

Dear Students

I hope that you are remaining healthy and continuing to engage with your studies.

Since I wrote to you on 8 April 2020, the President extended the lockdown because of the Covid 19 situation, by two weeks. This obviously meant that the return to studies at the College had to be delayed further. Even then it is not certain when the College could actually open. Based on an assessment, each student will be given enough time to return to a sanitised environment, ready for learning to take place.

In the meantime, I expect you to continue with self-study, by accessing your learning material via the student online learning portal as per the link provided to all of you.

Your lecturers are fully committed to ensuring that the 2020 study year is completed, even if we have to take extra measure to ensure that you are adequately prepared for your assessments and examinations. We have made several changes to the year planner to accommodate the weeks that the entire nation has been in lockdown.

Firstly noting that we do not know when we will return to normal functioning, we will all have to commit ourselves to extra hours even if these mean working over the weekend, cancelling vacations and extending the end of the year closing of the College. Therefore, when you return to campus, you will be given an updated planner.

Secondly, I emphasise again that the **assessments and assignments that reflect on the current planner have been postponed** until a date that will be communicated via your lecturers. I have had several meetings with the lecturers and support staff and am satisfied that your lecturers are in regular contact with you to provide support and guide you through the learning material they have provided either through the student online learning portal, WhatsApp, e-mail or other means. We have all been working very hard to ensure that learning material reaches you. Thus, I expect you to study the work you have received and to engage as much as possible with your lecturers.

If you require further information, make contact with the particular lecturer of the module to provide clarity. If there are other issues you require support with, make contact with Ms Des Chinasamy-Dampies – as you would usually do while on campus. We are here to support you – as those of you know who have requested information or help with any other issue. You must ensure that this time away from campus is as fruitful as possible – by remaining focused and committed to your studies. This is

important for both the Higher Education and the Agricultural Skills Development students. Follow the instructions given to you by your faculties and course co-ordinators, who understand the specific requirements for each module and course.

Our completed survey indicates that there are some of you who remain challenged with access to computers, data and other related issues. Over the next few days, an identified group (according to your responses to the survey) will receive data to assist during this period. The data must be used responsibly, only for your studies, and your usage will be monitored to ensure that you are adequately enabled to engage with your studies.

In conclusion, 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 your lecturers who have all been instructed to be accessible to you.

Check 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. The marks of recent tests written prior to the lockdown will also be displayed here.

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

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.

Keep on reading, studying, and hoping that we will see you soon,



Hayley Rodkin

Principal: Elsenburg Agricultural and Training Institute

17 April 2020