



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear colleagues,

The COVID-19 situation has evolved further, and Singapore is tackling the pandemic with unprecedented measures. First and foremost, on behalf of Senior Management, I wish to thank you for what you have already done to address this situation and to get our University prepared to adapt to new conditions. Your commitment makes all the difference. Our hearts also go out to anyone amongst us who may be affected in one way or another by the coronavirus.

The health and safety of all our constituents is paramount; we can make positive contributions and support our loved ones only if we stay healthy and avoid spreading the virus. With this in mind, about 80 percent of our University workforce have started full telecommuting mode from today. Telecommuting is a critical part of safe distancing. Therefore, SMU is committed to doing its part in contributing to the overall safety of our own people and the larger community.

Working from home, you may feel a sense of unease; there will be inconveniences to overcome and adjustments to be made. Even as you try to keep to the momentum and rhythm of work, it may take some fine-tuning before you settle down to a comfortable schedule. While technology has, in these difficult times, made it easier for us to stay connected for productivity's sake, let us not forget to take care of our mental well-being. These unsettling times require all of us to be even more caring, supportive and resilient, as we keep our spirits up, draw strength from our community and press on. We have received many notes of encouragement and thanks from students, faculty and staff over the last couple of weeks. Thank you for your support. Keep the SMU Smiles coming. More importantly, keep encouraging one another!

The University campus will be a lot quieter in the coming weeks, but behind the scenes, the 'machinery' continues to run, thanks to the good work of many colleagues: faculty members, with the support of the Office of Integrated Information Technology Services (IITS) and Centre for Teaching Excellence (CTE) have put in tremendous efforts to move lessons (and soon, examinations) on-line at short notice; our undergraduate and postgraduate admissions work went virtual in a very short time, and we have the second highest number of undergraduate applications in the entire history of SMU; the Office of Campus Infrastructure and Services team is on the ground to ensure that our city campus continues to stay open where necessary and run smoothly (with some energy savings, no less) and that critical facilities like data centres continue to be fully operational; IITS, whose huge efforts safeguard our business continuity and ensure the stability of the University's technology platforms as most of us work from our homes; and not to mention the Office of Safety and Security team, which has been working tirelessly from the

very beginning to plan and implement measures to keep the campus safe (so glad the Office was set up in July last year!). These are but a few of the many parts of the University whose unstinting efforts in preparing for and working through adjusted working arrangements have resulted in us being able to take the necessary precautionary measures in an efficient manner. I realise that there are many areas in which we can fine-tune and do still better, and I seek your patience and understanding as we adjust, to stay at least a little ahead of the situation.

We will continue to remain vigilant and take guidance from the relevant government advisories to adopt appropriately calibrated measures to further safeguard the health and well-being of the SMU Community. I am heartened by the manner in which all parts of the University have responded – with an agile, resilient and collaborative mind-set. Truly a demonstration of the spirit of One SMU!

Now, even as we begin our telecommuting arrangements, I am mindful that there are those among us who will continue to provide the necessary support to University operations so that we can all continue to work from home efficiently.

To show our appreciation to operational staff whose duties require them to continue working on campus during these difficult times in a split team arrangement, the University will be granting them three additional days of leave for the remainder of this year. While they may not be able to take the additional leave right away because of exigencies of service, as things settle over time, I hope the extra leave days will enable them to have some additional well-deserved rest. More details will be shared with Heads of Departments in due course.

Thank you for everyone's enormous contributions. Let's work together – across all parts of our University - to keep going.

Please look after yourselves and your families. Stay safe, and see you online!

With best wishes

Professor Lily Kong
President
Singapore Management University