

Presidents' Update

Friday 1 May 2020

Dear Students,

As the academic year draws to a close, deadlines and exams are looming and stress levels are likely to be on the rise. It's easy whilst in isolation to sit for hours at your desk without realising it; take your one-hour walk each day and be kind to yourself during this difficult time. The UniWellbeing app has some great resources and we'll be sharing our own tips over the coming weeks.

Today we are hosting our annual Student Opportunities Awards! We're proud of everything you have achieved and want to celebrate this. We have had so many nominations and it took a lot of work to decide the winners but, whether you're a winner or runner up, we'd like to say thank you and we hope you enjoy the virtual awards ceremony. Good luck everyone!

[Click here](#) to join us online. The ceremony starts at 7pm (GMT).

Update From President Welfare & Inclusivity

Get Involved Online

We've updated our '[What's On](#)' page to highlight what our activity groups are doing online, as well as developing a page for all the social distancing-friendly [volunteering opportunities](#). We're also sharing daily inspiration and activities on our as part of our [#IsolationNotIsolated](#) campaign

Exam and Deadline Stress

It is coming up to exam and deadline season and, with everything else going on, it might be fair to say that you are experiencing some of the strangest and most stressful exam/deadline seasons that we have ever faced! I want to reassure you that Academic Study Skills (ASK) are still available, and there is loads of useful information and tools on the [website](#). You can also book a virtual one-to-one tutorial for extra help.

With all of this extra stress, it is important to check in on your mental and physical wellbeing. You can still contact Living Support at any time and you're still more than welcome to contact me for a chat. Just email me on allie.guy@thesu.org.uk or message my [Facebook page](#).

Student Finance Information

I mentioned this last week, but I think it's super important to highlight again. In the coming months, many of you will be looking to get your student finance secured again. Due to the current situation, yours and your family's finances may be strained, so we have put together some [advice](#) about how you can resubmit to student finance in order to get a bigger loan.

Update From President Falmouth

Deadlines are starting to loom now and I want to wish you all the best in your submissions. I know many of you are worried about your academic performance, and understandably so, but I hope that you can all feel a sense of community right now, in that this a feeling that is being shared by so many students across the country, and likely the world, right now. We can only do our best in this situation (and whatever that looks like is okay) and, if you do that, hopefully you can reflect back on this time and be proud of what you managed to achieve in such challenging times. Please remember that you are not alone in your situation and there are so many people you can turn to for support: your course teams for academic support and more, your Reps to sound your concerns, and your friends to support your wellbeing.

Here are some updates I have for you all:

Better Communication Around Access to Extenuating Circumstances (EC's) for Students

Please remember that EC's are still available and I will echo Falmouth's message here: if you feel you need more time to complete your assessment, don't forget to apply for Extenuating Circumstances. You do not need evidence for claims related to COVID-19. If you get your work in within a week of the original deadline, you will still get your results in the summer, however you will have until June to hand in, and submissions after the week grace period will mean results will come nearer the end of July.

Regarding having an EC affecting your ability to graduate, the University has said that all graduating students will receive their award in either the first week of June (where work submitted on time or within the week window) or the first week of August if you use the full time available to you. Plans for the Graduation celebration event is still subject to discussion (as the University does not know what restrictions will be in place when). The only thing stopping students with ECs going to graduation in the past was the timing of the ceremony, so hopefully this will not be an issue with any future planned event. I am asking the University to consider

this as part of their planning. It is our priority to push for a graduation where as many students can come together as possible to celebrate and reconnect, which ideally means the Exeter and Falmouth graduations will align. Myself and Joe will be asking the universities to consider this in the planning as well.

More detailed and regular communication from Falmouth University so students feel reassured, fully understand all changes to their education and the support available to them.

Hopefully you will have seen the newsletter that went out a few days ago which outlines very clearly and simply the changes the Vice Chancellor's office have created to form a 'safety net' for you, and have also give a check in time for an announcement on September plans. There was also an inclusion of an announcement date set for updating students on study block one plans (September start etc) included at my request.

I am also working with Falmouth to make sure plans for the summer term have also been communicated clearly to accelerated degrees and post graduate courses through their course teams.

To have The Students' Union included in spaces where decisions are being made, not just consulted with.

Conversations have already started between Falmouth's senior management on preparation for study block one and I am hoping to get a voice in these discussions. However, in the meantime, I will do my best to discuss with your student reps to find out what you want as students, as the solution will not be 'one size fits all'.

Employability

As courses are coming to an end please don't forget that the university has an employability team who are keen to support you. Please [reach out](#) to them and they'll signpost you to the services they offer, or to one of the Talent Coaches who can help you with specific sessions, or highlight useful resources to you. The Employability Team are currently working with a range of external parties to find great ways of helping you with employment opportunities and how to manage online recruitment processes. They have been keeping me in the loop, so hopefully there will be some employability opportunities coming in the next few weeks.

Update From President Exeter

As exams are set to begin, I wish you all the best of luck in your assessments. Please continue to give feedback over the coming weeks. Below is my update for this week:

Exams/Assessments

With exams and alternative assessments beginning, there has been an Assessment Helpdesk set up for all students taking exams. It is only to be used if you are sitting an exam that day and run into a problem, or find an error in an exam paper. **You can call them on (+44) 01392 726800 or email on exams2020@exeter.ac.uk.** The Assessment Helpdesk will operate from 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday and from 8am to 12.30pm Saturdays BST. You should not email module leads or your tutor with issues - all problems can be directed by the helpdesk. If you find an error on a paper, contact them they will contact the academic and ask if any mitigation is needed and send out a student-wide email. If you have already completed your paper and didn't notice it, do not panic, it will be taken into account when marking takes place. You will have received an email this morning from Tim Quine and myself with tips during exam time. Please take time to read them.

Employability

I asked questions that came up in our survey to the Employability team and their answers are below. They are setting up huge amounts of online resources ,so please go and access it. The team will also be taking over our [Instagram Stories](#) on a regular basis, as part of our [IsolationNotIsolated](#) campaign, so keep an eye out for that.

How can students still be as employable as they have missed fieldtrips and internships?

i. Employers always encourage applicants to engage in all forms of extra-curricular activity to enable them to demonstrate the acquisition and application of competencies that they assess. Students and graduates will be actively supported to reflect on such experiences so that they can articulate these in applications and CVs.

ii. SEAS and academic colleagues are working together to reintroduce fieldtrips and placements at a later date, and also embed alternative employability-enhancing assessments and 'virtual' alternatives in the short-term.

How can we prepare students for the job world post Covid-19?

i. There are still many student and graduate jobs available and students should continue to fully research occupations and employers, and seek support from SEAS in preparing to make effective applications and practice interviews. Students should consider 'all' sector opportunities as 80% are open to any degree discipline.

ii. Over 600 vacancies are currently 'live' on the system. In addition, there are over 400 virtual mentoring opportunities available with 'virtual' internships and learning experience being added daily. Equally, students should not underestimate the value placed on part-time and casual work by recruiters for acquiring employability skills.

Will we be offering extra sessions around interview practice, CV etc.?

Yes, all services are now online and numbers now surpass those pre-COVID-19 (+20 during Easter vacation alone) including: 1:1 career appointments, assessment centres, aptitude and personality profiling, video-interviewing, interactive webinars, Exeter Award and over 5,000 digital resources.

Our team has been working hard to answer all of your questions and we've compiled them on our FAQs page. Please check [here](#) to see if your question has already been answered. There are also links to all reports, Presidents' letters and other useful resources.

Join the online Corona Community

Our [Corona Community](#) is live on Facebook and we're happy to say that the pet pictures are a hit. Please join us to share happy things, memes, and support each other.

Is there something more we can be doing?

Please talk to us. Firstly, please try using our feedback tool to give your opinions at www.thesu.org.uk/survey Our Advice service is also still running if you need independent, professional advice on university matters.

As always, we are all here for you and want you to know that you can reach out to us to talk about your concerns on anything in this uncertain time. We are available on nearly all platforms (Facebook, Skype, Teams, phones, etc) so please do not hesitate if you would like reassurance or a direct conversation on your concerns/situation, or even if you are feeling isolated and just want a chat.

Stay at home, protect the NHS, save lives.

All the best and stay safe,

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