



## COMMUNIQUÉ TO THE CUT COMMUNITY

### NATIONAL CORONAVIRUS ALERT LEVEL LOWERED FROM LEVEL 5 TO LEVEL 4

24 APRIL 2020

2020 #12

#### Dear CUT Community

A risk-reduction COVID-19 approach will be central to our lifestyles for the foreseeable future. On 23 April 2020, President Cyril Ramaphosa announced an economic phase-in following the release of the current level 5 lockdown to level 4 on 1 May 2020. Details of how this phased process will affect higher education will become clear in the next few days. We are in continuous consultation with all the relevant role players to ensure the best possible methodology, and will communicate detailed information in this regard to you soon.

We remain on track with our flexible and technology-infused learning strategy. As mentioned, the first two weeks will be a phase-in and orientation period for both students and staff, with no assessments and due dates for assignments, while we are attending to the distribution of devices, data bundles and study material, to start at 'full' capacity on 4 May 2020. A summarised *CUT Online Student Guide* is attached as **Annexure A**.

I want to assure all our students, staff and stakeholders that *no student will be left behind academically due to the COVID-19 pandemic*. We are fully aware of the challenges posed by a technology-infused learning approach. We also take cognisance of lecturers who may not be as fully equipped to embark on this adapted training methodology. Various support measures have been put in place and have been communicated by the relevant Deputy Vice-Chancellors (DVCs) and the Registrar. These measures include, *inter alia*:

- ❖ Support guides and online platform training for both staff and students, to optimise technology-infused teaching and learning.
- ❖ To date, we have spent R4,972 million on device support for students and staff.
- ❖ We acquired 21 500 data bundles ranging from 30GB to 40GB, depending on the network provider, valid for 30 days, to the value of R2,128 million, to be distributed to students and staff. In addition, we secured zero-based data for certain URLs at CUT. More information in this regard will be shared by the DVC: Resources and Operations. Furthermore, we are currently working on a longer-term data solution.
- ❖ Financial support via our CUT COVID-19 Relief Fund.
- ❖ Continuous pay-outs for NSFAS-supported students.
- ❖ Extensive safety protocols for any on-campus activities.

While we explore and implement all possible measures for your physical and academical well-being, we also encourage psychological health. Physical distancing does not have to cause distress. Remember that you can still connect socially while maintaining physical distance. Continue to connect with the CUT Wellness Centre, CareWays, or people around you via e-communication and by adhering to risk-free behaviour. We need each other more than ever before, and should share coping skills and solutions.

In conclusion, much discomfort is caused by the current situation, and Management deeply empathise with all the hardships felt. However, we remain positive that, through this challenge, the CUT community, and South Africa as a nation, will become stronger and more unified than ever before. Let us all embrace the well-known saying, *Crisis does not build character, it reveals it*. Take care and be safe!

**Prof. Henk de Jager**

Vice-Chancellor and Principal