



UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATA

Office of the Rector and Vice-Chancellor
Kantoor van die Rektor en Visekanselier
Ofisi ya Morektoro le Motlatsa Mokanseliri
IHhovisi loMphathi neSekelashansela

20 September 2020

Dear Students

UPDATE ON DEVELOPMENTS AT THE UFS

I hope you are well, healthy, and safe. I have experienced an overwhelming sense of commitment from staff and students across the university to make a success of the 2020 academic year. Thank you for working together towards this common goal.

Currently, we have a significant number of students back on the campuses in line with the university's reintegration plan, and others are continuing with online learning. On 16 September 2020, President Cyril Ramaphosa announced that the country will move to alert Level 1 as from midnight on Sunday 20 September 2020. During Level 1 of the national lockdown, we will continue to return staff and students in a structured and phased approach according to the university's reintegration plan. However, we are still unable to return all our students to the campuses, as we have to adhere to physical distancing and hygiene measures and also have to take into account the capacity of the lecture venues on the campuses, but most specifically the residences.

Please note that you will be informed by your faculty if you are required to return to campus during Level 1. If you have NOT been contacted, you will be supported through remote multimodal teaching, learning, and assessment until you are informed by your faculty that you can return to campus.

Data shows that most of you have adapted well to the blended learning modes – I find it admirable and inspiring. Rest assured that your lecturers are continuing to work hard to deliver a quality teaching and learning experience. Please use the [#LearnOn](#) material as a guide to plan for the second semester and engage with your lecturers on academic problems or consult with your faculty structures to find suitable solutions.

The university is aware that international students who have been residing outside of the country during Levels 5 and 4, may return to campus during Level 1; we will communicate with these students in due course.

I am confident that you are focused and committed to completing the second semester. We have prepared a safe environment for students who are returning to campus during Level 1. Sufficient hygiene measures are in place, as well as re-configurations to ensure physical distancing. The wearing of masks, physical distancing, and hand sanitising remain compulsory on all the campuses.

During Level 1, campus access will remain restricted – only those with campus access permits will be allowed to enter. Space in our residences remains limited due to physical distancing and residence students must comply with the protocols in their respective residences. See the attached document on the return of students to campus during Level 1 for more information.

Although our country will be on Level 1 of the national lockdown, it is still extremely important that you remain vigilant and take ownership of your health and look out for the health of those around you. Ultimately, your health is your responsibility. Please do not let your guard down and adhere to the protocols and regulations – for your own safety, and for the safety of others.

It is also important to keep your mental health in check – make use of the [#WellbeingWarriors](#) campaign from our Department of Student Counselling and Development, which is aimed at encouraging health and well-being among students. Visit the [COVID-19 website](#) for comprehensive information and updates.

Although the infection rate in our country is decreasing, remember that the COVID-19 pandemic is still testing every aspect of society; we must not underestimate the impact that the pandemic still has on local and global communities. Take care of yourselves and those around you and comply with the national guidelines and regulations.

I wish you all the best with your studies.

Best regards



Prof. Francis W Petersen

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