The Impact of COVID-19 on University's Research Environment and Management

- Challenges
- Best Practices
- Opportunities
MAX-DELBRÜCK-CENTRUM
FÜR MOLEKULARE MEDIZIN

NCURA Webinar

The Impact of COVID-19 on University’s Research Environment and Management

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MDC IN THE HELMHOLTZ ASSOCIATION

Helmholtz: Germany’s largest scientific organisation:

- > 38,000 Staff
- > € 4 billion annual budget
- 19 National Research Centers
- Strategic programs in the fields of:
  - Aeronautics
  - Earth & Environment
  - Energy
  - Health
  - Matter
  - Key Technologies

MDC
DKFZ
HMGU
DZNE
HZI
MDC SCIENTIFIC MISSION

“The MDC carries out biomedical research aimed at determining the molecular basis of processes of health and disease and turning this knowledge into better strategies to prevent, diagnose and treat human diseases.”

KEY FIGURES

- 100 million € annual budget
- 70 research groups
- 14 technology platforms
- 1700 staff and guests
- 50% of scientists come from abroad
- English as working language
IOANNIS – ABOUT ME

- Studies in Biology and Informatics, PhD in Cell Biology and Mathematical Modeling
- Since 2011 in Science Management
- Since 2012 EU experience
- Since 2015 in Leadership roles
- Since 2013 member of the EU-Life Grants and Funding Strategies Working Group
- Since 2018 responsible for International Strategic Cooperations
- 2018 ENRICH in the USA travel award
- Since 2020 Member of the Board of the International Region VIII of NCURA
ACTIONS EARLY-MID MARCH

• Official communication urging people to stay at home in case any (even light) symptoms appear.
• Cancellation of events and business trips in accordance with the regulations of the state of Berlin
• Establishment of VC system
• Establishment of a hotline for mobile working and support for personnel to start working remotely
• Plan to prepare the running research projects for a possible emergency operation so that no research gets lost.
• List of key personnel in case the institute goes in emergency operations – conditions for key personnel
• Institute in emergency operation as of March 18th
• Research on COVID-19 continues
• Crisis team meeting (virtually) every day (animal facility, infrastructures, IT), focus on communication
• All information transparently put on a new Sharepoint page
PRACTICE AT THE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC COOPERATIONS AND RESEARCH FUNDING

BEFORE emergency operation
• Purchase of extra laptops to enable home office
• Identify the colleagues that have capacity to work from home

AFTER emergency operation
• Continuation of Team meetings at Videoconference
• Increase 1-1 communication through bilateral meetings
• Reallocation of projects depending on the capacity of people to work at home
• Increased focus on supporting the COVID-19 projects
• Asking for deadline extensions when possible
• Stronger focus on priorities
IDEAL RESEARCH OFFICE

• Sufficient personnel to assist scientists as much as possible so that scientists can spend more time doing research
• Effective communication channels
• State of the art IT systems in science management as well (databases, workflows, etc.)
• Motivation working for science

CHANGES IN THE WORLD

• Importance of science
• Importance of global cooperation, problems cannot be solved on a local scale
• Open science and sharing of resources
• Cross-sectoral collaboration
• More focus on science policy to influence political decision making
THANK YOU!

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