



June 12, 2020

Dear Humane AI 2020 Applicant:

Greetings from Honolulu. We have been very carefully monitoring policy changes regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. Great uncertainties continue to exist in Hawai'i regarding when emergency response social distancing measures and travel restrictions will be lifted, but at this point it seems likely that an international, in-person conversation-focused program like the Symposium will be difficult to host in September. US Embassies and Consulates have suspended visa issuance services until further notice, and international travel is likely to remain very difficult and costly into the near future. Taking into consideration the complex health, travel, and liability issues associated with the pandemic, the East-West Center's COVID-19 Task Force has determined that it is in the best interests of all involved to postpone the Symposium.

We know how much time you put into applying for the program, and we can imagine how much of a letdown postponement must be. We can assure you that our own disappointment runs very deep. Given the quality of the applications we received and the depths and diversity of experiences and perspectives represented, I am sure that we would have had a remarkable three days of interaction.

Granted the uncertainties ahead, we are not establishing new dates for the Symposium at this time. Your applications will be kept on file and, once we have new dates, we will contact you to confirm your interest in being considered for the program.

There is an American idiom that one can always find a "silver lining on a dark cloud." With that in mind, we are taking advantage of this opportunity to launch an online Humane AI Working Papers series. We are still in the process of developing the web interface for the series, but have produced an attractive paper template. Attached is a paper in the planned format. The purpose of the Working Paper series is to offer a forum for digitally publishing new research, opinion pieces, and policy reflections associated with intelligent technology and its societal ramifications. Papers will be reviewed by an editorial board prior to publication and treated to modest copyediting before uploading. Our plan is to have papers posted online with a month of submission and to provide a digital forum for authors to receive reader feedback and engage in supportive discussions.

As we move forward, we would like to invite you to consider submitting papers on our Symposium theme of privacy and social cohesion for the Humane AI Working Paper series. This will not be a substitute for meeting in person, but it will provide opportunities for shared engagement with these timely issues. If we have sufficiently good response, we will consider hosting one or more online video-streaming meetings to allow for some real-time conversation.



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Once again, we are sorry to be unable to host the Symposium in September as planned. Our hope is to host the program in the near future and to remain as actively in contact with you as possible in the meantime.

Sincerely,

Dr. Peter D. Hershock
The Humane Artificial Intelligence Initiative
East-West Center