

Dear Students

I trust that you are keeping safe and healthy during these challenging times.

At this stage it is not clear when we will be allowed to move between towns, inter-provincially and across borders. We are awaiting an update from the President soon. As soon as he makes the announcement that applicable restrictions will be lifted, you will be informed when the opening of the College can take place - having considered travel arrangements, health risks and a range of other issues. Based on this assessment, each student will be given enough time to return to a sanitized environment, ready for learning to take place. It is hoped to give you at least two days' notice ahead of time and possibly additional time before classes restart to ensure that all arrangements are in place.

In the meantime, learning must continue by all means, even if it is a challenge. The College management has been attending to various issues around how learning can continue under the lockdown. A survey sent to all students checked your access to resources such as computers, data and smart phones. Just over 50% responses was received. This is indicative of the readiness and challenges faced. We are addressing those issues to make the learning environment as smooth as possible. Not everyone has the same challenge, so some solutions may not be suitable for everyone.

The **VERY IMPORTANT POINT** here is to keep checking your email, your phone, your WhatsApp. Keep in contact with each other! Help each other! Share information! Discuss research, study material, assignments amongst each other! Make contact with you lecturers who have all been instructed to be accessible to you. The College management has taken the position that the most important issue for the short term is to ensure that you receive study material for you to read through and understand. We will deal with assessments and tests later. So if you are given an assignment, it is not going to be graded or marked just yet. We will communicate about tests and marks later.

By now, all students should have received access to the **Student Online Learning Portal**. It contains learning material which will allow you to continue with your studies in the meantime. Follow the instructions from your lecturers, who will make contact with you via e-mail and/or WhatsApp and/or Google Classroom.

1. **For challenges regarding accessing** the Online Portal: Please send an e-mail to Mr Pieter Beyers at PieterB@elsenburg.com and copy DesireeCD@elsenburg.com and MaritjieC@elsenburg.com
2. **If your training material is not uploaded** on the Online Portal, please send an e-mail to your lecturer directly and copy DesireeCD@elsenburg.com and MaritjieC@elsenburg.com

My team and I understand that these times can be challenging you, as it is the whole of South Africa and the world. Yet, we must remain hopeful, calm and as active as possible. Try to find a dedicated place in your home to study at regular hours, while contributing to your household chores and routines. Your well-being is very important. It is likely that you will feel uncertain and even overwhelmed by the challenges of Covid 19. Take a moment to breathe and regain your calm. Speak to someone such as a parent, a lecturer or a friend.

You can make contact with the Independent Counselling and Advisory Service (ICAS) which offers all registered students professional and confidential well-being support:

- Phone the toll-free line on 0800 214 773
- USSD Code - The code ***134*905#** is available through a simple "please call me" message. Upon ICAS returning the request, you can state a time and date on which a counsellor can respond to your request.
- ICAS on the Go App is available on the Apple App store and on Android.

Wishing you well,



Hayley Rodkin
Principal: Elsenburg Agricultural and Training Institute
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