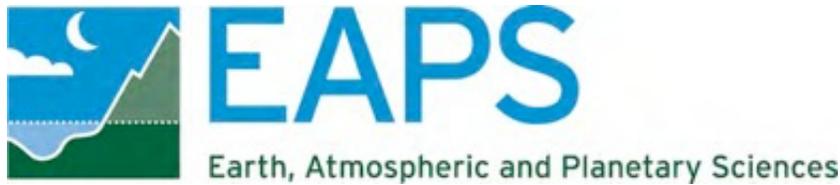


From: Robert D van der Hilst hilst@mit.edu 
Subject: To the EAPS Community: changes in academic activities in view of COVID-19
Date: March 10, 2020 at 8:59 PM
To: eaps-dept eaps-dept@mit.edu
Cc: Michael J Richard mjr@mit.edu, J. Taylor Perron perron@mit.edu, rvdh rvdh@mit.edu

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To all members of the EAPS community:

As COVID-19 is spreading, MIT is working hard to develop plans to safeguard public health while enabling the campus to operate as effectively, and with as much continuity, as possible. The [directives on campus presence and teaching](#) announced earlier today are guided by these dual principles. The policies MIT is putting in place to mitigate the effects of the virus will disrupt academic activities, and I ask you all to pitch in together to get through this extraordinary time and, especially, be respectful and supportive of one another. The situation is extremely complex and we all owe a debt of gratitude to the many people who have worked tirelessly to find optimal solutions and make very difficult decisions in order to protect the health and safety of everyone at MIT.

We (that is, department leadership) recognize that members of the EAPS community may face a variety of issues that impact their ability to work on campus as the situation evolves. In addition to MIT's new guidelines on campus presence, these issues may involve child care, elder care, transportation, personal health considerations, or other factors. We urge all supervisors to develop a strategy with their students, postdocs, research scientists, and support staff that is sensitive to everyone's needs and concerns. We will continue to follow MIT's general policy in providing guidance in such matters, but if anyone is concerned or unclear about their own situation and needs guidance, please contact us. Communication and partnership in finding solutions are of key importance.

From a community perspective, I realize that changes on campus in the days and weeks ahead could severely impact the fabric and cohesion of our community. In view of the decrease in population density on campus that is required to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus, I urge you all to think of ways to mitigate a sense of isolation that some in our community already feel. Indeed, I invite creative ideas to this effect.

In terms of specific actions, EAPS will follow the MIT policies that are being developed and announced to the community. Thus far, these include guidelines for [international and domestic travel and visits](#), the [preparation for educational continuity](#) and the [changes in campus presence and teaching announced earlier today](#).

Until further notice, the following changes will be in effect from March 14 through the end of the Spring 2020 term, but we encourage everyone to start preparing for online communication at their earliest convenience.

In line with Institute policy on travel, events, and visits, all in-person EAPS community events will be cancelled or postponed, and we encourage members of the EAPS community to utilize [online resources](#) for remote teaching, meetings, seminars, and events. Cancelled and postponed in-person events include seminars, conferences, Thursday faculty lunches, campus visits, and field trips. Faculty business meetings will be conducted remotely (probably using Zoom), and all seminar speakers will be offered to give online presentations. The annual EAPS Patrons Circle will be postponed until fall 2020.

Ongoing faculty search in “Climate Science”: We are moving to remote faculty candidate interviews for all upcoming visits through the rest of the season (excluding Shineng Hu who is already here). This eliminates the requirement for candidates to travel, reduces the number of in-person meetings, and standardizes the interview format for the remaining candidates.

Teaching: We aim to offer as much educational continuity as we can in situations where students, faculty, and staff are not on campus for a brief or extended period of time, or are otherwise faced with limitations to normal academic progress due to COVID-19. We urge instructors and those who support instruction to familiarize themselves with [resources for remote teaching](#).

Research Staff, Postdocs, Administrative and Support Staff: To prepare for the possible need to work from home, please be sure your computer is set up to work remotely. This may involve contacting DITR at <eaps-dcs.mit.edu> to be sure everything is working properly and that you have all the necessary authorizations. Please stay in contact with your group while you work remotely to keep research and business transactions moving smoothly.

Technical support: The situation is evolving rapidly, and we are adapting to expected demand as quickly as we can. We aim to provide support to those who need technical assistance getting started with new platforms and to have sufficient video camera and microphone equipment available for pre-recording or livestreaming online class sessions. We are grateful for HQ staff working hard to get familiar with the various platforms and equipment as needed in order to support anyone having technical difficulties, and we ask everyone for a bit of patience if and when needed.

There are many other issues that remain to be addressed and resolved, and we will keep you posted about major new developments. We appreciate your understanding during this challenging time and remain committed to the health of our community as well as continuing our shared educational and research mission.

If you have questions, for faculty matters please contact me, for staff matters contact Michael Richard (Administrative Officer; cc-ed), and for matters related to education contact Taylor Perron (Associate Department Head; cc-ed).

Rob van der Hilst
Head, Department of Earth, Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences

