Greetings to the University community,
Preparations for the opening of the spring semester, which will be conducted using distance learning, are advancing well. Thank you, to each of you, for the excellent cooperation and patience in dealing with the challenges. Here is an update on research and administration activities at the University, dictated to us by virtue of the directives published on Wednesday, 18.03.20.
The University is not closing. Various activities continue to take place within it, in the fields of teaching, research and administration. However, due to government directives given our commitment, that are aimed at combating the danger posed by the spread of the Corona virus, the activity that will be carried out on the campuses themselves will be very limited.

* Teaching
* Teaching resumes on Sunday, March 22. We aim at concluding the Spring Semester according to the original schedule. If needed, teaching will continue during the summer, but we work based on the assumption that such an extension will not be required.
* Research that can be performed remotely
	+ Research that can be performed remotely without a presence on campus and without the research team having to conduct a physical meeting, will continue. In these cases, it is permissible to continue employing research assistants with funding whose source is the research budget. However, research assistants are not obligated to work remotely, and they may prefer to be on unpaid leave during this period. Going out on unpaid leave should be done in coordination with the Human Resources Department.
	+ Students will continue to be paid their scholarships. Termination of payment of a scholarship to a student who wishes to stop research work being done remotely requires the approval of the dean of the relevant faculty or school.
* Research that cannot be done remotely
	+ Operations in research laboratories whose research cannot be done remotely is limited to research that would suffer serious harm if frozen (“emergency research"). Starting from Wednesday, 03/18/20, there will be no activity in laboratories except for emergency research.
	+ The deans and heads of schools have notified the heads of laboratories whose research has been declared emergency research, and these heads of laboratories have been notified of the permitted scope of employment of workers or the scope of the research activities permissible for students. Research activities beyond that approved is prohibited. Students who have not been given specific notice to the contrary, may not continue activities in the research laboratory at this stage.
	+ The work will be performed in "shifts," such that intermittent activity will be done in each laboratory. The aim of this measure is to reduce the number of people present in the building at any given time. An employee or student whose employment has been approved as above stated is not obligated to work at the laboratory.
	+ In addition to emergency research, full scale activity will continue in research laboratories that are directly related to the Corona virus, and that have been approved by the Dean. Even in these cases, employees and students will not be obligated to come to the laboratory. All activities will be carried out in accordance with the Ministry of Health directives, including directives regarding the number of people in the room and adherence to the distance between them.
* Administrative work:
	+ In light of the Government’s directives, and in coordination with the Workers Union, the administrative work at the university, on campus and from home, is hereby reduced to about 30% of normal employment. The employees’ scope of employment, and the location from which they will work, are those set out in coordination between unit managers and the administration. Other appointed employees will be on vacation status. We will permit use of vacation days that are expected to accrue in the future (i.e., it is permitted to have a debit balance of vacation days).
	+ Workers who are employed by the hour, and therefore do not accumulate vacation days, will be on unpaid leave, during which they are eligible for unemployment benefits from Israel’s National Insurance Institute (“Bituach Leumi” – akin to Social Security), subject to the applicable rules. In view of the substantial reduction in activity at the university, many of the workers employed by contractors from whom the University acquires services will be on unpaid leave, during which they also may be eligible for unemployment benefits from National Insurance Institute. The University will make great efforts to assist workers and contractor-workers who are employed by the hour, who are forced to go on unpaid leave, and who are not eligible for unemployment benefits.

Together we will go through these challenging times. Good health to all.
Yours,
Asher Cohen (President), Barak Medina (rector), Yishai Fraenkel (VP and Director General)