Greetings,

Here below is a brief update on matters relating to teaching at the University during the emergency period.

As you know, the University is operating at nearly full scope. The transition to online teaching has taken place without significant technical problems. Many thanks to our dedicated employees who led to achieving this excellent result, by virtue of your hard and professional work. Many thanks also to the instructors who participated in the training workshops and have cooperated fully with the challenge of transitioning to teaching online.

Distance learning involves complex pedagogical challenges. Instructors were instructed to examine necessary adjustments in teaching methods. Detailed advice on these matters are available on the Teaching and Learning Unit’s dedicated website. We highly recommended that you maintain a comments forum on Moodle for each of your courses. Distance learning also requires adjustment and creates many difficulties for students. Guidelines for students are available here. Along with our satisfaction that we are succeeding in conducting a distance learning routine, we hope to return as soon as possible to learning at “close range” - to the
non-verbal communication that accompanies it, the small talk and positive experiences that come with an in-person human meeting. In accordance with the Government and the Planning and Budget Committee provisions, only about 30% of the University’s administrative staff members are currently employed. This creates unusual demands on the reduced staff that is employed during this period in the secretariats for teaching and student matters. The other members of the University community, faculty and students, should thus display special consideration, by postponing non-urgent requests for later and by taking initiatives in relevant fields.

**Current updates:**

1. **Class attendance requirements:** There is no change in the policy regarding class attendance requirements, which includes active participation in classes, including the requirement that students activate video, in accordance with the teacher’s instructions. As in normal times, it is up to the course instructor to decide how to enforce the mandatory attendance requirement. At the same time, the teacher should respond to the greatest extent possible to reasoned requests from a student to be absent from the lesson, or to not activate video during the class.
2. **Ethics**: The academic staff have agreed that during the emergency period, classes are to be automatically recorded and will be available for the exclusive use of students registered in the course. As in normal times, students must not distribute recordings of classes or their screenshots, and they must not forward this material to anyone else, neither free of charge nor in return for payment, without receiving the teacher's written consent in advance. Breach of this provision is a disciplinary offense.

3. **Academic support**: Students who experience academic difficulties are welcome to contact the Equal Opportunities Unit in the Dean’s office ([mailto:dakars@savion.huji.ac.il](mailto:dakars@savion.huji.ac.il)) or they may fill out the following form in order to receive additional assistance and support:

   https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdp9KLaGe0sagyW3svL3O9omU-wJelBGonxdBvMZzLgZCwQdw/viewform

   We ask lecturers and teaching assistants to please contact students who are experiencing difficulty, or students who do not attend classes, and check whether it would be appropriate to offer them academic mentoring or other assistance.

4. **Change period**: The change period, during which a student can cancel registration for courses and register for other courses
(subject to vacancy in the desired course), has been extended until 4 April 2020. Further on, we will examine whether there is a need for additional extensions.

5. **Duration of the Spring Semester**: At this stage, it has not been decided yet whether the semester will end as planned on June 30, 2020 or whether it will be extended by a few days. We expect that the decision regarding this matter will be reached shortly after the Passover holiday. Currently, there are no plans to conduct Spring Semester study during the Summer Semester.

6. **Fall Semester exams**: Due to the emergency period, a limited number of second and third sitting exam dates for courses taught in the Fall Semester never took place as planned. The University administration has instructed the various units to reduce the harm to students who were supposed to be examined, by administering an at-home exam instead, in cases where this is possible; and by choosing, at the faculty’s discretion, to either postpone exams to summer, or to give an automatic passing grade. The faculty will transmit announcements in this regard.

7. **Spring Semester courses that have not yet started**: While almost all of the theoretical courses are being taught as usual, teaching has not yet started for courses that include practical experience, including clinical teaching, practical training, as well as
a significant portion of our laboratory courses. We hope that after the Passover holiday, we will have details regarding the expected duration of the emergency period, and in accordance with this, we will decide as to how to complete these studies, while minimizing harm to students.

8. **Transcription of lectures**: This week, the University acquired dedicated software for automatic transcription of lectures, which will enable adaptation of online lectures to people with disabilities. The Accessibility Unit in the Dean of Students office is working to make lectures accessible to students registered in the unit. The Learning Center for the Blind also continues to operate during the emergency period.

9. **Financial aid to students**: A significant part of our students work alongside their studies. Because of the state of emergency, this portion of the student population has lost its livelihood, which creates substantial financial hardship, and sometimes also causes emotional distress. The Hebrew University, which must also cope with serious budgetary consequences caused by the emergency situation, is working to help students whenever possible. Among other things: We have set a 15% dorm rent discount for students who pay most of the rent on their own; we have set lenient policies
regarding requests for postponement of payment date of dorm rent and tuition; and more. In addition, we have launched an emergency appeal to raise money in a special fund, aimed at granting scholarships to students in financial distress. Details regarding how to apply for the fund will be announced in the coming days. We invite students to contact the department chair or the Dean’s office for assistance in academic/study related matters. For issues pertaining to financial or other types of assistance, or for special needs accommodations and the like, students are invited to contact the Dean of Students. Subsistence scholarships continue to be paid as usual, including for the laboratories in which it is not possible to proceed with research activities at this point.

We must continue to show patience and forbearance, and to maintain constant contact with our loved ones.

Wishing Good Health to all,

Best regards,

Barak Medina, Rector