1. Can people can use their government email?
   Answer: Yes, but since the Federal email servers may be taken down, they should copy their umd.edu address or a personal one just in case.

2. Are ESSIC employees furloughed?
   Answer: No, only Federal employees are furloughed. All ESSIC employees are working (unless they take leave) and getting paid as of January 18, 2019.

3. Can we use government computers?
   Answer: You can also use government computers if they are available and you haven't been told not to, but many systems might be unavailable or unreliable.

4. How much funding does ESSIC have for our salaries?
   Answer: Our NASA and NOAA Cooperative Agreements have funds available through at least the end of February. The University is committed to ensuring continuity of salaries as much as possible.

5. Can we travel to meetings or purchase equipment during the shutdown?
   Answer: Travel that is underway or already approved should proceed, and procurements in progress will go forward. We recommend deferring future travel or procurements as much as possible (funds spent on travel and procurement will reduce the amount available for salaries), but discuss your options with your Account Manager. If travel changes or is canceled for reasons related to the shutdown (i.e. meeting is canceled, but tickets already purchased), and costs are incurred by the traveler, reimbursement will be made as long as you’ve followed all the rules.

6. Will my visa be affected by the shutdown?
   Answer: USCIS is still processing visas (at least for now). However, visas that require funding confirmation and sponsor's approval for the extension of H1B and J1 may be delayed. The ESSIC point of contact for visa questions and issues is Monica Gonsalves (rozarm02@umd.edu).

7. Is the submission and funding of proposals affected?
   Answer: The current impacts on proposal processing – mail and panel reviewing of proposals - are unknown, but decision making, which requires civil servant action, will obviously be delayed.

8. What happens if our grant funds run out, or there is a gap due to delayed funding of a continuation or new grant?
Answer: The University is working to develop solutions that will ensure continuity of salary and benefits. We expect that our Federal partners will attempt to help with that once the shutdown ends.

9. Since we can’t use our NASA or NOAA offices, where can we work?
Answer: We recommend that you work from home. ESSIC does have some office space, and if you need to work outside the home you are allowed to and welcome to work here. Please contact Andy Negri (anegri@essic.umd.edu) to discuss office space and access. In addition to a few offices and a number of cubicles, ESSIC has several rooms suitable for team meetings that can be scheduled. However, we do not have enough space for everyone to have everything they need – start by contacting Andy, and we will adapt as best we can.

10. Can we use University resources such as ARES, email, the libraries, and so during the shutdown?
Answer: All University resources are available on their normal schedule during the shutdown. Salaries and benefits are unaffected at this time.

11. What government resources are ESSIC employees allowed to access during the shutdown?
Answer: The agencies have been instructed to deny physical access to government facilities (but see the answer to question 17). Electronic access to computer resources is unpredictable; at present many websites and computers are running and accessible, and we do not know of any reason that you can’t use them. However, some may have locked down access, and others might do so at any time. You are not breaking any laws by accessing them, as long as you don’t attempt to circumvent the system security measures.

From ESSIC employees who normally work at GSFC:
- Many ESSIC employees working at GSFC have an "employee property pass agreement and removal permit" which allows them to "perform official duties off-site. In addition, supercomputers in NCCS such as Discover are running normally and emergency support (such as reset password) is also available (currently, passwords are not expiring and so there is no need to change it).
- The NASA NCCS center has two essential personnel on site to keep the Discover supercomputer cluster running. It will remain up barring catastrophic failure. The National Academies NAS system is down. (but see
- The MERRA-2 reanalysis halted production due to a lack of NOAA input; the GMAO numerical weather prediction and seasonal forecasts continue to run.  
- As of Wednesday, contractors continue to indicate that NASA is holding to its scheduled implementation of the Office360 email system on January 28. If it is in fact implemented, NASA email will only be accessible from a badge-reading laptop with a Cisco VPN account, and webmail access will go dark.

12. How will the flow of grant funds be affected by the shutdown?
Answer: As long as the people who initiate the transfer of funds for current grants are on furlough, we expect that no new funds will be transferred. The ESSIC Business Office is determining how long available funds for each project will last; contact your Account Manager for more information.

13. What will happen to health insurance and leave if a gap in funding leads to salaries dropping below 50% of FTE?
Answer: We don’t know. At present, the University has asked us to not make any changes in salary or fraction of effort while they develop plans to handle any gap in funding.

14. Can I access the wifi network in ESSIC, or print/copy/scan?
Answer: There are several wifi network available in ESSIC, and you can access at least some of them with your umd.edu ID and password, the same one you use to login to ARES. The space behind the mail room has a scanner and copier, and we have a network accessible printer. Contact Mark Baith (mbaith@umd.edu) for advice on how to use these resources.

15. What should I do about preparing for travel to meetings that are scheduled in the near term and have not been canceled yet?
Answer: Use your best judgement.

16. What happens if my government badge expires before the shutdown ends?
Answer: We assume that the agencies will make provisions for such cases.

17. Is there any way I can get research materials or personal effects from my office at GSFC or NOAA?
Answer: At least one person was able to get one-time access to GSFC; if you need that, contact Joanne Hill or Jim Irons. We do not know if similar access to any NOAA facility is possible.