

Corona-Update: March 13th

The Ministerpräsident of Baden-Württemberg has announced that all schools will be closed from Tuesday 17th March, until after the Easter Break (which ends for Baden-Württemberg on April 18th). As previously reported, in Germany the “boarding” is separated from the “school”. I think it likely that UWC Robert Bosch College will be allowed to continue hosting students, even if the formal classroom programme and the service programme beyond campus will be suspended until schools are allowed to re-open. The teachers currently are preparing to give students continued tuition and support, but from Tuesday primarily based online. Teachers will be meeting to further plan for this. The on-campus staff will continue to provide care and support, and if they are teachers, support also in this respect.

The City of Freiburg also is taking measures to combat the spread of the Covid-19 virus. Today it is announced that all swimming pools, theatres etc. will be closed until the 20th April. The City also has instructed that all meetings of over 50 people must be cancelled. Again, to combat the spread of the Covid-19 virus, the City has given a general recommendation for people to have as little social contact as possible. Accordingly, from today all off-campus service projects are cancelled. An updated “on-campus” CAS programme is being planned and should be ready mid-week. From 22:00 tonight (Friday) and until clear directives are received including from the Authorities responsible for the boarding section, students will not be allowed to leave campus except for:

- Medical appointments;
- For recreational walks and runs along the Dreisam River, and into the Black Forest behind the school (where the risks of close contact with non-campus people are small);
- Also from tonight, no further overnight exeats will be permitted except for small camping trips, again where risks of contact with non-campus people are small.

The reason for allowing people to go on off-campus walks and runs, and camping, in contexts where the risk of spread of the Covid-19 virus is small, is in the interest of students not feeling “cooped-up” and “trapped”, ie. for their sense of well-being.

To confirm: the following public UWC events or UWC events in public are cancelled:

- Student-organized Kobani Party, March 13
- Meeting of our Advisory Board, March 18
- Holi with Indians in Freiburg, March 22
- Reading by alumnus Jeremias Thiel, March 26
- UNICEF / Kultur in der Kartause Charity Event, March 27
- Host Family Weekend, March 28/29

In my (non-medical) view, students remaining at the College are not at significantly higher risk than they would be by travelling internationally to return home, and then staying at home. The leadership

team of the College is attempting to keep the Campus open to students because in our view:

- Their formal education is best supported in these challenging times by remaining in in-person contact with (some of) their teachers and by working in small study groups
- There already is evidence that students who have returned home from other UWCs feel that they are deprived of their “UWC experience”;
- This is the most likely way to keep RBC a viable examination centre for our students for May 2019;
- In many jurisdictions, it is likely to be close to impossible for students to move on to university without having a full IB Diploma. At this stage the IB is not willing to agree to the IB Diploma being awarded on the basis of internal assessment and predicted grades.

To repeat my general framing statements from earlier letters, updated in light of current directives:

- UWC Robert Bosch College does not plan to close its student village – the boarding section – at this time, unless instructed to do so by the Authorities.
- If a situation arises where UWC Robert Bosch College is required to close the boarding section, the College will work closely with you, staff, the families of German students, Host Families and the German National Committee to ensure that every student who cannot return home is accommodated. Under these circumstances, the College will fund the travel costs for all students who receive travel assistance as part of their scholarship provision, and if needs be those where the family / national committee is genuinely unable to bear the costs. But let us hope – and continue to plan as sensibly as we can – that we can keep the boarding section open and with generally-healthy students and staff.
- With the unfolding situation the responsibility remains yours for deciding whether you wish (your child) to remain at UWC Robert Bosch College with the precautions described above, or whether you (they) should return home. Should you or they take the view to return home now, I will respect the decision and the student will remain in good standing at the College (and with) UWC.

Laurence Nodder, Rektor