

Dear all,

Both computers, phones and other electronic devices have re-registered a great operation this morning. The UdG is back at pace, after the Easter break, and just one month after the start of confinement. I cannot stop thinking of the occasions in which I, as rector, referred to the invisible threads that bind us. Today, this image has a new sense, I had not considered before: next to all that technology gives us, the invisible threads are becoming more real, firmly holding our university, by our willingness to be, and by the exceptional capacity of students, lecturers, researchers, and administrative and service staff to adapt to new situations.

We have prepared and implemented in these weeks the scenario 5 of the *UdG response plan to the Covid-19*, which considers a prolonged confinement. We are facing as University a new paradigm within a very short period of time, which demands an exceptional effort from all of us. And all from the physical distance that makes us miss the complete synchronization of a conversation, the understanding of a look, the comfort of a good handshake. Therefore, I want to thank the staff for their commitment and professionalism in bringing your talent to the service of the country. And I want to thank the students for understanding this necessary flexibility accessing to knowledge.

I told you that every week I would send you a message. And I would have liked this message to be ever more positive, more hopeful, friendlier... Like turning a hourglass and with every grain that falls we were closer to the exit of the crisis. But I think I have to be realistic, because today we can still not say "Awake, it's a new day", referring to Salvador Espriu in his *Song of dawn*.

As I said in my last statement, we cannot normalize a situation that is absolutely exceptional. Cristina Fallarás in the opening ceremony of this academic year made us see that global headlines make the details anonymous, impersonal, pushing us away from the problems and the specific, sometimes severe, realities. So, if we talk globally about health crisis and the restrictions on freedoms, we will stop seeing the face, giving name and surnames, of many people who these days are emotionally suffering from the loss of friends and relatives,

of many people who suffer the loss of the income needed to live with dignity, of many students who could lose access to knowledge, to training, to the university experience.

It is precisely why it is difficult to look for a formula to help us to find the balance between the individual and the general, between the personal and the social. When we speak to each other or we read posts on social networks, we realise that we are all subjected to an emotional roller coaster: In one day, we have moments of anguish, scary, suffering, but we also have moments of optimism. This is what I would have wanted to express in these messages: moments of optimism, taking into account that each of us lives his or her emotions at a different pace, and the happy or enjoyable moment or playful of every one of us struggles with a very tough or sad moment of someone else.

But I also see many shared positive elements: strength, willingness to move forward, solidarity, cooperation. Whatever the emotion that governs our experience, this part sure is well received by all of us. And now I think that this positive energy must have to do with the invisible threads... Therefore, we hear the cautious good news of these days about the overall rhythm of the epidemic, while trying to protect our beloved people, our friends and colleagues. I think this helps to enhance one of the most important attributes of the UdG: proximity.

If we talk about the academic activity, in this resumption the university has introduced a number of measures aimed at protecting the most vulnerable, from the assumption that we can only guarantee a right, such as the right to education, if it can be completely exercised by everyone. As a public institution at the service of the country we have the duty and obligation to act responsibly and with humanity. As a University I do not doubt that we will meet the expectations, we will know how to respond to the particular concerns of each one of the members of our community, who will know how to accompany, support and give a warm and human response to the situations that arise in the exercise of our activity.

I thank all of you for your full commitment to the institution. I hope my wish was true that you and your family and friends are in good health as well. This confinement will be long, longer than we initially expected, so I have to ask you to be very attentive to the most vulnerable

and that we continue to maintain our activity of proximity, with the same rigor and professionalism, as civil workers at the service of our students and society. And to the students, I invite you to participate as members of the community of this unexpected journey, which has taken us down a different path, but must also lead us to the destination that we had planned together.

Cordially,

Quim Salvi  
Rector

Girona, 14 April 2020