

Office of the President

Prof. Uriel Reichman
President and Founder



April 28, 2021

Dear students,

COVID-19 is on the decline here in Israel, but it still exists. In this “interim period,” we must make decisions regarding how to proceed with our studies. The aim of this letter is to share with you the considerations and motivations behind our decision-making. Our view of the students as our partners requires frankness. Our responsibility to the collective has and will lead to decisions that will not be acceptable to some members of the community. As in the past, we will do what is right for the students under the circumstances.

When the coronavirus broke out, I addressed all of the students and faculty directly and clarified that over the course of the challenging period that lay before us, IDC Herzliya would operate in accordance with three goals: First, to do everything in our power to allow students to continue on their path without missing a semester or course. Second, to protect the health of our students, and third, to ensure the continued existence and functioning of IDC.

COVID has claimed more than 6,000 lives in the 14 months since it broke out in Israel, more than all of the fatalities of the War of Independence and more than twice the number of people killed in the Yom Kippur War. Throughout this difficult period, we made sure to act in accordance with government regulations, which sought to protect lives, while at the same time maintaining a system of distance learning and student services, which included financial, social, and employment assistance.

The regulations have changed from time to time. We went from a lengthy lockdown to being able to allow those with a “green pass” to enter the campus, with strict restrictions on the number of students allowed to be in a classroom or auditorium. The number of people allowed to be in indoor learning areas was then expanded to some extent. In line with the regulations, we initially outfitted all of the large auditoriums with advanced hybrid technologies, since only these auditoriums were relevant due to the severe restrictions on the maximum occupancy allowed inside. The easing of the regulations, which permitted occupancy of up to 50 percent of seating in the classroom, led us to equip the medium-sized classrooms for hybrid learning as well. The importance of hybrid classes lies in the fact that they allow for simultaneous frontal teaching and high-quality distance learning.

We recently received notice that the government regulations that restricted activity in educational institutions have expired; therefore, there is no longer an obligation to restrict entry to the campus to those with a “green pass,” and the occupancy restrictions in classrooms have been removed. The repeal of these regulations for educational institutions presents us with two challenges. One is how to ensure that our students’ health is protected, and the other is the need to prepare for classes to take place on campus at full capacity, and in this context the question of the continuation of remote learning.

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The removal of the obligation to require proof of vaccination (the “green pass”) does not exempt us, as demanded by the Ministry of Health and “Magen Israel” (Home Front Command), “from acting with accountability out of mutual responsibility and the need to protect public health.”

A letter sent to us by the Council for Higher Education asked that we heed the call of Magen Israel to the students to “go and get vaccinated. The vaccine is the most effective means of eradicating the virus, which will allow us here in Israel to slowly return to a safe and normal routine.” The fact that a “green pass” is currently required in order to enter concert halls, theaters, performances, and sports facilities indicates that the assessment of the Ministry of Health and Home Front Command is that this is necessary to protect against the spread of the virus.

As an institution, it is our duty to safeguard the health of our students. Even one student with COVID coming to campus could endanger the health and, in extreme cases, the lives of IDC students and faculty. Any spread of the virus is also liable to lead to the partial shutdown of the institution. In light of this, we are telling students today that we will do everything we can to protect your well-being and your future. The obligation to present a “green pass,” or a recent negative test result, will continue to be a condition to enter the campus. It is clear to me that there will be students who have not been vaccinated who will not like this decision. While we understand this, the responsibility is ours and our position is clear.

While IDC Herzliya is interested in returning fully to frontal lessons on campus, until the end of the current school year distance learning will continue in parallel. During this period, this option is important for students who cannot come to campus, including those who do not have a “green pass.” In order to enable frontal and distance learning to take place in tandem, we are currently making efforts to complete the transformation of all remaining classrooms on campus into hybrid classrooms.

On Tuesday, May 18, 2021, after the Shavuot holiday, frontal studies will resume throughout campus, according to the original program. Details with the lesson times and locations will be sent to all students. Until this time, we will continue to hold only partial frontal teaching. We would like to express our appreciation to the Student Union, with whom we remain in constant contact so that together we can ensure that we can all meet again soon and once more rejoice in learning, creativity and friendship.

Yours,

Prof. Uriel Reichman
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