March 24, 2020

Danforth Plant Science Center Update (COVID-19)

During this unique moment in history, the first priority of the Donald Danforth Plant Science Center is the health and safety of our Center community, our families, and those who work with us. The COVID-19 pandemic is a serious threat to public health, and one that requires all of us to respond with action. As an institution based on science and filled with concerned individuals from around the world, we know that control of the COVID-19 virus depends on effective isolation, effective testing and treatment, and effective personal and public hygiene. Since Monday, March 23, the Danforth Center has been operating under “Stay-at-Home” orders intended to limit the spread of COVID-19.

This means the Center community, which is dispersed, is making sacrifices and adapting to a different way of working. First, and in line with the stay-at-home orders, a number of essential community members are working part of their time in our facilities to support minimum basic operations (MBO). While most work requiring on-site facilities is being paused, we are maintaining minimal operations to preserve essential materials (e.g., plant stocks) and systems with rotating team members, staggered work times, and enforced separation and sanitation. We are grateful to those who are serving on the MBO team. And second, the majority within our community are working from home. Zoom and Slack are now vital, everyday tools for most of the remote workforce. Transitioning to stay-at-home mode actually started one week prior to the official orders when all those who were able to work from home were instructed to do so by Danforth Center leadership.

This is a difficult time for everyone at the Danforth Center, the region, and all places beyond. COVID-19 does not stop at international borders, age groups, or ideological beliefs. We have had to make difficult decisions to terminate some experiments, sacrifice materials that will take time and expense to remake later, and slow progress toward some very worthy goals. However, this public health emergency demands sacrifice from all, and we are doing our part.

We will continue to communicate through our e-newsletter, social media, and website. Please stay in touch. Most importantly, we hope that you and your loved ones stay well.

Jim Carrington, President

www.danforthcenter.org