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**Subject:** Update the the EAPS Community on COVID-19  
**Date:** March 16, 2020 at 10:07 AM  
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To all members of the EAPS Community:

I hope you are all doing as well as possible in these extraordinary times. With this message I want to give a brief update about recent developments and some practical and organizational issues.

Foremost, let me reiterate that the safety and health of you and the communities in which you live is the number one priority for what we do as individuals and as a department and institute. Each of you can help in multiple ways to protect yourself and others (See also [CDC](#) advice):

- Practice common sense hygiene: wash hands regularly, avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth, clean door knobs and hard surface, no hugs, cover mouth when coughing etc.
- Practice social distancing: keep distance (6ft is advised), avoid public transportation, and other places with high density of people;
- Stay fit and healthy: exercise, sleep well, and be rested.

Social distancing and reduced movement and interaction between people has shown to be effective in slowing the spread of COVID-19.

While MIT is open—indeed, as much as is reasonably possible, the education and research mission continues—we aim to reduce in-person presence on campus and ask people to work from home – or remotely, in general – and reduce campus visits to a minimum. This applies to everybody, so – I stress, again – supervisors should be compassionate, flexible, and enabling if anybody in his/her/their group wants to work remotely. They should eliminate activities that require people to get together on campus. Vice versa, everybody should feel free to stay home. But please communicate with one another so that everybody is aware of the situation, and have an emergency contact list for your group. If anybody has a concern, feel free to contact me, or use the [hotline](#) for guidance and advice.

In addition to practical and logistical issues surrounding on-line teaching and scaling down on-campus research operations, I am very concerned about the impact on social aspects and our sense of community. So, please look after one another and be creative and stay connected.

A few operational issues:

As I mentioned last week, HQ work will mostly be done remotely – for now only a minimal skeleton crew will be present in person, but this may change at short notice.

I have created two *ad hoc* committees to help navigate the crisis:

- An emergency executive group meets daily (on zoom) from 11-12. This group consists of DH (Rob), ADH (Taylor), AO (Michael), Ed Office (Megan), Comm office (Jen), and Facilities (Scott). This group meets daily from 11am-12noon.
- An EAPS Emergency Research Continuity committee (EERC), consisting of: DH, AO, Facilities, EHS (Brian Smith), Ed Office (Megan), and the program group leads (Tanja, Ben, Tom, Raf).

Finally (for now, that is). As the likelihood of having positive cases on campus (or in your direct environments increases) please read carefully the [Guidance for when you become aware of a person with \(possible\) exposure to COVID-19](#).

More later. Stay safe, and look after each other. Over the past days I have been very impressed about how people stepped up the plate in response to the challenges that face us. This shows that we have indeed a fantastic department – I am proud of EAPS and the strong sense of community will help get us through this crisis.

Best to all, and don't hesitate contacting us with concerns, questions, or any other comment.

Rob van der Hilst  
Head, EAPS

Contacts:

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If needed: MIT Medical COVID19 hotline: 617-253-4865