

18th June 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians, copied to UWC National Committees,

When your children, our students, set off last August to start their UWC journey at RBC, they did so during a pandemic and with many uncertainties. That they embarked on this journey showed courage – not only from them but also from you in letting them step into the unknown and the uncertain. Now, 9 ½ months and what seems like an eternity later, almost all have been able to return home. I thank the Hosting families who have provided a home for the handful of students who cannot yet travel.

RBC Sustainability Coordinator Tobi Kellner has likened a UWC experience to a tall, multi-tiered wedding cake. UWCs are schools. The academic curriculum and its delivery through classes, assignments and exams might be considered like the base layer of a wedding cake. The next layer probably is the formal CAS (creative, active, service) programme and the College Jobs. Then comes the layer comprising Special Focus Days, Global Affairs, Project Weeks, cultural weeks, the year-group Outdoor Pursuit camps, Spring Day and Garden Day. On top of that comes the layer of the less formal but UWC-special cultural exchanges prompted by living together, sharing rooms, the student cafés, the late-night conversations, doing non-programme things together, cooking together, simply “hanging out”. Maybe we can add a further non-formal layer: our health and sense of wellbeing, also informed by what is happening at home. Together, these all support a top layer: exploring our identity, our sense of meaning and purpose, sometimes finding space to contemplate these things alone, sometimes with trusted friends and/or members of staff.

Tobi pointed out that every layer in a wedding cake is load-bearing (apart from the top one). Increase the content in a layer, or hollow it out, and the cake may collapse.

In this final letter of the Semester, I wish to salute the students and the staff. Together, with personal sacrifice and some good fortune, I think we have managed to keep the integrity of each layer. The wedding cake is standing, maybe with a few tilts but still standing. We celebrate! It has been a challenging year for most. For some it has been really challenging. Fifteen RBC students have had members of their family die since March 2020 – some but not all from Covid. Several students have struggled deeply with their mental health, and a few have been hospitalized. There has been a significant thinning out in especially the informal staff-student interaction. We understand and support the need for regulations mandating that separation during the pandemic, but it does not diminish the reality and its effects. (This Tuesday, after all students had left campus, RBC had its first in-person staff meeting of the year.) Fortunately, the Authorities allowed us to consider the student body as one “household” – which allowed the students to engage with each other in a relatively “normal” manner but without much of the leavening effect of formal and informal staff presence.

We celebrate that together we have been able to give life to the UWC Mission in this community in such challenging circumstances!

Please read the attached Semester report with care, possibly as a prompt for conversations. Many parents hope that their children will be scoring top or nearly top grades (7 is the highest grade for each subject). The reality is that the global *average* IBDP aggregate most

years is between 29 and 30 points including the points for the extended essay and Theory of Knowledge, somewhere between 4 and 5 for each subject. For those RBC students who wish to apply to the almost 100 colleges and universities in the USA supported financially by Shelby Davis, there are several highly ranked institutions that admit UWC students scoring 24 points, sometimes students who do not achieve a full Diploma. These institutions are at least as interested in the overall profile of the student as in their grades: the student's broad engagement, what they have brought to UWC, *the effort they have put in*, their creativity, their trajectory, their aspirations and how these resonate with the student's engagement at RBC.

Key Dates for the 2021/2022 Academic Year

Thur 26 th August	Students arrive
Fri 29 th October	Last day of classes before Fall Break. Students who leave may do so after 6pm, or on Saturday 30 th . Campus remains open for Fall Break.
Mon 8 th November	Classes resume. Students to return to campus by 7pm on Sunday 7 th .
Fri 17 th December	Last day of classes. All students to depart after 6pm, or before midday on Saturday 18 th .

The full calendar remains available on <https://www.uwcrobertboschcollege.de/news-dates/>

Quarantine

Several students have asked what the quarantine arrangements will be. It is too early to know for sure. I am confident that quarantine, where needed, again will be allowed to be undertaken on campus. For the exact details, we will need to consider the regulations applicable in late August. Almost all returning students will arrive having been vaccinated. This should make things simpler than last August.

Conclusion

Thank you again for your courage and your support. My colleagues and I are relieved (also selfishly!) that almost all students have been able to travel home. We know that part of your courage extended to agreeing to your child coming to RBC last August even when there was no certainty that they could return home 9 ½ months later for their summer break. And you have continued to support your child, our student, from afar. Having earlier saluted the students and staff, I close by saluting you!

In celebration of a year spent together well,



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