gives our health care system its best chance to respond.
3. For those performing experimental work, we must expect some loss of efficiency because of reduced access to hardware. This is unfortunate, but the coming few weeks are not a time to be aggressively trying to push out experimental results from your apparatus. Better to work on research tasks involving coding, design, analysis, and writing.
4. The Kavli Headquarters Administrative Group is transitioning effectively immediately to a remote-work position. Our AO Jack Defandorf will continue to work from campus but others will be accessible online. The team has practiced remote meeting protocols and interfacing with MIT's Enterprise and business systems, and should be able to continue as normal. Jack will coordinate with the team to handle shipping and receiving.
5. Magellan observations for MIT PIs will transition to 100% remote operations, with support from an on-site Chilean Service Observer. Details will be posted on Friday 03/13 about system requirements for the client-side computers. Preliminary indications are that connections will be supported from MacOS systems only, running the High Sierra operating system or higher. Observers should anticipate a higher burden of advance preparation for runs, to coordinate properly with the Service Observer.
6. A proposal is circulating among the Magellan Council concerning how costs for the Service Observers may be shared between the Observatory, the Partners, and Science PIs. Once that converges I will send out information on the plan.
7. MIT offers an Enterprise Webex license; information on its use may be found on the MKI Cheat Sheet at [spacebook.mit.edu](http://spacebook.mit.edu) under "Working Remotely During MIT Campus

Emergencies. Some people prefer Zoom to Webex. MKI has purchased a set of Zoom licenses for use in the next month (up to 100 people per meeting). If you are interested in this capability please contact Scott Dynes. We expect to put Zoom notes on the cheat sheet in the coming few days. Some time “soon” MIT’s IS&T is expecting to have Institute-wide enterprise licenses for Zoom and Slack (see <https://ist.mit.edu/remote-working-emergency-resources>), but this measure will bridge us to that point.

8. Many groups are moving to online cloud-based productivity tools to try and maintain some of the contact and communication that normally come from office interactions. Employees are instituting new Slack channels, or boards on Trello and Smartsheets to organize work in addition to Webex or zoom meetings. **We strongly encourage all supervisors to meet often online with their groups, possibly daily** for the first week. Let’s not let the health effects of this lousy virus be compounded by loneliness or isolation of our staff.
9. As long as the work-from-home recommendations are in force, I will hold all-hands Webex meetings during the Tuesday 4:00PM slot traditionally reserved for Astrophysics colloquium. This will be an opportunity for the community to hear latest updates, ask questions, and be collectively present.

As always, we will collect all relevant information at [spacebook.mit.edu](http://spacebook.mit.edu).

I am proud of how we all have conducted business at MKI during these last few challenging weeks. There are more to come but I am as confident as ever that we can act with professionalism and compassion. Many thanks to you all and best wishes for your health as we enter this strange new world. I look forward to seeing you all online.

Sincerely,  
Rob