



THE UNIVERSITY OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA

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OFFICE OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR

To: Staff

Covid-19 – Wednesday 25 March 2020

The University's Covid-19 Emergency Management Committee met this morning to assess the University's position in relation to the State of Emergency, to make further decisions which we hope will help to protect your health and safety and to receive updates on progress so far. All service departments and two of our Schools were represented.

We are keeping under close scrutiny on issues such student catering (including hygiene issues), the supplies for taking protective public health measures such as hand hygiene, arrangements for environmental cleaning of at-risk areas. The readiness of the Clinic and Student Services to act if the situation intensifies was also considered and a number of actions identified.

We are also dealing with the alarming number of rumours, misinformation and false information which are being spread, particularly on social media. Of particular concern was the report from a number of sources that a member of our academic staff had been instrumental in, at least, spreading one particularly worrying and untrue rumour. Staff are reminded that any action they take which is considered to bring the University into disrepute will be taken very seriously and dealt with accordingly.

Other issues being considered are how we can provide more support for academic staff to increase their capacity for online teaching. This may be particularly necessary if the lockdown period continues beyond 14 days. We are also in the final stages of producing an information booklet in relation to the Covid-19 virus.

In the area of security, we are making every attempt to follow best practice with regard to public health and major incident management. This means we are having to tighten security to make sure that only authorised individuals with proper identification are allowed on campus. We are also carrying out the Government's request that we make sure that residential student do not leave the campus. We will be giving more information tomorrow for students who do wish to leave campus.

I hope that you are staying cheerful during this time which is trying for all of us.

And the daily repeat of a very important message...Please make sure you...

- ...activate your UPNG email account if you have not already done so – this is the means by which the University will stay in touch with you.
- ...practise social distancing by keeping at least 1.5 metres between you other people.
- ...wash your hands as often as possible and use hand sanitiser when it is available.
- ... cough or sneeze into your bent elbow – not into your hands
- ...avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- ...try to avoid social gatherings and crowded place

The University is taking steps to make sure that Environmental Hygiene is practised to ensure the health and safety of those remaining on campus.

Professor Frank Griffin
Vice Chancellor

