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## **University Updates for PhD Students**

### **Academic Updates:**

University's Coronavirus website: <https://coronavirus.upenn.edu/>

In particular, students should note the [FAQ for taking classes remotely](#).

The Penn Libraries are closed but providing [Virtual Support](#).

Pass/Fail Implementation: The VPE Office is working to issue guidance on the how to translate P/F towards graduate and professional student grades and GPA. Please stay tuned for more information in the next few days.

Deposit & Defense: The SAS Grad Division has outlined [procedures for defending and depositing dissertations this semester](#).

### **Student Support:**

Student services: CAPS and SHS are still seeing students in person at 3535 Market Street. Check the [CAPS website](#) and [SHS website](#) for their hours. Other student services are continuing remotely.

Students with children: Staff at the [Family Resource Center](#) can provide guidance and resources for supporting students with children.

Safety: Penn Public Safety and the University District Ambassador Program are available to provide Walking Escorts from 10:00am until 3:00am between 30th & 50th and Spring Garden Street to Woodland Avenue. Students can call 215-898-WALK(9255) to [Request a Walking Escort](#). Penn's on-demand Evening Shuttles, Penn Accessible Transit, and other medical transit services will continue to operate as normal. Shuttles provide free transportation from campus stops to anywhere in the service boundaries between 20th & 50th and Spring Garden Street to Woodland Avenue.

Students experiencing racial harassment: Public Safety's [Special Services division](#), [SIS](#), [CAPS](#), [Grad Student Center](#), and [Pan-Asian American Community House](#) are resources for students on campus. In addition there are resources from the [City of Philadelphia](#) and the [Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation](#) (provides text in Chinese). In February, ISSS made a [video](#) showing support for Chinese students. Please stay tuned as we continue to work with our partners in Public Safety for increased support from them and other campus and city partners. We will provide you updates as we have them.

### **Funding & Resources:**

Information on food banks, etc: The Graduate Student Center's [Spring 2020 Resources & Support](#) website includes information on local resources such as food banks, assistance for renters, etc.

Technology Grants: The VPE Office is working with several graduate student governments to develop a plan for providing graduate and professional students with grants to offset technology expenses related to conducting research or coursework remotely. We will provide more details shortly.

### **Protocols for students who may be ill:**

*If a student is sick and/or suspects coronavirus ...*

Tell the student to call Student Health (215-746-3535) for a medical consultation. The student will be advised how to proceed as a part of that consultation. Send the student's info to the Medical Director of Student Health ([Dr. Vanessa Stoloff](#)) and the Director of Campus Health ([Ashlee Halbritter](#)). Student Health and Campus Health will coordinate next steps, including options for self-isolation.

*If a student is not sick but is worried about exposure to coronavirus ...*

*If a student is not sick but someone at home is sick with confirmed or suspected coronavirus ...*

Send student info to the Director of Campus Health ([Ashlee Halbritter](#)). Campus Health will follow up with student and advise on next steps.

*If a student is not sick but is worried about vulnerable relatives at home ...*

Student should go home and should take extra care to follow recommended precautions: washing hands thoroughly, practicing social distancing, not sharing food and drink, etc. [CAPS](#) can also provide emotional support.

# GENERAL BGS ANNOUNCEMENTS

## University of Pennsylvania Coronavirus (COVID-19) Information and Resources

Please see the following links to recent University announcements and other informational resources regarding Coronavirus:

[SARS-CoV-2/COVID-19 Science and Medicine](#)

[Recording of BGS Open House with Executive Vice Dean on COVID-19 on 3-20-20](#)

[University of Pennsylvania Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Information and Resources](#)

[Penn Medicine Travel and Meeting Policy](#)

[Resources and Strategies for Teaching Remotely](#)

[Research Continuity During the COVID-19 Outbreak - Security in PSOM Facilities During Period of Reduced Occupancy](#)

The [BGS website](#) will continue to be updated with links to the latest information.

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## Deadline Extended! Sign up for Prism & MATLAB Licenses

The sign-up forms for Prism and MATLAB are due by **this Friday, April 3, 2020**. The links to each form are below.

BGS students may obtain one year licenses for Prism and MATLAB free of charge.

### 1) **PRISM** LICENSES

These are arranged through BGS. The new license year begins May 1st. **Please note that even if you already have a Prism license you need to sign up again.** You will not need to install the software again but may be prompted to update to the latest Prism version in order to extend your license for another year.

**If you are interested in obtaining a Prism license, please complete this Google form:** <https://forms.gle/WdXfzCzJzDRevDjM6>

Note that BGS offers Prism particularly for its graphing capabilities. With respect to statistical applications, we remind students of the importance of understanding the fundamental properties of any statistical analyses that they undertake. In addition, principles of reproducible research require all analyses to be carefully documented. This involves storing the data in an accessible form and

creating a written record so that another researcher can easily replicate the statistical analyses for a particular set of data.

## 2) **MATLAB LICENSES**

These are arranged through Penn Computer Connection, but they have asked that we collect info. on the number of interested students. You will receive an email when your installation instructions are ready.

**If you are interested in obtaining a MATLAB license, please complete this Google form: <https://forms.gle/otKTabbeYTfEdSsj6>**

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## **Call for Volunteer Contact Tracers**

The Philadelphia Department of Public Health is seeking volunteer COVID-19 contact tracers. Follow this [link](#) to the form for volunteers if you are interested and able to help.

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## **PPE and Supplies for the Health System**

The School of Medicine is accepting donations of PPE and other supplies. Please see the below announcement from Lynn Kathryn Meaney for details. **Please be sure to get approval from your PI before donating and to practice social distancing when dropping off items.**

- Viral swabs (red tubes)
- Sterile surgical gloves
- Bleach
- Isolation Masks
- N95 Masks – especially dire need for these\*
- Surgical Masks
- Utility Masks
- Safety Goggles and Glasses
- Shoe covers
- Bouffant caps
- Isolation gowns
- Wipes
- Ventilators that could be repurposed

For those of you whose items are located in the medical school buildings, please drop-off any items that you would like to donate to **BRB 251**. This room will be staffed by Medical students from 9am until 4pm beginning today until further notice. The room will be locked if not attended and you should not leave items outside the door. **Please ensure that you maintain social distancing when visiting the room. Do not visit the room if you are symptomatic or been diagnosed with COVID-19 (or been in contact with anyone else who has).**

If you are bringing items in from West Philly or the suburbs and you prefer, the Vet School has volunteered their loading dock at the **Hill Pavilion** as a drop off site. There is a box on the loading dock that will be available (unlocked) between 9am and 4 PM every day, Monday through Friday. The box will be locked after 4pm until the next morning. Do not leave items on the loading dock itself or next to the box.

If you need assistance with transporting items from a building within the School, please contact Security who will arrange pickup with Facilities. We will not retrieve items from an unattended space; there must be someone there to hand over the items.

I've attached a [template for you to complete and attach to your donation](#). Please leave this completed form with the materials. It is very important that we have a record of your donation, especially if the supplies you are donating were paid for by federal grants. We are gathering an inventory before we send the material to PennMedicine for their use.

Thank you for all of your efforts with this. Please contact me with questions at [meaney@upenn.edu](mailto:meaney@upenn.edu) but be aware that I may not be able to respond in a timely manner due to volume. If your question is urgent, please put urgent in the subject line.

Lynn

Lynn Kathryn Meaney, MBA  
Executive Director | Decision Support and Analysis | Perelman School of Medicine

M158 John Morgan | [8-1969](tel:8-1969) | [meaney@upenn.edu](mailto:meaney@upenn.edu)

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## Virtual Support for Teaching and Research -- Penn Libraries

Dear BGS Community:

I am here to help you with any of the services described [here](#). The easiest path to get help is to simply contact me directly:

[dmanuel@upenn.edu](mailto:dmanuel@upenn.edu)

215-746-2459

My appointment calendar:

<https://libcal.library.upenn.edu/appointments/dmanuel>

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**Overleaf now available from Penn Libraries**

Penn Libraries now offers institutional access to [Overleaf](#), the online collaborative [LaTeX](#) editing platform. All Penn faculty, staff and students may now set up free Professional accounts, or link to existing personal Overleaf accounts.

**Instructions** on how to access are found in the section "Sign up for Overleaf Pro with Penn Libraries" in this LaTeX/Overleaf web resource:

<https://guides.library.upenn.edu/LaTeX>

We are excited to offer this new collaborative resource to the Penn Community. Please [contact us](#) if you have any questions.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **The Coronavirus Outbreak Symposium: April 3, 11 AM**

[The Penn Center for Research on Coronavirus and Other Emerging Pathogens](#) will be hosting its first symposium, titled "The Coronavirus Outbreak" on **Friday, April 3 from 11am to 5pm**. The symposium will feature insights on coronaviruses from Penn experts. A detailed agenda of the symposium can be found [here](#).

The symposium will be presented online and is accessible from a web browser, mobile browser, or phone. See below for access instructions.

- Web Browser: <https://primetime.bluejeans.com/a2m/live-event/ccexhucb>
- Phone: Dial 1.800.520.9950 (US) and enter the pin 8220579#
- Mobile device: <https://primetime.bluejeans.com/a2m/live-event/ccexhucb>
  - Download the app if you don't have it already
  - Enter event ID: ccexhucb

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### **Wharton Online Course on Impact and Implications of Coronavirus**

Wharton is offering a six-week, half-credit online course about the implications of COVID-19, titled, "Epidemics, Natural Disasters, and Geopolitics: Managing Global Business and Financial Uncertainty." It began March 25, 2020. **Please note: registration is now open to graduate students.** Learn more about the course [here](#), and contact your [graduate group coordinator](#) if you are interested in registering.

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### **Online RNAseq Data Analysis Course, beginning April 15<sup>th</sup>**

Please see announcement below for Dan Beiting's online course starting April 15. The course is CAMB 714-001.

In an effort to provide BGS students with for-credit curriculum options during the COVID19 crisis, we're pleased to announce that the DIYtranscriptomics course, led by Dan Beiting, will be offered as an 8-week virtual course **beginning on Wednesday, April 15th and concluding on Friday, June 5th**. This course teaches students how to analyze RNA-seq data using command-line tools, with an emphasis on best-practices for transparent and reproducible data analysis in the R/bioconductor environment. No prior coding or bioinformatics experience is required.

Here are some important details regarding the course:

- Students who are interested in enrolling should contact their graduate group coordinator, who will register them.
- There are ~35 slots available for grad students. Registrations will be made on a first-come, first served basis.
- The course consists of recorded 2hr lectures, which will be available for viewing each Wed and Fri, from 3-5pm. Videos will be posted to the course website for convenient access.
- These virtual classes require active participation (usually in form of coding and data analysis), so be prepared to work as you watch the videos.
- In addition to recorded lectures, the course consists of three live 'hackdash' data analysis challenges, which will be hosted via Zoom.
- Please see the course website (<http://diytranscriptomics.com/>) for the course syllabus and details on topics covered.
- Postdocs may also register and should contact Dan Beiting ([beiting@upenn.edu](mailto:beiting@upenn.edu)) directly.

## THESIS DEFENSES

April 3, 3 PM (Meeting URL: <https://bluejeans.com/579475385>): Jennifer Cohen (CAMB), "*Pipe dreams: Luminal matrices and tube shaping.*" Contact [Meagan Schofer](#).

## PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **CAMB**

April 1, 2 – 4 PM: **CAMB Chair Dan Kessler's Virtual Office Hours**. Sign up [here](#) for a virtual meeting. Contact [Dan Kessler](#).

April 3, 12 – 1:30 PM (<https://bluejeans.com/383290937>): **DSRB Program Lunch: Nicolette Johnson (Lengner lab) and Aaron Weiner (Vaughan lab) presenting**. Contact [Meagan Schofer](#).

## CAREER DEVELOPMENT

## **The Art of Grant Writing: 03/31 @ Noon!**

The Institute of Regenerative Medicine is hosting a special "Socially Distanced Seminar (SDS)" on **Tuesday, March 31 at noon** featuring **Leslie King, Ph.D., the Scientific Director for Grant Development for the Penn School of Veterinary Medicine**. Dr. King is an accomplished grant writer who will be walking us through some strategies for putting together appealing applications. This should be a very relevant talk for the many of us at home working on grants right now, especially trainees!

Call information is below. Additional details can be found on the [SDS Page](#).

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## **Upcoming NIH OITE Webinars**

### **WORKSHOP/SEMINAR: INDUSTRY CAREERS; JOB SEARCH SKILLS**

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2961759275322735884>

**Mar 31, 2020 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm**

*Speaker(s): Lori Conlan, PhD, Director, Office of Postdoctoral Services*

This event is ONLINE only register

here: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2961759275322735884>

This session will cover the basics of what to look for in a job offer and how to negotiate the offer (if you even should negotiate). We will also cover how to make the transition to your new job easier by planning ahead. Topics will include: salary ranges, what to look at in the benefits package, and surviving your first 90 days. This session is appropriate for trainees moving into industry, non-profits, or other similar positions. *Note: This session will NOT cover academic faculty positions, please see academic specific sessions under the prior events tab of the OITE Web page.*

### **BECOMING A RESILIENT SCIENTIST: SETTING REASONABLE EXPECTATIONS AND HEALTHY BOUNDARIES FOR OURSELVES AND WITH OUR SUPERVISORS**

### **WORKSHOP/SEMINAR: PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT; WELLNESS**

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2300107262959484429>

**Apr 01, 2020 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm**

*Speaker(s): Sharon Milgram, PhD, Director, OITE*

Being a scientist requires a tremendous amount of resilience – experiments fail, papers get rejected, we struggle to communicate effectively with our supervisors and peers, and establishing healthy work-life boundaries can be a challenge, even in good times. These challenges are amplified greatly during this current crisis where we are bombarded by stressful news and have to make major adjustments to the ways we can and cannot do work. Join Dr. Sharon Milgram, Director NIH OITE, for a workshop focused broadly on resilience in research environments with a special focus on topics that are an especially challenging now. Topics to be addressed include, setting expectations and

responding to the expectations of others, staying focused when teleworking, dealing with career-related anxieties, and strategies for building our resilience for now and in the long-term.

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### **The Data Incubator's Summer 2020 Fellowship (To take place online)**

Early application deadline for The Data Incubator's Summer 2020 Fellowship cohort closes on **April 3**. [Apply here!](#)

Get the insights into coding you need for a more successful application. The Data Incubator is offering a practical data science demo: a live session with instructor Michael Cullen introducing the *how* and the *why* of data science on **Tuesday, March 31 at 1PM ET**.

#### **[Join them on Zoom March 31](#)**

If you don't already have access to Jupyter notebooks and Pandas, make sure you [get what you need](#) before the session begins.

In this live, 30 minute webinar, Michael will show you the steps to:

- Start with an analytical question, then introduce a data set
  - Perform initial exploration of the data set, including inspecting columns, looking for missing values, basic visualizations and summary statistics
  - Form a plan for analysis, turning the original question into something we can compute
  - Find some "checkpoint" values we can compute as we work toward the final answer
  - Understand code style and readability.
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### **The MBA Fund Startup Pitch Day, April 17 (virtual!)**

The MBA Fund is thrilled to announce its second annual [Startup Pitch Day](#) in partnership with the investors behind Lyft, DoorDash, AngelList and more.

Applications due **April 5<sup>th</sup>**. Virtual interviews will be conducted on a rolling basis.

They will be giving away \$75,000.

This prize is open to all alumni and current students across any department from The University of Pennsylvania. [Learn more & apply here](#).

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### **Daily Phone "Drop-Ins" with Penn Career Services**

In place of walk-ins, Career Services is offering a variety of phone and web appointments, which students can schedule through [Handshake](#). These include the option for same-day, 15-minute appointments with a career adviser. New appointment times open up every day at 9:15 AM ET. To schedule an appointment, sign in to Handshake and click the "Career Center" tab near the top right corner.

Twitter users can also follow [@PennCareerJobs](#), a daily automated feed that highlights new job posts. And be sure you've customized your email settings in Handshake to receive a weekly

newsletter featuring jobs and resources tailored to you! Detailed instructions on how to do so are available [here](#).

## **RESOURCES**

[BGS Career Development Site](#)

[BGS Career Twitter](#)

[BGS Alumni & Current Students LinkedIn](#)

[Black Women in Computational Biology Network](#)

[Penn Career Services - Ph.D./Postdoc Careers Page](#)

[Handshake](#)

[Request a sponsored Membership to the New York Academy of Sciences](#)

# **STUDENT RESOURCES**

[Slack for BGS Students](#)

[BGSA Website](#)

[Grad Center at Penn](#)

[Family Center at Penn](#)

[Ask Isaac: Your Personal IS Guru](#)

[Request a sponsored Membership to the New York Academy of Sciences](#)

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**For information about upcoming events or to advertise in next week's bulletin, contact [Rebecca Lopez](#).**