**Letter from the Vice Rector: Omicron Pandemic – Update, 2 January 2022**

Dear Students,

I would like to share with you the decisions we have made in response to the recent spike in morbidity and the expected rise in Coronavirus cases. Once again, I would like to emphasize that we are in constant touch with the authorities and comply with all government directives.

For now, teaching and research activities will continue on campus, as usual, in accordance with current guidelines. At the same time, we must take extra care to observe instructions and make sure to wear facemasks in enclosed spaces and during lectures, ventilate classrooms, and avoid crowding before and after classes.

This notwithstanding:

First, where possible, courses will immediately move to online teaching and students will be duly informed. In view of the abrupt transition to Zoom, attendance will not be mandatory nor will students be required to switch on their cameras.

Second, we have asked lecturers --with some exceptions-- to make available to all students the recordings of this week’s lessons (the last week of the semester), in addition to livestreaming the sessions. Lecturers who continue to teach on campus have been asked to waive attendance requirements until the end of the semester. Labs and practical trainings may take place only in spaces with proper ventilation, and after making sure that students maintain proper distance between them and wear facemasks at all times.

**Exams:**

At this stage, exams are due to take place physically on campus, for all students. However, as I mentioned, we are following very closely the directives issued by the Ministry of Health, as well as the general situation in the country. While abiding by instructions, we are making every effort to avoid disruptions to the exams.

Thus, we have instructed all Units to hold exams in large, well-aired halls, with maximum distance between examinees. This may cause changes in the times and locations of exams. In exceptional cases, and depending on the rate of infections, the dates of certain exams may change, and students will be duly informed.

At the same time:

Where possible, alternative methods of evaluation will replace in-class exams and lecturers will inform students.

I cannot emphasize enough the importance of complying with directives, especially wearing facemasks and avoiding gatherings before and after class. We have instructed lecturers to interrupt or stop lessons altogether, if students fail to uphold the requirement of wearing protective facemasks.

I ask for your understanding and cooperation during this complex and sensitive time. It is very likely that we will need to issue new instructions and updates on a daily basis. Please make sure you stay informed. We will continue to collaborate with the Student Union in this respect.

I wish you good health and success in your upcoming exams.

I am certain that, together, we will overcome this new wave of the pandemic.

Cordially,

Prof. Eyal Zisser,

Vice Rector