



30 April 2020

Greetings to the members of the Hebrew University community,

We hope that the most difficult days of the corona pandemic are behind us, and we are nearing the return back to normal, still in the shadow of Corona. Here is a brief update on plans to get back to normal.

Teaching remotely does have some benefits, but in most cases it is not an optimal replacement for human encounters in classrooms and throughout campus. The Hebrew University will consider the possibility of returning to teaching in classrooms, at least in part of the courses, when the Knesset and the government allow it. We are working to obtain a permit to return to learning and teaching laboratory and clinical studies in the very few days, and the relevant academic departments will update you on this shortly.

The University's research activities have already returned to normal, as the research laboratories returned to almost full-scale operation after the Passover holiday. We are working to obtain a permit to work according to the so-called "Purple Tag," that will allow almost all of the University's administrative staff to return to work this coming Sunday, May 3. The departments will update the administrative staff accordingly. We are also working hard to obtain permits to operate the campuses' learning spaces, computer labs and libraries. Additionally, we have already been granted permission to administer in-class exams, in compliance with public health restrictions. This will allow students to sit for the remaining exams from the Fall Semester and for the part of the Spring Semester exams that are scheduled as in-class ones. The academic departments will publish detailed information on this topic.

The University has launched an emergency fundraising campaign to raise donations in three areas: The University's management has established a special student aid fund. About 800 scholarships, in the amount of NIS 2,000 per student, are currently being awarded. Special arrangements have also been made to assist students residing in the University dormitories. The faculty Union has raised donations from faculty members to administrative staff who were adversely affected by the crises. In addition, the administrative staff Union and University management have also published a joint call for vacation day donations among administrative staff, to assist those employees who have been forced on a long leave. Finally, the Friends of the University in Israel and abroad, alongside philanthropic funds and organizations, have donated nearly 15 million dollars to a dedicated fund that the University established to help finance the extensive research activity focused on the Corona crisis. The activities of Hebrew University researchers on the research front on this topic are extremely impressive, and there is a real chance of significant breakthroughs soon.




The University community has excelled in contributing to society in the difficult days that we have undergone. Among other things, in an effort that was led by a dedicated group of faculty and medical students, more than 20% of Israel's Corona diagnostic tests were conducted at the Hebrew University's laboratories, in collaboration with Hadassah Hospital (approximately 2,000 tests were performed daily, for several consecutive weeks). The MDA Logistics Center in Greater Jerusalem is currently operating from the University's Safra campus, and the Test and Drive facility for East Jerusalem residents is located in the University parking lot on Mount Scopus. The University's scientists have filled a central role in both setting the government's policies and in initiating a critical discussion of the government's policies, thus fulfilling the University's mission of substantial involvement in community life. During this emergency period, just as in normal times, the HUJI student community has excelled in providing assistance to many, including to high school students, people with disabilities and disadvantaged communities.

Thank you to all for your excellent cooperation and adaptation to the changing conditions.

Best regards,

  
Prof. Barak Medina  
Rector

  
Prof. Asher Cohen  
President

  
Mr. Yishai Frankel  
Vice President and Director  
General