

Presidents' Update

21 April 2020

Dear Students,

We hope you have all managed to enjoy the Easter period. The government have now confirmed 3 more weeks of lock down and we, like yourselves, are doing our best to keep motivated, healthy and entertained over this time.

We wanted to say a massive congratulations to all of the students involved in Eco Soc, Women in Conservation, Sustainability Week, and Disability Week for being shortlisted for the [National Society and Volunteering Awards](#)! We've got our fingers crossed for you and can't wait to see who has won on 6 May.

We know that loads of you are now thinking about how you can best help other students and the community whilst we are in lockdown, so please share your stories with us.

Update From President Welfare & Inclusivity

- **Falmouth Hardship Fund update:** Falmouth University's Hardship Fund is still running as usual. If you are struggling for money, we urge you to apply for this fund. If you have any queries about how to do this, you can get in touch with our Advice service, who will be able to help you. I would also appreciate your feedback on how this process has been for you if you have already applied for it.
- **Accessibility Committee and Strategic Group:** I've been working hard with a dedicated group of students to set up the Accessibility Committee. We want to make life at university more accessible for everyone, especially students with disabilities. I have also been in conversation with Falmouth University and the University of Exeter to get the Strategic Accessibility Group set up so that we can crack on with figuring out the priorities that need to be addressed and getting them done.
- **Wellbeing training for students:** I'm in the process of trying to secure funding for online training for students. This training would include mental health first aid and resilience training.
- **Wellbeing online:** The University of Exeter have set up a centralised webpage to direct you to all things Coronavirus and wellbeing. There are loads of useful things on there so make sure you have a look: <http://www.exeter.ac.uk/coronavirus/wellbeing/>. Falmouth University also have wellbeing information [here](#).
- **ResLife:** The [ResLife](#) Team have taken their events online. If you're feeling bored or lonely, keep an eye out for the activities they're arranging. They also provide a lot of useful information on things that are happening at the university.

Update From President Falmouth

- **Better communication and clarification of what 'no student will be academically disadvantaged' means for students, and the protection their grades will receive.**

- o Falmouth are in the process of approving their 'statistical modelling' process. This is going to be brought to Academic Board (which I attend) next Wednesday (22/4) for full approval, ready to then be communicated with students. I understand that this has taken a long time for development and I am communicating to the University that they need to get these communications to you as soon as possible.

- o The statistical modelling process, to the best of my understanding, will try to ensure that students' performances in modules are in line with historical performances on previous, or similar modules. It is my belief that this is their version of a safety net for you. If you have concerns about this process. please give feedback to us through the feedback tool. I will do my best to make sure all feedback is presented at Academic Board, or before, in my regular meetings with senior managers to make sure this new system gives students the fairest outcome.

- o If despite the efforts that have been made to change assessment you are still concerned about your academic performance in your assessments, then please talk to your staff team about this. I have heard some great feedback about how supportive academics have been for their students.

- **Funding for students who have no access to a laptop or 4G devices to purchase devices, which enable them to complete their studies in parity with their peers.**

- o The feasibility of this is being reviewed, however progress on this will take time. The University are looking at what they can put in place to help mitigate the impact of this while they find a solution.

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

o On Tuesday I met with Falmouth's marketing team and the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement. In this meeting we discussed Falmouth's comms. I communicated that students wanted more updates from the University on what they are working on and decisions that are trying to be made, plus more reassurance. Falmouth felt that they are communicating adequately with students and emphasised the importance of the communications that departments and course teams are circulating. At this time they are not looking to increase the amount of communications they have with students as they feel they will be repeating themselves if they did so, however they will be focusing on their updated weekly newsletter and only sending out separate comms when necessary.

o I now have weekly meetings with Falmouth's communications team to be able to feed into these.

· **Securing a meaningful end to 3rd year and Graduation.**

o I have had initial conversations with management team of the stannary bar in regards the feasibility of the graduation ball. The events and bar industry is in a suspended state with many suppliers and vendors furloughed making planning of any event very tough and with the national situation changing we are in no position to understand what large scale gatherings and events will be allowed. We are waiting for Falmouth and Exeter to set their graduation dates before we can consider what could be on offer in the form of a ball or event. There will be another meeting in a few weeks time to establish the feasibility of an event and the safety of students and staff are our top priority.

o Falmouth have confirmed to me, as I mentioned in my previous email, that intermittence is still an option if you feel that you wish you would like to come back in the next spring term to complete your studies, however this has financial implications. If you would like support in making that decision, our Advice team are available. Please email them at advice@thesu.org.uk

• **FXplus Casual Staff**

It has been made aware to me that casual staff have still yet to receive communication on if they are going to be furloughed, even though decisions already have been made to furlough non-casual staff. I have yet to gather enough information from FX Plus to understand the decision making process and what is taking so long, but I would like you let you all know that the situation is being discussed and pushed by the Union.

If you need financial support, please see Allie's guidance above on accessing the Hardship Fund. And please communicate your concerns to us using the [feedback tool](#).

Update From President Exeter

I have received huge amounts of positive feedback around the communication students have received from the University. I have fed this back and asked for the level of communication to remain high to keep students well informed of the ever-evolving situation. If there are any issues that you feel are not being addressed, please email me and let me know how I can help. Below is my update for this week:

- **Student Trustees:** We are looking to recruit Student Trustees from both universities, (the job advert will be published on our website on Monday at www.thesu.org.uk/jobs). If you are interested, please apply. It is amazing experience and great for your CV. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to drop me a message.
- **Employability:** Many students have raised concerns around missing out on field trips and internships that may make them less employable, and concerns around the lack of job opportunities in the current market. I have raised these to the University and will inform you when I receive an update on what the University intends to do about the issue.
- **Graduation:** Some students have voiced concerns around graduation and would appreciate reassurance that they will not miss out. I can confirm graduation will happen; it is just a question of when. As I said in the previous letter, I am in conversation with University staff to explore some options, which will then go out to students for a vote in the coming weeks.

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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