

**Subject:** SLT Briefing

**Date:** Friday, 22 May 2020 at 15:13:17 British Summer Time

**From:** Vicky Maloney

**To:** Mailing List - Everybody

## **Sent on behalf of the Senior Leadership Team**

Dear Colleagues

We hope that you, your families and your friends continue to be safe and well. You will recall that we have started a regular series of SLT briefings to all staff every month. This update is part of that series and builds on the note sent to you all by Stephen Davis last Friday.

Firstly, on the run up to half term, we would like to thank all of our colleagues for their continuing huge efforts to provide a great education service to all of our students during these challenging times. Many of you will be taking a well deserved break over the half term week and for those who are we hope it provides an opportunity for you to find some time to relax from the pressures of work. Staff and student wellbeing is always at the forefront of our minds and it is important that everyone has the opportunity to take regular breaks for their own personal wellbeing.

The benefits of that fantastic effort you have all put in can be seen in the results of our latest student survey. We asked all students to rate their learning experience on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 5 being the best). When we ran this survey before Easter - after the first week of digital learning - the average rating was 3, which was very positive in the early stages of students' experience. We are delighted that the latest survey shows the average rating has moved to 4, demonstrating that the vast majority of our students are receiving a very good education service that is meeting their needs. This is down to you and your hard work. Our student engagement levels remain positive and many thanks to those of you who are now operating as temporary key workers, helping to try and engage all of our students in continuing learning. We will continue to support you all to ensure that the students' experience continues to improve over the next few weeks.

Thank you also to those of you who took the time to complete the recent short staff survey. This shows that around 90% of you have the tools you need to work effectively, feel supported and feel that we are communicating well. It is great that so many of you feel positive about these issues, but we will continue to work hard to ensure that these figures get as close to 100% as possible. Our coronavirus planning meeting, including our Trades Union partners, meets regularly to monitor and meet requests for IT devices and support and to raise and resolve other issues. Following feedback we will be creating a simpler to use IT helpdesk immediately after half term which we hope will benefit you and our students.

We have started this term's round of staff voice sessions, with really good zoom meetings with colleagues from Willesden and Wembley where those colleagues discussed their experiences over the last couple of months and raised issues that we will seek to resolve. We are looking

forward to the sessions with staff from Paddington and Maida Vale after half term.

As Stephen outlined last week, the positive student experience and engagement, which shows that our students are benefiting from the current remote provision, has led us to conclude that we do not need to have plans in place for those students to return to campuses before the end of the summer term. Whilst we will continue to keep this under review in the light of rapidly changing circumstances and government and health guidance, we will always treat staff and student safety as our paramount responsibility.

We are busy working to ensure that students can return to campuses at the start of the next academic year, and basing our plans on the assumption that social distancing will still be required then and that we will need to use a blended learning approach of face to face and digital which will vary depending on individual course requirements. Roy Croasdaile, our Health & Safety advisor, is a key part of the planning group to ensure we have completed all necessary risk assessments during our planning for this, and we are consulting with our Trades Union partners as our plans develop. These plans will mean that we will use the campuses in significantly different ways to the ones we have been used to, and we will need to thoroughly test these plans and ensure that all colleagues know how they will operate before students return to the campuses. It is therefore likely that we will be asking some colleagues to return to the campuses for some period over the last 2 weeks of this term (late June and early July) to acquaint themselves with the plans and raise any issues that we have not covered so that we can resolve them before students return in September. We will, of course, complete full risk assessments before asking any of you to return for this period. We will let you know more about these plans over the coming weeks. Other than those staff we ask to come in over this period we will continue to follow the advice that those who can work at home should continue to work from home.

We are also working to reshape our enrolment process for this summer with an aim to move the whole of enrolment on-line. For those of you who know our traditional enrolment process you will know that this is a huge task as in previous years we have had queues of hundreds of people in our campuses during enrolment. If we cannot move everything on line this year we will seek to use telephony as a back up and we will keep everyone informed of how our plans are progressing. We are also refocusing our marketing campaigns at the same time to move to relatively higher levels of social media marketing rather than the more traditional channels we have previously used.

We are optimistic that these plans will maintain or grow our enrolment numbers for next year and we are actively engaging with ESFA, GLA and other commissioners to ensure we have a strong and sustainable income and financial position. Whilst we have suffered a relatively significant loss in income from some sources this year, we remain in a strong overall financial position and do not expect to have to make unplanned savings next year as long as our enrolment assumptions are met.

Finally, although we will be producing regular SLT updates as mentioned at the start of this note, we would encourage you to keep visiting our dedicated micro site on the UCG website at

[www.ucg.ac.uk](http://www.ucg.ac.uk) where you will be able to find the most up to date information on a range of issues relevant to our response to coronavirus, our future plans, the latest HR advice and how the way you operate may need to change as part of those plans.

Once again, thank you all for your continuing commitment and dedication to helping our students receive the best quality of education we can provide.

Best wishes

The Senior Leadership Team