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27 March 2020

Dear colleagues

I write to you on the first day of lockdown. I trust that the entire Wits family is adhering to the measures outlined by our government, and we are each – in our own way – playing our part in managing this crisis. This continues to be a time of fear and uncertainty, but I firmly believe the best service we can offer the country is to take personally responsible measures to quarantine and for us as Wits staff, to keep the university running.

Under the leadership of Greig Krull, Fiona Macalister, Danie de Klerk and Jason Cohen, our Faculty has been working flat out over the past two weeks to prepare us to move to online teaching. The team has developed (and will continue developing) a suite of excellent resources that will guide even the most tech-phobic among us in the transition to online. This is particularly crucial for academics, but I want to encourage the professional and administrative staff to participate as well. For the foreseeable future this will be our new normal, and every single one of us needs to get comfortable working in an online environment. Please all go to this site <https://wits-e.wits.ac.za/portal/site/dafd3abf-2ae4-4e05-a498-5dc9aa7cead4> (remember you need to sign in using your staff number and password) and start playing around. Watch the videos, do some trials, set up a Teams meeting.

We have sent out invitations for a webinar today, and will repeat these over the weeks. You are all urged to sign up and educate yourselves on how the technology works. I am sure you will find this technology very user friendly and an exciting new way to think about teaching. The postgraduate Heads of Schools (WSG and WBS) are communicating with staff in those Schools directly since they may have slightly different timetables given the unique nature of their Schools. For everyone else courses will be going up on 20 April 2020. That means dry runs

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around 13 April to check that everything works and there are no unforeseen glitches. Use this time wisely to learn a new skill (for those that have not used technology in lectures before) and get comfortable with this new way of teaching.

Remember if you feel unwell please immediately contact the **NICD hotline at 0800 029 999**. Thank you again for being part of an important project to keep Wits open in this crisis. Keep safe and be kind to one another.

#FlattenTheCurve

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Imraan Valodia', written on a light-colored background.

Imraan

Professor Imraan Valodia

Dean: Commerce, Law and Management