Dear colleagues,

Due of the corona pandemic, TU Dresden has been operating in emergency mode for a week now.

I am deeply overwhelmed by the willingness and commitment of all members of our university to switch to this emergency operations mode in the shortest time possible and to keep it running smoothly. I am very grateful for that. My impression is - and I have already emphasised this publicly: The large TU Dresden family has now moved even closer together – even in times of this social distancing.

During this challenging time, immense power, energy and time are needed to safeguard the system-critical processes and tasks.

It is almost impossible to list everything that has been done this week and what is still being done. I would like to acknowledge every colleague but I can name only a few highlights in this circular email.

Our employees are doing a terrific job - in teaching, research, and administration.

During the emergency mode, a lot of members of staff have duties that simply cannot be done from the safety of a home office. Yet, these tasks must be completed, e.g. in order to save other people from unemployment or to attend to animals who are in the care of TUD. Logistical tasks such as our transportation services and the emergency mail service cannot be carried out from home either. These colleagues bravely face the challenges of coming into work as well as the unprecedented situation at work while observing the extensive ban of physical contact.

Some colleagues work from home, sometimes in cramped living situations and with all-day care, e.g. for their underage children, partly with a poor internet connection and mostly using their private means of telecommunication. For them, the separation between private life and work is non-existent. I am very much aware that this is a challenging situation, especially for families.

Both work situations - whether from home or on TUD premises - are sometimes stressful and strenuous. Yet, they are equally indispensable for TUD's emergency mode and both deserve respect and heartfelt gratitude for all involved.

The lecturers and central units such as ZLSB, ZiLL, ZiW, LiT do tremendous work. They are currently preparing for the start of the semester on 6th April and often have to break new ground in the shortest period of time.

In this situation, we are intensifying the use of digitalisation in our studies to an extent that we would probably not have done otherwise in the foreseeable future. As difficult as our predicament is right now: These innovative teaching concepts and forms of study will not disappear once we will have overcome this crisis and they will thus make courses at TUD ever more attractive.

In research, it is essential to coordinate with providers of third-party funds and cooperation partners on how to, despite the unparalleled situation, secure the results obtained and how to build on them later on. Laboratories and long-term trials must be operated safely but with minimal human resources. Some institutes offer to use their technologies to help fight the pandemic. Our DRESDEN-concept research alliance is also involved in a community action for
society. One excellent example of worldwide cooperation and assistance, is the donation of respiratory masks that TUD received from the Taicang High-Tech Park, which was facilitated by Prof Xinliang Feng (Chair of Molecular Functional Materials). This donation will be of great benefit to not only our University Hospital but also to other hospitals in Dresden. This gesture is emblematic of numerous other activities.

**ZIH activities for video conferences and virtual teaching spaces**

There is a high demand for software solutions for the digital implementation of lectures and video conferences. Therefore, negotiations with a provider of a commercial tool are pursued with the highest priority. In addition, both the Bildungsportal Sachsen (Saxon educational portal) and TU Dresden are working intensively on expanding their internal services in this regard. As soon as possible, presumably by the middle of next week, we will inform you and provide a schedule, of the solutions for different scenarios that will be provided centrally. They can be used free of charge by TU Dresden members. Therefore, we urge you to refrain from buying your own licenses, not least in order to avoid violations of the data protection law. The colleagues at the ZIH work almost around the clock to maintain the services and to create new solutions. Thank you for your relentless and tireless work!

**Launch of a psycho-social counselling hotline**

The commitment of the members of TUD is virtually indescribable. Nevertheless, the situation is burdensome for many people. In order to offer counselling to our employees and students who suffer from stress and anxiety, we are launching a TUD-internal psycho-social counselling hotline on Monday, 30th March 2020 at 9:00 am. A team of psychologically trained staff will be available for members of our university who can call the hotline number +49 351 463-82082. The hotline is initiated and supported by employees of the Occupational Health Services of TU Dresden, the Directorate Studies and Continuing Education, the Institute for Clinical Psychology and the Staff Unit Internationalisation. The hotline will be available Mondays to Thursdays from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon and between 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm and on Fridays from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon. Again, thank you very much!

On behalf of the entire University Executive Board, I would like to wish you and your loved ones, health and lots of strength for the challenges that are still ahead of us!

Best regards,

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