

Why the COVID-19 Pandemic Could Lead to Overdue Change in Academia

August 03, 2021

After an absolutely devastating year, academic scientists in some parts of the world are beginning to reopen their labs and see their colleagues in person. As the global vaccination campaign continues, scientists elsewhere will begin to take similar steps. Many of us are still struggling to cope with the consequences of the pandemic. But after the crisis passes, we may find that it leads to some positive change. In our labs, we have begun to look back on the past year to see whether there might be any useful lessons learned.

After the pandemic hit, we transformed our traditional lab meetings into remote meetings from our homes, worked nontraditional hours around child care, and adjusted our teaching. Jay even taught a class on his cellphone while he was [trapped in an elevator](#) with his kids. We struggled with our own mental health challenges as we tried to hold things together, and we mourned the loss of loved ones. Through it all, we had to figure out new ways to do our research, teach our classes, and support our students and colleagues. In short, we did the best we could in a bad situation. But we also learned a few things we might want to continue to do, or do differently once things get back to some semblance of “normal.”

...